

A New Conceptual and Empirical Approach to Stuttering Based in  
Psychoanalysis.

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Although in this thesis stuttering is also considered from the perspective of the drives, it is mainly explored from within the object relational framework of Klein and Bion. Based principally on psychoanalytic case-studies of people with a stutter, an understanding emerges of stuttering as a problem associated with the containment of psychic experiences, leading to words being expressed in a fragmentary form. However, since people engaging in analysis typically have other underlying problems, it is necessary to find out whether there is support, or not, for this hypothesis in a non-clinical population. It is suggested that in the empirical research the quality of containment can be inferred principally by the participant's capacity, or not, to respond fully to the emotional issues implicit in a targeted projective task, and by the nature of the object relations portrayed. A story stem technique that stimulates participants to tell stories proves very useful in producing appropriate research data. The responses of the participants are analysed using an object relations scale and by using a thematic analysis. Differences are found between children with a stutter and children with no stutter. The children with a stutter have difficulties responding fully to the emotional issues implicit in the stems. There are also problems for the children with a stutter to differentiate between characters in their stories, and the responses of children with a stutter have scant dialogue. I argue that these results, along with defences such as agglomeration and the nature

of the object relations portrayed in the responses of children with a stutter provide tentative support for the usefulness of Bion's concept of a containing relationship. Although the findings are based on a small sample, this project helps to consolidate a place within the psychoanalytic framework for an account of stuttering from an object relations perspective.

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## **Introduction: Setting the scene for an object-relations perspective on stuttering.**

The relationship between the mind and body has long been a perplexing issue. In psychoanalysis this question has been framed predominantly by the controversies between Janet and Freud (Sloate, 2016). In broad terms Janet understood psychosomatic symptoms as the effect of psychological trauma which evaded psychological representation; in other words the mind was bypassed and the trauma found expression in the body (ibid). Freud, on the other hand, preferred the view that a symptom in the body, which didn't have any evident biological cause, was a part of a dynamic mind; the symptoms were symbolically meaningful and rooted in intrapsychic conflict (ibid). These two positions have largely developed independently of each other-the former predominantly in the Paris School of Psychosomatics, and the latter predominantly in North America (ibid).

The phenomenon of stuttering<sup>1</sup> has stimulated a wide range of questions and theories. It is also a phenomenon that can have a devastating impact on a person's life. It has been researched from a

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'stammering' can also be used. The difference is stammering is used more widely in the UK and stuttering in the USA. In this research project I use 'stuttering'

range of different perspectives, for example neurochemical, psychoanalytic, psychological, research using neuroimaging as well as from the viewpoint of language acquisition.

Stuttering has been characterized as an impediment in the fluent flow of speech production (Garnett *et al.*, 2018). A problem with timing has received a lot of support in the research literature on stuttering. Van Riper, who wrote extensively on stuttering, stated that 'temporal disruption is the core behavior of stuttering' (Van Riper, 1972, p.249), and that a stutter occurred when:

the forward flow of speech is interrupted abnormally by repetitions or prolongations of a sound, or syllable, or articulatory posture, or by avoidance and struggle reactions (Van Riper, 1972, p.249)

At the beginning of chapter 2 I will expand on this understanding of stuttering as a temporal breakdown and also give a brief overview of theories on stuttering from different knowledge domains.

This present research works within a psychoanalytic framework. Even though the research is based on the assumption that the cause of the stutter resides in the psyche, the research design cannot prove causality and I do not enter into the debate about this. Although making this assumption does not do justice to the complexities of stuttering, I agree with Britton that each perspective of a phenomenon needs its own developed account, and later there is the possibility that they can

engage with each other (Britton, 2015). At times during the present research I note where there is potential for overlap between a psychoanalytic perspective and an understanding of stuttering from other domains of knowledge.

Another assumption implicit in this present research is that speech should not be isolated from interaction, and that speech is a continuation of 'a dialogue [that occurred previously in infancy] without words' (Danon-Boileau, 2001). Amir, likewise, views one's mother tongue as 'the internalized mother's emotional language' (Amir, 2014, p.143). The inseparability, in my view, of learning a language and relationships is well expressed by Sloate, who argues that:

Each of us acquires words in unique relational ways, and the shades of meaning we attribute to them are coloured by the interpersonal context of their acquisition; words and relationship are inseparably intertwined' (Sloate, 2016, p. 230).

I also agree with Amir who argues that 'language is first and foremost a depressive achievement' (Amir, 2014, p.1). The child needs to have had good enough experiences with the primary object in order to tolerate separation and the depression that, according to Klein, goes with it. It is only through the acceptance of that loss that mother can be retrieved as a symbol (Kristeva, 1987), and how a child can 'build an internal world' (Urwin, 2002, p.75).



In the psychoanalytic literature the two main approaches to understanding stuttering have been from the perspective of the drives and within the framework of object relations, and I will look at these two approaches later. Working from an assumption of a close connection between acquiring a language in infancy and relationships, I was motivated to adopt an object relations approach as the broad psychoanalytic framework in this project. Although I also explore stuttering from the perspective of the drives, taking an object relations approach would facilitate a deeper understanding of an interaction between stuttering and relationships, both of the inner and outer world.

In this next part I would like to describe in detail the steps taken in the realization of this research project.

In chapter **two**, I give a brief overview of how stuttering is understood in a range of knowledge domains such as in neuroscience, and explore an understanding of stuttering from the classical Freudian tradition, with a focus on the oral and anal drives. Taken overall this is the predominant psychoanalytic framework within which stuttering has been understood. However, I argue in this chapter that understanding stuttering only in terms of fixation does not adequately account for the primitive level of ego functioning implicit in stuttering. I argue that the thinking of Segal (1957) around the connection between object relating

and symbolization is useful in making sense of this primitive level of functioning.

In chapter **three**, basing the research principally on psychoanalytic case-studies on people with a stutter, my aim is to build up a hypothesis about stuttering from within an object relational perspective. Certain themes emerge from these case-studies, namely inhibition with underlying aggression, omnipotence, fear of causing harm to the object, attacks on linking, and problems of processing emotion. I find Bion's thinking on attacks on linking and containment as particularly useful in understanding the findings from the case studies. In the second part of this chapter I argue that these concepts of Bion can also account for the actual stutter. Due to a problem with containment, emotional experiences are not processed and these find expression in the fragmentary form of words. Rather than the communication of ideas the stuttered words are viewed as acting upon the object, namely through fusion or aggression. Since these findings emerge from work with people in analysis, who may well suffer from a range of underlying issues, there needs to be an empirical investigation to determine whether there is support for this hypothesis in a non-clinical population.

In chapter **four**, the Methods chapter, I set out plans for an empirical study. Many aspects of this process prove challenging. I struggle for a long time, for example, with how to operationalize Bion's

concept of containment. Using the thinking of Walker and Hinshelwood (2018) regarding a 'duck test' to infer unconscious processes aids me in developing a way that could support, or not, this hypothesis. A fundamental aspect of a 'test' of containment that is developed is whether the participants can respond fully to the emotional issues of the task presented to them. To collect data I decide to use the Story Stem Technique, in which the participants are presented with everyday situations at home, and I am fortunate in attending a course on the use of the Story Stem Technique at the Anna Freud Centre in London. This gives me first-hand experience of a research tool that can provide rich data on the object relations of children. The course also provides me with the experience of administering the story technique.

Recruitment of participants also proves particularly difficult. Children with a stutter are recruited mainly from local Speech and Language Providers, and for one of these I am obliged to seek ethical approval from IRAS. This is a very demanding process, which took around 9 months to complete. Recruiting children with no stutter, who I want to use as a control group, requires extensive communication with schools, and in the end I manage to obtain the support of two local schools. I am compensated for my efforts by the very interesting research material that is collected.

When analyzing the narratives of the participants there are two main objectives. On the one hand, a type of data is necessary that will facilitate a comparison between children with a stutter and children with no stutter, and for this an object relations scale is used. On the other hand the complexity of the participants' responses need to be preserved, and to do this a thematic analysis proved useful.

In the initial analysis of the data I want to preserve a distance between the data and the theoretical framework that this research as a whole is couched in, namely a Kleinian and a Bionian perspective. The main reason for this is to avoid a circular nature of knowledge in which the data which is selected is that which supports the hypothesis. To keep this distance I am concerned initially with observing patterns of object relations in a broad sense of the term, identifying themes that emerge from the data itself, and identifying links within the data.

In chapter **five** the results from the use of the object relations scale and the thematic analysis are presented. Whilst working within a broad object relations perspective, I am concerned with presenting the results as they were, paying very close attention to the responses of the participants. I find differences in the responses of children with a stutter and children with no stutter. The children with a stutter do not fully respond to the stem and use defences such as denial of emotion, distorting the stem, or responding only from one perspective. The

children with no stutter, in contrast, show that they are more capable of maintaining the conflict presented in the stem and transforming it into a story. Moreover, the children with a stutter have problems differentiating between characters and there is scant dialogue between their characters. The children with a stutter also produce responses that are extreme, either there is excessive emotion in their narratives or scant emotion.

In chapter **six** these findings are then interpreted, with a focus on whether or not there is support for the research question, namely that there is a problem for children with a stutter regarding psychic containment. Although the sample is small, I find that the children with a stutter have more problems than children with no stutter in responding fully to the emotional issues implicit in the stems. The likelihood that this difference can be accounted for by a problem of containment for the children with a stutter is increased by the nature of the object relations and the use of primitive defences inherent in the responses of the children with a stutter: in chapter 6 I will argue that the object relations and the use of primitive defences in the stories of children with a stutter reflect paranoid-schizoid functioning. A problem with psychic containment is further supported by the fact that this concept can help explain some of the phenomena in the responses of children with a stutter, namely a lack of differentiation between the characters in their

responses, the scant dialogue, an insistence on sameness, envy, and the contrasting of excessive emotion and scant emotion in their responses.

In chapter 7 I conclude that although the sample is small, the research project helps to consolidate a space within the psychoanalytic framework for an object relational understanding of stuttering. There is tentative support for the view that stuttering is associated with a disturbance in early object relations, and for the usefulness of Bion's concepts of container-contained and attacks on linking. I also point out the potential for the integration of this psychoanalytic perspective with contemporary neurological studies. This object relational perspective on stuttering, I argue, also has implications for the practice of speech therapy. When providing treatment this thesis reinforces the importance of paying attention to the therapeutic relationship.

Before starting this research project in earnest, I would like to explain some key terms used in the research.

### **Object relations**

The overall approach in this present research is object relations. This perspective posits the infant's need to relate with others at the centre of human motivation (Akhtar,2009) and that the quality of relating is the catalyst for the growth and development of inner psychic structures.

.Antonovsky (1987) provides, I think, a good description of this approach:

It soon became apparent that object relations theorists, both in their Kleinian-Fairbairnian-Winnicottian versions and more particularly so in their ego psychological versions (Jacobson, Modell, Loewald), were concerned not only with relations to external objects and even more so with relations to and within an internalized object world—now seen by some as the true motivational system—but beyond that with the growth and development of inner psychic structures of increasing complexity that would result from the full internalization and depersonification of object relationships, structures that would gradually do for the individual what previously, at a lower level of development, only external objects could do (540-541).

The theoretical framework of this present research is predominantly based within the thinking on object relations of Melanie Klein and Bion. The following concepts are pertinent:

### **Paranoid-schizoid position**

Klein associates the P-S position with the first six months of life (Klein, 1946); however, it is a position that is revisited and refined during the lifespan. P-S is characterized by part objects, originally a good and bad breast. A core feature of P-S is anxiety due to the fear of annihilation from the bad object, both internal and external (Ibid). Splitting is a core defence as the infant attempts to keep the good object separate from the bad. Projection is also used to get rid of aggressive impulses, and introjection to take in the good object (ibid). This position is dominated

by phantasies, particularly phantasies of very aggressive impulses and/or idealistic impulses.

### **Depressive position**

Klein associates the depressive position with the second part of the first year of life (ibid). It is not a phase, however, as it is a position that is reworked throughout the lifespan. It is characterised by whole objects and as the infant works through this position he/she brings together destructive and loving impulses towards one object (ibid), and thereby synthesizing the object. The infant experiences guilt for harm done in phantasy to the good object, and strives to make reparations (ibid).

There is an awareness of separateness in the more balanced object relations of the depressive position.

### **Concepts specific to Bion's thinking**

There are many terms specifically used by Bion, for example container-contained and attacks on linking, which are pertinent to this research.

As these are explained in detail in chapter two when I build up a hypothesis about stuttering, it is not necessary to explain them at this stage.

### **Projective Identification**

'Projective identification is an unconscious phantasy in which aspects of the self or an internal object are split off and attributed to an external



object' (Melanie Klein Trust, No date). Projective identification can involve not only getting rid of parts of the psyche but also acquiring parts of the psyche of the other. I think it is worth quoting Klein at length:

The infant 'expel..[s] dangerous substances (excrements) out of the self and into the mother. Together with these harmful excrements, expelled in hatred, split off parts of the ego are also projected on to the mother or, as I would rather call it, into the mother. These excrements and bad parts of the self are meant not only to injure the object but also to control it and take possession of it. In so far as the mother comes to contain the bad parts of the self, she is not felt to be a separate individual but is felt to be the bad self. It is, however, not only the bad parts of the self which are expelled and projected, but also good parts of the self'. (Klein, 1944, p.102).

Bion extends this understanding of projective identification by viewing it as part of normal development, namely as the earliest form of communication that the infant can avail itself of in relation to the object. If the communication is responded to by a sufficiently containing object, this 'fundamental contact' (O'Shaughnessy, 2012) between the dyad is an essential aspect of a successful container-contained relationship.

After this introduction to the research project, and a brief explanation of some of the key terms pertinent to this thesis, I will begin the argument with a consideration of stuttering from a range of different knowledge domains and from the classical Freudian perspective in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Two: How stuttering is understood within different domains of knowledge and from the perspective of the drives.**

Freud's lifelong interest in speech and language found expression in an early work *On Aphasia* (1892). In this book he makes a distinction between word-presentations and thing-presentations, a distinction which Kristeva describes as 'the gap between the biological substratum and the linguistic (langagière) manifestation' (1997). This mind/ body gap still finds expression today, and is particularly prevalent in the antagonism that is currently felt between researchers who state that stuttering is a problem of the mind, and those who state it is a neurological or biological problem. Before giving more details about how Freud understood the gap between the biological and the mental and how the theory of the drives has been used to account for stuttering, I would like to give a representative sample of the understandings of stuttering that are prevalent in different domains of knowledge.

A lot of research on stuttering is currently taking place in neuroscience, and a problem with internal timing has received a lot of attention. There may be deficient connectivity among brain areas that support timing and rhythm (Chang, Horwitz, Ostuni, Reynolds, & Ludlow,

2011; Lu et al., 2010). This is in agreement with Alm (2004), who suggests that the core issue in stuttering is a deficit in automatic or internal timing. Due to dopamine levels in stuttering, there is a problem in the capacity of the basal ganglia to automatically transmit the timing cues that initiate the next segment of speech. That the core problem in stuttering is a disorder of timing or a problem with rhythm is also suggested by research showing that when a person with a stutter recites words in unison with another or sings to a musical rhythm stuttering improves (Johnson and Rosen, 1937; Bloodstein, 1950; Freeman and Armson, 1998; Fransella and Beech, 1965). Other neuroscientists such as Garnett hypothesize that the problem lies in brain connectivity and in areas such as the primary motor cortex in the left hemisphere, the hemisphere that is associated with speech. (Garnett, Chow, Nieto-Castan, Tourville, Guenther, and Chang, 2018).

In the study of the role of genetics, twin studies have proved particularly useful. Four different genes have been implicated, which all point to a problem of transportation within the cell (Frigerio-Domingues, and Drayna, 2017). Yairi, Ambrose and Cox (1996) confirm the importance of considering the interaction between genes and environment.

Current literature in the field of psychology strongly suggests that heightened emotional experience and regulation of emotion are salient

issues affecting children with stutters: Riley and Riley (2000) found that children with a stutter (CWS) were more sensitive (reactive to situations) than controls; Karrass et al. (2006) found that CWS showed more reactivity and less regulation of emotions and attention than controls. These psychological findings have been supported at the level of physiological activity. The findings of Jones et al. (2014) suggest that children with a stutter show lower baseline potential for emotional regulation, and a maladaptive interaction between sympathetic and parasympathetic activity.

## **DRIVE THEORY OF STUTTERING**

Freud never lost sight of the direct relationship between excitations at a neurological level and mental processes (Compton, 1981). Kristeva (1997) refers to a 'double determination in the face of ...psychoanalytic symptoms'. It is in the concept of the drives that for Freud this link between the biological and mental is mediated. Freud (1915/1957) defines the drive as:

as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body (121-122).

The mind and the body are inextricably linked and it is in the pressure of the demand for work that somatic excitations impose on the mental that the drive is constituted as the psychic representation of the somatic.

When compared with theorists such as Bion, who stressed the vital need of the interaction with the other in the development of the mind, the constitution of the mental is presented here as a matter unfolding within the individual, albeit within a relationship with the object.<sup>2</sup> Mature language is associated with the unfolding of the drives at the genital stage and the resolution of the oedipus complex. In identifying with the father, and with inevitable repression, the child takes on board the language of society (Lacan, 1966 in Urwin, 2002), and there is 'a discourse that responds to logical and cognitive common rules' (Amir, 2010, p.663). However, the unfolding of the drive can be impeded and there can be regression and recathecting of former positions or fixations (Laffal, 1964), namely the oral and anal stages.

I would now like to give a representative sample of psychoanalytic literature on stuttering from within the framework of the drives. Most of the discussion within this approach is predominantly related to either the anal drive or the oral drive as a source of the stutter. In the second part of the chapter, I will argue that stuttering has not only been understood

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<sup>2</sup> Researchers such as Green take a strong view on this. 'The concept of the drive is unthinkable without the object. The proof of this is the object is part of the drive assembly' (Green, 2002)

as the symbolic expression of an unconscious conflict, but also as a deficit in the mind of integrating primitive elements. Following the thinking of Bronstein (2010) I will make the point that these two perspectives on stuttering are compatible within the object relational perspective of Bion and Klein.

### **Anal drive**

Fenichel, whose work on stuttering is very often cited, considers that stuttering is predominantly of an anal-sadistic character (Fenichel, 1945). Stuttering is a 'sexualized defecation' (Ibid, p.312), and retention of words 'may be either a reassurance against possible loss or a pleasurable autoerotic activity' (Ibid, p.312). He argues that there is an unconscious association between speaking and the utterance of obscene, and particularly anal words as well as an aggressive stance towards the listener. Fenichel states that stuttering is particularly prevalent when the stutterer wants to prove a point or is speaking to someone in authority (Fenichel, 1933). He refers to a very aggressive stance and writes in terms of an unconscious desire to kill the listener, which is blocked and punished by a severe superego in the form of the stutter. When a stutterer cannot speak it often means that a desire to kill has been turned against the ego (Ibid). A stutterer's ego is thus struggling against anal impulses and a severe superego, suggesting an ego that is vulnerable from both sides.

In Heilpern's analysis of a stuttering analysand she also argues that a displacement onto the speech functions at the anal level of development results in the conflict between the impulse to kill through 'anal-sexual' noise of words (stuttered words are the attack) and the

counter desire to repress this desire 'in a suicidal, self-castrating manner by stowing his tongue (Heilpern, 1941, p.113). This anal-sadistic character of stuttering reflects Freud's main theoretical formulation on stuttering which he expressed in a letter to Ferenczi in 1915. He stated that 'stammering could be caused by a displacement to speech of conflicts over excremental functions' (Freud, 1915)

In reference to a young stuttering analysand, Searl seems to be writing about the persecutory nature of defecating (Searl, 1927). This persecution relates particularly to noise, which is associated with the noise of father during coitus. Typically, after going to the toilet this young boy rushed away in terror and awe. On one occasion, however, Searle made an interpretation, which linked defecating and noise. This resulted in him going back to the toilet and shouting 'I bited him' twice (Ibid, p. 68) After this his stuttering practically disappeared. This suggests that the solution is connected with gaining mastery of his fear of going to the toilet, and, since there is a reference to biting, possibly as well to an overcoming of his castration fears.

In the psychoanalytic literature on stuttering exhibitionism has been linked to the anal phase, as well as the oral phase. Abraham, for example, writes of a four-year-old stuttering child, who enjoyed reciting poetry, and when this pleasure stopped took to exhibiting his buttocks (as cited in Heilpern, 1941). Heilpern also argues that there is an unmistakable exhibitionist component in his stuttering analysand, who remembered how his family were captivated when he said 'a-a', the name he had for his faeces and the sound he emitted when expelling them (Heilpern, 1941).

These accounts of stuttering are based predominantly on the displacement and symbolic expression of unconscious conflicts. However, to argue that in stuttering there is no differentiation between

anal, and, as we will also see, oral, activity and speech, strongly suggests that there is not just regression but also a partial disintegration of the mind. This perspective from the point of view of drives does not take into account the view held about psychosomatic illnesses by authors such as Marty from the Paris School of Psychosomatics, namely that there is a problem to do with the capacity of the mind to symbolize (1952, in Sloate, 2016). I will discuss this issue later in the chapter.

### **Oral drive**

The oral gratification involved in stuttering is emphasized by Stekel:

The stutterers have.... sexualized the language and play with the letters, the rapid and slow speech, the sticking, ..... various scenes with the tireless imagination of the neurotic who run after their infantile pleasure sources throughout their lives (Stekel, 1911, p.328).

Stekel's perception of stutterers having a 'sexualised' language could reflect Bion's understanding of stuttering as oral masturbation (Bion, 1970/1983a) and Orchinik's argument that stuttering is associated with the traumatic experiences of tickling (Orchinik, 1958). Orchinik writes about the stutterer's occupation with 'the dammed-up suspenseful state of pre-emission' (Ibid, p.35), in which there is a simultaneous desire to release and withhold. He states:

From the point of view of gain we see stuttering speech as an enhancement of forepleasure that economically repeats and accentuates the suspenseful but controlled thrill phase of the tickling-laughter sequence (Ibid, p.35).



The importance of oral impulses is particularly expressed by Coriat, who wrote extensively on stuttering for 30 years (Glauber, 1982). His argument is that stuttering is not a conversion symptom, that is to say the symbolic expression in the body of an unconscious conflict, but rather the stutterer in speech continues 'the original gratification' afforded at the nipple and 'retains the pleasure and the motor patterns of an act of nursing at an illusory nipple' (Coriat, 1933, p.254). There is an 'unbroken continuance of the original pregenital organisation' (Coriat, 1933, p.244), and 'the mouth has become the principal and all-powerful organ of libidinal pleasure, which is gratified only by the oral discharge in speech' (Coriat, 1927, p.62.) Castration anxieties and guilt arise from a continuation of oral gratification in speech, and lead to self-punishment behaviours such as biting the lips and tongue (Coriat, 1933). Continuing to enjoy nursing pleasures in stuttering is caused, according to Coriat, by a weak super-ego, which stems from narcissism and the incomplete mastery of the oedipal complex (Ibid).

Fenichel, as a criticism of Coriat's understanding, argues that stuttering is not a pleasurable experience (Fenichel, 1934). I'd like to make a critique of Coriat from the perspective of object relations. Coriat is situating the origins of stuttering in the context of a relationship with a part object, namely the breast. It would be useful, I think, as regards Coriat's thinking, to have a theoretical framework that helps to

distinguish the use of language in which there is an equation with the original libidinal binding with the mother (Coriat, 1933, p.252) from a more mature use of communication. An equation between speech and nursing at the breast resonates with the example that Segal gives of a schizophrenic who can't differentiate between playing a musical instrument and masturbating publicly (Segal, 1957). In the next chapter, using the thinking of Segal and Bion's concepts of container-contained and beta elements, I will argue that for people with a stutter there is a problem of symbolizing and of differentiating between the object and the symbol.

Glauber, who has written extensively on stuttering within the framework of ego psychology, agrees with Coriat that stuttering involves a fixation at the oral phase (Glauber, 1982). However, unlike Coriat, he views it as a conversion neurosis. Behind this oral fixation there is a strong identification with an omnipotent and magical mother. Dependence on her generates conflict in the ego, and an oscillating relationship, also due to the mother's ambivalence, leads to a conflict over whether or not to remain dependent, which translates into whether or not to speak (Ibid). In this relationship there is an 'estrangement from ..real feelings' of the stuttering child (Ibid, p.39) as 'feelings become dangerous and are repressed'(Ibid, p.39). Later in the chapter I will

point out that, although Glauber does see the stutter as a displacement of unconscious conflict, he primarily stresses a disturbance of the ego.

Both approaches to stuttering, the anal and the oral, place it at a pre-genital level. At each level there is a mental functioning in which the basis of speech is more about equivalence to body functions and acting on objects rather than about symbolic communication between separate individuals. Although most authors refer to stuttering as comprising of different components, there is an emphasis on which component is predominant, either oral or anal.

#### **A problem at the level of drives and at psychic integration.**

However, some psychoanalytic researchers argue that stuttering can arise from different levels of psychic functioning, not just at the level of the drives. Wassef argues, as abstracted in the Annual Survey of Psychoanalysis, that along with considering stuttering on the level of drives it is also important to think about 'archaic elements' such as 'sadistic conceptions of the primal scene and fusion of sadistic visual memories with thinking and speaking' (Wassef, 1955). She found that a solution to stuttering involved a 'transition from the partial to the total object relationship and integration of the primitive elements into the personality' (Ibid). Glover (1939) argues that stuttering can be regarded as a 'mixed type' of psychoneurosis, which arise from difficulties at

different levels of mental functioning, one of which can be correlated with psychotic manifestations. Glauber, who works within the framework of ego psychology, recognizes in stutterers the operation of different kinds of anxiety: 'psychoneurotic-teleological-defensive, on the one hand; and, on the other, direct evidences of ego breakdown: depersonalization- "actual" existing anxieties' (Glauber, 1982, p.20). He is distinguishing, I think, the displacement of the conflict onto a symptom, from a cause at the level of ego functioning. Glauber came to see that the core problem of stuttering is at these primitive levels of mental functioning: 'In recent years I have been impressed by the importance of the visual and auditory spheres in speech pathology. Speaking situations frequently activate visual and auditory as well as oral conflicts which were first brought to the forefront in relation to primal scene fantasies and experiences' (Ibid, p.18). The problem for the stutterer is the integration of these stimuli. Balkanyi understands the operation of the drives in stuttering as 'secondary functions' (Balkanyi, 1961, p.108). She goes on to say that stuttering is an 'independent pathological function. It is the dysfunction of the preconscious; the dysfunction of moulding affects into words' (Ibid, p.108).

I agree with these authors that from within a psychoanalytic framework an understanding of stuttering can be situated at both these levels of functioning, namely at the level of drives and at a level of

psychic integration and/or formation of the mind. I think these different perspectives are well expressed by Sloate. She states:

A [psychosomatic] symptom may indicate the presence of as-yet-discovered repressed conflict. But it might also be a manifestation of accumulated tensions, bodily or affective, that have never been thought about enough to be repressed' (Sloate, 2016, p. 223)

Approaching from both these perspectives can add complexity by going beyond understanding stuttering merely in terms of a predominantly oral or anal nature (Wassef, 1955).

However, I think that contributions from both these two perspectives cannot be easily integrated within a classical psychoanalytic framework. As mentioned in the introduction these two perspectives have predominantly found their expression along different historical lines of development; on the one hand it is claimed that the conversion of unconscious conflict into a psychosomatic symptom endows the latter with symbolic meaning. This point of view is strongly associated with developments in psychoanalysis in North America (Sloate, 2016). On the other hand, there is the view that the Paris School of Psychosomatics adhere to, namely that in psychosomatics there is a problem with the mind's capacity to symbolise. According to the Paris School the psychosomatic symptom cannot be symbolic of an unconscious conflict because there is a deficit in the mind's capacity to elaborate. Without this elaboration 'the somatic manifestation [merely] replaces a conflictive

situation' (Bronstein, 2010, p.64). For a detailed account of a psychosomatic disorder from the perspective of the Paris School see Aisenstein and Rappoport de Aisemberg (2010).

Bronstein suggests a way of bringing these two perspectives together (Bronstein, 2010). She refers to the thinking of Melanie Klein, and how psychosomatic symptoms can be the representation of unconscious phantasy, i.e. they are seen as 'anchored in the mind and, therefore, available to analytical exploration' (Ibid, p.65). At the same time, Bronstein continues, Bion's concept of container-contained emphasizes the need of making emotional experience available for thought; if the experience is not processed it will be evacuated, possibly 'via psychosomatic disorders'(Ibid). The object relational framework of Klein and Bion 'might help to bridge the gap between a theory that stresses the lack of psychic representation of the psychosomatic symptom [i.e. from the Paris School], and a theory that sees it [the symptom] as being linked to an unconscious representation of conflict [i.e. the drive theory]' (ibid).

### **Brief summary**

In brief, in this chapter I have argued that using the drive theory brings a contribution to an understanding of stuttering, namely stuttering as a regression to the conflicts of the oral and anal phases. However, I have

also argued that a problem at the level of formation of the mind also seems implicated in the phenomenon. Moreover, I suggested that the object relational framework of Bion and Klein could help to bridge a gap between understanding the stutter as a symbolic expression of an unconscious conflict and perceiving it as the result of a deficit in the mind's capacity to symbolize.

In chapter 3, I will develop an understanding of stuttering within an object relations perspective. In the second part of chapter 3, in which I give an account of the actual stutter, I will expand on my argument that a view of the stutter which emphasizes the representation of an unconscious conflict is compatible with a view of stuttering which emphasizes a problem in the mind's capacity to symbolize.

### **Chapter Three: Generating a hypothesis on stuttering within an object-relations perspective.**

My purpose in this chapter is twofold. In the first part I want to build up an understanding of the object relational world of people with a stutter, predominantly through the psychoanalytic case study. I want to identify predominant features about people with a stutter that emerge mainly from across different case studies. After identifying these features I will argue that Klein's paranoid-schizoid position theory and Bion's concepts of attacks on linking and container-contained are useful in making sense of them. In the second part of the chapter I will try to account for the actual stutter through Bion's concept of container-contained. There are thus two separate sections in this chapter. My main focus on using the case study is not to test theories, as Hinshelwood (2013) does in *Research on the Couch*, but to generate theories about stuttering. These theories about stuttering will then be explored empirically, and this empirical study will form the basis of chapters four, five and six.

#### **The case study**

In the field of psychoanalysis the production of knowledge evolved originally from the case study (Hinshelwood, 2013). It still is an important way of reporting insights that have been gained from the analytic



situation (Kachele, Schachter and Thoma, 2009). A psychoanalytic case study on people who stutter is potentially a rich source of knowledge about the subjectivity and object relations of a stutterer and of the theories used to make sense of the stutter. It can pinpoint what aggravates the stutter as well as offer interpretations regarding what helped the stutter to decrease.

However, the knowledge produced by the single case study has come under scrutiny by researchers such as Luborsky and Spence (1971) and Hinshelwood (2013). Hinshelwood (2013), for example, raises questions about the problem of generalizing from a unique case study, and about the potentially circular nature of the knowledge in the case study. There is typically no separation between the selected facts in the case study and an interpretation of them, meaning that the theoretical frame can determine what facts are selected, and those facts are themselves understood in terms of the frame.

My use of the case study was not to test theories about stuttering, but rather to generate a hypothesis, which would subsequently be investigated empirically. However, the generalizability of single case studies and the potentially circular nature of knowledge were still concerns. In relation to generalizability from the case study Dattilio et al. (2010) state:

One observation or one case offers only a small piece of evidence, but repeated observation [:] across a series of cases provides a way of constructing a database of evidence on which clinical theory can be built (p.436).

By using multiple case studies in this present research, I could go beyond evidence from a single case study and add plausibility to any hypothesis about stuttering.

## **Method**

All of the cases for this present research were selected through PEP web, a psychoanalytic archive including books and journals, except two- Freud's case study on Frau Emmy, and a case study selected from the Single Case Archive, which is a database of psychoanalytic case studies published in ISI ranked journals (Meganck et al., 2017). Exclusion criteria for the search were that the case studies were very brief and they were in a language other than English. Although I was taking a broad object relational approach, I accepted case studies that were informed by other theoretical frameworks. Even if a case study is formulated within a classical Freudian perspective, for example, I agree with Antonovsky (1987) that psychoanalysis has never been without object relations and there is still scope to interpret from this perspective. I will expand on this choice of diverse frameworks later. On the PEP web an initial search was conducted using the terms stuttering AND case,

which produced 302 results. After screening there were 6 articles in the English language that involved the presentation of a substantial case study on a person with a stutter. A similar search on PEP web was carried out using the terms stammering AND case, which provided 273 results. After screening there were 8 relevant articles. The 2 searches produced broadly the same case studies.

### **Identifying themes and developing a theory**

In the process of elaborating a hypothesis about stuttering from these case-studies I was guided by the method of metasynthesis as outlined by Iwakabe and Gazzola (2009). Metasynthesis is a method 'in which researchers gather single-case reports that deal with similar clinical issues and identify common themes and processes' (Iwakabe et al., 2009, p.607). It aims at 'theory building, theory development, and higher levels of abstraction, with an emphasis on the interpretation of findings from a carefully selected collection of research studies in a chosen area of interest (Thorne et al., 2004). It is a method in which the researcher pays close attention to the data in the case studies, and at the same time focuses on development of a theory. Drawing on the thinking of Glaser and Strauss (1967), who are known for the Grounded Theory method, the researcher in metasynthesis makes use of theoretical sampling as a way to move between the data and theory

building. When categories or themes have emerged from the data theories are formed which then in turn drive the 'need to collect more data to examine [these] categories and their relationships and to assure that representativeness in the category exists' (Chenitz and Swanson 1986, p.9). 'Sampling ..... is done for verification or to test the validity of a category' (Ibid, p.9).

In the present research I followed the steps recommended by Iwakabe *et al.* (2009). I immersed myself in the case-study, and identified potential themes in the margins. Common themes were identified across case studies and distinct features of a case-study were noted. Opposing findings were managed by reflecting on the underlying constructs and deciding if they were in conflict or manifestations of the same phenomena. Theories then emerged that seemed useful in making sense of this data.

### **The case-studies in the present research.**

The available case studies on people with a stutter were written by analysts working within diverse theoretical frameworks, including from within a classical Freudian perspective, a case study from a Kleinian, a Jungian, an object relational analyst, as well as a psychotherapist working within a short-term psychodynamic approach. On the surface working with case-studies from such a diverse range of frameworks, with their differing language and underlying assumptions, was problematic.

One example of these problems is in the case study written by the Jungian analyst dissociation of the analysand was often referred to, and I had to grapple with how this term relates to splitting in a Kleinian framework. Another example of the difficulties involved in understanding stuttering, from within the psychoanalytic tradition, was the tension between a drive and an object relational perspective.

However, it was still a useful endeavor to analyse these case studies in order to identify certain object relational features of people with a stutter. Object relational concerns were shared by most of the authors of the case studies, which facilitated the task of finding common themes. Moreover, by drawing on case-studies from a range of theoretical frameworks this suggested that the common features identified were not a product of just a single theoretical framework. The potential problem of the circular nature of knowledge mentioned above was thus, at least partly, avoided.

Here is a brief summary of the main case studies that I refer to in this chapter. This background information will help to orient the reader as I present the results and discuss them.

**Plankers, T. (1999) 'Speaking in the claustrum: The psychodynamics of stuttering'.**

In this case study **Plankers** drew on his work with **Mr. A.**, who was 33 when analysis started. Plankers understood the inner world of Mr. A. principally in terms of difficulties in separating and Meltzer's concept of an anal claustrum, 'in which all obstacles that are encountered between self and object must be eliminated' (Plankers (1999, p.239). Psychic space was thus very restricted. To understand the actual stutter Plankers drew on Anzieu's concept of the sound envelope, which could be defined as a shared space of sound linking infant and primary carer. The stutter, according to Plankers, arose from the projection onto the sound envelope of this 'anal-sadistic object space of the claustrum' (Plankers (1999, p.239). In stuttering both the sound envelope and its contents, i.e. its words, got torn. Plankers linked Mr. A's improvement in speech to his emerging from the claustrum and starting to show an appreciation of the people around him.

**Wilkinson, M. (2001) 'His mother tongue: stuttering to separation, a case study.**

**Mark** was a young adult when he started his analysis with **Wilkinson**, a Jungian analyst. Mark's mother was presented as pathological, which will be explained later in the chapter, who did not want to separate from her son. Predominant features in the analysis for Mark were separating from the object and 'the patient's struggle to "get born" (Wilkinson, 2001,

p. 257). Wilkinson understood the actual stutter predominantly in terms of a regression to the infantile, or in her own words as 'a flight from separateness [which language is closely entwined with]] back to an illusion of [oral] fusion with mother' (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 257). Wilkinson linked an improvement in Mark's speech to becoming separate and emotionally alive.

### **Magnavita, J.J. ( 1998) 'Methods of Restructuring Personality Disorders with Comorbid Syndrome'**

**Magnavita** provided therapy to **Jim**, an adult in his forties, within a short-term psychodynamic framework. Magnavita (1998) was struck by Jim's unawareness of his passive and dependent personality and of his stutter. Magnavita understood the stuttering as a 'barometer of conflict and unacceptable emotion that needed to surface' (Magnavita ,1998, p.81). 'The stuttering had links to buried feeling related to disturbances in early parental relationships and was manifest when he assumed a passive/submissive position in order to avoid conflict' (ibid, p.82). It also seemed to Magnavita that Jim used the stutter as a weapon against his father and wife to punish them. The stutter was thus an expression of unconscious conflict, and was linked with the difficulty of expressing negative emotion.

**Usher, R.D. (1944) 'A case of stammering'**

**Usher**, who worked within a Kleinian framework, started analysis with **Jimmy** when he was 6. Jimmy was cold-shouldered by his father after the birth of his sister. The stutter started when Jimmy, his sister and mother were evacuated during the war, and separated from his father. Usher painted a picture of a boy with a lot of aggressive impulses, with a fragmented and extremely conflicted inner world, who at times tried to exercise rigid control over his emotions. She observed increased stuttering at these moments of rigid control and aggressive impulses, and whenever the aggression was interpreted or released, i.e. through defecation Jimmy's speech improved. Usher observed that for Jimmy words were things. She understood the stutter as the expression of unconscious conflicts, and emphasized the link between the symptom and the ejection of fragments which resulted from his attacks on his objects, for example his 'phantasied bitten-up sister' (Usher, 1944, p. 63).

**Hunt, W.R. (1984) 'The psychology of Stuttering: The Insights of I. Peter Glauber'**

**Hunt**, who went on to become a psychoanalyst, described his experience as a young man, 30 years previously, of being analysed by **Glauber**, who wrote extensively on stuttering from within an ego



psychology perspective. The insights that Hunt gained in this analysis were that the core conflict in stuttering is between the wish to remain in a harmonious state with mother and the wish to become an independent self; a conflict that then infected the speech act. Hunt's speech improved, and he emphasized two factors in particular that contributed to this. He experienced getting better after hearing interpretations from Glauber, which consciously he didn't understand, like 'I [Hunt] felt myself to be my mother's penis' and 'My stuttering was my attempt to bite my way out of my mother's belly'. This suggests the role of unconscious phantasy in the stutter. Hunt also experienced a big improvement in his speech when he 'diagrammed ..[his] psychodynamics on a large piece of paper, showing connections between the different parts'.

**Ablon, S.L. (1988) 'Psychoanalysis of a stuttering boy'.**

In this case study a 5 year-old boy called **John** is analysed by **Ablon**. John's parents divorced when he was around 2 and his parents got married again soon afterwards. John was loving and aggressive to his new half-sister, and had problems when visiting his biological father. Ablon interpreted the stutter in terms of object relations and also referred a lot to the psychosexual framework. He linked John's stuttering to anxiety around his aggression, anal interests and affect relating to separation-his stuttering started when his father did not allow him to see

his mother. Ablon also stressed the role of ego development: 'stuttering both represents and expresses a vulnerability in the development of the early ego's mastery of affects, especially anger, sadness, anxiety and excitement' (Ablon, 1988, p.91).

**Kolansky, H. (1960) 'Treatment of a three-year-old girl's severe infantile neurosis-stammering and insect phobia'**

**Ann's** severe stuttering started when she was three when twin sisters were born and the house was filled with people to visit the twins. During the event Ann remained alone in the corner, and the next day when she woke up she had a stutter that then persisted, presumably closely linked to Ann being displaced by the twins. Ann felt aggressive towards the twins, and the stutter got worse when one of them died. When Ann's anal preoccupations and particularly her anger towards her mother for being abandoned or neglected were interpreted and worked through, this had a significantly positive impact on her speech. She was practically stutter-free by the end of treatment. Kolansky (1960) understood Ann's stuttering as representing oral sadism and anal preoccupations, defence reactions against them, along with a fear of losing mother's love.

**Searl (1927) 'A Case of Stammering in a child'**

This is quite a brief case-study in which Searl analysed a four-year-old boy called **Peter**, which I referred to in the previous chapter. Searl worked within a classical Freudian framework and understood the stutter principally in terms of anal conflicts and these became linked to the mouth and speech through an identification with the grunts of father in coitus. Searl made a clear link between persecutory fears of going to the toilet and castration fears of rivalry with father. I will expand on this link later in this chapter when I discuss the importance of containment.

### **Heilpern, E. (1941) 'A case of stuttering'**

The patient of this case-study was 21 years old when he started analysis, and is referred to throughout as the 'patient'. Heilpern described the stutter as a pregenital conversion neurosis, with a predominantly anal-sadistic character. The source of the neurosis was a witnessing of the primal scene in which noise, sexuality and death were linked; he thought the man was trying to kill his aunt during intercourse; and the immediate cause of the stutter was a loud noise of a toy torpedo busting, and a sadistic sexual impulse towards his cousin. His stutter got a lot worse when his cousin died years later. A fear of loud noises and an emotionally charged auditory sense were associated with the freedom that family circles enjoyed around passing wind, and jokes around anal material. A displacement onto the speech functions at the

anal level of development resulted in the conflict between the impulse to kill through 'anal-sexual' noise of words and the counter-desire to repress this desire in a form of self-punishment. When this interpretation was worked through the last vestiges of resistance broke down and stuttering stopped.

### **Balkanyi (1961) 'Psycho-analysis of a stammering girl'**

Eve, a monosymptomatic patient, was 11 years old when she started analysis with Balkanyi. Eve's stutter and passing wind were closely associated, and both of these meant that she made an impact, which was in contrast to how she felt about words. When Eve had problems expressing herself she passed wind. Eve showed exhibitionist tendencies and displaced pleasure from the anal and genital zones to speech function, but Balkanyi considered these 'to be the motivation of the condition, that is to say its secondary functions' (p.108). Balkanyi's main understanding of stuttering was a deficit in the linking of affect and words in the unconscious. She argued: 'Stammering is an independent pathological entity. It is the dysfunction of the preconscious; the dysfunction of moulding affects into words' (p.108).

The case studies were explored with a view to finding out the predominant features pertaining to the object relational world of

analysands who stutter. Certain themes emerged that had salience across the case studies, namely separation issues and/or a sense of fusion between the stutterer and the mother/analyst; severe aggression or anger that was split off or dissociated; omnipotence, attacks on linking and a problem with tolerating emotion. The findings allowed me to build up an argument and a hypothesis about stuttering, namely an attack on linking and a problem with container-contained.

### **Separation issues and/or Fusion**

Although in a few of the case studies working within a classical Freudian framework separation issues were not mentioned, it was an important theme generally in these case-studies and other psychoanalytic literature on stuttering (Glauber, 1982; Plankers, 1999; Hunt, 1984; Magnavita, 1998; Wilkinson, 2001; Albon, 1988; and Kolansky, 1960). Ann, the child analysand of Kolansky, sobbed and trembled when she was reunited with her mum after an unexpected separation at the clinic of the analyst (Kolansky, 1960). Ablon's analysand John experienced prominent stuttering during separations in the analysis, and his stuttering had started when his father threatened not to allow him to go back to his mother. Klaniczay (2000) referred to the stutterer as being frustrated in clinging.

What was striking across some of these case studies was the pathological nature of the relationship with the object (Hunt, 1984; Plankers, 1999; Wilkinson, 2001; Magnavita, 1998). Hunt (1984), for example, wrote about the fusion with his girlfriend in this way: 'This experience of intense closeness could easily slide over into an experience of the woman as cloying, controlling and suffocating' (p.467). In fact the analysand was forbidden by Glauber to move in with his girlfriend, as the analyst felt there would not be a separate individual to analyse (Hunt, 1984). Mark, the analysand of Wilkinson (2001), found it difficult to separate from his mother and this is poignantly described in a dream about her:

She seemed to be having something drawn off. It seemed as if she had a scrotum and it was fluid from there....Whatever was in there had to be drawn off... She was dead but it was something I'd got to do before I could get free of her. (ibid, p.264).

In the dream Mark seemed to be experiencing himself as a part of his mother, who he had to extract himself from physically. Wilkinson (2001) understands the dilemma presented in the dream in this way: 'on the one hand he needed to get born, that is get his life away from her, on the other hand his attempts to separate felt doomed to failure because of the insistence on sameness [i.e. his mother having a scrotum] which had been such a feature of their relationship' (p.264).

The lack of boundaries between Mark and his mother/analyst was also reflected in the counter transference. Wilkinson (2001) stated:

‘Boundaries seemed non-existent and it was as if I became the mother with whom he was symbiotically fused’ (p. 261). Wilkinson (Ibid) argued that Mark wanted fusion at all costs, even to the cost of self.

This lack of boundaries also came across very strongly in the transference of Mr. A. His analyst, Plankers, experienced Mr. A. as wanting to enclose him in an ‘anal claustrum’, in which problems between self and object were eliminated and people were thus stripped of their individuality (Plankers, 1999). I will elaborate on this case study later.

Although I do not want to argue that people with a stutter are necessarily autistic, the type of fusion presented in these case studies bears many similarities with the relationship between mother and an autistic child as described by Tustin. Tustin, in a letter to Korbivcher, stated: ‘I now realise that a sense of fusion and non-differentiation between mother and baby is an abnormal situation even in early infancy.....For an infant in this situation awareness of bodily separateness from the mother comes traumatically. It is unbearable. It is felt as a ‘hole’ (Korbivcher, 2014, p. 12). This seems to resonate with Mark, Mr. A. and Hunt in which they all experienced their relating with their object in an almost physical way. Glauber, a psychoanalyst who

wrote extensively on stuttering in the 1950's, wrote something similar to Tustin in relation to the mother of a stutterer, who he argued, 'felt [the child] to be an integral part of her own body -an organ as it were' (Glauber, 1982, p.39)

This 'symbiotic fusion' (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 257) between mother and stuttering child does not necessarily derive from a collusion with a pathological mother as was argued by Glauber. Fusion could also be the result of envy and the difficulty for a child to be dependent on its primary object. I will elaborate on this later in the chapter. Later in the chapter I will also refer to the problem with container-contained. In brief, this could be described as the process by which experiences are given psychic existence by the primary carer. A problem with this process impedes the development of a mind and of a self that can manage experiences, and thus problematizing separation.

## **Omnipotence**

Although omnipotence did not seem to be as prevalent across the data set as fusion, it still played an important role in some of the cases (Usher, 1944; Wilkinson, 2001; Plankers, 1999 and Magnavita, 1998), and it was a facet of people with a stutter emphasized in the secondary literature on stuttering (Glauber, 1982; Barbara, 1958; Perkins, 1965). In an identification of omnipotence as a theme I was guided primarily by an



understanding of this concept as 'a defensive maneuver the ego may use to deal with a feeling of helplessness or angry frustration' (Beiser, 1979, p.114). It is characterized by such features as 'overestimation' (Fuxe, 1938, p.505), denial of reality and with magical components (Glauber, 1982).

Usher's analysand Jimmy, a young boy of 6, was focused throughout the case study on maintaining omnipotent control over both his inner and outer objects (Usher, 1944). This was exemplified by a dialogue between Jimmy and the analyst:

I had you inside me in pieces and you tickled my tummy, so I had to go to the doctor and that's why I'm late.' I asked him what the doctor did; he replied: 'He cut my tummy open to get you out. He kept me in hospital. Now you throw me the cushion and I'll hit it back to you.' When I [Usher] remarked: 'You want to throw me out', he answered: 'Daddy came and made you all right again, so you aren't in pieces anymore' (p.63).

Here Jimmy is showing how in phantasy he could control and repair his objects. This almost complete control over his objects was also strongly reflected in the case-study of Mr. A. I have already mentioned his destructive omnipotent phantasy of enclosing his analyst in an anal claustrum, a feature I will discuss in depth later. Mr. A. did not have a close relationship with anyone; his siblings, for example, he only saw in terms of rivals.

Omnipotent control over the object, which alternates with submission to the object (Eigen, 1985), came across strongly in the case study of Wilkinson. Mark, her analysand, 'longed to surrender' to a religious community, and at a later stage had a fantasy of controlling an orchestra, which the analyst interpreted as a desire to control her and the sounds she made. In the countertransference Wilkinson 'felt like a victim sometimes and at others as if a dictatorship were being forced upon me' (Wilkinson, 2001, p.262). When he was separating from the analyst Wilkinson states that this took the form of omnipotence 'as he sought to separate from 'mother', that is his internalized mother, mother church and 'mother' analyst all at once' (p. 263), and leaving the vulnerable child behind in the room.

Submission to the object and denial of self was also a feature in In the case-study of Jim, a client of Magnavita (Magnavita, 1998). Jim was dominated and humiliated by his father and wife. His wife chained the bedroom door one morning when he went for a shower and called him 'sick' when he decided to go to therapy. As therapy progressed he began to wonder how he had 'swallowed' all the 'stuff' from his father and how he had been a 'slave'. At the beginning of therapy Magnavita was very surprised by the extent that his patient Jim was so unaware of his personality and the effects of his stutter.

The importance of omnipotence in relation to persons with a stutter was expressed elsewhere in the psychoanalytic literature. Glauber, who was the analyst of Hunt, maintained that stutterers were merged with 'magical omnipotent mothers', and have a strong oral identification with them (Glauber, 1982, p. 38). Perkins (1965) and Barbara (1958) likewise stressed its importance. 'He [the person with a stutter] preserves his symbolic self with an all-powerful fantasied identity composed of what he dreams he could be' because the stutterer has a belief that he is nothing (Perkins, 1965)). Barbara (1958) stated that for stutterers the shoulds pertaining to an idealized self were more important than who they were with their faults. The stutterer 'evaluates poorly what he is feeling as well as what he is doing, what he is capable of feeling as well as what he is capable of doing' (Barbara, 1958, p.114). This denial of reality was a predominant feature in the case of Mark, who, according to his analyst Wilkinson, wanted fusion with the object at all costs, even at the cost of self.

### **Inhibition with underlying aggression**

Another important theme that emerged in the case studies was inhibition which was typically accompanied by a lot of underlying anger or aggression. Plankers (1999), Magnavita (1998), Wilkinson (2001), Usher (1944), Ablon (1988), and Kolansky (1960) emphasize the inhibited

nature of their stuttering clients in relationships. Mr A., the analysand of Plankers, was extremely inhibited in his relationship with his analyst, but this was accompanied in his dreams by an underlying world full of extreme aggression and hatred. There was such a contrast between these two states that Plankers wrote 'viewed from the outside [i.e. from a position outside of the consulting room] it seemed impossible that it should be he [Mr. A.] who was unfolding this destroyed world' (Plankers, 1999, p. 249). Mark, the analysand of Wilkinson, was also very submissive in his relationship with his mother and analyst. His dreams and fantasies, in contrast, contained a lot of violence. When he was becoming more separate he had violent fantasies about Auschwitz and sticking a knife in the back of the analyst (Wilkinson, 2001)

This inhibition accompanied by underlying aggression found expression in other ways. Ann, the 3 year-old analysand of Kolansky, experienced unconsciously a lot of anger towards her mother and newborn twins. She was very inhibited in her play and found the mixing of one type of food with another unbearable (Kolansky, 1960). The 6 year-old analysand of Usher likewise could only express himself at times in very rigid geometrical shapes or staccato movements when experiencing aggression (Usher, 1944). It seems that if there wasn't a very strict inhibition, emotions can be overwhelming. When Kolansky's young analysand started to use finger paints, she became less inhibited.

However, this led to her becoming so aggressive that her parents subsequently turned to psychiatric help (Kolansky, 1960).

### **Fear of causing harm**

I think Melanie Klein's thinking around inhibition due to the anxiety provoked by aggressive impulses causing harm to the object seems a useful way to understand a lot of aggression and the inhibited relationships in the present case studies. Magnavita's stuttering client had a fear of exploding in his relationships (Magnavita, 1998). Kolansky also links the stuttering of a young girl, Ann, to repressed anger towards younger twins in the family, and when one of the twins died Ann's speech became 'markedly mutilated, and she could barely be understood' (Kolansky, 1960, p.264). Kolansky, in his words, compared this situation to that described by Leonard (1956). A 'two-and-a-half-year-old girl could not walk after the healing of a tibial fracture healed', and this inhibition of walking was interpreted as a way 'to prevent the child from getting to her baby brother and hurting him' (Kolansky, 1960, p. 282). This defensive measure resonates with the stuttered speech of an analysand of Eigen (2011), who feared his words would kill the other, and also with Fenichel (1933), who as I mentioned in the previous chapter, argued that the stutter was a form of castration for wishing to kill the listener. On one occasion in the play of Jimmy, the analysand of Usher, he 'strapped down [his

parents], not only to prevent them from copulation but also to protect them from his own aggressive attacks by flatus' (Usher, 1944, p.62). His remarks were accompanied by an access of stuttering, suggesting the disturbance of his aggressive actions.

### **Freud's case study of Frau Emmy**

I think the linking of speech problems and the fear of causing harm is a useful way to understand the clacking and stuttering of Frau Emmy, one of the subjects of Freud's case histories (Freud, 1955). She had a protective mantra 'Keep still!—Don't say anything!-Don't touch me (Freud, 1955). Under hypnosis she explained to Freud that the phrase "Keep still!" came from the belief that if anyone moved when she was having frightening thoughts like animal shapes everything would get worse. Her clacking with tongue started when she forbade herself from making a noise while sitting with someone who was ill and involuntarily she made a noise, and her stuttering started after she had forbidden herself to make a noise when the horses were startled in order not to disturb the coachman who was trying to control them (Freud, 1955). Frau Emmy came across as defenceless against her own mind and felt the need to protect herself and others from it. Freud explained the clacking and the stuttering in terms of a mnemonic symbol that were the remnants of the traumatic event in which Frau Emmy's mind did the

opposite of what she didn't want, i.e. not make a noise. Strongly implicit in this is the danger posed by the mind. This sense of a precarious mind, I think, has links to a lack of containment implicit in stuttering, which is an argument that I will develop later in this chapter.

### **Elective mutism**

Elective mutism and stuttering have obvious parallels, in that there is an inhibition in speech. Here I just want to exemplify how those suffering from elective mutism exhibit these phenomena of locked away hate and aggression and the fear of the impact of that on others, which I am arguing are significant features of those with a stutter. Yanof (1996) wrote about an analysand with elective mutism who had an extremely aggressive inner figure that could only be destroyed by a tornado that blasted the figure to outer space, that is to a place where it could not impact others. There is both a very strong desire to kill off the other, and to defend against that. I think the opposite of this can be seen in Danon-Boileau's case study of a boy with elective mutism (Danon-Boileau, 2001). His improvement of language cohered with developing a relationship with the therapist and through a range of aggressive insults. One could speculate that by being able to throw nasty insults at the therapist he had overcome his fear and anxiety of harming the therapist,

and that the aggression necessary for development of language and for relationships had thus been integrated or contained.

### **Direct link between actual stutter and aggressive impulses or rigid control**

In the case-studies about people with a stutter a direct link was made by the authors between the actual stutter and aggressive impulses or rigid control of emotions. Increased stuttering was observed when Usher's analysand rigidly controlled his play and with Frau Emmy's attempt to control her speech. It was also noticed that with increased anxiety which accompanied an increased awareness of aggressive impulses, anger or feeling of being bad, there was increased stuttering\_ (Wilkinson,2001; Usher 1944; Magnavita 1998; Ablon,1988; and Kolansky, 1960).

Magnavita (1998) held that his client's stuttering surged when 'his unacknowledged anger toward his father, authority figures, and his wife threatened to surface' (p.82). When Mark, the analysand of Wilkinson, was becoming aware of his separate self he said that he was afraid of being close to the analyst as he feared sticking a knife in her, and this was accompanied by increased stuttering. In Wilkinson's own words: 'As he [Mark] alternated more frequently between moments of an idealized fusion and moments where he sought to be separate, his stammer reasserted itself more intensely' (Wilkinson, 2001, p265). The close link



between hidden anger and a stutter reveals itself in the following

dialogue between Magnavita and his client Jim:

CLIENT: This morning I left the house, actually I took a shower and I went to get some clothes and I see that she had put a chain on the door. I'm blown away by all of this. [the patient's wife had installed a chain on their bedroom door]

THERAPIST: How did you react?

CLIENT: I was angry [no sign of anger—voice monotone body limp]

THERAPIST: You were angry? [therapist underscores the affect with raised voice]

CLIENT: Yeah, but I didn't want to say anything because it was early morning and everybody was asleep. When I think about it, it's all part of her game. How does she put it? I'm irrational (stutters).

THERAPIST: Now, see what happens?

CLIENT: I stutter, nerves.

THERAPIST: You were nervous, but what is underneath that anxiety?

CLIENT: Anger. Because I'm not . . . It's just a blatant lie. The thing is she wants to hang (stutter) it [marital dysfunction] on me.

THERAPIST: Okay, but you see there is anger there?

CLIENT: Certainly, there's anger, it's stupid.

THERAPIST: So how do you experience that anger toward her?

CLIENT: I feel tension (stutters). I feel tight.

THERAPIST: You see how when you repress the anger, it goes into anxiety and then comes out as stuttering. (Magnavita, 1998, p.81)

## **Containment**

Bion remarked on these two features of a person with a stutter, namely excessive emotion or scant emotion. On the one hand, Bion stated, 'the words that should have represented the meaning the man [with a stutter] wanted to express were fragmented by the emotional forces to which he wished to give only verbal expression; and on the other hand the man with the stutter 'in his attempts to avoid the contingency I have described resorted to modes of expression so boring that they failed to express the

meaning he wished to convey. He was thus no nearer to his goal' (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.94). In the first situation the container is fragmented because of excess emotion, and in the second situation emotion is not available because the container is too rigid. This excess emotion could be positive as well as negative emotion. Research done on the functioning of the autonomic nervous system of children with a stutter found that, in contrast to children with no stutter, children with a stutter had difficulties in regulating physiological states when faced with challenges and revealed a greater use of the sympathetic nervous system, which is linked, for example, to the fight or flight response, when watching and speaking about a video that induced positive emotions rather than negative emotions (Jones et al. , 2014)

Understanding libidinal impulses (loving as well as hating) and rigid control in stuttering from the perspective of containment adds the dimension as to whether there is the capacity for the emotion to be known and understood by the mind. This relates to the thinking of Klein in which she stated that the anxiety of causing harm to the object because of aggressive impulses impacted negatively on symbol formation. Klein's analysis of Dick in 'Symbol-Formation in the development of the Ego' exemplified this. Because of anxiety surrounding aggressive impulses Dick lacked a symbolic relationship to reality and took refuge 'in the phantasies of the dark, empty vague

womb' (Klein, 1930, p. 227), which has obvious similarities to Mr. A's refuge in the maternal anal claustrum to be discussed later. Being able to symbolize gives an experience meaning and a proper psychic existence, which is to say it makes it into a manageable experience. Ablon wrote about something similar and understood the stutter in terms of 'a vulnerability in the development of the early ego's mastery of affects, especially anger, sadness, anxiety and excitement' (Ablon, 1988, p.91). This capacity to know and contain emotions is dependent on the depressive position, that is to say the capacity to relate with whole objects (Bion, 1954), and for emotions and aggressive impulses to be accepted (Rosenfeld, 2001). Later in this chapter I will draw extensively on the case-studies to argue that the stutter improved when emotions could be known and contained.

### **Bion's contributions**

In this next section of this chapter I would like to make a detailed analysis of Plankers' case study on Mr. A. This is partly because it has a clear exposition of the phenomena of merging, omnipotence, inhibition in relating and extreme aggression, and thus making it a comprehensive account of the themes that are salient in psychoanalytic case studies involving people with a stutter. Perhaps more importantly, however, this case study really helped me to appreciate the value of Bion's thinking,

whilst not forgetting the thinking of Melanie Klein, in understanding the object relational world of people who stutter. Through a process of theoretical sampling I was then able to extrapolate from the case-study of Mr. A. and make sense of phenomena from the other case studies on people with a stutter. This shift in emphasis from a Kleinian perspective could be expressed in the words of Nemas as she discussed Bion's contributions, which she argued 'have deep roots in Kleinian developments on object relations, but, at the same time, have an originality that marks a new way of thinking about human bonds in which thinking and verbal thought are basic' (Nemas, 2017, p.42). The case study of Mr. A. portrayed how this capacity to think, or to link at an unconscious level can be attacked.

Before putting forward an argument that Bion's thinking is useful in understanding the case study of Mr. A. and also other case studies, it is important that I give the background information on some of the key elements of Bion's thinking that I intend to apply to the case studies. This background information will include a discussion of attacks on linking, envy, container-contained, and ego destructive superego.

### **Attacks on linking**

Bion's concept of attacks on linking is a useful tool when doing an analysis of the case-study of Mr. A. This is a concept that has its roots in

Melanie Klein's thinking around attacks on the breast, and which for Bion referred to 'the destructive attacks which the patient makes on anything which is felt to have the function of linking one object with another' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017, p.3). The destructive attack does not need a lot of noise; it can find expression in a 'silent poisoning way' (Abel-Hirsch, 2020) The original attack is on the parental couple or the primal scene (Plankers, 1999). For Vermote they are attacks on 'the stream of waking dream thought or unconscious, creative, automatic linking' (Vermote, 2017, p.85). This is a state of mind in which there is an 'implicit hatred of emotion and the need to avoid awareness of it' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017, p.8). Bion made this hatred of emotion clear in his account of a disturbance between infant and primary carer, in which emotional complications can be split off:

This split, enforced by starvation and fear of death through starvation on the one hand, and by love and the fear of associated murderous envy and hate on the other produces a state in which the patient greedily pursues every form of material comfort; he is at once insatiable and implacable in his pursuit of satiation. Since this state originates in a need to be rid of the emotional complications of awareness of life, and a relationship with live objects, the patient appears to be incapable of gratitude or concern either for himself or other (Bion, 1962/1983b, p. 11).

Thus, to survive, the infant needs to attack a psychic link with the primary carer, which is potentially the source of emotional development.

Bion developed this concept in his work with schizophrenics and articulated it in his paper 'Attacks on linking' (1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017). One client, Bion felt, was on the verge of agreeing something about his personality in a conversation with Bion, but what came out instead was a severe stutter. Bion perceived this as an attack on linking with the analyst. Another example from this same paper was a patient who Bion thought was feeling understood by the analyst; however, this experience was subsequently 'split up, converted into particles of sexual abuse and ejected' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017, p.6). Emotional connections with an object were thus not tolerated.

It's important to emphasize that Bion hypothesized that the schizophrenic did not just attack content but rather 'attacked his own mind' (Aguayo, 2009, p.80). Bion stated that parts of the personality that could be aware of reality could be split and expelled along with the content (Bion, 1957), which Walker and Hinshelwood (2018) described as a depletion of a specific part of the ego-function. In the development of this concept Bion is partly drawing on the adaptations which Freud described as necessary to respond to the demands of reality:

All the functions which Freud described as being, at a later stage, a developmental response to the reality principle, that is to say, consciousness of sense impressions, attention, memory, judgement, thought, have brought against them, in such inchoate

forms as they may possess at the outset of life, the sadistic splitting eviscerating attacks that lead to their being minutely fragmented and then expelled from the personality to penetrate, or encyst, the objects (Bion, 1957, p.268).

These attacks on linking problematize and compromise awareness of reality and what Bion referred to as transformations in K, for example from beta elements to alpha elements. Later, I will enlarge on beta elements, and also describe an inner object, namely an ego destructive superego, by which Bion later in his thinking conceptualized these attacks (Vermote, 2017)

## **Envy**

Envy plays an important part in the thinking of Bion. For example, in his analysis of the clinical examples in 'Attacks on linking' envy appeared frequently- for example 'envy for the parental state of mind' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017, p.8) and 'I [Bion] said he [the analysand] felt so envious of himself and me for being able to work together' (Ibid, p.7). Bion draws on Klein in his understanding of the destructiveness of envy. Klein expresses it in this way:

'Envy not only seeks to rob . . . , but also to put badness, primarily bad excrements and bad parts of the self, into the mother, and first of all into her breast, in order to spoil and destroy her. In the deepest sense this means destroying her creativeness.' (Klein, 1957/1997, p.181).

It is important to emphasize that this is an attack on the *good* object; in his summary of Klein Hinshelwood stated, 'Primary envy is an innate aggression and sadism towards the good object or their good attributes, as opposed to the more paranoid aggression towards bad objects that seem threatening to the object (Hinshelwood, 1991, p.173). This points to a disturbed relationship with the primary carer, strongly suggesting the inability to tolerate dependence on the object and to take it in. As Nemas pointed out Bion extends the reach of envy from attacks on an object to attacks on the links that connect objects (Nemas, 2017, p.42), or to express this in Bion's own words: 'Envy precludes a commensal relationship' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.96), by which he means envy makes a mature link between objects impossible.

### **Container-contained**

Container-contained is a factor of a broader concept of Bion's, namely alpha-function. Alpha-function can be described as 'the psychic process by which undigested facts (conscious experience) are transformed into emotional thoughts', or alpha elements (Brown, 2013, p. 11). Alpha function derives from Freud's notion of dream-work (Ibid), and when the emotional thoughts are formed they are then capable of being constructed into a dream.



Conceptualization of the relationship between container and contained has roots in Melanie Klein's thinking around projective identification, an acknowledgement Bion made in his paper 'Attacks on linking' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017). Melanie Klein emphasized the pathological nature of projective identification, a process in which there is an excessive use of splitting and projection into another. An important modification Bion made to projective identification is to propose it as the earliest form of communication of the infant to the mother.

Through this tool the infant projects distress, along with part of his ego-functioning into the primary carer. If the primary carer is receptive to this distress it is transformed through her reverie, or alpha functioning, and this makes the emotional experience more digestible by the infant when it is re-introjected, along with the 'lost ego-function' (Walker and Hinshelwood, 2018, p.177). Bion's thinking on container-contained has echoes in an earlier article in which Bion stated that for the formation of a thought there needed to be a 'balanced introjection and projection' (Bion, 1957, p. 269).

It is important to emphasize that container-contained is dependent on contact with emotion in order for there to be a proper psychic and containing experience. 'Thus conjoined or permeated or both [by

emotion] they [container-contained] change in a manner usually described as growth. When disjoined or denuded of emotion they diminish in vitality, that is, approximate to inanimate objects' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.90).

However, some emotions, like envy, are not compatible with growth. In a much-quoted example, Bion stated that the feeling that the infant wants to communicate, for example the fear of dying, could be projected with feelings of envy into the breast. As a result 'the breast is felt enviously to remove the good or valuable element in the fear of dying and force the worthless residue back into the infant' (ibid, p.96).

The contact point between the container and the contained can also be disturbed by either too much emotion, or the container can be too constraining. Bion referred to this contact point as the contact-barrier which establishes 'contact between conscious and unconscious and the selective passage of elements from one to the other' (Bion, 1983b, p.17). Associated with the contact-barrier are alpha elements which create what could be described as 'reflective space' (Hinshelwood, 1994), and are capable of being used to contain and to link. If there is a problem with the contact-barrier mental phenomena 'might [for example] overwhelm the patient's awareness that he is talking to a friend' or conversely his 'awareness that he is talking to a

friend...[might] overwhelm his phantasies' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.15). In the first case too much emotion or phantasy is brought to the relationship, and in the second there is concrete thinking without emotional resonance, and both inhibit a potential space for reflection.

Bion makes a fundamental distinction between a container-contained relationship in which a psychic link is implied and a container-contained as an inanimate configuration. The latter Bion referred to as a parasitic mode of container-contained, which is described by Cartwright in this way:

In the parasitic mode the creative union between container-contained and its asymmetrical qualities cannot be tolerated and the configuration is annexed so that real exchange between objects is compressed or denuded of meaning through destructive attacks against the container or contained (Cartwright, 2010, pp.144-145).

I think this has roots in Bion's thinking regarding a disturbed relationship between the mother and infant. Since the infant needs to survive and continue feeding despite the disturbance, 'a split between material and psychical satisfaction begins' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.10). This split ensued because in a situation that 'stimulates love and gratitude' feelings of fear, hate and envy are so feared that steps are taken to destroy awareness of all feelings, although that is indistinguishable from taking life itself '(ibid, p.10). Bion continues: 'Envy aroused by a breast that provides love, understanding, experience and wisdom, poses a problem

that is solved by destruction of alpha-function' (ibid, p.11). That is to say at this early age there is an incapacity to tolerate ambivalence, namely love and hate/envy. This fundamentally changes the relationship between the mother and infant, between container and contained. Instead of looking to the container for psychological satisfactions 'the need for love, understanding and mental development is now deflected ... into the search for material comforts' (ibid, p.11). I think this implies that instead of the potential for psychic growth, which leads to separation and individuation, through mother's reverie and within a container-contained relationship, the infant's connection with the mother remained experienced as if in the physical realm. This problem with containment inhibits development of symbol formation in which there is a distinction between object and symbol.

This resonates with the Real in Lacan's thinking; and Amir, using Lacan's framework, referred to an analysand for whom nausea retains a physical link to the mother. Amir states: 'Nausea..enacted an attack on any type of linking, a shackling to the traumatic Real which tells no story and wants to hear no story' (Amir, 2014, p.121). I will make the argument later that a stutter is experienced as retaining a physical connection to the mother rather than language serving the function of a proper symbolic representation and communication.

Bion's understanding of container-contained is not just regarding the containment of the primary carer/infant dyad. Experiences of this process of containment by the carer/container allow the development of the infant's own thoughts and alpha functioning, or an internalized container-contained apparatus, which Britton referred to as the function of the ego that 'contains and processes internal experience as it arises in the individual' (Britton, 2003, p.72).

Container-contained can also refer to the relationship between words and meaning, and even larger relationships such as the historical one between the established church and the new ideas that Jesus brought (Bion, 1970/1983a). Hinshelwood referred to it as a 'reflective space' where emotional linking can take place (Hinshelwood, 1994).

### **K and minus K**

K, or knowledge, is as much a fundamental link between objects as love and hate (Bion, 1962/1983b). I think this implies that there exists for Bion along with a libidinal and death drive a drive for knowledge, or for awareness of reality. Bion stressed that K was a process, a getting to know, and was evident whenever there was growth in the container-contained relationship (Bion, 1983b). In contrast to this minus K was associated with a 'wilfully misunderstanding object' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.117), namely an ego destructive superego.

## **Ego destructive superego**

An ego destructive superego is a further conceptualization of Bion's concept of attacks on linking (Vermote, 2017) It is a 'kind of murderous superego that is opposite to a containing function, or good internal breast' (Vermote, 2017, p.77), and which Bion described as 'a phantasy of an internal object potentially destroying psychic order' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017). Britton (2003) described it as 'an internal object opposed to the ego's development and creativity which nevertheless occupies the status in the internal world that the police and judiciary do in the external world' (p.118). Nemas gave an example of this attack on the mind: as soon as a creative link between Nemas and one of her analysands might appear, which would help the analysand to think about her omnipotence, for example, this link with the analyst was attacked by a part of her analysand's personality, namely an ego destructive superego, as the analysand experienced the link as the 'submission to a tyrannical owner' (Nemas, 2017, p.48). Bion wrote about new developments in analysis being attacked as if they 'were a rival to be destroyed' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.98). Bion also wrote about the difficulty of facing integration for fear of this severe superego (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017), which echoes the Kleinian formulation of a fear of the combined parental couple.

There can also be less pathological inner objects (Britton, 2003) and (Anzieu, 1979). Both Britton and Anzieu refer to states of mind in which the patient can't hear even though the actual hearing is physically sound. These patients thus have restricted ego function and do not have the extent of the loss of contact with reality that Bion's psychotic patients have in 'Attacks on linking'. The distinctions that Britton made between his clients and those that Bion refer to in 'Attacks on linking' are that Britton's clients were menaced by a hostile superego, but did not identify with it (Britton, 2003). He went on to say that:

It is as if [their] superego is modelled on a parent whose loving care can encompass the very earliest stages of infancy but whose continuing love is complicated by envy of the child's personal capacities and, when there is separate development, creativity (Britton, 2003, p.120).

This is important in the present research because I am not making the argument that people with a stutter are psychotic, and I am aware that I am referring to processes that Bion developed in his work with schizophrenics. I will discuss the problem of where to situate people with a stutter within Bion's thinking in the next paragraph. I am also aware that some of the patients in the case-studies I cite appear to be quite disturbed, and the fact they had analysis indicates they had underlying problems. This was an important motivation for carrying out empirical research. I wanted to explore whether there was support or not for a

hypothesis about stuttering, namely that this indicated a problem with containment, in a non-clinical population.

Before presenting my argument that Bion's thinking is useful in understanding the case study of Mr. A. and the material from other case studies on people with a stutter as well as the mechanism of the actual stutter, I would like to make some preliminary comments on an apparent discrepancy between a discussion of a schizophrenic, on whom Bion based his understanding of attacks on linking and an ego destructive superego, and a person with a stutter. In 'Attacks on linking' Bion was referring to clients who were seriously disturbed and who needed to work hard to maintain a grip on what is real (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017). Therefore, classifying people with schizophrenia and people with a stutter together does not seem justified, and it might be argued that a juxtaposition should mean that there is a higher prevalence of stuttering among psychotics. However, there seems to be no empirical evidence for that (Freund, 1955). However, Bion argues that it is useful to consider psychosis and stuttering together. Both disorders are manifestations of the 'same configuration' and can 'illuminate' each other: This is the full quotation:

In fact the descriptions of the psychotic patient as having a speech disorder and stammering as being psychotic both have substance, and in both eccentricity depends on the vertex, 'Stammer' and 'psychosis' are vertices displaying the same configuration in a



manner that illuminates characteristics just as binocular vision demonstrates qualities that require stereoscopy to make them manifest (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.43).

The link between the two phenomena can be understood, I think, within the context of Bion's argument, which echoes the argument of Segal, that powers of expression and personality/emotional development have a mutual impact on each other, in that 'emotions..serve.. to develop ability for well-chosen speech and that capacity for speech ...help..... emotional development' (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.96). Bion seemed to be making the link between a person who stutters, as an example of a person lacking powers of expression, and the kind of primitive mental functioning associated with psychosis

While Bion is not being entirely clear, his bringing together of stuttering and psychosis suggest that for a person with a stutter there is a threat of fragmentation or psychic disunity (Barbara et al., 1961). However, this does not overwhelm the person as in psychosis. I think what Sloate writes about psychosomatic patients might be relevant here: 'some aspects of the ego may develop in pseudo-normal fashion, while others-the terrors of hostile aggression and object loss...are split off' (Sloate, 2016, p. 225). Wilkinson (2001), for example, argued that Mark uses his stutter to prevent awareness of both his hatred for his mother and of his separation from her.

It could be argued that people with a stutter are able to defend against the threat of inner fragmentation because the attacks are not so intense as people suffering from psychosis. Following this line of thinking the person with a stutter does not fully meet the four preconditions to be labeled as psychotic, namely 'hatred of reality', 'preponderance of destructive impulses', 'a dread of imminent annihilation' and 'a premature and precipitate formation of object relations' (Bion, 1957, p.266). Rather than the intense attacks on linking leading to a loss of contact with reality as found in psychosis, in stuttering the attacks could be less intense and/or the person with a stutter hasn't had good enough experiences of containment, i.e there is a deficit.

Rosenfeld's concept of 'psychotic islands' could also be relevant here (Rosenfeld, 2001). By 'psychotic islands' Rosenfeld meant destructive impulses that have not been contained and are reinforced by frustrating experiences and which become lodged in specific body parts. This would put the person with a stutter on a similar level to Britton's client, for whom I have mentioned there was an attack on hearing rather than a more generalized disturbance in relation to reality as found in patients in 'Attacks on linking'.

### **The case-study of Mr. A.**

Turning to the case study of Mr. A. Plankers, his analyst, commented that there was a profound split between Mr. A's strong intent not to enter into a relationship with him, and the violent content of Mr. A.'s dreams and transference, which at the same time gave an indication that he was in 'no way indifferent to or remote from any object relationship' (Plankers, 1999, p. 249). Plankers thought that his analysand's stutter played an important role in avoiding this emotional connection with him; it was through the stutter and a speech that lacked in musicality that Mr. A. raised a 'barrier to any real experience with me [the analyst]'.

Drawing on Britton, Plankers argued how Mr. A. split off any connection between meaning and experience. Plankers 'found this concept of splitting helpful in understanding how in...[their ]contact Mr A. severed every connection to a meaningful basis for...[their] discussions' (Plankers, 1999, p.246). Plankers continued: 'Neither within nor outside the transference was he ever able either to think about an object that he was experiencing or to experience an object that he was thinking about' (Ibid, p.246). He referred to people as things, and would talk about pieces of art that he collected in such a way that the analyst did not know what they meant to him.

### **Attacks on linking**

Bion would describe the splitting between experience and meaning as attacks on linking. 'He [Mr.A.] expected objective explanatory statements from me [the analyst]: he felt we ought to discuss things that did not directly concern us without any introduction of subjective experiences.' (ibid, p.246). Whenever there were sessions in which Mr. A. felt understood, the following sessions were doom-laded and he would talk, for example, of his friend who had testicular cancer or had dreams about the area where analysis took place as being bombed. Plankers came to understand this as Mr. A. staging the negative response, so as to kill off any aliveness in the sessions. I think Mr. A. wanted to retain an experience of a physical link with the primary object, with the 'grey, cold and rejecting atmosphere of his parents' house' (ibid, p.247). Ultimately, Plankers states, 'through this special kind of transference relation Mr A was seeking to destroy *in me* everything that connected me with others, that is he wanted to make me into a *dweller* of...[an] anal *claustrum*. (ibid, p.249).

### **The claustrum**

The claustrum is a concept that Plankers borrows from Meltzer, and summarizing, Plankers understood it is an 'intrusive form of projective identification .... which helps parts of the self to penetrate internal

objects and form an identificatory relationship with them.’ (ibid, p.241). This intrusive identification ‘gives rise to a claustrophobic experiential world in which all obstacles that are encountered between self and object must be eliminated.’ (ibid, p. 239)

Mr. A’s phantasy of the claustrum seems to be the expression of the connection, which Vermote (2017) makes with regards to psychotics, between an ego destructive superego and an omnipotent phantasy. The ego destructive superego ‘strips everything of any meaning’ (ibid, p. 82) and this ‘go[es] hand in hand’ with a defensive omnipotent phantasy.

## **Envy**

A very dominant theme in this case study was Mr. A’s envy. Plankers (1997) described this primarily in regards to Mr.A’s envy of siblings. The first dream that Mr. A. recounted during analysis was Mr. A. fighting with the analyst’s son in the house of the analyst. Plankers argued that Mr. A’s ‘intrusive identification with areas of the mother's body served as an attack both on the siblings *and* on the parents' relationship, which might be a source of intolerable rivals. Mr A was able to tolerate the situation in so far as he had brought the parents' relationship under his control’ (Plankers, 1997, p.248).

However, I think that envy is more widely manifest in this material than just envy of siblings. I think that envy in the case study of Mr. A. can be linked to the severe superego and the phantasy of the destructiveness of the attacks on linking described above. On one occasion when Mr. A. had seen patients waiting he assumed they were all waiting to see his analyst and later 'he compared the analysis with the Warsaw ghetto, 'in which people wait for others to die so they can rip out their gold teeth' (Ibid, p.248). I think this is a good description of the ego destructive superego mentioned above, that is the 'envious stripping away or denudation of all good', which 'degenerates to nullity' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p 97). The pervasiveness of envy can also be seen when Mr. A. saw the analyst outside the consulting room and he mistakenly mistook Plankers' long blonde haired daughter for the analyst's son (Plankers, 1999). This indicates that it is not just an envy of siblings, but that envy can actually lead to an attack on the perceptual apparatus.

Envy and attack on linking is related to the thinness of Mr. A's object relating. Klein argues that envy contributes to the infant's difficulties in building up his good object, for he feels the gratification of which he was deprived has been kept for itself by the breast that frustrated him' (Klein, 1957/1997, p.180). Plankers makes the point that for Mr. A. his mother as an object didn't exist, and I think the analyst didn't exist for him either in any real way, at least not for a long time

during analysis (Plankers, 1999). Mr. A. likened the analytic undertaking to building a house, and Plankers states: 'It was important to him to build the house alone; I was to have the role neither of labourer, nor architect, nor of any kind of helper in this "confusion" (Ibid, p.246). Mr. A. could not be dependent on his object. The defensive links that Mr. A. created are 'sterile and dead as far as emotions are concerned' (Vermote, 2017, p.85), and do not allow for the analyst to be experienced as helpful, or indeed any emotional connection to be made. This resonates with what Mr. A. said towards the end of analysis about how he was previously in his childhood: 'I can't understand people who keep animals. I have only bothered with "dead" things that last forever. With animals and with children there can be losses. I wouldn't be able to stand that' (Plankers, 1999, p.251).

The denuding of the relationship that is seen in Mr. A's case-study is a good example of a 'parasitic' relationship, one of the configurations of container-contained already mentioned, that result from problems with the mother infant relationship. Bion means by this 'a relationship in which one depends on another to produce a third, which is destructive of all three' (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.95). Relating within an anal claustrum is a 'third' that destroys any potential relating in a relationship, or destroys any potential psychic aliveness. It needs to be pointed out that the 'third' Bion is referring to is not the 'third' that is connected to the thinking of

Britton. By 'third' Britton is referring to a triangular space that opens up the capacity for observing, being observed and thinking. The 'third' that Bion is referring to here is actually the opposite-the closing down of space and the obstruction of linking between the expression and the means of expression. It is a form of container-contained that Bion argues is governed by -K, a function of the ego destructive superego.

### **Applicability of Bion's thinking to the other case studies.**

Plankers' case study on Mr. A. made me particularly aware of the usefulness of Bion's thinking in understanding the object relational world of people with a stutter. It could be argued, however, that Mr. A. is a deeply disturbed individual and the usefulness of Bion's thinking around stuttering cannot be generalized beyond this case.

As a response to this and guided by theoretical sampling, I decided to explore the usefulness of Bion's thinking in accounting for features of the other case studies I have cited in this chapter. This would help to decide whether a hypothesis about people with a stutter based on Bion's thinking has potential for generality. This approach, however, differs from the first section of this chapter, in which theories emerged from the data, and runs the risk that I am looking for data that fits a theory. I would like to emphasize, however, that the underlying purpose



here is to develop a theory about stuttering, which would then be explored empirically.

After reading the case-studies again I found that Bion's thinking could help to make sense of features of the object relational world of the analysands. The usefulness of Bion's thinking in relation to the other psychoanalytic case-studies on stuttering is considered in these four main points:

1. difficulty in tolerating emotion and not being aware of self;
2. thinness of object relating;
3. the threat of a severe superego;
4. improvement of the stutter as a result of ownership of emotions.

### **Difficulty in tolerating emotion and in being aware of self**

Using the lens of Bion to observe the other case studies I was struck by the difficulty that the analysands faced in tolerating both emotions and awareness of their own minds. There is a pronounced difficulty in tolerating aggression or hatred (Wilkinson, 2001; Plankers, 1999; Usher, 1944; Magnavita, 1998; Kolansky, 1960). Jimmy, the young analysand of Usher, at times drew rigid geometrical shapes, suggesting an intolerance of emotion (Usher, 1944). Magnavita was impressed by how much his client, Jim, is unaware of 'his stutter or the effect that this might

have on others' (Magnavita, 1998, p.79) and he is 'almost entirely unaware of his passive dependent personality' (Ibid, p.81). Jim also denied his negativity: he 'habitually buries his feelings, avoids his wife, and then usually responds later in some passive aggressive manner, such as coming home late or not telling her where he is going' (Ibid, p.82). Wilkinson, the analyst of Mark, argued that Mark used the stutter as a way of not being aware of his hatred towards his mother. He must attack anything that obstructs his fusion with the object (Wilkinson, 2001).

Although there are similarities between these case studies and the case study of Mr. A., namely the difficulties in getting to know self and other in an intimate and emotional way, there also seem to be some differences. The attacks on linking and envy, which I have argued play an important role in the case-study of Mr. A., do not seem to have the same pervasive quality in these other case studies. In Mark's case, for example, his overriding concern was to stay fused with the mother/analyst. In the next section I will make the point that Mark's mother did not act as a container for him, so perhaps it is just as appropriate to write about a deficit in alpha function in his case, i.e. he didn't receive enough experiences of proper containment, as it is to write about an attack on linking. However, owing to the extent of the difficulty in tolerating emotion and in being aware of self and a differentiated

object which is present in some of these case studies, significant envy and attacks on linking in a more 'silent' and 'poisonous' form than in the case study of Mr. A. could still be inferred (Abel-Hirsch, 2020).

### **Thinness of object relating**

The thinness of object relating, which I argued was a feature in the case study of Mr. A. and which is pertinent to the existence of a containing relationship, is also prominent in some of the other case studies (Wilkinson, 2001, Magnavita, 1998, Hunt, 1984). As I have just mentioned Mark, the analysand of Wilkinson, endeavoured to maintain 'an illusion of fusion [with his mother/analyst] at the cost of the loss of his own separate being' (Wilkinson, 2001, p.261). Wilkinson did not experience him as a separate person to analyse and felt at times in her counter-transference as a nobody. At times Wilkinson did not know who thoughts belonged to, her or Mark (ibid). As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, Hunt's relating with his mother/girlfriend could easily slide from fusion to rejection (Hunt, 1984), and his analyst insisted on him not living with his girlfriend as there would not be a separate person to analyse (Hunt, 1984). Jim, the client of Magnavita, had a relationship with his father and wife that was characterized by submission (Magnavita, 1998).

This thinness of object relating could be closely related to a difficulty in tolerating dependence. A client of Wassef's, who stuttered,

identified strongly with his father, but could not develop a close relationship with him. Instead, Wassef argued, he stole from his father and this was like taking his father's attributes. In this way he was not dependent on his father within a close relationship (Wassef, 1955). Wassef linked this difficulty to strong oral ambivalence towards the primary object, that is to say the incorporated object was both good and dangerous. Tolerating dependence on the object is vital in establishing a good relationship with the object and in having the capacity to be contained by the object.

### **Destructive superego**

In the case-studies of Magnavita (1998), Wilkinson (2001); Kolansky (1960), and Usher (1944) there are strong echoes of a destructive superego, even if it seems that it is not as destructive in the case study of Mr. A. In the case-studies of Usher (1944) and Kolansky (1960) there is rigid control of aggressive impulses. I think in the case-study of Magnavita a destructive superego is present in Jim's relationships with his father and wife (Magnavita, 1998). His relationship with them is characterized by 'humiliation and dominance' (ibid, p.82)-there is no space for him. In the lengthy case-study of Mark the precedents of an attacking superego were strongly suggested. Mark's mother did not provide a containing function, and there are echoes of attacking envy, for example when she also demanded of Mark that he dreamt the same

dreams as her (Wilkinson, 2001). In fact Mark came across as a container for his mother. She was an alcoholic and at times tried to commit suicide, and once when Mark was eight his dad asked him if he could get his mother out the kitchen where she had locked herself in (Ibid). Considering Mark's childhood experiences the introjection of a hostile obstructive object was not really surprising. Such an object seemed to find expression in a dream that Mark had in the early stages of his analysis: 'He [Mark] was inside a room and seeking to protect a young boy from awful danger outside. He locked the door but it was no good, a large and menacing woman managed to get into the room. As she came towards him he was filled with dread' (Ibid, p.260). Such an internal relationship is the opposite of a container-contained, from which there can be growth. The relevance of containment, or rather lack of containment, for Mark in this situation is seen in the working through of the above (ibid): Mark narrated the dreams about this terrifying mother image in a very numb, dissociated way. At first the analyst felt nothing, but soon fear associated with the image emerged in her (Ibid). By dint of the analyst experiencing this fear this allowed Mark to remember some childhood experiences of his mother. It could be stated that the experience of containment had allowed a part of Mark's ego-function to wrestle some control from a severe superego and experience a part of his childhood (Britton, 2003).

**Tolerance of emotion is associated with an improvement in the stutter.**

When there was ownership of the mental state, i.e. when the feeling could be accepted and thought about, the stutter improved (Magnavita, 1998; Wilkinson, 2001; Plankers, 1999; Hunt, 1984; Ablon, 1988; Searl, 1927). This is in contrast to the observation that I made earlier in this chapter that when there is an increased awareness of aggressive impulses there is increased stammering (Wilkinson, 2001; Usher, 1944 and Magnavita, 1998). A greater tolerance of emotion is compatible with Bion's framework, namely the analysands having had an experience of containment.

I would like to give some examples of a greater tolerance of emotion. Searl referred to an episode which practically led to the end of her analysand's stutter (a 4 year-old boy):

[H]e beat the tin hard and asked me [the analyst] with a roguish smile, 'What that noise like?' 'Is it like big busy?' 'Yes, it is'. His stammering became so bad after this that I said to him 'You are trying hard; you have to try hard when you do big busy, don't you?' .... This time when he went to the lavatory he attended to himself and did not stand passively to be helped as on his first visit; and though as before when he had pulled the plug he rushed away with noises of mingled delight and terror, this time he ran back and spat into the seat and cried 'I bited him, I bited him! The release of his anal defiance was clear, and his stammer all but disappeared from now onwards. (Searl, 1927, pp.67-68)

Although Searl was not expressing the 'cure' in terms of containment, I think it is a useful way to understand this. Going to the toilet was persecutory for her analysand, Peter (Ibid). In the same text Searl links the noise of going to the toilet with the grunts of father in coitus, and rivalry with him (Ibid). In this episode quoted above Peter was able to take a mental position towards his fears, including his castration fears, and he expressed this mastery as he cried 'I bited him'. He was able to be aware of his anxiety, accept it and contain it, with the help of his analyst. In the next session Peter made 'a great deal of noise himself and much 'moosie', i.e. singing' (Ibid, p.68). Maybe Peter was just happy, but it is also possible that the rhythm implicit in songs is an aid in the containment of persecutory sounds. This is an argument I will come back to later. Ablon also highlighted the vulnerability for people with a stutter to master affects (Ablon, 1988).

Plankers reported a dream of Mr. A. towards the end of analysis: 'I picked up a mole that had come out of the ground. It had a baby, a tiny tangle of wool, that fell down, someone picked it up, I took care of it. The big mole dug its claws into my thumb, hurting me. The pain went and I wanted to see the mole's face; it seemed familiar' (Plankers, 1999, p.250).

Mr. A's stuttering had diminished and I think this dream suggested that he was now more ready to face life outside the anal claustrum. I

think it suggests a 'differentiated subjective self, with an enhanced capacity to maintain awareness of physical and mental pain' (Sloate, 2016, p.228). Mr. A. felt more caring to his parents and no longer saw his brother in terms of being a rival but as a 'companion in suffering' (Plankers, 1999, p. 251).

Likewise, towards the end of analysis Mark was able to connect parts of self; for example he became more aware of the links between his grandiosity and his mother's idealized view of him. He could also remember fragments of his childhood (Wilkinson, 2001); towards the end of analysis he had a memory of walking in an orchard and sensing the beauty of nature (Ibid). By the end of analysis Mark's stutter had disappeared and Wilkinson associated this with the integration of emotion into his life: Mark came back to see her and:

the man who had almost always worn grey flannel was dressed in woven fabrics, in subtle shades of blue, lilac and green. When he spoke, the flat, affectless speech of the early days of analysis was gone entirely and his voice had depth and warmth. I felt as if he had come alive (Ibid, p.266)

Like with Mr. A. it could be argued that there had been a movement from attacks on linking (Vermote, 2017) to a greater openness to the creativeness in life due to the psychoanalytic experience. Hinshelwood sees this opening up to different colours in life as suggestive of the operation of a less strict superego (Hinshelwood, 2019)



Hunt, the stuttering analysand of Glauber, stressed that integrating his emotions played an important part in his recovery (Hunt, 1984). He finished with: 'There is something about linking, about gestalt forming, that we may miss in our belief in the power of affect' (Ibid, p. 470). Usher's stuttering analysand moved from increased stuttering associated with rigidity to a state in the later part of his analysis, practically stutter-free, when he said: 'I can whistle blowing in or blowing out', which Usher interpreted as indicating 'lessened anxiety over his introjection and expulsion mechanisms' (Usher, 1944, p.68).

### **The usefulness of Bion's thinking**

Although it was the case-study of Plankers on Mr. A. that made me particularly aware of the usefulness of Bion's thinking as a way to understand the object relational world of people with a stutter, material from these other case studies on analysands with a stutter could also be accounted for by Bion's concepts of container-contained and attacks on linking. These other case-studies suggest, however, that the attacks on linking and an ego destructive superego may not be so severe as in the case of Mr. A. and/or that there is a deficit in containment.

In a discussion of these case studies of Plankers (1998), Magnavita (1998), Wilkinson (2001); Kolansky (1960), and Usher (1944) I have highlighted the difficulty of analysands who stutter in tolerating

emotion and containing it so as to make it psychically manageable. A problem with integration and the capacity to tolerate emotion could be understood as a container-contained problem, which is dependent initially on the projection of distress and 'significant ego-function passing over from the subject to object' (Walker and Hinshelwood, 2018, p. 180), the containment of the distress and then its re-introjection in a more accessible form. When containment was successful, this seemed to be associated with an improvement in the stutter in these case-studies. In the next part of this chapter I will argue in more detail about the connection between the container-contained relationship and the actual stutter.

Psychic containment is closely related to the quality of the relationship with the object. In the discussion chapter I will put forward an argument that for people with a stutter there is a problem with differentiation and that in phantasy the primary object is experienced in a physical way, echoing the themes of fusion and aggressive impulses prevalent in the case-studies in this chapter, and that this could be associated with problems with developing a symbolic relationship with the object within a containing relationship.

**Brief summary of part one.**

From an analysis of case-studies of people with a stutter certain themes emerged, namely separation issues and/or merging with an object; omnipotence; excessive aggression and/or inhibition; and attacks on linking/ego destructive superego. To make sense of these findings I have drawn on the thinking of Melanie Klein and Bion. Klein's thinking around aggression and inhibition proved useful, namely regarding inhibition due to fear of harming the object. Plankers' case-study on Mr. A., with support from other case-studies, made me particularly aware of the usefulness of Bion's thinking in understanding the object relational world of people with a stutter, and of the usefulness of the container-contained relationship as a framework to understand the difficulties faced by people with a stutter to tolerate emotion and to symbolize experiences so as to make them more manageable.

## **Part Two: The formation of the actual stutter.**

Before moving on to the empirical study in chapter 4, I'd like to put forward an account of the actual stutter using Bion's concept of the container-contained relationship.

In chapter 2, I argued that in the research literature, understanding stuttering as a temporal disruption has received a lot of support. Walsh, Mettel and Smith (2015), for example, argue that

stuttering 'ultimately represent(s) breakdowns in the precisely timed and coordinated articulatory movements required in fluent speech' (p.1).

The structuring and containing function of timing and rhythm is obviously vital in the production of speech. To give an idea of what may be involved in the production of speech I will quote from Van Riper:

Over 70 muscles may be involved and each of these must get its appropriate nervous impulses at the required moment in the sequence if the word is to be spoken without disruption.....Moreover, in order to achieve successful integration and a smooth flow of unfolding speech sounds, the motor correlates of the component correlates...must be pre-programmed so as to provide the necessary coarticulation' (Van Riper, 1971, p. 413).

From a psychoanalytic perspective Balkanyi wrote about a problem with timing in stuttering. She argued that speech 'does not permit simultaneity...[but] only sequence' (Balkanyi, 1964, p.70). She gave an example of such a disturbance in a doctor, who when speaking to a patient was thinking of two medicines simultaneously and the result of this was a severe stutter (Ibid).

I have argued so far that the stutter is related to a problem of timing and rhythm. In this next part I want to link this to the overall theoretical framework of this thesis, namely that in stuttering there is a

problem with successful container-contained relating. Before doing this, I need to explain Bion's concept of beta elements as I argue that they play an important part in the formation of symptomatic stuttering.

### **Beta elements.**

As mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, the infant/child with some intolerable experience projects it into an object for it to be contained in the object in reverie, where it is given meaning and a proper psychic existence, enabling it then to be re-introjected by the infant. Beta elements refer to the raw material pertaining to the sensory domain that the infant initially experiences that he/she then projects into the object for containment. In the event of the containing function not being successful, these fragments continue to be experienced as physical, and indistinguishable from the object, and since they haven't been transformed into alpha elements they are not available for thinking or dreaming, and are thus only fit for evacuations in action, in soma or hallucinosis (Britton, 2003). Along with this projection, Bion added, there is a further confusion between the symbol and the object since the expelled particles now 'lead an independent and uncontrolled existence either contained by or containing the object' (Bion, 1957, p.268).

Sullivan expressed beta elements in this way: 'The infant's "thought" is not about a breast; it is a breast' (Sullivan, 2010, p.70). The

“thought” is dependent on the presence of the concrete outer object. Sullivan continues: ‘This kind of “thought” [the beta element] does not develop any sense of self for the baby. There is no self in the experience: there is a breast that is good, not an “I” having an experience’ (Ibid, p.71). Making such a distinction between the object and its representation is essential in the growth of a mind that can properly contain experiences and in ‘build[ing] a person with an emotional life separate from and related to other beings (or things) about whom or for which he or she has feelings’ (Lombardi, 2016).

### **Auditory stimuli**

Amongst other stimuli, the infant faces a chaotic external world of sounds, which often are associated with threatening stimuli (Kohut and Levarie, 1950). Glauber (1982), Searl, (1927), and Heilpern (1941) hypothesized in stuttering there is a traumatic link with the sounds from the primal scene, which I think provoke emotions such as hatred and envy.

I think it is useful to understand these auditory stimuli as beta elements, that is to say fragments of experience that are indistinguishable from the object. This resonates with what Segal (1957) refers to as symbolic-equations, where the object and symbol are indistinguishable. These fragments are experienced as physical, and

'lend themselves to [attack and] treatment by motor discharge' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.83).

If these fragmentary stimuli are to be processed by the mind they need containment. Lehtonen argued that this function was carried out by 'musical thinking' and rhythm, which he described as 'the beginning of order, and the most primitive, yet complex, structure of the human mind'. It is a primitive form of thinking, which like reverie, 'set[s] this "chaotic mass of sounds" in order and, thereby..... transform this unorganised material' (Lehtonen, 1995, p.22).

This containment resonates with the thinking of Stern and Meltzer, although they emphasized its object relational basis. Both Stern (1985) and Meltzer (1975) made a distinction between language used for conveying information and 'a deeper and musical level of language, which is used for the communication of experiential states by means of projective identification'. Stern (1985), basing his findings on infant observation, found that the talking that the young child stimulates in the mother often becomes a kind of song, in which dramatic 'crescendi, decrescendi or glissandi' (p. 24) may be produced through changes of pitch and volume. This also resonates with the regulatory function of sound proposed by Sloate, who stated that: 'The non-verbal patterns of maternal sounds and silences are the vital medium in which children's

attachment, cognition, and quality of object relatedness are regulated and organized' (Sloate, 2016, p.230).

Anzieu hypothesized a 'sound envelope' (Anzieu, 1979, p.30) by which the infant is enveloped in a 'melodic bath' and 'is connected to its parents by a truly audio phonic system of communication' (Ibid, p.27). For the infant the 'sound envelope' is a 'carrier of global sense' (Ibid, p.26). It is a sound connection between infant and mother that Maiello argued started before birth; a relationship that was based on what she describes as a 'sound-object' (Maiello, 1995).

In the elaboration of the 'sound envelope' Anzieu drew heavily on Bion's concept of container-contained, which he described as the 'capacity of the mother's breast to "contain" sensations and to 'halt.. the aggressive-destructive retro-projection of expelled and scattered bits of the self' (Anzieu, 1979, p.23). This containment by the primary carer was essential for the infant to stop the projection of sound fragments, establish patterns and eventually begin to manipulate sound 'for his games of phonemic articulation' (Anzieu,1979, p. 31), that is to say for use as the sounds of a language.

Anzieu and Bion understood this containing function to be carried out initially by the container-contained/ 'sound envelope' and it is only repeated experience of this containment that leads 'to the establishment



of a mental apparatus featuring spatio-temporal structures and functioning as a container' (Lombardi, 2003, p.1534).

It is worth noting an important difference between the thinking of Anzieu and Bion. If there is not successful container-contained relating with the mother this may be due, according to Anzieu, to the poor rhythm in her speech as well as her 'metallic' and 'hoarse' voice (Anzieu, 1979, p.32), whereas Bion emphasized factors such as envy in the child and a possible lack of receptivity in the mother. Anzieu seemed to be stressing a deficit model.

Specifically in reference to stuttering, Plankers (1999) stated that the 'sound envelope' or the container-contained relationship has become 'lifeless' and with a 'torn content, i.e. stuttered sounds, words and sentences' (Ibid, p.239). Plankers noticed and was impacted on by not only the stuttering of Mr. A. but also a deep lack of musicality in his speech:

The clinical material demonstrates that my patient's language was disturbed not only by the occasional fragmentation of the content in stuttering, but much more fundamentally in its musical aspect. Of course the stuttering also had an impact on this deep musical structure of language. However, even the parts of his speaking that were free from stuttering were characterised by the non-musicality that immediately made me want to turn away and lose interest (Ibid, p.251).

The potential of the 'sound envelope' to contain had 'withered away' (Ibid,251), that is to say the musical 'empathetic inner space' (Ibid, p.253) that linked mother and infant, and could potentially provide

containment, was attacked and/ or was deficient. Plankers (1998), in relation to stuttering, hypothesized 'a fundamental attack on a possible empathetic inner space that is directed at the object' (p.253).

Because of this problem with containment unmanageable bits of noise associated with objects, bad and good, are eventually released in speech in fragmentary form. Bion expressed it in this way: 'The domains of thought and action are so close, when the musculature used in talking is involved with beta elements, that the distinction between them becomes confused' (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.121). Later, I will illustrate this confusion by drawing on the psychoanalytic case studies referred to earlier in this chapter.

In Bion's thinking alpha function does not just refer to the transformation of auditory stimuli but to the transformation of any raw material so as to make it available for thinking or dreaming. In stuttering there are arguably destructive impulses, and/or a deficit in container-contained, which are limited to a specific function, i.e. sound. This is akin to Rosenfeld's thinking about 'psychotic islands', which I referred to earlier in the chapter. Through an attack on the function that produces sound and/ or a deficit in this function the raw material for sounds is not given a proper psychic existence.

In order to give an account of the actual stutter, I have argued that there is a problem with successful containment. In the next section, I

would like to draw upon the psychoanalytic case studies of this chapter to illustrate how with a problem in processing beta elements, in which the object is indistinguishable from the symbol, there is a confusion between thought and action when communicating. In other words, the stutter can be considered as a form of projective identification rather than the communication of an idea. Plankers, for example, saw the stutter of Mr. A. as one element in his arsenal to attack the link between them (Plankers, 1999). Although writing from a different framework, Fransella (1972) also wrote about the enactment quality of a stutter. She wrote about how the person with a stutter used the stutter to manage a speaking interaction, i.e. by making the responses of the other more predictable. In the rest of this chapter I want to argue specifically that the stutter can be understood from the vertex of an enactment of fusion with, and aggression against, the object. Understanding the stutter as the projection of unconscious elements means that connections can be made with an understanding of the stutter as symbolic displacement arising from a fixation at the level of the drives, which was the focus of chapter two. Although these are different frameworks through which stuttering is understood, they resemble each other phenomenologically. In both cases the stutter is seen as the projection or displacement of elements of the unconscious.

Getting rid of stuttered words or projecting them out could be considered predominantly as a way of acting on the object in phantasy, in contrast to an understanding of language as the communication of ideas. Jimmy, the analysand of Usher, was at times tickled by his analyst's words and for Usher 'it was quite evident that 'words' were things for Jimmy' (Usher, 1944, p.66). Wilkinson noticed how Mark's stuttering was indistinguishable from his relation to the object:

At the beginning he experienced most difficulty with words beginning with 'm' such as 'mother' or my name. I became 'Ma ... Ma ... Margaret'. At a later stage in the analysis, when he became more aware of a different kind of mothering from the analyst-mother, which made possible the beginnings of an experience of separateness and some awareness of his feelings of hate, the quality of the stutter changed. He still stuttered in a relatively soft way but over harsh words as he expressed something of his anger with me. (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 258)

It seems the function of the stutter here alternated between merging with the object and attacking the object, both features that I found to be important in the case studies of people with a stutter.

Paraphrasing Mahler's observations that speech, which bestows upon the child the capacity to function separately from the mother, Wilkinson stated that it 'might be given up or distorted by a child in order to preserve a delusion of an unconditionally omnipotent symbiotic union' (Wilkinson, 2001). Stein (1949) and Gadding (1987) emphasized an association of stuttering with merging with the internal object. Stern

observed that among some of the symptoms that appear last in stuttering are clicks, pursing of the lips and protrusion of the tongue tip.

He stated:

Clicks are noises accompanying sucking movements. In producing them in the absence of food the baby symbolically takes in an imaginary mother, and so performs one of the most primitive, most stabilised, genetically fixed erotic, pre-genital acts (Stein, 1949) Gaddini wrote of the process of stuttering as a psychophysical syndrome which can occur in the second year of life at the stage where the functional link of speaking and breathing is:

used by the infantile mind to reactivate-but usually in an altered way (in the body's concrete language)-one of the first functional links of which the mind has experience, which is that of suckling and swallowing while continuing to breathe (Gaddini, 1987)

In these examples there is a close resemblance between seeing the stutter from the vertex of merging with the internal object in phantasy, and the view of stuttering from the perspective of oral fixation, which was expressed in chapter two.

Besides merging with the object a stutter can also enact an aggressive attack on the object. This is dramatically demonstrated in the session by a 3 year-old analysand of Kolansky. The analyst was interpreting how Ann initially began to stutter, that is to say she felt lonely and sad and angry at the newborn twins, and Ann responded to the interpretation by reaching out to bite the analyst (Kolansky, 1960). Anal sadistic impulses displaced onto the speech, as I mentioned earlier,

played an important role in the stutter of Heilpern's analysand (Heilpern, 1941). In another of the case studies referred to earlier Usher described her 6 year-old analysand's stuttered speech as the 'letting out [of] schrapnel in small pieces' (Usher, 1944, p.64), and argued that stuttering is indistinguishable from acting on the object, for example a 'phantasied bitten-up sister' (Ibid, p.63). At times, Usher stated, the discharge of pent-up emotions was in the form of 'stammering movements-for example, he jabbed nervously, in staccato fashion, at his paints'. (Ibid, p.63). This suggests that with the staccato movements with the paint brush, like with his stuttered speech, he was attacking the object in phantasy. Eigen's stuttering analysand equated his stuttered words to bullets directed at the analyst (Eigen, 2011), and Magnavita compared the stuttering of his client to a weapon (Magnavita, 1998). I have already mentioned how for Mark, the analysand of Wilkinson, excessive stuttered speech accompanied his desire to stick a knife in the back of the analyst (Wilkinson, 2001). It could be argued that the excessive stuttering was due to anxiety of wanting to harm the analyst, but I think in any case there seems to be a symbolic equation between the stuttered words and the phantasied attack with the knife.

### **Brief summary of the formation of the stutter**

In this account of the actual stutter I have focused on a problem with the early formation of the mind, specifically a problem with successful containment. I have argued that because of a problem with containment the stutter can be seen as a release of fragments that are experienced as physical. I have also argued that from a different vertex the stutter could be viewed as a symbolic expression of the drives and unconscious phantasy. In this chapter as a whole I have built up a hypothesis regarding stuttering, namely as a problem with containment and associated object relations. In the next chapter I turn to the question of investigating whether or not there is empirical support for this hypothesis.

## **Chapter Four: Preparation for the empirical study.**

In the previous chapter I drew out the predominant features that emerged from the psychoanalytic case studies of people with a stutter. These included separation issues and/or a pathological merging with the object, inhibition with underlying aggression, attacks on linking or problem with alpha function, an ego destructive super-ego and omnipotence. I argued that the fundamental issue for stutterers could be seen as a container-contained problem. My research aim in this chapter is to set out how I will explore empirically whether there is support for the hypothesis that for children with a stutter there is a problem with containment.

### **Exploring the research question**

Initially I had wanted to design a psychometric measurement of containment. However, I soon realized that I was thinking too much along the lines of a positivist approach. Successful containment, as theorized by Bion, is a very elusive concept, and it proved extremely problematic to find objective markers that would indicate its presence or absence. I thought it would be very difficult, for example, to differentiate a problem with containment from aggression.

It was not until I read a chapter 'Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Operationalisation of unconscious processes' by Walker and



Hinshelwood (2018) that I became clearer about how to operationalise containment. In this chapter Walker and Hinshelwood used a 'duck test' to operationalise unconscious processes, and one example they use is the operationalisation of containment. In a 'duck test' Walker and Hinshelwood (2018) have identified certain steps. Firstly, features of a concept are conceptually established, and 'patterns of features.... that appear to be the most crucial to the mental entity' are identified (Ibid, p.173). If these features are then found in the data this concept can be *inferred* (Ibid). This is a particularly useful approach for psychoanalytic concepts, which tend to be elusive and not directly observable in the data. It is an approach that Walker and Hinshelwood stated is potentially valid and reliable (Ibid).

In their operationalisation of containment they focus on whether it could be inferred from the data that distress and ego function were being projected into an external container, and subsequently leaving the ego function of the subject depleted. These for Walker and Hinshelwood were key features of containment (Ibid). They weren't so interested in the later stages of this distress being modified by an introjecting container, and then the subsequent re-introjection by the subject of the modified distress along with the lost ego-function. My focus in this present research was more to do with these later stages of containment. My main interest was to identify from the data whether it could be

inferred that a containing function that 'contains and processes internal experience as it arises in the individual' (Britton, 2003, p. 72) had been internalized by the participant.

During a discussion with one of the authors of this chapter (Hinshelwood) we came to the conclusion that a broad approach to inferring the presence of a containing function in the present research context was to observe whether participants engaged fully with the emotional issues implicit in the task presented to them. In chapter three, I emphasized that having proper psychic and containing experience contact with emotion is key so that the distressing emotion can be bound, symbolized and thereby made more manageable. Participants in the present research could then be distinguished, for example, by assessing whether the emotional issues in the task presented to them were denied, i.e. with concrete responses, or distorted. In contrast, successful containment could be inferred if the participant produced a narrative that fully addressed the emotional issue of the task.

Engaging fully with the emotional issue of the task, however, is a general capacity, and by itself would not be strong support for the hypothesis that the container-contained relationship is a particularly useful concept by which to understand the object relational world of

children with a stutter. More specific support regarding this relationship needed to be added.

Further specificity could be gained by investigating whether in the data there is evidence for the presence of concepts that are theoretically closely related to Bion's concept of containment. This could add plausibility to the hypothesis that a problem with containment is useful in understanding stuttering.

One such interrelated concept with containment is the movement from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position, that is to say the movement from part-to-whole-object relating, or from a fragmentary inner world to a more balanced outlook (Sullivan, 2010). The capacity to form symbols, that is to contain experiences psychically, is dependent on abandoning the paranoid-schizoid position and the 'bringing together of splits and the ushering in of the depressive position' (Bion, 1954, p.114).

A paranoid-schizoid mode of functioning could be recognised in the responses of the participants by features such as the use of primitive defences like splitting and projective identification, a lack of separation, extreme positions taken towards the object, namely very aggressive impulses and/ or idealization of the object, and a severe superego.

Further consideration of the container-contained relationship as a useful conceptual tool by which to understand the object relational world of children with a stutter, would be its explanatory power. It should be able to explain features in the responses of the children with a stutter and also explain differences between children with a stutter and the control group, namely children with no stutter.

### **Collecting appropriate data**

An early task as a researcher was to find a collection tool that would elicit appropriate data. My interest was the object relational world of participants and data that would allow me to infer container-contained relationships. I needed a research tool that would elicit information that went beyond what the participants were conscious of. On top of that it was necessary to use a research method that was non-threatening for the participant (Steele et al., 1999; Warren, Emde and Sroufe, 2000). This is especially the case since I decided very early to recruit children for the research, and I will explain this choice later.

An issue that needed careful consideration in my reflections on an appropriate research tool was language. If participants are asked to produce narratives, it might well be argued that when researching the inner world of children who stutter and using children who don't stutter

as a comparison group the stutter could well be a confounding factor. Potential differences might be partly due to children with a stutter being less able to use language in the form of narratives.

However, as a response to this particular concern, there is quite strong empirical support that, for a range of stuttering severities, a stutter does not have a significant impact on telling narratives (Nippold et al., 1991; Trautman et al., 1999); Scott, Healey and Norris, 1995; Bajaj, 2007). Scott, Healey, and Norris (1995) analysed the inclusion of grammatical components and level of sophistication in narratives; Nippold et al. (1999) analysed narrative ability; Trautman et al. (1999) looked at narrative complexity and cohesion; Bajaj (2007) amongst other things looked at syntax and narrative ability. In all of this research no significant difference was found between children who stutter and children who don't stutter. Weiss and Zebrowski (1994), however, did find a difference between stutterers and speakers without a stutter when retelling a story. They looked at the ability to retell stories to a listener familiar with the story and a naive listener. They found that the stories told by children with a stutter (CWS) were shorter, and when children with no stutter (CWNS) told the story to naive listeners they were more elaborate and their accounts were longer, possibly reflecting a difference in the theory of mind. This difference between CWS and CWNS seems

important. However, the focus of this present research is for the participants to create a story with doll characters, which I will say more about later, and not to retell a story to the interviewer. The use of inference in this present research context, i.e. making judgements regarding what the listener already knows, is less important than in the research by Weiss and Zebrowski (1994).

Although this aforementioned research indicated quite strongly that children with a stutter are potentially as able to tell a story as children with no stutter, there remained an ongoing concern about the impact of the stutter on the stories of the participants. One of the factors I had to consider was that arguably the children with a stutter might produce shorter stories to save time and to avoid emotional awkwardness. Moreover, the participants were meeting the researcher for the first time and he was going to present them with situations that would potentially provoke anxiety. Asking children with a stutter to rely on language alone in such a situation might prove too difficult. There could be ethical concerns here as well as concerns about ecological validity, namely the responses of the children with a stutter may say more about the research tool than everyday reality.

Because of these concerns I did contemplate the idea of asking all the participants to draw responses to the situations presented and then to speak about the drawings. This meant that the children who stutter

were supported and not totally reliant on language. However, asking the participants to draw added complications like finding a systematic way to assess the responses and raised questions such as what importance to give the drawing and the spoken part in each particular case. This would make comparison between the groups difficult. The research tool which I eventually chose did offer potential support to CWS in the form of the manipulation of doll figures. I will now turn my attention to the research tools considered.

### **Research tools considered**

My ultimate aim in this empirical research was to explore whether there is support for the hypothesis that children with a stutter have container-contained problems. To have access to data that could indicate whether there is support for these conjectures a kind of projective test was necessary. A projective test works by presenting stimuli with ambiguous meaning, for example the Ink blot, which therefore stimulates subjective projections of the subject's inner world (Sundberg ,1977), and thus contrasts with a more direct or leading approach of asking questions in a research tool such as the Child Attachment Interview (CAI). Projective tests enable the researcher to 'gain privileged access to psychological information of which respondents are not consciously aware' (Lilienfeld, 2000, p.29). Because of my interest in object relations and container-

contained relating, I wanted a semi-projective test that would elicit interaction among predominantly child and parent figures and/or a narrative involving such figures. This would allow the observation of relating in the inner world. I therefore needed a projective test that imposed more restraint on the participant than for example the Rorshach Ink blot, which is used to elicit free association (Horowitz and Murphy, 1938)<sup>3</sup>. The main restraint being imposed on the participant in this present research is a situation in which child and parent figures are used.

For my research purposes I considered the following tests:

#### **Bar Ilan Picture test for children** (Itskowitz and Strauss, 1977)

I looked at the Bar-Ilan Picture test for children, in which a situation at home or at school was presented in picture form to the participant, and this was followed by standard questions in relation to the situation. Since I was interested in internal relating I thought that asking questions about the situation was too directive and too structured for my research purposes.

#### **The Patte Noire test** (Schrofl, 1977)

The Patte Noire test seemed more appropriate. In this test the pig family along with other animals are shown and the participant is asked to

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<sup>3</sup> Researchers such as Mayman (1967), however, have inferred object relations from the Rorshach.



choose picture cards with which to create a story. It is noted which pictures are preferred or rejected. Themes in the stories could then be identified by using Thematic Analysis.

### **Use of stems**

There are also numerous semi-projective tests available that ask participants to complete stems, such as the 'Madeleine Thomas completion stories test (Mills, 1953), the Duss fable method (Kramer, 1968), in which some of the stems contain animals, and the MacArthur Story stem battery (Oppenheim et al, 1997), in which the material consists of human miniature figures.

These tests seemed appropriate for my aims, that is to say, to observe interactions and/or narratives among family figures. A distinct advantage of the MacArthur story stem approach was that participants could also manipulate miniature figures, which I considered could give support for children with a stutter. It would mean that they weren't totally reliant on language, and which would potentially relieve some pressure on the participants in the research context.

### **SSAP and Macarthur battery**

My supervisor drew my attention to a training course at the Anna Freud Centre in London on the Story Stem Assessment Profile (SSAP), developed by Hodges, Hilman and Steele, and which historically has

close links to the MacArthur group (Hodges *et al.*, 2003). Story Stem assessments have been widely employed for both clinical assessments and research (Emde, Wolf, and Oppenheim, 2003)

The SSAP as well as the technique used by the MacArthur Group in the States involves the use of story stems that depict family members in everyday situations at home and then the children are asked to complete the stem. A relationship has been shown between the children's narratives produced as a response to the stem and reports of children's behavioural difficulties by mothers (Oppenheim *et al.* (1997). For example, scoring higher on reports of peer problems was related to features in children's narratives such as denial of distress and less realistic mastery. This strongly suggests that the narratives were tapping into the inner world of children.

Having the experience of doing the training course was vital (December 2016-February 2017). It gave me useful experience of administering the test and an insight into the theory behind the test, and practice in coding the responses. Doing the course and then later conducting a pilot study, also helped me to make the final decision that the story stem technique would be useful in providing the kind of data that I needed to support or not the hypothesis. These experiences made me aware that stems can potentially elicit very rich material regarding

the inner world and object relations of participants. In one of the story stems during the pilot study, for example, the parents wanted to spend some time alone together and asked the child figure to go to her room. In her response to this stem the participant developed a story in which dad 'threw' mum on the bed, while at the same time emphasizing that dad didn't throw her on the floor. Dad then proceeded to clean the girl's room. This response could be interpreted to demonstrate oedipal fantasies and the fact that the participant emphasized that dad put mum on the bed rather than the floor strongly suggests care for mum in the midst of these oedipal fantasies. The story stem test can thus potentially allow the expression of conflictive information about relationships and can make it more likely for children to share experiences (Buchsbbaum, Toth, Clyman, Cicchetti, & Emde, 1992), which made it appropriate for the purposes of this present research. Moreover, the fact that the information is projected can help to minimize the threat to children when they divulge this sensitive and conflictive data (Steele, Hodges, Kaniuk, Henderson, Hillman & Bennett, 1999; Warren, Emde, & Sroufe, 2000). I will expand on the ethical concerns of the research later in this chapter.

Another benefit of the SSAP is that, like the MCAB, the participants have the possibility of manipulating the doll figures as well as of verbalising, thus giving some support to the children with a stutter

to express themselves, if needed. The pilot study, which I will discuss later, did make me aware that I needed to be careful in the selection of stems, as some stems did not tend to evoke much response in the participants.

### **Stems**

Although there are 13 stems in the battery of stems of the SSAP, the researchers from the Anna Freud Centre as well as from the Macarthur Group have included a different number of stems in their research protocol (Steele et al., 1999); Warren, Emde, & Sroufe, 2000). In the end I didn't use all 13 stems of the SSAP. I would have given more thought to this question, if I had decided to use the manualized coding along with the stems and the manual function as a system with norms and with validity. However, I didn't use the manualized coding of the responses, a decision I will come back to. My purpose was to put the participants in situations in which they had experiences of object relating in play, and from experience of using the stems on the training course and on the pilot study I did not think that quantity was the most important issue. I thought it more important to have a range of stems that would put the participants in different kinds of 'problematic' situations, allowing the researcher to observe how the characters responded to these and how they went about finding a solution. I also chose stems that would involve

different types of interactions, for example between mother and child, among the whole family, and between siblings. To vary the potential interactions I didn't want all the stems to be about 'problems', so I chose a stem in which the child brings to the family a picture drawn by him/herself. This present research uses 6 coded stems, all of which come from the SSAP or from the MacArthur battery (see appendix A for stems used). Using existing stems served the purposes I detailed above, and helped to avoid problems of creating new stems such as having to test them.

### **How the stories in the SSAP are typically coded**

In the SSAP the stems are typically used along with a coding manual. This whole package, that is to say the stems along with the manual, has been used extensively to categorise children according to attachment style (Hodges et al., 2005).<sup>4</sup>

Categorising children according to attachment style is done by using the individual codes, examples of which are 'Self-mastery', 'Adult

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<sup>4</sup> Story stems have, however, been used for a variety of purposes, for example emotional dysregulation (Grych, Wachsmuth-Schaefer, & Klockow, 2002; Robinson, Herot, Haynes & Mantz-Simmons, 2000); self esteem (Page, 1988; Verschueren, Marcoen, & Schoefs, 1996); aggression/violence (Grych, Wachsmuth-Schaefer, & Klockow, 2002; Stover, Van Horn, & Lieberman, 2006) and family functioning (Bretherton et al., 1990b; Poelmann & Huennekens, 2003).

provides help' and 'Adult unaware', with a view to broadly categorising the participant into one of these attachment styles. Although I was aware of the usefulness of the stems, an attachment framework did not fit with the theoretical framework of this thesis. After discussion with one of the developers of SSAP, Saul Hillman, I decided to use the stems but not the coding system. (In fact Saul Hillman communicated to me in a personal email that some of his students were analyzing the participants' responses using qualitative analysis rather than the manualized coding system). I would thus only use the stems to elicit data about the inner world of children with a stutter, and would find an alternative way to analyse this data. By using the stems of the SSAP and not the coding manual I could no longer claim that I was working with a test that had psychometric properties, thus casting some doubt on the scientific status of the research (Lilienfeld, 2000). The interest of the researcher, however, was in eliciting experiences of object relating and observing these experiences, rather than having a system that can explain these experiences in terms of attachment theory, which is not the theoretical framework of this present research.

### **Preliminary remarks on the analysis of the current research data**

The responses of the participants were analysed from a transcribed version of the video recordings taken of the interviews. In the first

analysis of the participants' responses I aimed to focus on the data as it was. Although interpretation was inevitably involved in making sense of the findings my intention was to approach the data in the spirit of an observational study. The main reason for this was to put some distance between the data and the theoretical framework of the research, namely a Kleinian and Bionian framework. Hinshelwood argued that in order to avoid the circular nature of knowledge, there needs to be a distance between the overall theoretical framework in which the research is couched and the tool used to analyse the results. 'Allegiance to theory can determine the selection, and inferences, from the significant segments of clinical [or research] material' (Hinshelwood, 2013), and I wanted to avoid this as much as possible.

In the first analysis of the participants' narratives I wanted to focus on object relations defined in a broad sense of the term, and also on the identification of themes in a 'bottom-up way' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By a broad definition of object relations I meant how that concept was defined in the introduction, namely 'relations... within an internalized object world' (Antonovsky, 1987, p.540). By remaining close to the data and using an understanding of object relations in this broad sense there was more potentiality for agreement among raters than if I used a strictly Kleinian perspective on object relations. These results are presented in the results chapter.

The analysis proper follows in the discussion chapter in which these selected facts are interpreted from the perspective of the research question, namely whether in the responses of children who stutter there is support for the hypothesis that there is a problem with psychic containment.

### **Identification of data in the narratives**

With a view to identifying research data, I had two particular aims. On the one hand I wanted an analytical tool that would allow me to remain open to the potential richness of the object relating in the narratives. Below I will state the reasons why Thematic Analysis was the most useful tool that was eventually chosen for this purpose. On the other hand, when understanding the object relating of children with a stutter I also felt it necessary to compare this group with a control group, namely children without a stutter. By comparing the two groups, those with and those without a stutter, it would help to highlight features of children with a stutter. An approach working with the analysis of qualitative data, such as Thematic Analysis, does not easily lend itself to comparing groups. Using this kind of analysis a wide range of themes may well be generated at an individual level, meaning that there is no standard of reference by which individuals let alone groups can be compared.



Although comparisons have been made between groups when using a qualitative design, it seems necessary to make use of ready-made categories, a typical feature of quantitative research, in order to facilitate this comparison and to have a standardised means of assessment. Given the object relational orientation of this thesis I eventually opted for an object relations scale that would categorise responses of the participants along the scale, thus yielding quantitative data. The stuttering group and the control group could then be compared against each other by adding up the numbers. Although generating numbers in such a way is a crude way to assess the subjectivity and responses of the participants, it does facilitate comparison. Moreover, the disadvantages of this form of analysis would be offset by combining this method with an analytical tool such as Thematic Analysis, which can capture the complexity of the responses. My research design would thus be both qualitative and quantitative, and theoretically able to provide a convergence as a necessary basis for comparison, and at the same time respond to the rich data potentially elicited by the story stems.

### **Quantitative data**

There is tension between collecting quantifiable data, i.e. data that is reliable, and collecting data that can inform psychoanalytic theory (Smith, 1992). I referred to this problem at the beginning of this chapter

when I looked for a way to operationalize the container-contained relationship. The variables used to quantify a concept may be too abstract, or they may be too concrete and there is not a good enough link by which they can inform theory (ibid).

Once I had decided to use a quantitative measure so as to compare children with a stutter and children with no stutter, the task was to find a tool that was appropriate. From discussions with staff at the university where I studied, one type of tool that was considered particularly appropriate in this present research, given the object relations focus, was an object relations scale. Apart from providing reliable data, requirements of a scale were that it could provide data that could potentially inform the constructs relating to the research question, that it could be used to assess narratives, and that it could be used with children.

There are numerous scales of object relations (see Smith 1992). Scales used by researchers such as Bell *et al.* (1986) and Azim *et al.* (1991) could be initially ruled out because they are based on self-reports. The 'Object-Relation Inventory' of Diamond *et al.* (1990) was based on a description of significant people in a person's life. These scales had not been used with children nor had the potential, I think, for that purpose. It would be very problematic and anxiety provoking for

children to describe important people in their lives. A scale was needed that could work with projective data.

‘The Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale-Global Rating Method (Scors-G) (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018), which I initially accessed online, was worth exploring as a potential research tool. The theoretical underpinnings of Scors-G are social cognition and object relations. From an object relational perspective, and fitting with the present research, Westen argues that the focus is on ‘the nature and development of representations of self and others and the affective processes brought to bear on those representations’ (Westen, 1995). The dimensions that are assessed, for example complexity of representations and coherence of narratives, can provide data that could usefully inform the research question. Whether or not a participant, for example, can produce a coherent story in the face of conflict and is not overwhelmed by emotions can help to inform the researcher if the participant has internalized an apparatus of containment. Scors-G is flexible and has been used widely within the psychoanalytic community in different clinical and research contexts, and with a wide range of narrative forms (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018). Although it is mainly used with adults, it has been used with children, for example by Weise

and Tuber (2004), and Conway *et al.*, (2010), and by Westen *et al.* (1991) who used an earlier version of Scors-G.

Scors-G has ‘good to excellent reliability’ (Shrout and Fleiss, 1979), and the potential for reliability was enhanced by the publication of the book *The Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale-Global Rating Method (Scors-G)* by Stein and Slavin-Mulford (2018). Stein and Slavin-Mulford argue that ‘the purpose of this book is to fill in ...gaps to help individuals establish inter-rater reliability with even more ease’ (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.10). The authors also argued that the validity of Scors-G is ‘well established’.

In a pilot study for the present research, which will be explained in more detail later, I tested the usefulness of this scale in rating the narratives stimulated by the story stems, and found that it could capture ‘a comprehensive understanding of a patient’s inner world’ (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.10) and the participants’ representation of important relationships. I also found in the pilot study that this object relations scale helped me to focus in on certain aspects of object relating that seemed relevant to my research question that without the scale I might not have considered. In the dimension ‘social causality’ of the scale, for example, narratives are scored according to whether they are nuanced and coherent rather

than simple. This is potentially relevant information that can inform the researcher whether the participant is linking directly with the stem.

I did notice, however, in the pilot study that the assessment implicit in this object relations scale was dependent on elaboration by the participants, and the younger children, namely those aged 5 at times produced accounts that were short. However, I considered that this limitation of this research tool could be compensated by combining the results of this scale with the results of a thematic analysis, which can draw on other sources of information and are not just reliant on an elaborated verbalized account. One such source is the subjectivity of the interviewer, which I will look at later.

This scale was adapted for the present research purposes, and permission was given for this by Hilsenroth, a colleague of Stein and Slavin-Mulford (personal communication). The overall structure of the scale was preserved, but some changes were introduced. The two categories 'self-esteem' and 'identity and coherence of self' were omitted as I thought it would be difficult to assess these from the responses arising from the stems of the SSAP. Omitting these 2 coding dimensions did not, I think, have a significant impact on the scoring as the dimensions were coded separately.

The six dimensions coded are as follows:

### **1. Complexity of representations of people**

This dimension looks at the extent that characters in the narrative are 'fused versus differentiated, nuanced, and complex' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.37). It also assesses 'the presence, degree, and differentiation of internal states' (Ibid, p.37).

### **2. Affective quality of representations**

This dimension 'captures the emotional lens with which we view the world' (Ibid, p.55). It is mainly focused on 'how the person experiences other people and relationships' (Ibid, p. 55).

### **3. Emotional Investment in relationships**

This dimension 'assesses a person's ability for intimacy and emotional sharing' (Ibid, p.73). It looks at the interaction between people and the extent of reciprocity.

### **4. Emotional investment in values and moral standards**

This dimension looks at how participants think about and act 'in relation to morality and compassion for others' (Ibid, p.89).

### **5. Understanding of social causality**

'It examines both the flow and detail of the narrative, as well as the extent to which people's actions and intentions are depicted as coherent

and organized and nuanced versus distorted/ disorganised and/ or simplistic/ concrete' (Ibid, p.107).

## **6. Experience and management of aggressive impulses**

This dimension looks at the ability to 'experience and express anger' and to 'modulate aggression' (Ibid, p.127).

### **Scoring**

Dimensions are on a scale of 1-7. An important division is between 1-3, and 5-7, with 4 typically considered as a default position. A rating of 1-3 indicates phenomena such as less value being placed on relationships with significant others; people being seen in less complex ways; less coherent narratives; being overwhelmed by emotion; little or no mention of inner states. A rating of 5-7 indicates phenomena such as a greater capacity to see characters in psychologically more complex ways; an ability to produce a coherent story based on the interpersonal (Ibid). See appendix B for an adapted version of the scale of Stein, M. B. and Slavin-Mulford, J., 2018.

The task of coding according to the scale was simplified through the publication of *The Social Cognition and object relations scale-global rating Method (Scors-G)* by Stein and Slavin-Mulford (2018). The purpose of this book was to guide researchers and clinicians in the use

of the rating method. For each dimension the authors specified what kind of answers merited a certain number on the scale. The book also had dimensional anchor points. What was also useful was that practice was given on the use of the scale through exercises. This book was thus a very useful aid in the standardization of coding.

For further support in coding I also had feedback from various sources. I had the opportunity to get feedback and discuss scoring with my supervisor. Furthermore, I worked closely with a Post-graduate student in the Psychoanalytic department. After training her in the use of the scale she proceeded to code all of the responses of the children with a stutter, and 50% of the children with no stutter. After she coded one of the participants, we met and compared the answers, and if there were differences in our scoring we discussed that and tried to come to an agreement. If we couldn't come to an agreement we opted for a number in-between.

I would like to exemplify my bias in coding and how I was helped by this feedback. When child characters in the stories did not do what parents asked them to do, and as long as the characters were not overly aggressive about this I initially had a tendency to view this as the character having 'personality'. When differences on this matter occurred on several occasions between the postgraduate student and myself I



realised that this was a blind spot and began to adjust my scoring and rate these responses of the participants more in terms of being focused primarily on their own needs.

### **Qualitative analysis**

From a pilot study as well as training in the use of story stems and from familiarity with the work of the MacArthur Research Group it was apparent that the stems elicited very rich data concerning object relations. Although an object relations scale such as the one presented in this research was necessary in order to compare two groups, it could not do justice to the complexity and richness of the themes that appear as a response to the stems. Moreover, the object relations scale used here does not account for the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interaction between the interviewer and interviewee can give important information about the object relations of the participant, adding another dimension to the assessment of object relations as elicited in the response to the actual stems themselves. I will discuss this dimension further in the section about subjectivity in the research. To capture this complexity a qualitative approach was also necessary.

### **Qualitative methodologies considered**

This present research focuses on the participant's experiences of object relating as projected in their play. Although I wanted to stick closely to the participants' responses in a 'bottom-up way' (Braun and Clarke, 2006), I had my own lens, i.e. the stories as seen from the point of view of object relations. This made the research akin to an observational account of these object relations.

This meant that a type of analysis such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was not appropriate for this present research because IPA focuses on the interpretations that participants ascribe to their own experiences. Smith states the aims of IPA: 'The participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world; the researcher is trying to make sense of their participant making sense of their personal and social world' (Smith, 2004, p.40). IPA is thus rooted in hermeneutics.

Grounded Theory was also considered as a means of identifying and analysing the data in this present research. Although Grounded Theory does make use of focussed coding, which is a strength regarding the present research, it is ultimately based on a bottom-up coding of the data with a view to generating a theory or a model (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The purpose of this empirical research, however, was not to generate theory. It was both a description and comparison of the object

relations of children who stutter and children who don't stutter, and these results would then be discussed in terms of the theory generated from an analysis of the psychoanalytic case-studies, which was the focus of chapter three.

The approach finally chosen for this present research was Thematic Analysis. A feature of this flexible method, which is independent from theory and epistemology (Braun and Clarke, 2006), is that it can be data-driven or analyst driven (ibid). This was pertinent in the present research because the researcher was not interested in the data from the perspective of the interviewee, but in its relevance to object relations. There is also a choice between identifying themes at a semantic and explicit level or themes at a latent and interpretative level (ibid), which is vital when considering material from a psychoanalytic perspective. As Braun and Clarke argue, it is 'a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality' (ibid, p. 6). Identifying themes at a latent level was particularly relevant in order to compensate for the scoring of Scors-G, the analysis of which was focussed on what was explicit in the responses of the participants.

When analysing the interviews I followed closely the stages as set down by Braun and Clarke (2006). The method I took is as follows: After transcribing the data I looked at the responses to the stems line by line

and generated codes. I then collated the codes and grouped them into potential themes (Ibid). I then reviewed the themes by seeing if they worked both in terms of the coded extracts and the entire data set, which in this case was the responses to all the stems (Ibid). Patton's concepts of 'internal homogeneity' and 'external heterogeneity' (Patton, 1990) were taken into consideration at this phase, that is to say whether the themes were internally consistent and whether themes could be identifiably distinguished. A thematic map of the analysis was then created. The themes were then further considered in relation to one another, with the specifics of each theme being refined, and names were given to the theme (Ibid). A report of the themes of each participant was then made; the reports were then collated for both the experimental and control groups for each of the age groups. In the final stage these groups were compared. See appendix C (i), and C (ii) for examples of these reports.

### **Subjectivity in the research**

It was inevitable, no matter what steps were taken, that the relationship between the interviewer and the participant would impact on the results. All of the interviews with the participants, for example, were conducted by myself, a middle-aged male. I took a friendly and relaxed stance with the participants, but, as I will explain in the section

'Research Protocol', I tried to keep within a frame. Although in some sciences the goal is to eliminate matters pertaining to the research relationship as much as possible, authors such as Hollway and Jefferson have argued that the transference and countertransference can actually contribute to the results of a study (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). This is particularly relevant in the present empirical research as the focus was on the object relations of the participants. For this reason during and after the interview I made observation notes on phenomena such as feelings and impressions, and the occasions when participants made reference to external events as well as behaviour such as smiles, which might indicate a participant's attitude to what was being expressed. I also noted and later reflected on the moments when I stepped out of my usual patterns of carrying out this research. I then took this data into consideration at the moment of doing the thematic analysis of the responses and when writing the discussion chapter.

### **Participants and recruitment**

Initially it was my intention to research children who stutter between the ages of 4 and 6. Although my research design could not show causality, my hypothesis was that the stutter is linked with the forming of the mind in the early years. Researching participants in the age group 4-6, which is close to the onset of most childhood stuttering (Morley, 1957; Andrews

and Harris, 1964) meant that they would be less likely to have suffered from the psychological *effects* of having stuttered for a long time.<sup>5</sup> I was thus more likely to tap into potential causal components of a stutter at this young age with fewer complications arising from a psychological reaction to having a stutter. However, I thought that recruiting only at this young age could limit the range of responses of the participants. Children at this age can be identified with actions (Weise *et al.*, 1991), so I decided it would be useful to research older children as well, who would tend to be more psychologically-minded and potentially more able to express themselves verbally. In one of the stems I would go on to use in which there is a conflict between mum and child over the holiday destination, for example, the participant at this young age group might just say we went on holiday and leave it at that. It might thus be easier to explore whether there is differentiation between CWS and CWNS with the older age group. Although there was more scope for the observation of data that is non-verbal in a thematic analysis, the object relations scale, which I also wanted to use, scored on the basis of verbalized accounts. Sparse verbalized accounts could thus problematize analysis (Weise and Tuber, 2004). Since the data of older children was potentially more tangible, i.e. verbalized, than with younger children, I

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<sup>5</sup> The onset of most childhood stuttering has been put in the age range 2-6 (Bloodstein, 1995; Peters and Starkweather, 1990; Andrews *et al.*, 1983)

felt this was a good reason to recruit them as well. Extending the age range was also necessary, because I was finding it very difficult to recruit participants and by increasing the age range I would improve my chances of recruitment. In the end I increased the age range to 10, as this is the oldest age that the SSAP has been administered.

Ideally, I would like to have researched children with a stutter as close as possible to the onset of the stutter as this would have increased the likelihood that the responses of the children with a stutter were not due to the effects of the stutter. Ultimately, however, this present research could not show causality, and so recruiting older children with a stutter should not be considered a flaw in the research design.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Exclusion criteria for taking part in the research were that participants were not eligible if they were below the age of 4 and above 10 years old, or had a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Children with a diagnosis of a mental health problem were excluded because the researcher hypothesized that the stutter is a problem at a deep layer of mental functioning, and a mental health issue would be a confounding factor. If children with a mental health problem were included, this would rule out support for my hypothesis that children with a stutter can be

distinguished from children with no stutter by an association between the former and a problem with psychic containment. In contrast, by excluding children with a diagnosis of a mental health problem, this would add strength to my hypothesis if it is supported by the data. The exclusion of participants with a diagnosis of a mental health problem was also crucial in this research because the research hypothesis emerged from case-studies on people with a stutter who underwent analysis, and the main rationale for doing empirical research was to investigate whether the hypothesis can find general support in the non-clinical population.

### **Recruitment process**

A long and difficult recruitment process took place. I made contact with many Speech and Language Providers throughout the UK. I placed numerous recruitments ads on the website of the British Stammering Association, and to recruit children with no stutter I made contact with many schools. The children who stutter were eventually all recruited through 2 different Speech and Language Providers in Essex, apart from one boy who was recruited through a school. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Essex in February, 2017 and for one of the Speech and Language Providers I also needed approval through IRAS, which was eventually obtained in February 2018. All of the



children with no stutter were recruited from two different Primary schools in Essex. All of the participants received an information sheet and a consent form either through the Speech and Language Provider or the school. See appendix D (i) for information sheet for parents; D(ii) for consent form; D (iii) for information sheet for children with a stutter (5-6 year-old); D (iv) for information sheet for children with a stutter (8-10 years old); E for letter from Speech and Language Provider to children with a stutter.

For the children with a stutter I arranged a time with the participant and parent, and with his/her school for the interview. All of the research interviews took place at the school of the child. All of the participants were thanked for taking part, and the researcher donated some books to the schools that were involved.

It had been my goal to recruit 20 children who stutter and 20 fluent speakers. This goal was based on my expectations around the number of children, especially those that stutter, that I would be able to recruit. I didn't have contacts in the area of speech and language therapy in the local area, and so I anticipated problems of recruitment. This was a small sample size, and not enough to potentially find a statistical significance between the two groups. It would still allow me to test the hypothesis that in stuttering there is a problem with container-contained relationships, but any claims would be tentative. In the end I was only

able to recruit 7 children with a stutter and 9 children with no stutter. See table below:

	Boys with stutter	Boys with no stutter	Girls with stutter	Girls with no stutter
5-6 year-old	5	5	0	1
9-10 year- old	1	1	1	2

I was fortunate in that all the participants fell in the age range of 5-6 years or 9-10 years, thus facilitating comparisons between boys in the age range 5-6, between boys in the age range 9-10, and between girls also in the age range 9-10. All of the children recruited had a mild stutter except one whose stutter could be termed mild to moderate. The sample size in this research was too small to think about making a distinction between children with a stutter in terms of the severity of the stutter. In the conclusion I state that it would be useful in future research to investigate potential correlations between severity of stutter and quality of containment.

### **Controlling for age, gender and socio-economic background**

The participants were categorized according to age, gender and socio-economic background, i.e. the professional status of parents. Being

controlled for age was important because of developmental differences. Oppenheim, Nir, Warren and Emde (1997) found that age impacted on responses to story stems both in the quantity and complexity of representation of ideas. Gender has also been found to impact on responses to the stems. Bretherton and Oppenheim, 2003; Page and Bretherton, 2000 and Von Klitzung, Kelsan, Emde, Robinson and Schmitz, 2000) found that girls were more prosocial and have themes that are more coherent, whereas boys showed more aggression as a response to the story stems; and socio-economic background was controlled for because of the impact of this on responses to stems. It actually turned out that all of the participants had parents in the Professional category of occupation. Overall then the group of children with a stutter as a whole would not just be compared with the control group of children with no stutter, but rather the comparison would be made at the level of sub-groups, that is to say gender and age.

### **Modification in research plan**

My research plans emerged and were modified as the preparation for the empirical study progressed. An important change was a shift to a more qualitative rather than quantitative perspective. Initially I had wanted to put greater emphasis on the object relations scale, which would facilitate a comparison between children who stutter and children

with no stutter. Having children with no stutter as a control group would potentially put limits on the data about the children with a stutter, potentially helping to highlight specific features of their inner world. I would then choose some of the narratives of these participants for thematic analysis in order to give justice to the data.

There were several reasons for leaning towards a more qualitative approach. On a practical level the sample was small, which ruled out the possibility of determining whether any potential difference between the group of children with a stutter and the control group had statistical significance. More important, however, was an emerging understanding that the use of thematic analysis was more compatible for a study focused on object relations. As I will outline in the section on limitations later in this chapter, there were some problems with using the object relations scale in this study. When using the object relations scale the researcher is dependent on seeing direct evidence in the responses for the codes that are chosen. However, at times object relational phenomena can only be inferred from the data. For example, as a response to the story stem in which the parents ask the child to go to his/her room and allow the parent's time to be alone, a participant tells a story in which the child goes to her room and just after the TV the parents were watching blows up. It can be inferred that the child was projecting aggression, but following the object relations scale aggression

and/or anger the researcher could not code for these emotions.

Thematic Analysis allowed a more flexible interpretation and more compatible for a psychoanalytically focused study.

However, I had concerns that by giving greater importance to Thematic Analysis I would end up with a vast array of data, which although rich, would be hard to manage. I thought it might be hard to make links in the data both within the group of children with a stutter and between this group and the children with no stutter. In the end, however, following the procedure of Braun and Clarke outlined above and writing first of all individual reports for each participant, followed by reports for each group, i.e. 5-6 year old children with a stutter (boys), and then a report comparing these 5-6 year old children with children with no stutter of the same age range and gender, I found that very useful links within the data set could be made.

With a focus on a qualitative approach I could thus work with a method of analysis that was more compatible with object relations, and by using an object relations scale along with this I was able to profit from triangulation, that is to say looking at the data from a variety of methods.

### **Ethical concerns**

Five of the stems used involved a potential conflict between a parental figure and child, or between siblings. Added to the fact that the participant

was meeting an unknown person for the first time, namely the interviewer, I thought that this might provoke some anxiety for the child. I therefore had to make some contingency plans before carrying out the research.

The interests of the participants were safeguarded in various ways. When I communicated with the school, where the research was going to take place, I was put in contact with a responsible person, who was either the teacher of the participant or a teaching assistant. When I arrived at the school I said to the person responsible that the research interview might cause some anxiety for the participant, and therefore to monitor the child after the research took place. I also gave this person my contact details to contact me if necessary. After the research interview there was a debrief with the participant when I asked the participant how they were feeling and to speak to the teacher or the assistant if they felt a bit worried afterwards. Before leaving the school I made contact with the person responsible.

### **Information sheets**

Both the participant and parent(s) received separate information sheets. The purpose of the information sheet for the participant was to give him/her information about the research in a form that they could relate to, and to ask for the participant's *assent*. See appendix D (iii), and D (iv).

In the information sheet for the parent (s), who also received a consent form to sign (see appendix D(ii)), I outlined the steps that I would take if the participant got distressed. I also stated here the limits of confidentiality, namely that I would not tell anyone what was told to me unless there was indication that the child or others might be hurt. If this was the case, I stated that I would talk initially to my supervisor and would then contact the relevant authorities. I stressed that the participant's participation was voluntary and that he/ she was free to withdraw at any time without giving reason and without penalty. The parent was also informed of the type of information that would be collected, namely the age, gender and profession of parents, and that this data would be stored safely in electronic files with a secure password. They were also informed that there would be a written record of the video recordings, and that when the research was published anything that could help to identify the participant would be removed. The parent was also given the contact details of the people at the University of Essex who they could contact in case they would like to make a complaint.

### **Research Context and Protocol.**

All of the interviews took place in the school of the participants. In all of the interviews, except one, the participant was alone with the interviewer in a room that was easily accessed. The regulations of the school meant

that a teaching assistant had to be present during the interview of Frank, a 5 year-old child with a stutter. The teaching assistant sat at one end of the room reading a book, and I asked her in front of Frank to respect his confidentiality. The interviews were scheduled to last around 30 minutes (See appendix F for interview schedule). There were 8 stems, the 6 assessed stems along with an introductory birthday stem and a winding-down stem. At the end of the interview there was a debrief to assess whether the participants had any concerns about taking part in the research. The 6 assessed stems were videotaped, as had been pointed out in the information sheet. As props I used playmobil figures representing the family as well pieces of furniture such as TV and cooker.

I endeavoured to conduct the research interviews in the same way for all the participants, and I wanted to avoid as much as possible having a significant impact on the responses of the participants. I wanted to maintain the frame of the research as constant as possible so as to be able to compare CWS and CWNS. Initially an unassessed Birthday stem was presented, with the purposes of helping the participant to relax, of familiarizing the participant with the activity, and for the participant to give his/her own names to the characters. Before presenting each stem the interviewer enlisted the help of each participant in setting up the situation, and the same props were made available to every participant.



The stems were presented in the same order for each participant. The interviewer followed a script for the presentation of the stems, and each stem was followed by the instructions, 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'. I followed the protocol of the SSAP regarding when and how to give prompts to the participants (Hodges and Hillman, 2012), so for example, in the picture story if there was no mention of the picture I would ask, 'Does anyone say anything about the picture?'. I avoided making comments like 'good' or 'interesting' story, as this might have an impact on the type of story the participant narrated. I took a friendly and relaxed stance towards the participants, but did not engage them in conversation in matters outside of the domain of the research. When participants divulged information about the external world I acknowledged that and moved on.

### **The Pilot study**

The Pilot study was carried out for different purposes. I wanted to see if the stems would elicit appropriate data for this research on object relations and to check specifically if the object relation scale could be used to analyse these responses. It also gave me some practice in administering the story stem assessment.

4 participants took part, all girls and children with no stutter, ranging from 5-9 years old, and they were all recruited through colleagues at the university. Ethical approval had already been given by the University of Essex on 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017.

I used a range of story stems in different orders, with not all the participants responding to the same stems. The purpose of these variations was to help me to consider different factors that impacted on the quality of the responses. The stems used were: the Picture story, in which the main character brings a picture home from school; an exclusion story, in which the main character is excluded from the living-room, where mum and dad want to spend some time alone; a story in which the main character is not allowed to see her/ his friend; a story in which mum has a headache and wants quietness, but a friend arrives wanting to watch tv; and a story in which mum and dad go away for the evening, leaving the children with grandmother and then the parents return the next day. I followed the same protocol as I would for the main study, in which I presented the story and finished with 'Now can you show and tell me what happens next?'

The stems generally produced rich data about object relations. Here are some examples from a range of participants. When the child doll of one of the participants showed her picture to the parents in the

Picture story, the mum's reply was 'Good' [picture], whereas dad's response was 'Very pretty'. That dad used the word 'Pretty' just after mum using the word 'Good' could suggest something about the participant's representation of the relationship between dad and daughter, i.e. the oedipal nature of the data. It was also interesting from an object relations perspective that in the picture story of another participant, when the child comes into the room no-one looks at her, resulting in the child resorting to being naughty and turning off the TV, and then referring to herself as 'Bad Page' (the name of the child doll). The richness was also shown when in the story in which the child's hand is burnt the story became very dramatic, with the arrival of the ambulance and the fire brigade.

Two of the stems, however, elicited less response than the others- the story about the headache and the story in which the parents go away for the evening and then return. Even though the pilot had only 4 participants, making it difficult to make an informed decision, I took this information into consideration and compared these to other stems in the SSAP and Macarthur batteries in terms of their potential for providing data about object relations. In the end I omitted these two stems from the main study, and opted for other stems from the batteries.

In a subsequent analysis of the data the object relations scale proved to be capable of categorising the participants' responses. For example, when the parent figures of one participant asked the child doll to go to her room as the parents wanted to spend some time alone together, the participant said the child doll just 'ignore[s]'. This can be scored in the dimension 'Emotional investment in relationships' with a rating of '1', i.e. focusing on their own needs in relationships. In another example one of the participant's child character sneaked out when told by the parent that she couldn't see her friend that day. This could also be rated '1' in the same dimension, i.e. focusing on own needs in relationships. Since the research data could be categorised according to the scale, this meant that the children with a stutter and children with no stutter could be assessed against each other by comparing the numbers.

### **Limitations of the study**

In this section I refer to limitations that I was aware of at different stages of the research process.

This was an observational study of how children with a stutter and children with no stutter responded in semi-structured play to predominantly conflictive situations between family members.

Differences between the two groups were suggested by the study,

namely the extremes of either scant emotion or excessive emotion and a problem with responding fully to the stems in the responses of the children with a stutter. Unlike the children with a stutter, the children with no stutter showed a better capacity to maintain limits between characters, and to symbolize. There was a small sample, but this was not detrimental to the results arising from the thematic analysis. However, a small sample did impact on the results from the object relations scale. Because of the small numbers statistical significance could not be verified. The object relations scale, through which a numerical comparison between the two groups could be made, would need to be used in future research with a much larger sample for the results from the thematic analysis to be backed up quantitatively.

Another limitation of this study was that it was not blind. The researcher was aware whether a participant had a stutter or not while conducting the interviews and during analysis when coding the responses. Some precautions were taken to offset bias in the research. The responses to the Story Stems were also coded by a postgraduate student, who was blind to whether it was a response of a child with or without a stutter. As stated previously in this chapter, the researcher and the postgraduate student met after both had coded a participant and discussed the coding. Another precaution was to follow closely the

procedures set out to code the responses when using the object relations scale and thematic analysis. However, despite these precautions there was undoubtedly some unconscious bias both when interviewing and when coding. For future research one way to deal with this limitation is for one researcher to carry out the interviews, and for the principal researcher, blind to whether the participant is a person with a stutter or not, to code the responses.

Moreover, the researcher had some issues with applying the object relations scale to the responses of the participants. I followed closely the method of scoring recommended by Stein and Slavin-Mulford (2018), and an aspect of this was that 'we should only score the information directly provided in the narrative' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.56). Although by following their guidance this potentially increased reliability of the scoring (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018), it did mean at times that this approach seemed to have lacked potential for linking with psychoanalytic theory and the research question. For example, Frank, a five year-old child with a stutter, made his character in the story not respond verbally to mum's prohibition regarding seeing his friend, but immediately after related that the dinner got burnt. From a psychoanalytic perspective the researcher would infer the presence of aggression. According to the

scale, however, it was not an indication of aggression. A similar problem occurred regarding the scoring of the expression of inner states and degree of intimacy and understanding of the 5-6 year old participants. With this young age group a lot of their narratives were based on actions and were generally short, and in the dimension 'Emotional investment in relationships' the participants were assessed on their verbalization of intimacy in relationships. It was difficult to differentiate groups at this level. The difference between the two groups, CWS and CWNS, at this younger age range, was at a lower level of functioning on this dimension, namely at maintaining or not the connection with the other and the use or not of dialogue. The object relations scale was, I think, not sensitive enough to pick up on this lower level difference between the groups. This was not such a problem for the older participants as they were generally more verbal in their expression of inner states. In the end I decided to adhere to the guidance of Stein and Slavin-Mulford (2018) for reasons of reliability, with the understanding that a later thematic analysis of the material would give me more flexibility in interpretation. Despite having these issues with the application of the object relations scale in this present research, the scale had unforeseen benefits such as highlighting aspects of object relating, such as difficulties in

differentiating characters in the responses of CWS, that could help inform the discussion of the research question.

Although it had been my intention to observe a variety of interactions in the story stem situations, I realized when I was writing up the thesis that I did not have a situation that included only the main character and the father, whereas I did have a stem which contained only the mother and the main character. Upon reflection I realized that I was at least partly influenced by previous researchers on stuttering and on the story stem approach. A theme in the research literature on people with a stutter is the phenomenon of the absent father (Wilkinson, 2001; Barbara, 1961; Glauber, 1982). Wilkinson, for example, writes that her analysand's father 'might have acted as a bridge to the outside world and might have offered his son some alternative to that of the illusory oneness with mother, but he was often absent' (Wilkinson, 2001, p.260). Moreover, from the review I made, the battery of stems from the MacArthur set or from the story stem technique developed at the Anna Freud Centre do not have stems which include the main character and father alone. Responses to a stem which had the main character alone with the father might have added nuance to the findings from the empirical research, for example, that children with a stutter had a problem in differentiating



between characters and in responding fully to the emotional issues in the stems.

Since it has been suggested in the literature mentioned above that the phenomenon of the absent or remote father is significant in the life experiences of a person with a stutter or in his inner world, the gender of the interviewer is a factor to be considered more carefully in future research both as regards the choice of interviewer and in the analysis of the results. The present research was carried out by a middle-aged male, so this may have had an impact on the responses to the research situation of the children with a stutter that was not so significant for the children with no stutter.

#### **Brief summary of chapter four**

In this chapter I have laid out how I planned to explore whether there is empirical support or not for the hypothesis that for children with a stutter there is a problem with early containment. The research data would be elicited by the presentation of story stems, and the container-contained relationships would be operationalized in this research as the capacity to address the emotional issues implicit in the stem. Further support for the usefulness of understanding stuttering in terms of container-contained relationships would be sought by exploring whether there was an indication of the presence

of the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position, Klein's related concepts, and whether Bion's container-contained could help explain features of the data. The data would be analyzed using both an object relations scale that assessed children with a stutter and children with no stutter on a numerical scale, and using thematic analysis. In the following chapter I will present the results of this empirical study.

## **Chapter Five: The Results of the study**

In this chapter I am going to present the results of the study comparing the object relations and features of the inner world of children with a stutter (CWS) and children with no stutter (CWNS). In the analysis using the object relations scale, which is presented first, I stick closely to the method of analysis devised by the authors of the scale; and in the thematic analysis although I use an object relations lens, I stick closely to the responses of the participants. In the following chapter I will discuss these results in terms of the research question. (See appendix G (i) for transcript of a 5 year-old child with a stutter; G (ii) for transcript of 6 year-old child with no stutter; G(iii) for transcript of 6 year-old child with a stutter; G (iv) for transcript of 9 year-old child with a stutter.)

### **The object relations scale**

The object relations scale has 6 different dimensions, namely complexity of representation; affective quality of relationships; emotional investment in relationships; understanding social causality; experience and management of aggressive impulses; and emotional investment in values and morals. Each of these are presented separately. The results of the participants in the age group 5-6 years are presented first, and then followed by the older age group. After

the presentation of the raw data, i.e. numbers for each dimension, I will give the reader an indication of what lies behind these numbers.

**Results for 5-6 year old boys: comparison between children with a stutter (cws) and children with no stutter (cwns). Possible range of scores 1-7\_(Results of one CWNS (Girl) of the same age group are also presented)**

### COMPLEXITY OF REPRESENTATION

Mean score for each CWS (Boy) over the six stems	Frank 2.2	Paul 2.3	Jack 2.2	Arthur 2	John 2.7	Group Mean 2.3
Mean score for each CWNS (Boy) over the six stems	Sean 2.8	Trev 3.2	Sylvester 2.3	Kirk 3.0	Ben 2.7	Group Mean 2.8
Mean score for CWNS (Girl) over the six stems	Tulip 3.2					

**Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)**

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	3	3	2	1	3	2.4
Stem 2	2	2	2	2	3	2.2
Stem 3	2	3	3	3	2	2.6
Stem 4	2	2	2	2	2	2
Stem 5	2	3	2	2	4	2.6
Stem 6	2	3	2	2	2	2.2

**Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)**

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	2	3	2	3	2	2.4
Stem 2	4	3	2	4	3	3.2
Stem 3	2	3	2	3	3	2.6
Stem 4	3	3	3	4	3	3.2
Stem 5	3	4	3	2	2	2.8
Stem 6	3	3	2	2	3	2.6

**Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS/ girl)**

	Tulip
Stem 1	3
Stem 2	4
Stem 3	2
Stem 4	3
Stem 5	5
Stem 6	2

Comment:

Complexity of Representation assesses 'the presence, degree, and differentiation of internal states' and relational boundaries. (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018). There was a slight difference between CWS and CWNS on this dimension in favour of CWNS, but because the number of participants was low there was no way to determine if this was statistically significant. There was not a lot of differentiation in internal states of the participants from this age group in general, for both CWS and CWNS. Stories for both groups generally tended to have a lot of action, thus making it hard to distinguish the groups in terms of complexity of inner states. However, the representation of complexity of relational boundaries and differentiation between characters was clearly more present in the stories of CWNS. As a response to the stem in which a child brought a picture home Paul, a 6 year-old CWS, presented a story in which all the characters acted in unison as they all watched TV together and then they all fed the pets together. This lack of differentiation was also suggested in the story of Jack, another CWS, as a response to the same stem. When he was presented with this same stem, the picture was not mentioned even when prompted by the interviewer. It was emphasized that Blake [his main character] missed the show that the family was watching on TV. This suggests that in this representation of the family individuality was not valued. In stem 2 in

which the child was excluded from being with the parents, either the CWS as a group were not apparently affected by this exclusion or ignored the limit imposed by the parent. In fact, Jack and Arthur stated that they were happy when excluded, and John just played in his room before going to bed. Paul and Frank, two CWS, went back into the room where the parents were and stayed, even after the interviewer reminded them of the request of the parent, namely to go to their room.

In contrast, in response to this exclusion stem, for example, Kirk, Tulip, Trev and Sean (all CWNS) had characters that were able to accept the limits imposed by the parents, and, as I will comment on this more in an analysis of 'Emotional Investment in Relationships', were able to maintain relationships between the characters despite these differences. Trev, a CWNS, thought that the main character was being excluded from his parents as a punishment, and so in order to bridge the gap the main character started reading, which led to him getting praise from his father.

**Affective Quality of Relationships (AFF)**

Mean score for each CWS (Boy)	Frank 4	Paul 4.3	Jack 3.5	Arthur 4	John 4	Group Mean 4
Mean score for each CWNS (BOY)	Sean 5.2	Trev 4.5	Sylvester 4.0	Kirk 3.8	Ben 4.3	Group Mean 4.36
Mean score for each CWS (girl)	Tulip 5					

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	2	4	4	3.6
Stem 3	4	5	3	3	3	3.6
Stem 4	4	4	3	4	4	3.8
Stem 5	4	5	5	4	4	4.4
Stem 6	4	4	4	4	4	4

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	5	5	4	4	4	4.4



Stem 2	6	5	4	4	4	4.6
Stem 3	4	5	4	4	6	4.6
Stem 4	4	5	6	4	4	4.6
Stem 5	6	4	3	3	4	4
Stem 6	6	6	4	4	4	4.8

	Tulip
Stem 1	6
Stem 2	4
Stem 3	4
Stem 4	4
Stem 5	6
Stem 6	6

Comment:

Affective quality of representations assesses 'what the person expects from the relationship and how s/he tends to experience significant others' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.56). It also assesses the 'emotion explicitly described in the narrative'. 'It [thus] captures the emotional lens with which we view the world' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.56). Most of the scores of both groups fell around 4. 4 is the default score and is scored 'where affective quality is absent, bland, or limited' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.57). Generally across the two groups there was limited expression of affect, which contrasted with the responses of the older age group as will be seen later. I think an important reason for this limited expression of affect in the younger participants is because this scale assesses the verbalization of affect, and children of this age group in

relation to projective stimuli often produce shorter accounts, especially in terms of affect (Weise and Tuber, 2004).

The data does suggest, however, that for CWNS there was a slightly greater positive expectancy of relationships. Sean's character received praise for producing a picture, and Trev's character received praise for reading. A CWNS showed surprise that a sibling pushed another off the chair, and the sibling apologized, and Sylvester conveyed the expectation that his mum would sit down with him to negotiate about the holiday. Tulip, a CWNS (girl) revealed particularly positive expectations surrounding relationships. Her response in story 5, in which a sibling pushed the main character off a chair, stood out in the sense that the siblings found a way to share the chair. The responses of Paul, a CWS, also expressed quite a lot of affect and positive expectation between the main character and friend as well as sibling, but this came across at times as Pollyannaish, or naively optimistic, as he expressed statements such as 'you are my best friend ever'

Negative affect was most clearly seen in the responses of Jack, a CWS. There was expectation of negative affect in his holiday story. When the family went where the main character wanted to go he ended up getting grounded. When both Arthur and Jack brought a picture home this wasn't responded to by the family even after

prompting by the interviewer and in Jack's case the focus was on the TV show he had missed rather than the picture. It is worth noting that although there was no expectation of Jack's character (a CWS) that his picture would be responded to, when the main character was pushed off his chair and hurt himself in story 5, there was a lot of comforting by mum as she put him to bed with all his favourite toys. This suggests that although as an individual he did not seem to be appreciated, he seemed to receive care when there was a mum-baby relationship.

#### Summary:

There was generally limited expression of affect in both groups. There seems to be a slightly greater positive expectancy of relationships in the responses of CWNS, and some evidence of negativity in the responses of CWS.

### Emotional investment in relationships (EIR)

Mean score for each CWS (Boy)	Frank 2.8	Paul 3	Jack 2.2	Arthur 2	John 3	Group Mean 2.6
Mean score for each CWN S (Boy)	Sean 3.2	Trev 3.8	Sylveste r 2.5	Kirk 2	Ben 2.5	Group Mean 2.8
Mean score for each CWN S (girl)	Tulip 3.2					

### Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	3	3	2	2	3	2.6
Stem 2	2	1	2	2	3	1.8
Stem 3	3	4	2	2	2	2.6
Stem 4	3	2	2	2	3	2.4
Stem 5	3	5	2	2	4	3.2
Stem 6	3	3	3	2	3	2.8

### Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	3	4	2	2	3	2.8
Stem 2	4	5	2	2	3	3.2
Stem 3	2	3	2	2	2	2.2
Stem 4	3	3	3	2	3	2.8
Stem 5	4	4	3	2	3	3.2
Stem 6	3	4	3	2	3	3

	Tulip
Stem 1	3
Stem 2	2
Stem 3	2
Stem 4	2
Stem 5	5
Stem 6	3

#### Comments:

Emotional Investment in Relationships ‘assesses a person’s ability for intimacy and emotional sharing ..[and] examines the extent of interaction between people as well as the quality of their relationships’ (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.73). The results suggested that it was difficult to distinguish the two groups on this dimension.

Generally for both groups, CWS and CWNS, there was not strong evidence of intimate relating and sharing among characters. Perhaps

verbalizing intimacy is not really a feature of the psychology of a 5-6 year old.

Although not assessed by the object relations scale, the two groups, children with a stutter and children with no stutter, could be distinguished at the level of a more basic relational functioning, namely maintaining a relational connection and/or having a dialogue. In response to stem 2, the stem in which the child was excluded from the parents' company, I have already mentioned how Trev, a CWNS, worked hard to maintain an emotional connection between the main character and the father. In response to this same stem Sean, a CWNS, used the family pets to maintain a relationship with the parents by the pets roaming between the main character's bedroom and the room where the parents are. Meanwhile, the main character, in obedience to the parents, remained in his bedroom.

In contrast both Arthur and Jack, two CWS, had a main character that merely played with his toys when excluded, and the relationship with the parents was not referred to. In the response to the stem in which a sibling was pushed off a chair, the main character in the story of Arthur just went to the hospital, and there was no mention of relationships.

There tended to be more dialogue between characters in the responses of children with no stutter, although this was not

necessarily maintained throughout the whole interview. For example, there was an extended dialogue in the conflict over the holiday between mum and the child in Sylvester's response, and in Trev's narrative there was a dialogue between the child and mum when the child wasn't allowed to see his friend. In contrast, this interaction and dialogue seemed to be missing in the responses of CWS. In the exclusion story the parents in the narrative of Paul, a CWS, seemed to disappear when he talked with them, because he ended up asking and then answering his own questions. In the story in which the child brought a picture home Frank showed the picture and, with no interaction, put it back immediately in his school-bag, which was then put in the cupboard. In the story of another CWS in which there was a conflict about where to go on holiday the participant merely said they didn't go there, with no other interaction. Likewise, in the story of a CWS in which the siblings were alone, a sister cooked a lot of food for the brother, but they didn't communicate. It is also worth pointing out that the situations in which some of the children with a stutter showed evidence of interacting/having a dialogue were in relation to a sibling (both John and Paul in stem 5) and in relation to a friend (Paul in stem 3).

## Summary

Although there did not seem to be a difference between children with a stutter and children with no stutter in terms of intimacy and emotional sharing, the two groups seemed to differ in favour of the children with no stutter in terms of maintaining an emotional connection with others and the use of dialogue

## Understanding Social Causality (SC)

Mean score for each CWS (Boy)	Frank 2.2	Paul 2.5	Jack 2.5	Arthur 2	John 3	Group Mean 2.4
Mean score for each CWN S (Boy)	Sean 3.2	Trev 3.5	Sylveste r 3	Kirk 3.2	Ben 2.8	Group Mean 3.1
Mean score for each CWN S (Girl)	Tulip 2.8					



## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	2	2	2	2	3	2.2
Stem 2	2	3	2	2	3	2.4
Stem 3	2	3	3	2	2	2.4
Stem 4	2	3	2	2	3	2.4
Stem 5	2	2	3	2	3	2.4
Stem 6	3	2	3	2	3	2.6

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	2	4	2	2	3	2.8
Stem 2	4	4	2	3	3	3.2
Stem 3	3	4	2	3	3	3
Stem 4	3	3	5	4	3	2.8
Stem 5	3	5	4	4	2	3.2
Stem 6	4	5	3	3	3	3.4

	Tulip
Stem 1	2
Stem 2	2
Stem 3	3
Stem 4	2
Stem 5	5
Stem 6	3

Social Causality (SC) assesses how human behavior is understood. It 'examines both the flow and detail of the narrative, as well as the extent to which people's actions and intentions are depicted as coherent and organized and nuanced versus distorted/disorganized and/or simplistic/concrete' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.107).

The scores for this dimension were higher in favour of CWNS. The responses for both groups were focused on actions rather than making sense of behavior, and this explains why there were few scores with 5 or above.

There seemed to be more coherence and elaboration in the narratives of CWNS. Although Sylvester, who only scored 3 overall on this dimension, was visibly anxious in the first few stories, from story 4 he produced elaborated turns. Trev's stories elaborated on the issues implicit in the stem. In story 5 in which the main character was pushed off a chair, for example, he was able to deal with the problem in a nuanced way by maintaining a relationship, but by making the sibling stand in the corner as punishment.

A lack of response to the issue implicit in the stem due to sparse narratives was a feature of some children with a stutter. Arthur's response to the holiday story was to say, 'They went where the boy wanted to go' without any engagement with the problem. Likewise, the

stories of the two CWS (Frank and Paul), whose stories weren't sparse, had events which just happened with little sense of how they related to the stem. These two participants had stories with a lot of routine actions like going to bed and particularly the consumption of an enormous amount of food. However, a lack of direct engagement with the stem was also apparent in some of the stories of Ben (a CWNS) who seemed engrossed in his own world of building walls and jumping from them in a few of his stories.

### **Experience and management of aggressive impulses (AGG)**

Mean score for each CWS (Boy)	Frank 4	Paul 4.2	Jack 4	Arthur 4	John 4	Group Mean 4
Mean score for each CWN S (BOY)	Sean 4	Trev 4.3	Sylveste r 3.8	Kirk 4	Ben 4	Group Mean 4
Mean score for each CWS (girl)	Tulip 4					

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 3	4	5	4	4	4	4
Stem 4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 6	4	4	4	4	4	4

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 5	4	6	3	4	4	4.2
Stem 6	4	4	4	4	4	4

	Tulip
Stem 1	4
Stem 2	4
Stem 3	4
Stem 4	4
Stem 5	4
Stem 6	4

### **Experience of aggressive impulses (AGG)**

This dimension 'assesses a person's ability to experience and express anger' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.127). 'Lower scores are suggestive of more struggles with anger management, whereas higher scores are reflective of more mature ways of acknowledging and expressing anger' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.127).

The scores for the two groups were basically the same. The large majority of participants in both groups expressed no aggressive impulses or anger directly in their stories and so received the default score of 4, and it will be seen how this contrasts with the older group (CWS). The scoring of the experience of anger or aggression was problematic in this system because rating 'is based on what is specifically expressed in the narrative' (Stein and Slavin-Mulford, 2018, p.56). Thus, it did not capture more nuanced expression of anger. When the cooking burnt just after the main character of Frank, a CWS, was not allowed to see his friend, for example, this, according to this scale, was not rated as the expression of anger. However, these unconscious dynamics were represented in the thematic analysis.

### Emotional Investment in Values and Moral Standards (EIM).

Mean score for each CWS (Boy)	Frank 3.3	Paul 3.8	Jack 3.3	Arthur 4	John 3.8	Group Mean 3.6
Mean score for each CWN S (Boy)	Sean 4.2	Trev 4	Sylveste r 3.7	Kirk 3	Ben 3.7	Group Mean 3.7
Mean score for each CWN S (Girl)	Tulip 4.2					

### Breakdown of results for each stem (CWS)

	Frank	Paul	Jack	Arthur	John	Group Mean
Stem 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	2	3	4	3	3.2
Stem 3	4	4	3	4	4	3.8
Stem 4	4	2	3	4	4	3.4
Stem 5	3	5	4	4	4	4
Stem 6	4	4	4	4	4	4

## Breakdown of results for each stem (CWNS)

	Sean	Trev	Sylvester	Kirk	Ben	Group Mean
Stem 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Stem 3	4	4	4	1	4	3.4
Stem 4	4	4	4	1	2	3
Stem 5	5	4	2	4	4	3.8
Stem 6	4	4	4	4	4	4

	Tulip
Stem 1	4
Stem 2	4
Stem 3	4
Stem 4	4
Stem 5	5
Stem 6	4

Comment: This dimension 'measures how a person views...and acts in relation to morality and compassion for others' (p.89).

For this dimension most participants of both groups received a default score of 4, meaning that the stories contained no moral issue. Kirk, a CWNS, received a lower score on this dimension because of behaving in self-indulgent ways without a sense of remorse. For example, when the parent figures wanted to book a holiday online,

Kirk's main character planned to take the computer and then to lock the door to prevent this from happening. In some of the responses of a CWS there was a lower score because of a moral rigidity towards self. In story 4, for example, in which the family went along with his idea for a holiday, Jack's main character ended up doing something wrong during the holiday and became grounded for 3 months. Paul, another CWS, received a low score for a few of the responses because of behaving in a self-indulgent way without a sense of remorse.

**Results for 9 year-old boys: comparison between children with a stutter (cws) and children with no stutter (cwns). Possible range of scores 1-7**

**Complexity of Representations of People.**

Mean score for CWS	Tom 2.3
Mean score for CWNS	Pete 3

Breakdown of results for each stem:

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		2		3
Stem 2		3		3



Stem 3	2	3
Stem 4	3	3
Stem 5	2	3
Stem 6	1	3

Comment:

A difference between the CWS and CWNS was suggested by these results. The main difference between Tom and Pete was that the former expressed less differentiation or psychological space between the characters. There was both a lot more aggression towards others and evidence of merging with objects in the responses of the CWS. In the exclusion stem of Tom, for example, the family merged together in anticipation of a new-born, and in the conflict between the siblings in stem 5 the best friend of a sibling 'whacks' the other sibling over the head with a frying pan. In both stories 3 and 6 the main character was physically restrained or dragged home by the father.

### **Emotional Investment in Relationships**

Mean score for CWS	Tom 1.7
Mean score for CWNS	Pete 3.8

Breakdown of results for each stem:

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		3		5
Stem 2		1		3
Stem 3		1		3
Stem 4		3		3
Stem 5		1		3
Stem 6		1		5

Comment:

The CWNS scores higher than the CWS on this dimension. However, this is not tested for statistical significance. In the responses of Pete there was more indication of a positive relationship. He could have a dialogue with his mum about why he couldn't see his friend, and they went to the cinema together. He placed a lot of value on seeing his friend. However, his narrative showed evidence of focusing primarily on his own needs, for example when he had the mum character wait for the main character while he was playing in the garden. Although there were moments of caring in the responses of Tom, for example support which the main character received from his best friend to retrieve a picture, the relationships in the narratives of the CWS tended to be tumultuous. They tended to be either very aggressive or

idealized, and Tom's responses had practically no interaction or dialogue.

### Understanding of Social Causality

Mean score for CWS	Tom 2.2
Mean score for CWNS	Pete 4.6

Breakdown of results for each stem:

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		2		5
Stem 2		2		5
Stem 3		3		3
Stem 4		2		5
Stem 5		2		4
Stem 6		2		5

Comment: The CWNS scored higher than the CWS. However, this was not tested for statistical significance. A reason for this potential difference between the two groups is that the narratives of Pete were largely coherent, generally more relevant to the stem presented, and that seemed to be more grounded in the reality and everyday concerns of a 9 year-old boy. When he was asked to go to his room so that the parents could spend some time alone together, the

reaction of the main character was to 'sneak out' and go and see his friend. This desire to meet with his friend was expressed in stories 1, 2 and 3. In contrast to this, the stories of the CWS contained a lot of events, predominantly aggressive, that seemed irrelevant to the situation. In the first stem in which a child brought a picture home to show his family, the story developed into the dog taking the picture and causing havoc in the house. Likewise, as a response to the last stem in which the character burnt his hand the CWS produced a story in which there was a lot of destruction. It was not just destructive acts that were irrelevant to the situation. In stem 2 when mum and dad wanted to spend some quiet time alone, the CWS created a story in which the mum went to hospital to have a baby, and as a response to the conflict between the main character and mum in the holiday stem Tom created a story of escalating conflict between the parents, which caused anxiety in the children, who ended up cooking for the parents their favourite food and putting them to bed.

### **Affective Quality of Representations**

Mean score for CWS	Tom
	2.5

Mean score for CWNS	Pete
	5.4

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		3		6
Stem 2		4		4
Stem 3		2		5
Stem 4		4		6
Stem 5		1		5
Stem 6		1		6

Comment:

On this dimension the CWNS scored higher than the CWS. However, this is not tested for statistical significance. A reason for the potential difference between the two participants was that for Pete there was an indication of a positive relationship between the child and parent, and as I have already mentioned between the main character and his friend. In story 3 where the main character was not allowed to see his friend, and was forbidden to watch TV by his father, he narrated a story in which mum invited the main character to the cinema. There was thus the expectation of an object that was kind and sensitive to the needs of the child. For Tom, on the other hand, there seemed to be abuse in his narratives. In the story about the child not being allowed to see his friend, for example, the conflict could not be solved through verbal communication. Dad had to drag him home and send

him to his room. In story 5 a friend of a sibling hit the other sibling over the head with a frying-pan, and mum in the same story, after yelling at the sibling, threw the TV in the bin.

### **Experience and management of Aggressive Impulses.**

Mean score for CWS	Tom 2.5
Mean score for CWNS	Pete 4

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		2		4
Stem 2		4		4
Stem 3		1		4
Stem 4		5		4
Stem 5		1		4
Stem 6		2		4

Comment: On this dimension the CWNS scores were higher than the CWS. However, this is not tested for statistical significance. In the stories of the fluent speaker there was no evidence of anger or aggression, and so Pete received a default score of 4. However, in the responses of Tom there was a lot of aggression expressed in 4 of the stems.

### Emotional Investment in Values and Moral Standards.

Mean score for CWS	Tom 2.5
Mean score for CWNS	Pete 3.8

	CWS	Tom	CWNS	Pete
Stem 1		4		4
Stem 2		4		3
Stem 3		1		4
Stem 4		4		4
Stem 5		1		4
Stem 6		1		4

Comment: On this dimension the CWNS Pete scored higher than the CWS. However, this is not tested for statistical significance. Pete, the CWNS, scored mainly the default score of 4, where no particular moral concern was raised. The scores of the CWS Tom were mainly lower because of a lack of remorse for behaving in an aggressive way, and could have been lower still if they hadn't been balanced by moments of affection and care for the object, for example in story 1, when the best friend helped the main character to locate the picture.

**Results for 9 year-old girls: comparison between children with a stutter ( cws) and children with no stutter (cwns). Possible range of scores 1-7**

**Complexity of Representation of People**

CWS mean score	Sally		Group mean
	3.2		
CWNS mean score	Britney	Susan	Group mean
	4.5	5.7	5.1

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	3	5	4
Stem 2	2	4	6
Stem 3	5	4	6
Stem 4	2	4	6
Stem 5	5	5	6
Stem 6	2	5	6

Comment:

Although not tested for statistical significance, there did seem to be a clear difference between the two groups. In some of the stories of Sally a clear differentiation between the parents and the child was not made. In the exclusion story the CWS projected her feelings and caused the TV that the parental couple were watching to blow up. The parents then ended up together with the child in the child's bedroom having a pretend tea party; in the holiday story the parents couldn't make a decision and the whole family ended up having



competitions to decide the holiday destination, with the parents being the ones who cheated first; and in the final story mum sat down with the other sibling eating at the table, leaving the main character and father to cook their own dinner.

This lack of differentiation was in contrast to the stories of the two CWNS, Britney and Susan. Despite being subjected to the same pressures in the exclusion story, for example, the main characters of the CWNS could maintain differentiation from the parents and could show signs of a rich and nuanced inner world. When excluded from the parents Susan could construct a role play in which she was the queen and the dog was the servant. Britney could also maintain differentiation and elaborate a scenario in which mum had to go to work, which allowed the main character to spend the day with dad, cooking and watching TV together.

### **Affective Quality of Representations**

CWS mean score	Sally 4.7		Group mean
CWNS mean score	Britney 5.7	Susan 6	Group mean 5.8

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	4	6	6
Stem 2	4	6	6
Stem 3	5	4	7
Stem 4	5	6	5
Stem 5	6	6	6
Stem 6	4	6	6

Comment:

Although this difference wasn't tested for statistical significance there did seem to be a difference between the two groups. In story 6 where the child burnt her hand in the response of Britney the whole family came to help her, and then the family discussed this problem of the children reaching for a hot frying-pan, and how this could be prevented. In the narratives of the CWS the expectations of others were mixed. In story 3, in which the main character couldn't see her friend, the main character got angry and mum tried to reason with her. In story 4, however, there was a lot of rivalry between the main character and parents, as they had competitions to help decide on the holiday destination.

### **Emotional Investment in Relationships**

CWS mean score	Sally		Group mean
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	3.7		
CWNS mean score	Britney 5.5	Susan 5.2	Group mean 5.3

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	4	6	5
Stem 2	5	6	5
Stem 3	3	4	6
Stem 4	3	5	5
Stem 5	4	5	5
Stem 6	3	7	5

Comment:

Although this difference wasn't tested for statistical significance there did seem to be a clear difference between the two groups. In story 3 of CWNS Susan, in which the child was forbidden to see her friend, and in story 4 where there was a conflict about where to go on holiday, the mum stood firm but really thought about how the child was feeling. Mum encouraged her to talk to her friend about it and also to see the benefits of a certain course of action. Although the child was not happy in these situations and let mum see this, she accepted mum's decision; and in the end both situations finished up well for the child. There was thus a lot of verbal negotiation between the child and mum and both were engaged in maintaining the relationship. In contrast, there was more destructiveness of relationships in the stories of CWS Sally, for example in the exclusion

situation as I have mentioned, and in story 3 in which the child started shouting at mum and then jumping on the sofa. The responses of the CWS had practically no dialogue between the participants. Although the responses of the CWNS Britney and Susan could reveal a lot of selfishness, for example wanting to go to France on holiday no matter what, the characters of CWNS could respect each other and the boundaries between them and maintained a dialogue despite issues.

#### Understanding of Social Causality

CWS mean score	Sally 3.5		Group mean
CWNS mean score	Britney 4.5	Susan 5	Group mean 4.8

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	3	5	5
Stem 2	2	4	5
Stem 3	4	3	5
Stem 4	4	4	5
Stem 5	5	5	5
Stem 6	3	6	5

Comment:

Although there was a difference between the two groups, this has not been tested for statistical significance. Although the girls of both groups at this age produced elaborated responses, there were

important differences between them. On the surface level the exclusion story of CWS Sally was confusing, with the TV blowing up and then everyone going into the child's bedroom to have a pretend tea party. In contrast, the fantasy of CWNS Susan, with her being queen and her dog the servant, seemed to bear more relation to the rejection implicit in the exclusion stem presented. The theme of being excluded seemed to be continued in Susan's story as she went into mum and dad's bedroom because she thought she had heard a 'noise'. The final story of Sally, a CWS, in which mum and the other sibling ate up all the food and did not wait for dad and the other child, as well as the response in which parents and children had a competition to decide the holiday destination, were also confusing.

### **Experience and Management of Aggressive Impulses**

CWS mean score	Sally 3.7		Group mean
CWNS mean score	Britney 4	Susan 4.2	Group mean 4.1

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	4
Stem 3	1	4	4
Stem 4	4	4	5
Stem 5	4	4	4
Stem 6	4	4	4

Comment:

There was a slight difference between the two groups on this dimension, but it was not tested for statistical significance. For all the participants the default score of 4 was the overwhelming scoring. The main difference between the groups was that Susan, a CWNS, asserted her hostility appropriately. She was really annoyed that she couldn't see her friend and couldn't go where she wanted on holiday, but this annoyance did not spill over and she expressed it through a tone of voice. Although Sally, a CWS, mainly scored the default score of 4 there was a lot of aggression in story 3 as she shouted at mum and jumped up and down on the sofa when she couldn't see her friend. Sally would have scored lower on this dimension if the projection of aggression had been assessed by this scale, i.e. when the TV the parents were watching blew up after the main character had been excluded.

## Emotional Investment in Values and Morals

CWS mean score	Sally 3.2		Group mean
CWNS mean score	Britney 4.3	Susan 4	Group mean 4.1

	CWS (Sally)	CWNS (Britney)	CWNS (Susan)
Stem 1	4	4	4
Stem 2	4	4	4
Stem 3	2	4	4
Stem 4	2	4	3
Stem 5	4	5	5
Stem 6	3	5	4

Comment:

There was a slight difference between the two groups on this dimension, but it was not tested for statistical significance. The default score of 4 which meant there were no moral concerns raised was the most common scoring here in both groups. There were, however, slight differences in the groups. In story 3 of Sally, a CWS, in which the main character was very aggressive towards mum, and in story 6 of the CWS, in which mum and daughter ate while dad cared for the wound of the main character, one would have expected remorse, but this was not expressed. In contrast, in story 6 of CWNS

Britney, the whole family were very concerned for the girl with the burnt hand and in ways of avoiding this in the future; and in story 5 of CWNS Susan the sibling expressed a lot of guilt and reparation for the injury she had caused the main character by knocking her over.

### **Themes that emerged in the Thematic Analysis**

I will now look at the results from the thematic analysis of the Story Stem material. At the end of this chapter I will then summarize the main results from both the object relations scale and the thematic analysis.

In the methodology chapter I laid out the process of how I carried out the thematic analysis. I would like to remind you now of the important features of this process. With my interest in the object relations and inner world of CWS in the background, I coded the responses of the participants on a line by line basis, sticking closely to the participants' responses. After this, codes were collated into potential themes. The specifics of each theme were later refined, with some themes, for example, becoming sub-themes of broader themes. A report was then written about the themes that emerged in the narratives of *each* participant. From these individual reports a report was written for the age range 5-6 and one for 9-10 for both groups, CWS and CWNS (See appendix C (ii) for an example of these).



Below is the final report of the findings. This report details the most prominent features which arose from the narratives of the children with a stutter (CWS), and these features are juxtaposed with what emerged from the narratives of children with no stutter (CWNS). The focus is on the presentation of the findings, but I do add some comments when I think this can make some sense of these findings. The main analysis, however, is in the following chapter when I interpret these findings and consider them in relation to the research question.

The following themes emerged from the narratives of CWS, contrasting with what emerged in the data of CWNS:

- 1. Problem with differentiation of characters and lack of verbal dialogue in the responses of CWS.**
- 2. Scant emotional connection with self and others.**
- 3. Excessive emotion.**
- 4. Problem with responding to the issues presented in the stems in the stories of CWS**

In my exploration of each of these themes I will provide data from the responses of CWS that exemplify the theme, and I will compare and

contrast this with the data from the responses of CWNS. Although I have tried to use examples to illustrate the themes that differ from the examples already cited when making comments on the different dimension of the object relations scale, it is inevitable that some of the data is repeated

**Problem with differentiation between characters and lack of verbal dialogue in the responses of CWS.**

In the responses of CWS, of both age groups, the results indicated that there were difficulties in making a differentiation between characters.

Sally, a nine-year-old girl with a stutter, showed no difference at times between the parents and the main character: when the main character was asked to separate from the parents in the exclusion scene, the TV that the parents were watching blew up and the parents ended up coming into the child's room to have a pretend tea party.

This projection of feelings onto the TV and the pretend tea party suggest strongly the difficulties in accepting the authority of the parental couple.

This problem in differentiating parents and children was further suggested in Sally's holiday story: the parents played a board game with the children and then had a race in order to decide what to do about the

difference of opinion as regards the family's holiday destination. Moreover, it was the parents who started cheating first in order to win. Gender and generational limits were also collapsed in the last story of Sally when it was daughter and father who cooked together and mum who behaved more like a daughter as she sat down with the sibling and ate dinner before father and daughter came to the table.

Likewise, Tom, a 9 year-old CWS (boy), found differentiation of characters at times difficult. In his response to the exclusion scene the whole family became merged in the celebration of the birth of an infant, and when he was reminded that the parents wanted some time alone together he said that he 'completely forgot', perhaps suggesting the difficulty in accepting the limitations imposed by the parents.

In the younger age group, although CWS could not be distinguished from CWNS in terms of elaboration of inner states, CWS were less able than CWNS to accept the boundaries between characters. The responses of the CWS, who were inhibited in expressing their emotions, namely Jack, Arthur and John of the younger age group strongly suggest a problem with separateness. In Jack's picture story no one mentioned the picture, even when the interviewer reminded the participant of it; instead it was emphasized that the character had missed the TV show the family was watching. It seems that Jack's contribution, namely the picture, could not exist in its own right, and Jack

had to submerge into the family unit. However, care for the main character was shown when he was infantilized by his mother and put to bed with his favourite toys in the story in which he was pushed off a chair by a sibling. It seems he was appreciated when dependent, but not when he was expressing himself as an individual.

For CWS of this age group, namely Frank and Paul, who were less inhibited in the expression of their emotions, there were also problems of differentiation. When Frank was reminded by the interviewer in the exclusion story that mum and dad wanted some time alone together, he replied that the parents had had their time together and now wanted their children back, when in fact no time had elapsed since the presentation of the stem. Frank found the limits around the parental couple difficult. In the picture story, for example, there were three beds, and he ended up having the siblings share a bed, and the parents having their own separate beds. A difficulty in the differentiation of characters was also suggested by Paul's response to the exclusion situation. The main character 'sneaks' into the room where the parents wanted to be alone. He made himself gradually more visible to them and then during a conversation with his parents, his parents seemed to disappear as he asked a question and then responded himself. It could be argued that the separation implicit in the exclusion scene was too much to bear, and so as a solution the limits between the objects were

collapsed. In Paul's response to the holiday situation there was likewise little differentiation. This was Paul's response in full to the stem in which there was a conflict between mum and the main character regarding where to go on holiday:

(P= participant; I=interviewer)

P: Max [the main character] came up with Brazil, her sister came up with America, then they all thought America sounds that sounds good

I: Ok

P: and then on their summer holidays they all flew to America, then they booked a hotel and the lunch was great there

I: Ok

P: and so when it was tea-time there they had chicken nuggets and peas

I: ok

P: and when it was bedtime next Friday them at lunch time they (incomprehensible) had a bit of bacon and a hash brown and some beans and then tomorrow they had to leave. Max was feeling all the things that was a nice holiday.

I: Ok

P: so it was had been a really big holiday, the next holiday was going to be Brazil that they all thought

I: so the next time is going to be Brazil. Is this the story finished?

P: Yep

I: thank you very much.

The conflict with mum has disappeared from the narrative and it was the siblings who agreed where to go. The lack of an opposing voice and lack of differentiation was suggested by the phrase 'they all thought', which is repeated twice. The response and particularly the sentence 'Max [the main character] was feeling all the things that was a nice holiday' suggests that for him there was no distinction between a holiday enjoyed

by him and one enjoyed by the whole family, and also no distinction between the holiday and the satisfaction of being well-fed.

This lack of capacity to differentiate was also a feature of the relationship between some of the CWS and the interviewer. I had to struggle at times with Frank and Paul, two CWS of the younger age range, when presenting the stems. Quite often they wanted to start speaking immediately, and Frank got quite frustrated when I firmly but politely insisted on finishing the stem. He would move his finger down the crack between the tables, which I felt was a way to hold in check his negative feelings. When he did start there was initially some ambivalence. He was subdued for a while as if there was a struggle between wanting to tell the story and not wanting to. After a while he got really involved in telling the stories again. It made me think of an infant who had a problem with a separate mother, and who took some time to start feeding again.

Perhaps a problem with differentiation also found direct expression in the language of some children with a stutter, namely Frank and Paul in the younger age group and Tom in the older age group. At times these participants confused the use of pronouns, particularly for gender. In response to story three, in which the main character was not allowed to see his friend, Paul, a 6 year-old CWS, confused the use of the gender pronoun. Upon hearing that he couldn't see his friend he said:

‘So then he went back to her bedroom and lay down to think about what he could say’. This misuse of the gender pronoun could possibly reflect a problem with gender differentiation.

Here is an extract of Tom’s response to the picture story, in which the main character has brought home a picture from school:

(Timmy is the name of the main character, but at times in his responses the participant referred to him as Dale)

P: (has mum figure in hand, then also lifts Timmy) and then Dale show him [mum] no then they show the family, why do I keep knocking things over? That's really annoying, then they show them but the dog.

I: ok

P: (incomprehensible) she happened to draw a picture of a bone...

I: ok Timmy drew a picture of a bone.

I think Tom used ‘they’ in this extract because he has condensed mum and the main character, so that they have become like a joint object in showing the picture to the family. Tom uses the wrong gender pronoun to refer to Timmy.

There is also a problem with the pronoun in Tom’s response to the conflict about where to go on holiday. Here is the first few lines of his response:

(Timmy=main character; Leo= sibling)

P: Dad agrees with Timmy and Leo agrees with mum, so they start arguing

I: the whole family start arguing.

P: No just mum and dad.

From what Tom said the interviewer made the assumption that ‘they’

referred back to the people he had just mentioned. However, in Tom's mind 'they' only referred to the parents. It could be argued that Tom, at this moment, is not differentiating the minds of the speaker and the listener. Possibly, he was making the assumption that listener and speaker shared the same information.

In contrast, CWNS seemed more capable of differentiation between characters. For example, after being excluded a 5 year old CWNS, Trev, replied that he watched TV in the living room, i.e. with his parents. However, when reminded by the researcher 'I thought the parents wanted to spend some time alone together' he was able to quickly reestablish the boundary and went on to say he watched TV in his own room. After that he did some reading and got a reward from his father. So, he could still maintain a relationship with his father whilst (eventually) accepting the boundary. Pete, a 9-year-old CWNS, could also accept differentiation between characters. When prompted that mum wanted to go back to the same place in the holiday story, the main character replied: 'that's confusing', which I understood as meaning, this is conflictive with the story which he had been telling so far about going on holiday where the main character wanted. By saying that he was confused I think he was acknowledging mum's desires. The main character could then develop this story by saying that he had suggested a place, and mum liked the idea. Sean, a 5 year-old CWNS, could also



maintain the limit imposed by the parents in the exclusion scene even though he was 'sad because he was alone with his cat and dog and not mum and dad'.

### **Scant dialogue in the responses of children with a stutter**

In the responses of the CWS, in both the younger and older group, there was little mutual interaction and very little dialogue between characters. In story 1 of Sally there was direct dialogue when the mum asks 'What have you been doing since today?', but that was it. In the story in which the main character of Sally was not allowed to see her friend the participant responded: 'She's horrible and she hates her'. She didn't speak directly to mum, but rather was describing how the character felt. When the main character of Tom, a 9 year-old CWS, stormed out of the house, after a conflict with his mum and later met his father there were no words shared between them; the father dragged the son home. Likewise, there was a complete absence of dialogue when the main character of Tom became frantic after burning himself on the stove and knocking everything over in story 6, the situation was solved by the dad diving on his son. Here was Tom's complete response after burning his hand:

(P.= participant; I= interviewer; Timmy=the main character)

P: Timmy runs around screaming, knocking everything over

I: Timmy knocks everything over

P: Everything I mean everything when I say everything (hint of pleasure saying this but not sadistic)

I: everything

P: (has mum and Timmy in his hand) (incomprehensible) mum (incomprehensible) horrible (mum is now on the floor) and dad lunges at him

I: lunges at Timmy

P: (incomprehensible) and takes him to the hospital.

I: takes him to the hospital

P: and he just spends a whole month at the hospital and that's the end.

I: he spends a month at the hospital and that's the end.

ok thank you very much

Dialogue would be expected in a situation in which a child burnt his hand, but in this case it did not materialize.

When the main character of Tom was excluded from the parents, there was no dialogue between the characters. The whole family ended up in a merged state of hugging each other in anticipation of a new-born.

Mutual interaction and dialogue was also missing in the responses of the younger CWS. In the story in which the child brought a picture home Frank showed the picture and, with no interaction, put it back immediately in his school-bag, which was then put in the cupboard. In the story of Jack in which there was a conflict about where to go on holiday the participant merely said: 'they didn't go there', with no other interaction. Likewise, in the story of Frank in which the siblings were alone, a sister cooked a lot of food for the brother, but they didn't communicate.

This is in contrast to CWNS. In the responses of Pete, a 9 year-old CWNS, there was a lot of everyday interacting as the main character played with his friend. In story 4 of both Susan and Britney of this older age group, which presents the conflict about where to go on holiday, there was a lot of verbal talk between the participants. Although both of the main characters of this age group were quite egocentric in their desire about where to go, mum character was able to negotiate with them.

I would like to exemplify the extent of the negotiation in the responses of the older children without a stutter. This is Susan's response to the story about not being able to see her friend. It is a long response, and here I have omitted half of it:

(P= participant; I= Interviewer; Emily is the name of the main character)

P: (Picks up Emily) Emily is very sad, but Mum says how about tomorrow. Emily says ok mum, in a very annoyed voice, so she goes to her room and she starts thinking about what she is going to do when she goes to her friend's house tomorrow. Her mum comes in and says tea's ready, then Emily goes to dinner and they chat about that they are going to get a new dog incomprehensible ....., then Emily says Mum can we get a cat instead, but mum says sorry dear but unfortunately I don't think we can get a cat because all the cats are gone (incomprehensible) mum says but we are going to get a nice dog though and Emily says ok again in a very annoyed voice and goes back to her room while mum is putting the bread away and Emily says I wish we could get a cat instead because dogs can be a bit incomprehensible but anyway mum says Emily don't be sad the dog's nice. I'm sure you will get used to it and you get to pick a name for it (incomprehensible) you will see your sister tomorrow too and then maybe you can let's say maybe you can play with the dog and see what tricks he can learn and if he learns about two tricks in the whole day you can give him a long

doggie treat but anyway after Emily's mum said that Emily said I can't wait mum I really can't wait so she goes to bed because she thinks it will pass the time .....Emily, time to get up.

There is a lot of interaction here between the main character and mum.

A prominent feature is that the main character was annoyed, firstly because she couldn't see her friend and secondly because she wanted a cat rather than a dog. Through language mum responded to her daughter, and she was able to contain and regulate the negative emotions of her daughter.

Dialogue and mutual interacting was also a feature of the responses of the 5-6 year-old CWNS. In his responses the main character of Trev spent a lot of time interacting with his brother, and in Trev's narrative there was a dialogue between the child and mum when the child wasn't allowed to see his friend. In the conflict over the holiday between mum and the child in Sylvester's response there is an extended dialogue. Here is his response to the holiday conflict between the main character and mum:

(P.=participant; I.=interviewer; Tom=main character)

I: The family are having dinner and they're talking about their next holiday and mum says let's go back to the place we went to last year. Tom thinks I didn't like that place very much. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: They said they will go to a place where they have never been

I: Tom says he wants to go to a place where they have never been

P: (long silence) but mum says we have been everywhere

I: Mum says we have been everywhere

P: Tom says well then somewhere we haven't been for a long time  
 I: Tom says somewhere where we haven't been for a long time  
 P: (nods in agreement) (long silence) in Spain  
 I: In Spain  
 P: says he wants to go to Spain  
 I: He says he wants to go to Spain  
 P: (nods in agreement)  
 (long silence)  
 I: Is this the story over?  
 P: (nods in agreement)

Sylvester was able to keep mum's opposing voice in mind, and to use argumentation, i.e. 'somewhere we haven't been for a long time' to counter mum's opinion. I found this a sophisticated interaction for a 6 year-old child.

### **Gender differences in the responses to the story stems**

There is a higher rate in male stuttering with a typical ratio of 4:1, which strongly suggests that gender is significant in stuttering<sup>6</sup>. In the younger age group of the present research there is only one girl, who is without a stutter, and so it is very difficult to make any observations about the gender differences in responses to the stems. In the older age group there are two girls without a stutter and one girl with. There is also one boy with a stutter and one boy without. These are still very low numbers to allow a critical discussion on gender differences in the responses. I noticed, however, that all of the girls in the older age group,

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<sup>6</sup> There is evidence that at the age of three there is no gender difference, and that differences only arise after this age (Briley and Merlo, 2021; Yairi and Ambrose (2012)).

particularly the girls without a stutter, had elaborated responses when referring to relationships and considered relationships from the perspectives of different characters. The responses of the girl in the younger age group also indicated this. In contrast, in the responses of the boys, of both age groups, there was scant elaboration when referring to relationships, and relationships tended to be considered from one perspective. It could be argued that a better capacity suggested by this research for females to hold on to more than one perspective is usefully accounted for as a better capacity in females to tolerate both separation and dependence, with the subsequent need to negotiate these poles through dialogue. The interactions of the boys, both with and without a stutter, tended to reflect either independence or submission of one character to another. For example, Pete, a nine-year-old child with no stutter expressed his independence in the oedipal story stem by having his character escape from the house, and Tom, a nine-year-old with a stutter had his character run away from the house when he was sent to his room by his mother for misbehaving, only later to be subjugated by the physical strength of the father. Since the capacity of holding different perspectives is a critical aspect both of learning a language and also of a container- contained relationship, i.e. a relationship between two, the gender difference suggested by this study deserves greater attention. It would be very useful in future studies to ascertain whether this potential

gender difference is supported when there is a larger sample of male and female participants.

### **Scant emotional connection with self and others**

Another prominent feature in the responses of the children with a stutter (CWS) in the age group 5-6 was scant emotional connection, which was accompanied at times with a strong suggestion of a lot of emotion lying just under the surface. Emotions and conflicts with others as presented in the stems were typically not responded to, and responses sparse for three out of five participants. Jack and Arthur, for example, said they were happy when excluded by the parents. In these responses by Jack and Arthur there was no sign remaining of the relationship with the parents or painful emotions. It seems that something had gone missing, or had been split off.

Likewise, in responding to the conflict over the holiday, Jack and Arthur said matter of factly that they didn't go there, thus not entering into the conflict. This is Arthur's response to this conflict over the holiday:

(I=interviewer; P=participant; James=main character)

I: So the family are having dinner and they're talking about their next holiday and mum says I'd like to go back to the same place as we went to last year and James thinks I didn't like that place very much. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: They didn't go to that place

I: They didn't go to that place.

(Long Silence)

I: Is this the story finished?

C: Nods in agreement

In Thomas's response to the story in which the main character could not see his friend, the main character said that he was 'sad'.

However, that was the end of his response. Thomas did look as if he was trying to continue, but nothing came. I think by using the word 'sad' he was therefore not expressing felt emotion. By not being able to continue with his response suggests he was not in touch with his feelings.

In the picture story of Frank, another CWS, there was a lack of a felt connection when showing the picture to his family. Here is his response:

P: dad goes to open the door

I: Opens the door

P: Liebe. Evelyn comes in and then she sits down

I: Okay and then Evelyn comes in and then she sits down

P: (incomprehensible) She doesn't sit down, she gets her bag of there

I: Takes her bag

P: Yep liebe off her back

I: Ok she takes her bag off her back

P: (incomprehensible) Liebe and then she takes her big picture out of it

I: Takes the picture out

P: Liebe and then she shows everybody and then she put it back in her bag and then she puts her bag in the cupboard



I: Okay puts her bag in the cupboard  
 P: (incomprehensible) (points) Puts it in there and then she sits down again and watches telly

The showing of the picture to the family was just one part of a sequence of actions, and had no special emotional significance for the main character. This extract from his response was subsequently followed by the family eating large amounts of food, and there was no emotional connection between the family members.

In story 3 of Frank in which the main character was not allowed to see his friend, the character did not respond to the mother, but immediately afterwards there was a bang and the dinner was burnt. This is suggestive of a lot of aggression behind his lack of response to the mother. John's character, in his response to the same stem, did not express his emotions, saying that he would play with his brother instead. However, when saying this he stuttered a lot more than in his other responses, which could suggest a lot of emotion underneath the surface. When dad checked on the main character of John in the exclusion story the child merely said good night, but at the same time he felt there was a monster in the cupboard.

In story 5, in which the main character was pushed off his/her chair by the sibling, the main character of the CWS group as a whole did not stand up for themselves. As a response to this stem Jack's

character was put to bed by his mother to play with his toys; the main character of Arthur went to hospital; one got another favourite chair; Paul's character sat down with the sibling and realized it was 'comfy' and they ended up doing a lot of activities together. Although John's character was able to ask the sibling why he did this, i.e. knock him off his chair, these responses of the CWS as a whole suggest a particular difficulty of CWS to respond to aggression, or to a conflict with another. This was Jack's response to the stem in which the main character is pushed off the chair:

(Blake=main character; Leo=sibling)

I: In this story Blake is sitting in his favourite chair and Leo thinks I'd like to sit in that chair and Leo goes over and pushes Blake off the chair and Blake says I've hurt my leg. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next.

P: the boy (incomprehensible) in his favourite chair

I: What boy?

P: Leo. Then the mother came to see his leg and took him to the bedroom and put him into bed and he lay there and played with his toys

I: He lay on the bed and played with his toys. Is this the story over?

P: nods in agreement

In contrast some of the boys (CWNS) responded to being kicked off their favourite chair tit for tat; Tulip's character was able to think about this and see it from the perspective of the sibling, i.e. it was also their favourite chair and this led to a compromise. Trev was able to maintain the relationship with the sibling, but make him stand in the

corner as a 'punishment', which suggests a response to the conflict between the siblings.

Although some of the children who don't stutter (CWNS) in this age group were also emotionally inhibited, and did not speak their minds in moments of conflict between the child and parents, there was a greater sense that even in the case of being inhibited they could maintain an emotional connection with themselves and others. In the exclusion situation Sean's main character showed that he was in touch with his emotions. He stated that he felt sad being separated from his parents, and he used the family pets to maintain a relationship with the parents by the pets roaming between the main character's bedroom and the room where the parents were. Kirk, a 5 year-old CWNS, was also in touch with his feelings in the exclusion scene. He felt 'angry and frustrated' and this led to him spying on his parents. Sylvester, a 5 year-old CWNS, responded to the story in which the main character couldn't see his friend by having the main character and mum go in separate directions. However, later mum and main character came together and physically touched one another. Although in this story Sylvester was not able to symbolize his emotion, I think the characters' touching might suggest that he was in contact with a felt sense of separation pain. In the conflict about the family's holiday destination, Tulip, 5 year old CWNS, presented a narrative in which the family went to one place, which was

too hot, to a second place, which was too cold, and to a third place, which was just right. Tulip generally in her responses did not express direct conflict in dialogue between the characters. I think here she was using the fairy story of Goldilocks as a way to manage her anxieties about the disagreement with her mum about where to go.

### **Excess emotion**

The responses of CWS also showed the other extreme – that of showing excess emotion. Both the participants in the age group 5-6 years, that is to say Frank and Paul, whose responses were longer than the others in the younger age group, ate vast amounts of food and took part in endless activities. The vast quantities of food and the ritual of going to bed in the stories of Frank were unnecessary pieces of information that did not address the issues presented in the Story Stems.

The expression of emotion, however, was particularly a feature of the older age group of CWS (9-10 years.). Both the CWS in this age group (9-10) gave stories that were full of aggression or a sense of fusion among characters. Tom brought a lot of aggression to the picture story, the story about seeing a friend, and in the last story in which the main character's hand got burnt, and Sally brought evidence of raw

aggression in the exclusion stem and the stem about not being allowed to see a friend.

This is Tom's response to the stem in which the main character Timmy was not allowed to see his friend:

(P=participant; I=Interviewer; Timmy=main character)

P: Timmy starts crying (incomprehensible) (child doll hits mum)

I: Timmy starts crying.

P: And yelling at mum.

I: Yelling at his mum.

P: Mum looks offended and sends him up to his room, but Dale just runs away.

I: Timmy just runs away.

P: Runs straight to his friend's house. Who could be his best friend's mum?

I: I don't have any more characters. Timmy goes to his friend's house.

P: and (incomprehensible) does he realize that his dad is there.

I: His real dad was at Timmy's friend's house.

P: Yeah. He goes ballistic.

I: He goes ballistic.

P: He gets dragged out of his house and put into his room.

I: Gets dragged home and put into his room.

P: That's the end

I: Thanks very much.

Tom's character just stormed off to his friend's house after his mum said to him to go to his room for yelling at her. It was the father figure who managed this behavior not through communication but by getting angry and dragging him back home; likewise in story 6, in which the main character burnt his hand and subsequently ran around and caused destruction by knocking over furniture and mum, it was the father who dived on him to stop him. There is a sense here that the

aggressive impulses were very difficult to control. Knocking over mum and being controlled by a physical and perhaps aggressive father in both stories could suggest an identification with aggressive impulses.

Strong emotion was also present in Sally's response to story three, in which the main character was not allowed to see her friend:

(I=Interviewer; P=Participant; Rosie=main character).

P: Rosie starts shouting at mum.

I: Starts shouting at mum.

P: Actually she has been waiting the whole day and she's horrible and she hates her so she goes to watch tv and mum turns the tv off.

I: Mum turns it off.

P: And took Rosie there and got on her knees.

I: Mum got on her knees.

P: That she's her mum and she can't speak to her like that.

I: She can't speak to mum like that.

P: She grounded her for three months.

I: Ok.

P: She stormed off again.

I: Stormed off again.

P: and started jumping on the sofa.

I: Jumping on the sofa.

P: She fell off.

I: She fell off the sofa.

P: She was on the floor. Mum helped her up (incomprehensible) on the sofa and put a plaster on her knee and her hand (incomprehensible) each other.

I: Ok.

P: And then ..

I: The smaller ones if you put near the front, they sit better

P: And then they watch tv again.

I: Then they watch tv. Is this the story over?

P: Yes.

I: Thank you.

Excessive emotion of a different kind was shown in the exclusion situation of Tom, a 9 year-old CWS. This is Tom's response:

(Timmy=main character)

P: (lifts Timmy). Timmy was curious He went down to see. They wanted to talk about the new baby girl. Timmy ran upstairs and woke up Leo [sibling] and told him. They both ran up and hugged their mum and dad.

I: they hugged their mum and dad

P: Then they went to sleep and then the next day the mum went to the hospital.

I: I thought in the story mum and dad wanted to spend some time alone together. They wanted to spend some time alone together

P: but Timmy was curious and got so excited and completely forgot

I : and forgot what mum and dad said.

P: nods head

I: Is this the story over?

P: Yes

P: Who is going to get to see this video?

I: only me; afterwards I need to write down what you say

P: yep

I: Only myself gets to see the video

P: Ok

Tom brought a lot of phantasy to this narrative that did not belong to the stem presented to him. He literally could not contain his emotions and/or sexual phantasies as he intruded on the space of the parents. There is almost a fusion of the whole family as they all hugged each other. I can only speculate on why after this response he asked the interviewer who would see the video. This possibly suggests that he had some awareness of his oedipal wishes that he didn't want other people to know about.

A kind of fusion is also present in Sally's response to the exclusion situation:

(P=participant; I=interviewer)

P: Mum and dad go back to the tele

I: they go back to the tele

P: And watch (incomprehensible)

I: Ok

P: And then they ask each other what they would watch (incomprehensible) pressing the buttons changing the (incomprehensible)

P: Changing the..

P: Yeah and the TV blew up

I: The TV blew up

P: Rosie [main character] came running out

I: Ok

P: What was that big bang?

I: What was the big bang?

P: Then her Mum came into her room incomprehensible and spoke to her about what happened then her dad came in.

I: Ok

P: And because there was no tv they all sat down in Rosie's room and had a pretend tea party.

I: Sorry?

P: A pretend tea party. They played for a couple of hours and they all fell asleep

I: They all fell asleep. The story's over?

P: Yeah

In Sally's response there was initially a lot of aggression against the parental couple as the tv they were watching 'blew up'. This then led to an idyllic scene in which they had a pretend tea party in the child's bedroom and then fell asleep together. This is a fusion based on the elimination of the generational and gender limits implicit in the stem.



This excessive emotion is in stark contrast to CWNS. Overall the responses of the CWNS seemed more everyday or benign responses. I have mentioned the drama of Tom, a 9 year-old CWS, in story 3 when he stormed out to his friend's house and then his dad got really angry with him. In the same story of a 9 year-old CWNS, Pete, the main character sneaked out of the house, played with his friend and then went home without his mum noticing. In this same story Pete's character was playing with his gun and then said: 'I have an idea'. However, at this point he stopped himself, covered his face and immediately ended the story. I imagined that he was going to continue the story about killing someone, but he seemed to inhibit such an impulse. Perhaps this aggressive impulse was repressed as it would cause too much anxiety.

This is Pete's response to this stem:

(David=main character)

I: The next story we only have two people. We have mum and David. In this story David has been waiting the whole day to go and see his friend. David says to mum can we go now to go and see my friend and mum says sorry David not today. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: David asks his mum why and she says because his friend is on holiday with his dad, so David goes to his room and plays with his robot dog then he goes out of his room and asked his mummy if he can watch the telly. Mum said no because dad said we are not allowed to use the telly, so David goes back to his room and asks his robot dog if wants to sneak out so the robot dog said yes so they sneak out

I: ok

P: Then they go to the treehouse in the garden, and then his mum goes to his room to see if he is there and David sees his mum, so he quickly rushes in and quietly he goes into his room without his mum seeing, then she walks in and now she says asks him if he wants to go to the cinema he said yes and they go to the cinema. They come back and then David goes to his treehouse and mum sits on the sofa just waiting for David. David is in his treehouse and he's playing with his toy naff gun, he has an idea (covers face with hand) and that's the end.

Pete seems to be showing a capacity to repress strong emotions, which arguably Tom and Sally lack.

A benign response to the stems was also seen in the response of Britney, a 9 year-old CWNS, to the stem in which the main character burnt herself. The whole family sat around and talked about this, and the parents decided in the end on a course of action that could prevent this in the future. Overall in the responses of CWNS emotion was present, but it did not seem to spill out and dominate the stories, as was seen in the narratives of Tom and Sally.

I have already suggested how the children with no stutter, of both age groups, showed themselves more capable than the children with a stutter of accepting the limits imposed and the pain or discomfort that came along with that, and finding a symbolic way to express that emotion. The transformation of the emotion associated with being excluded by the parents by Susan, in which she became the Queen and her dog the servant, is a good example of that. In the younger age group Sean dealt with this emotional pain by staying connected with the

parents through his cat and dog. This capacity to transform arguably contrasts with either the scant emotion or the excessive emotion typically found in the responses of the children with a stutter.

Alternatively, working from the perspective of a drive theory, it could be argued that this level of symbolization in the responses of the children with no stutter is a result of a resolution, or a partial resolution, of the oedipus complex.

### **Particular problem for CWS in responding to the emotional issues presented in the stems**

Both the sparse accounts and the expression of excess emotion in the responses of the children with a stutter could be connected to another feature of the responses of CWS - that of particular problems in responding to the emotional conflict implicit in the stems. Arguably this is more of an observation than a theme; yet it is an important feature in the responses which bears directly on the research question relating to container-contained relationships to be discussed in the following chapter.

Three out of five CWS in the 5-6 age group produced many one-line answers when presented with the stem, for example the main character 'played with his toys' in the exclusion situation, or 'the family went where the boy wanted' in the holiday situation, and then they

finished their narrative. For these participants there was little elaboration and little engagement with the emotional issues implicit in the stems. This was Arthur's full response to the story in which the main character was pushed off a chair by a sibling:

(James=main character)

P: James went to hospital

I: James went to hospital (Silence) I: He went to hospital

P: And didn't go to school.

I: And didn't go to school

P: For a week

I: For a week ok

(Long silence)

I: is this the story over?

P: (nods head)

For two CWS of this age group, namely Frank and Paul, there was also, despite lengthy responses, scant or no regard for the emotional issues presented in the stem. The stories were usually overwhelmed by a lot of food or actions. This was Frank's response to the stem in which there is a conflict about where to go on holiday. The focus was not on responding to the conflict presented in the stem, but rather on the actions performed and on food:

(P=Participant; I= Interviewer; George=sibling)

P: Dad says I know what to do. let's go to Spain instead

I: Dad says let's go to Spain instead

P: Liebe Mum and George agreed with them

I: mum and the children agreed with dad

P: and then and then start getting down from the table (Knocks over table)

I: that's fine  
P: down there then they could go to bed actually they could watch tv  
I: they watch TV  
P: (showing some frustration) no they can go to bed  
I: ok  
P: then they wake up and they have breakfast  
I: breakfast ok  
P: (puts family at the table)  
I: mum, dad, Evelyn and George  
P: then they have breakfast (incomprehensible) then they watch telly  
I: then they watch telly  
P: big  
I: that's a very long sofa  
P: yeah  
I: the small ones F. if you put them near the front they sit better.  
ok. Good.  
I: mum and dad they all watch TV  
P: (lifts dad) and then mum gets down I mean dad gets down and says to everyone what would you like for lunch  
I: ok  
P: and they all said the same thing. They all said cheese on toast  
I: cheese on toast, ok  
P: and then dad goes to make it  
I: dad makes the cheese on toast  
P: and then it's all ready (puts plates on the table)  
I: cheese on toast  
P: (puts family on the table) then they all have their lunch  
P: and then they and then they start and these two go up for their room  
I: who Evelyn and George  
P: and then they have a nap  
I: ok they have a nap  
P: mum and dad stay down here and watch Liebe telly  
I: they watch TV  
P: and that's the end

The conflict was dealt with very quickly, namely by accepting dad's option. Although Frank's hesitation, i.e. if the characters watch TV or

go to bed, was suggestive of the conflict presented, the story was not a response to the emotional conflict of the stem but rather just a description of family activities.

With the older age group (CWS) I have already remarked that in their responses there was often excess emotion, either a lot of aggression or a sense of fusion. With Tom and to a certain extent Sally there was very limited response to the underlying issues in the stems. In stories one, two, four and six I had the sense that the stem was a cue in Tom for a description of his imaginings about object relations rather than seen as a presentation of an issue that had to be addressed. This was his response to story four, in which there is a conflict between mum and the main character about where to go on holiday:

(Timmy=main character; Leo= sibling)

P: Dad agrees with Timmy and Leo agrees with mum, so they start arguing

I: the whole family start arguing.

P: No just mum and dad.

I: mum and dad start arguing

P: Timmy and Leo start panicking and both run off and try to come up with a plan

I: So they try to come up with a plan.

P: When they come up with a plan they got a frying pan and made their favourite soup which stopped them from arguing and then they buy them some more time to come up with a plan

I: so they tried to buy some time

P: they come up with the idea tuck them up and put them to bed and let them snuggle up with the cats and dogs

I: mum and dad go to bed and snuggle up with the cats and dogs.

P: that's the end

I: That's the end of the story

The original conflict was not directly referred to, and was immediately turned into an argument between mum and dad, and how the children reacted to parents arguing. Likewise, Tom's response to the picture story turned into a story of an aggressive dog. In Sally's holiday story the conflict was addressed, but in a way that wasn't about the conflict between mum and child that was presented to her. This was Sally's response:

(Rosie=main character; Lilly=sibling)

P: Rosie asked her dad if she could go to Florida

I: Rosie asked if she could go to Florida

P: Her little sister Lilly agreed because Florida is very sunny but her mum and dad liked what they did last year. They thought about how they could decide

I: Ok

P: and they decided to play a ball game. So the two teams mum and dad against the children. Whatever team wins gets the holiday

I: Ok

P: They started playing and Mum and dad started cheating

I: Ok started cheating ok

P: Yeah so they moved around, so they are next to each other, then the girls started cheating (Incomprehensible) they forgot about the ball game and went outside.

I: went outside

P: and decided to have a race and whoever wins that wins the holiday.

The problem was the mum started pushing Lilly so the dad shouts ready steady go. Mum pushes her and runs

I: mum pushes her and runs

P: but she (incomprehensible) Lilly says on your mark get set go but Rosie pushes dad and runs

I: Rosie pushes dad and then she runs

P: they were out because they lost and they had another race

I: ok

P: (incomprehensible) tripped over (incomprehensible) they both won so they decided to go to Florida this year and the place they went to last

year the other year

I: Ok is this the story over?

P: Yeah

I: Thank you

Like the responses of Tom, Sally's story revolved more around her ideas about object relations rather than addressing the stem and the emotional conflict presented to her. The exclusion story of Sally and the response to a burnt hand also focused primarily on what she imagined about relationships. Although in Sally's burnt hand story there was a response to the wound, the stem seemed more like a cue for the expression of the participant's inner world. In this story of Sally the main character, i.e. the child, was paired off with the father, and the mother became child-like as she sat down at the table and ate all the dinner with the younger sibling while dad and the main character were dressing the main character's wound. For Tom and Sally generally the inner imaginings about relationships took over and the actual issue of the stem got at least partially lost/discarded.

In two of Sally's stories, however, the emotional issue was addressed adequately. In story 5 in which the main character was pushed off a chair by a sibling there seemed to be a resolution to the emotional issue brought up by the stem. Here was her response to story five:

(Rosie= main character; Lilly=sibling)



I: the next story Rosie's watching tv in her favourite chair and Lilly thinks I'd like to sit in that chair. Lilly goes over and pushes Rosie and Rosie says I have hurt my leg. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Lilly (incomprehensible) sits in the chair

I: Lilly sits in the chair

P: and turns on the telly to a better show and Rosie (incomprehensible) to clean her up in the bathroom (incomprehensible) her knees

I: Ok

P: puts a plaster on (moves Rosie to Lilly) I was there first, can you get off? and Lilly says no (incomprehensible) Rosie kicks her off and sits back down

I: ok

P: Lilly says can we just sit in it together (tries to sit the toys together) it doesn't work so they both agree to get the sofa, and put that chair away so they get the sofa and sit on that together and they watch the tv show together. Done

I: is that the story over?

P: nods in agreement

However, in general the responses of both age groups of children with no stutter were more grounded in the stems and the emotional issues presented. The responses were more about everyday life and were clearly directed to the stems and the emotional issues. The 9-10 year-old CWNS told extended stories that were driven by the emotional issue of the stems. Susan, for example, had a very long response to the story about the main character being pushed off a chair when watching TV by the sibling. The story included the sibling having to go to the optician because of eye problems connected with watching TV, the sibling confessing what she had done to an authority figure, and reparations being made. The

initial emotional issue of the stem was dealt with coherently and with integration. This was Trev's response, from the younger age range of the CWNS, to the stem in which the main character hurt his leg because he was pushed off his chair:

(T.=main character; Richard=sibling)

P: (incomprehensible) mummy and daddy come to see what happened; he bruised his leg and had to go to hospital

I: he had to go to hospital

P: then he tells his little brother off because he knocked him over

I: T. tells his little brother off

P: because he knocked him over

I: ok

P: then he can't walk, he had to hop back home

I: then he had to walk back home

P: HOP

I: ah ok HOP back home

P: because he can't walk with his leg, that's hop and then dad said are you all right now, and then he said yes, then he starts watching tv

I: starts watching tv

P: and then Richard also watches tv and Richard stands up as a punishment for knocking him over as a punishment

I: he has to stand there

P: (incomprehensible) and then the story's finished

I: and then the story's finished

Although it was far-fetched that a child goes to hospital by himself, the response was clearly about the issue raised in the stem. I think there was quite a mature attempt by the main character to deal with the issue with the sibling. The sibling was punished for his behavior, but at the same time the two brothers maintained a relationship.

The responses to the stems of the older children with no stutter were also more grounded than the responses of the children with a stutter.

Here is an extract of Susan's response to the conflict about the holiday:

(Emily= main character; Deveney=sibling)

(P): Emily says to her mum I didn't really like that place because it was boiling hot and well (incomprehensible) and mum says oh don't worry I'm sure it will be fine this year and dad says don't (incomprehensible) it is just a holiday and Deveney says I kind of liked that place .....they eat their dinner and they discuss what's going to happen on the holiday. Emily put her fingers in her ears because she didn't want to hear anything about that holiday. When they finished she took her fingers out of her ears and sat down to eat. Now when Emily heard what would happen she thought I don't want to listen. I'm going to my room ok mum says Emily. Her mum says ok maybe you can discuss it with your friend on the phone the holiday. Emily says ok but really she is going to play with the dog. .... They start watching tv she has in her room. She watches her favourite programme which annoyingly had a favourite character going to the place she will be going, so she turned off the that show and went on to her favourite one ..... she goes to sleep she goes to sleep on her pillow or her bed and she says tomorrow I am going on holiday and I don't want to go but anyway she goes to sleep and [the next day] says to Mum are we going to the holiday? Mum says we have changed it we are going to Mexico.....

Throughout this elaborated sequence the conflict between Emily and mum was clearly present, and it led to mum trying to solve the problem through dialogue and to Emily looking for ways to distract her mind from the ever-present issue. This is in contrast to Sally's response, a CWS from the age group. In Sally's response the issue between mum and the

main character very quickly turned into competitions between the parents and the children, thereby overwhelming the story.

In the responses of the CWNS, in cases when the emotional issues were not dealt with interpersonally as in these examples of Trev and Susan, the CWNS, as I mentioned earlier, showed themselves capable of staying in touch with the emotion underlying the stem and of refashioning it in order to make it more manageable. I mentioned the example of Susan, who could refashion the pain associated with exclusion into a scene of a queen being waited on by her dog servant, which indicated that this participant could keep in mind the difficult emotion generated by the exclusion scene and transform it into something more digestible, whilst retaining a boundary between the child and parents. This did not mean that it was an easy challenge for Susan to transform this emotion. Later in the story she went into her parents' bedroom as they were sleeping because she thought she had heard a noise, suggesting how precarious maintaining separation from the parental couple was. The main character of Tulip, a five year-old CWNS (girl), likewise revealed the use of a mind to help her deal with the 'sadness' of being separated from her parents in this same situation. After being excluded she built a wall and put herself on top of the wall. I immediately thought of this as a symbolic way of building herself up and maintaining some control over the situation. This is in contrast to Frank,

a 5 year old CWS, who as I mentioned before, responded to a reminder that the parents wanted time alone together by stating that the parents had had their time together when in actual fact they hadn't had any time alone.

There were moments which showed that the CWNS had difficulties in responding directly to the emotional issues presented. In the holiday story, in which there was a conflict between the main character and mum about where to go, Sean, a 5 year-old CWNS, started playing with his pets, and had to be reminded of the issue. I had to remind Trev, a 5 year old (CWNS), that mum and dad wanted to spend time alone together. After the reminder, however, both participants were able to maintain the conflict, and Trev was able to maintain a relationship with the father through reading.

Ben, a 5 year-old CWNS, however, had particular difficulties in responding to the stems. He had his own agenda of building and climbing walls in some of his stems rather than responding directly to the issues implicit in the stems. I'd like to make some observations of other features of his interview that stood out. He seemed at times to make little differentiation between his inner and outer world. For example, he told very long and rambling stories, and then blamed the interviewer for keeping him in the room for a long time. When he narrated his responses his actions were accompanied by noises, and

I had a feeling more than with any other participant that when he narrated he had no sense that there might be another person listening to what he was saying. He was very difficult at times to understand. His interview lasted twice as long as the average interview. Whenever the interviewer had a character in his hand he would try to take it out of the interviewer's hand. His scores on the object relations scale were generally on the lower end of the scores given to the other children with no stutter within his age range.

### **Overall summary**

#### **Summary of findings from the object relations scale.**

Differences between CWS and CWNS were more pronounced in the older age range than in the 5-6 year-olds. In the younger age range for both groups there tended to be less direct expression of affect than in the older age range. I think this was at least partly due to the nature of the object relations scale which privileged verbalization, and in the responses of the younger age range there tended to be more action and less verbalization than in the older age range. In the older age range CWS tended to be more overwhelmed than CWNS by emotion, particularly negative but also positive emotion. There was some more evidence of negativity in the responses of the CWS generally than in the responses of CWNS. Although there was no

difference between the two younger groups in depiction of inner states, there tended to be problems with differentiation between characters for CWS, for both the younger and the older participants; and the exclusion situation seemed particularly problematic for CWS. Although in the younger age range there seemed to be no difference between CWS and CWNS in terms of investment in relationships according to the object relations scale, scant interaction and dialogue of CWS compared with the CWNS was noted. This was also noted for the CWS of the older age range. For both age ranges the responses of the CWNS seemed more coherent and to address the issue implicit in the stems more directly.

### **Summary of findings from the thematic analysis**

The thematic analysis suggests that there were particular features in the responses of CWS, namely problem with relating between separate characters and lack of verbal dialogue in the responses of CWS; inhibition and lack of connection with emotion; excessive emotion; and problem with responding to the emotional issues presented in the stems in the stories of CWS. There was more evidence in the responses of the CWNS that the characters were in touch with the emotional impact of the stem and the situation, and either through dialogue or mental elaboration, i.e. in the goldilocks story, found a way to deal with the pain.

Although the object relations scale did not suggest differences between CWS and CWNS in the younger age group in certain aspects, these findings of the thematic analysis correspond quite closely to the findings of the object relations scale.

The next step of the process is to consider whether this data from the object relations scale and the thematic analysis can throw any light on the hypothesis that CWS, compared to CWNS, have problems with container-contained relationships. This will be the focus in the next chapter, in which I discuss these results.



## **Chapter Six: Discussion of the results in terms of the research question.**

In this chapter I want to try to make sense of the findings from the empirical research, with a particular focus on whether there is support or not for the hypothesis that the core problem for children with a stutter (CWS) can be understood using Bion's formulation of container-contained relationships. Container-contained relationships are operationalized by the capacity of the participant to respond to the emotional issue in the story stem. However, as expressed in the methodology chapter, although this capacity to respond to emotional issues may be a crucial feature of the outcome of successful containment, on the surface it is a general capacity and by itself does not necessarily identify the usefulness of the container-contained configuration.

As I stated in the methodology chapter one way to address this issue is to consider container-contained relationships within a broader framework of Bion's thinking. If there is evidence in the data for concepts that are closely related to Bion's concept of container-contained relationships, this can add plausibility to proposing a link between container-contained relationships and stuttering. One such interrelated concept with container-contained relationships is, as I stated in chapter 4, the movement from the paranoid-schizoid position

to the depressive position, that is to say the movement from part-objects to whole objects, or from a fragmentary inner world to a more balanced outlook (Sullivan, 2010). If container-contained relating is a useful concept to understand the object relational world of CWS, there should be echoes of the paranoid-schizoid position in their responses. A paranoid-schizoid position could be recognised by the use of primitive defences such as splitting and projective identification. It could also be recognised by a lack of separation between the characters and extreme positions taken towards the object, namely very aggressive impulses and/ or idealization of the object, as well as suggestions of a severe superego.

Apart from there being echoes of the paranoid-schizoid position in the responses, in order to determine the usefulness of container-contained in understanding stuttering, this concept should have explanatory power. This concept should be able to account for features in the responses of the children with a stutter as well as explain the differences between the responses of children with a stutter and children without.

### **Response to the stems**

In this first section I will focus on the participants' response to the stems, as this can indicate the participants' capacity or not to contain the emotional issues inherent in them.

### **The response of the younger participants to the stems.**

Although both the children with a stutter (CWS) and children with no stutter (CWNS) in the younger age range (5-6 years old) generally had narratives with a lot of action, the CWS told either particularly concrete accounts or produced narratives that were not really relevant to the stems. As regards those CWS who told concrete accounts, there seemed to be no or very scant connection to the emotion implicit in the stems. The 5- 6 year-old CWS produced matter of fact and concrete responses such as 'they didn't go there' with no further remarks when there was a conflict over the holiday, or 'he played with his brother' when presented with the conflict with mum about seeing his friend. In this way the complexity of the conflict inherent in the stems was not faced.

In contrast, I noted in the results chapter that CWNS of this age group were better able to connect emotionally to the stem and object. In the exclusion situation, for example, the main character of Trevor was able to accept the limit of exclusion from his parents and at the same time was able to maintain an emotional connection to the father, namely by reading and thereby getting his father's attention and praise. Even those

participants of CWNS who were inhibited, namely Sean and Tulip, were able to remain engaged with the emotion implicit in the stems. In the exclusion situation, for example, Sean's character did not leave his bedroom, but he stated that he felt sad being separated from his parents, and he used the family pets to maintain a relationship with the parents by the pets roaming between the main character's bedroom and the room where the parents were. The emotion was present, and Sean in this case was able to creatively manage the emotional disturbance.

### **Inhibition**

It is useful to speculate on the scant emotional connection, or inhibition, of the CWS of this younger age group. In Kleinian thinking inhibition is typically associated with an attempt to preserve the 'good' object from aggressive impulses. Arguably the empirical data was suggestive of this. In Frank's story, just after his main character was told he couldn't see his friend, mum's dinner got burnt, possibly suggesting that through a process of projection the main character was expressing his aggressive impulses, and thus protecting mum and himself from the direct expression of his feelings. Such an argument resonates strongly with findings from the case studies in chapter 3. Inhibition, which was accompanied by underlying aggression, was an important aspect in a number of these case-

studies (Plankers (1999), Magnavita (1998), Wilkinson (2001), Usher (1944), Kolansky 1960).

**Inhibition: A comparison of children with a stutter and children without a stutter.**

Despite not expressing their emotions directly, the CWNS seemed to be able to maintain a symbolic connection to them. Tulip, for example, seemed to draw upon the Goldilocks story as a way to respond to the conflict about where to go on holiday, which indicated that she was in touch with the conflict generated by the stem, but couldn't express it directly to the object. In contrast, the inhibition of the CWS seems to be at a deeper level; arguably at a level where the emotion or the experience cannot be known or thought about. Arthur and Frank, for example, said they were 'happy' when excluded from the parents' company. Jack, in response to the exclusion situation, said that when the main character went back to the living-room where his parents were, they were still hugging. Just after this, Jack said 'I can't think anymore'. Arguably the parental scene was too overwhelming for thought to occur. A useful way to understand this could be a shutting-down of affect and anxiety, which echoes the inhibition of Dick, an analysand of Klein, who had difficulties establishing a symbolic relationship with reality.

### **Attack on alpha function**

Like Klein, Bion links concreteness to a fear of aggression in the early relationship, albeit from the perspective of a more two-person psychology. Due to a fear of aggression or envy Bion writes about a consequent splitting in the object due to the need for survival and this leads to 'the need for love, understanding and mental development [from the breast]....[being] deflected .... into the search for material comforts' (p.11). In this state of mind awareness of all feelings is destroyed or emotional links are attacked (Bion, 1962) through an attack on alpha function (Lopez-Corvo, 2006).

The concreteness of responses or a lack of connection to emotion was an important factor in some of the younger children with a stutter of this empirical research, and links to a difficulty in tolerating emotion that was a feature of some of the case-studies looked at in chapter two. I think the thinking of Bion and Klein resonates with the thinking of Marty, from the Paris School of Psychosomatics, that psychosomatic patients use concrete thinking as a defence against knowing their own minds (1952, in Sloate, 2016).

Bion's concept of container-contained can go further in accounting for why not connecting with emotions in some of the responses of the younger CWS links to the problem in responding to the complexity of the stems. Emotion is necessary to bind experience and to give it a form,

and Bion gave a visual model of Elliott Jaques' concept of the reticulum to help explain the importance of the binding force of emotion in forming the container-contained: 'The result is a reticulum in which the gaps are the sleeves and the threads forming the meshes of the reticulum are emotions' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p. 92). In the concrete responses of the CWS there could be a fear of fragmentation, that is to say a sense of a lack of a containing function. In contrast to the CWS, I have already mentioned how the CWNS showed more capacity to remain connected to emotions, and this connection it could be stated drove a complex and coherent response, for example in Tulip's Goldilocks story.

### **A severe superego**

I think in Klein's understanding of Dick, in which there is a standstill of emotional life, a severe superego is implied. The responses of Jack and Arthur, two CWS, to the picture story and Jack's response to the holiday also strongly suggested the workings of a severe superego. In the picture story the picture was not responded to by the family despite the participant being prompted. Moreover, in Jack's case it was emphasized that he had missed the TV show the family was watching. This could be accounted for as follows: In a situation of a child bringing a picture home to show the family, which elicited praise in the responses of all the CWNS, and the fact that the child missing the TV show was the focus of attention suggests the workings of a

severe superego. In Jack's response to the holiday story in which the family decided to go on holiday where the child character wanted rather than where mum wanted, this child was immediately grounded because he was naughty. Moreover, when the interviewer reminded Jack that the parents wanted to spend some time alone together in the exclusion story, Jack's response was that the main character 'got told off because he was meant to play with his toys'. This could also suggest the workings of a punishing superego, and the main character in Jack's story could be compared to a client of Britton, who whenever he asserted himself felt threatened by an attacking superego (Britton, 2003).

**Is scant response to the emotional issues of the stems support for the hypothesis of a problem with container-contained relationships?**

Not responding fully to the emotional issues underlying the stem meets one of the criteria for container-contained specified in the methodology chapter. However, not responding fully to the emotions in the stems could be accounted for using other theoretical frameworks. It is compatible with the thinking of Marty, from the Paris school of Psychosomatics, that psychosomatics use concrete thinking as a defence against knowing their own minds (1952, in Sloate,



2016). Even the denial of emotion and the presence of a severe superego in the stories of CWS, which could echo a PS position, could be accounted for in other psychoanalytic frameworks. Sloate (2016), for example, makes a similar connection in her paper between denial of emotion and a severe superego. It could also be argued that the scant responses that were found in the stories of some children with a stutter were due to a wish not to stutter so as to avoid feeling emotionally awkward. In the design of the research tool, I did try to deal with this eventuality by giving participants the opportunity to manipulate Playmobil figures as well as to verbalize their stories. I observed, however, in the actual research that it was the inhibited children with a stutter in contrast to the children without a stutter who made a lot less use of the Playmobil figures. This could suggest that the children without a stutter were using the play figures to communicate and to express a symbolic relationship to reality, and that the inhibition of the CWS was a part of a broader problem of symbolization and expression of the mind rather than merely due to the desire to avoid emotional awkwardness when they stutter. All in all the research data could support a hypothesis that with children who stutter there is a problem with container-contained; however, it does not *necessarily* point to a problem with container-contained.

## **Use of agglomeration as a defence against the stems by children with a stutter.**

I think the insulation from the demands of reality of the stems is an important feature in the responses of Frank and Paul, two CWS in the younger age group, who produced lengthy and elaborated responses to the stems. In their narratives, as stated in the results chapter, they made a lot of references to food and ritualized actions such as going to bed. Unlike the CWS who were withdrawn/inhibited in their responses, these narratives expressed desire; however, the responses were largely irrelevant to the conflict between child and parents that was presented in the stems, and thus lacked coherence. Irrelevant responses to the story stems could suggest that the conflicts presented in the stems were too difficult for Frank and Paul to face. It cannot be argued that they were displaying a lack of interest in the stems because both Paul and Frank were enthusiastic about telling stories. In the following paragraphs I would like to argue that there is strong support for the operation of a defence against the emotional reality of the stems.

I think it might be appropriate to see this accumulation of food and activities in the narratives of Frank and Paul as a verbalised form of a mode of thinking Bion refers to as 'agglomeration'. In reference to the schizophrenic Bion argued: 'He cannot synthesize his objects: he can

only agglomerate or compress them' (Bion, 1957). This incapacity to integrate his objects stems from an attack on awareness of an experience, resulting in the projection of bits, which become hostile because they were expelled, and which later cannot be introjected but only added together (Bion, 1957). It is a problem of processing emotional links. It could be argued that the characters of Frank and Paul in this present research were absorbed in themselves, in acts of gratification, and in a form of thinking which insulated them from the reality presented in the stems.

Hinshelwood describes 'agglomeration' as a rigid form of containing, and which serves as a defence against the potential fragmentation resulting from an awareness of linking emotionally with others, and ultimately reality (Hinshelwood, 2016). Because of a fear of being overwhelmed the container could be described as sealing itself up, with the result that emotions do not gain access and potentially given a proper psychic existence. This process resonates with the description Bion makes of people with a stutter resorting to the defence of 'modes of expression so boring' in order to protect themselves from overwhelming emotion (Bion, 1970/1983a, p.94), a quote I made reference to in chapter three. Arguably, for Paul and Frank food served as a defence against the potential fragmentation

resulting from awareness of the conflict between the characters presented in the stems.

I will quote at length from Frank's response to the stem in which the main character was pushed off his chair by a sibling. The reason for using this quotation here is because it shows clearly, I think, the fragmentation that occurred in his response to the conflict in the stem and also how references to food and different activities seemed to help Frank to remain centered.

(P= participant; I=interviewer; George=main character; Evelyn= sibling)

P: (Immediately he gets up, gives the interviewer a look of defiance. lifts George, and as if about to cry/or in frustration) And then George he mm he he mm' (lifts cooker looks inside it and takes out tray and looks at it, plays with it) he starts starts liebe (lifts Evelyn [the sibling] ) (incomprehensible) starts to watch

I: George starts to watch tv

P: (looks around him a lot; looks at camera) Evelyn (incomprehensible) another good chair (puts chair alongside the first chair) and she has her best chair and she sits on that.

I: sorry

P: liebe I mean Evelyn gets her best chair and she sits on that

I: Evelyn sits on that chair. (He looks at interviewer and camera; He runs tray along border between tables)

P: and then Evelyn (long pause. looks behind him and to his side as if looking for something to say) Evelyn has makes some lunch.

I: Evelyn makes lunch

P: then they have some lunch

I: then they have some lunch

P: (long time thinking about what to say) they have some lunch then they go to their rooms

I: then they go to their rooms

P: (incomprehensible) have a little play on their bed

I: have a little play on their beds

P: and then they get a little snack downstairs

I: have a little snack

P: then they carry on playing with their toys  
 I: carry on playing with their toys  
 P: (incomprehensible) Evelyn goes and makes some pizza  
 I: Evelyn goes and makes pizza ok  
 P: (puts dolls at table) and then they have it then they have a yogurt  
 I: after the pizza they have a yogurt  
 P: and then they and then they and then they go to bed  
 I: then they go to bed

Frank did not address the underlying conflict in the stem, namely the conflict between one sibling pushing another off the chair and getting hurt. Nevertheless, the stem seemed to have affected him a lot. There was a greater fragmentation in his speech as he stuttered more in this story than the others. He gave the interviewer what seemed to be a look of defiance, and was visibly disturbed. There was a lack of coherence at times -his speech did not match the actions that he was doing, i.e. referring to George [the main character] but lifting the sibling instead. He looked around him a lot and moved the tray between the tables, which I understood as a way to keep control of his emotions. Then, at one point in the narrative a sense of flow became evident as the characters moved from one activity and a food item to another. In this latter part he seemed to be functioning, and this could be seen as a buffer against the earlier disturbance.

**Is agglomeration support for the container-contained hypothesis?**

I have made the argument that agglomeration is a useful way to understand the defence against fragmentation that a stem might bring, and I have described agglomeration specifically as a rigid form of containment that defends against such awareness of emotional reality. This could be a useful way to understand the problems of Frank and Paul, both children with a stutter, in responding to the emotional issues of the stems, and could be support for the usefulness of the hypothesis that successful container-contained is a core issue in stuttering. It could be said that Frank and Paul, in order to deal, or not deal with the emotional conflict in the stems and the related anxieties, resorted to aggregation because they have not successfully internalized a container-contained function that would give their experiences a proper psychic existence, and thereby make them more manageable.

### **Brief summary of the 5-6 year old children with a stutter**

I have argued that a lack of an emotional connection with the stems and suggestions of a severe superego could offer support for the usefulness of the hypothesis of container-contained for understanding stuttering. I have also argued that Bion's concept of agglomeration could explain an aspect of the responses of some children with a stutter. This could add support for the usefulness of container-contained in understanding stuttering.

### **Differences found between children with a stutter and children with no stutter in response to stems in the age group 9-10.**

A difference was also found in the age group 9-10 between CWS and CWNS in response to the stems. Tom and Sally, two CWS, typically responded to the stems with excessive emotion, either with a lot of aggression or fusion. In the results chapter I made the observation that particularly Tom but also Sally seemed to use the stem as a cue to express their imaginings about object relations and emotions of fusion or aggression rather than directly responding to the emotional issue presented. What seemed to provoke this overwhelming emotion at times were the generational and gender limits imposed by the stems. In the response to the exclusion stem the tv the parents were watching in Sally's response blew up and the whole family had a pretend tea party in the child's room. Although difficulties in accepting gender and generational differences were also present in Tom's responses, for example his intrusion in the exclusion situation, his aggression also came across as fortuitous, for example in the response to the picture story in which a dog caused havoc in the house and, and in the response to the story in which the main character burnt his hand and this led to him knocking a lot of objects over, over including mum.

In contrast, as I have already argued in relation to the younger CWNS, the older children with no stutter showed a better capacity to respond to the emotional issue in the stem and to find a creative response to it. In the results chapter I gave some examples of this in the responses of CWNS. In the exclusion scene Susan, a 9 year old CWNS, was able to maintain her connection with painful feelings associated with exclusion by the parents and to transform them into a narrative of the main character as a queen and her dog as her servant. In the exclusion scene of Britney, a 9 year-old CWNS, her oedipal phantasies seemed more difficult to tolerate than Susan's, but this did not lead to a destruction of the link between the parental couple as in the story of Sally, a 9 year old child with a stutter. Unlike in Sally's response, in which the parents ended up having a pretend tea party with the main character, the reality of the parents and the link between them was not destroyed. Britney's main character was able to creatively arrange for mum to go to work so that she could spend the day with dad.

It is this capacity to symbolize, as demonstrated by children with no stutter, and truly contain their experiences, I think, that plays an important role in whether reality can be faced as it is, without the need to distort or deny it. This point will be developed later

### **Absence of guilt**



I found it surprising, given the libidinal and very aggressive nature of the responses of Tom and Sally, two 9-10 year olds with a stutter, that there did not seem to be the presence of guilt or anxiety. Perhaps there was an inkling of guilt when Tom asked the interviewer who would see the video after his very libidinal response to the exclusion situation. Tom and Sally did not seem by nature aggressive people; they came across as very friendly and relational. Tom shared a few anecdotes with the interviewer. I was also surprised in Tom's responses to the stems that he could swing from being aggressive in story one to the opposite in the exclusion story.

### **A latent primitive superego**

The apparent absence of guilt in Tom and Sally's responses could possibly be explained in terms of a latent primitive superego. It could be argued that the excessive emotion and the distortion of the stems in the stories of Tom and Sally were defences against an integrated response to the stems for fear of a severe superego. A severe superego is closely related to a fear of one's destructiveness. This implies that the libidinal and aggressive impulses of Tom and Sally had been split off and because these experiences hadn't been suffered the person was pushed into 'behavioural patterns that he cannot think about but can only succumb to' (Sullivan, p.72). The splitting off of aggressive impulses was

strongly suggested in Tom's picture story in which the story developed into a narrative about the family dog, who acted in a very aggressive manner. In story 3 of both Tom and Sally, in which the main character was not allowed to see his/her friend, the main character got angry and stormed off. A restriction on the main character was met with an explosion, like in Sally's response to the exclusion situation. I think a limit could have been experienced as a death, and in Tom's case it was preferable for the main character to be dived upon by the father later in the story and dragged home rather than being sent to his room for shouting at the mother. The preference for an aggressive treatment for Tom's character could suggest that a limit imposed by a good object, namely the mother, was particularly hard to tolerate, i.e. wanting to keep the good and bad separate, and arguably the character did not want to feel guilt. The superego here echoes the severe superego of the paranoid-schizoid position, in which the morality of the superego is linked with deathly punishments and condemnation or fear of these.

The remnants of a primitive superego might also be suggested by Tom and Sally's responses to story 4, in which there was a conflict between mum and the main character about where to go on holiday. In Sally's case the parents and children had competitions between them to decide where to go, and it is the parents who started cheating.

Competitions could carry some resonance of a primitive superego, and

by the parents cheating this suggests that either her parents as inner objects had a problem with moral authority, or this is an idea that Sally was playing with, i.e. it is something she would like to be the case.

In Tom's response to the same stem the parents were experienced by the children as having such a serious argument that the children had to make them their favourite food; however, this was not enough and the children had to devise other steps to placate the parents, namely put them to bed with their favourite objects. I don't understand this as an attempt at reparation associated with the depressive position. I think Riviere is useful here. She wrote about a manic defence against anxieties surrounding damaged, and also damaging, objects (Riviere, 1936). I understand the panic in the children's behavior as the fear of destructiveness, and brings to mind the primitive anxieties provoked by the combined parental couple. This resonates with a theme in chapter 3 from the psychoanalytic case-studies of people with a stutter, namely the fear of causing harm to the object.

**Considering the older children with a stutter in terms of a problem with container-contained relating.**

Very emotional responses that seemed to destroy or seriously undermine the reality of the stems could give support for a problem with container-contained, that is to say a container that is fragmented due to

emotional force. Echoes of a paranoid-schizoid mode of functioning, namely the suggestions of a severe superego and manic defence against anxieties, could be seen as giving further support to a reading of these older CWS in terms of a problem with container-contained.

### **Considering the research data from the perspective of the reality/pleasure paradigm**

It could be argued that the different problems engaging with the issue inherent in the stem in the responses of CWS in general, both for the younger and older participants, could be usefully understood within Freud's paradigm of the reality and pleasure principle. Difficulties in responding to the conflicts or issues could suggest that for the CWS there was a withdrawal from a part of reality, and that there was through regression a domination of the pleasure principle. It could be argued, for example, that the large amounts of food that Paul and Frank, two CWS, indulge in was a defence against the anxiety provoked by the stems.

The children who stutter who were inhibited, producing scant and concrete responses, in this paradigm could be understood in terms of a regression to an anal phase or in terms of an inhibition of libidinal impulses. There is a partial withdrawal from the reality of the stems on the part of all the CWS, either in the form of inhibition, or excess reference to food and activities, or in excess emotion of fusion or

aggression in the older CWS. This is in contrast to the children with no stutter who on most occasions deal fully with the emotional issue presented.

### **Primitive anxieties in the responses of children with a stutter.**

However, there are some problems with understanding the responses of CWS in terms of a regression from a structured mind. I mean by this a mind that is structured as a result of a resolution or partial resolution of the oedipus complex. In the responses of children who stutter there is indication of primitive anxieties rather than neurotic anxieties. Previously I quoted at length Frank's response to the stem in which a sibling was pushed off a chair by another. This conflict did not only stimulate the consumption of large amounts of food, which as I just stated could suggest a regressed state, but also in Frank's response there was fragmentation of thought, behavior and speech. This strongly suggests primitive anxieties.

### **Primitive defences in the responses of children with a stutter.**

The existence of primitive anxieties in the responses of children who stutter was also indicated by the primitive defences that are used. I will exemplify the use of primitive defences in detail because this lends some validity to situating the problem in stuttering within a

Kleinian/Bionian framework. In the responses of the CWS rather than sublimation there was evidence of primitive defences of splitting and projecting, which are on top of the other defences already mentioned, namely inhibition, concrete responses, agglomeration and distortion of stems seen in the older CWS. In the results chapter, for example, I referred to Paul's response to the picture story. When the main character brought the picture home the whole family went together to open the door and psychological distance was created between the family and the main character (also a family member) by someone saying 'it is that little girl at school'. Suffice it to say now that this could have been Paul's way of coping with difference, i.e. by splitting the main character off from the rest of the family. Later in the chapter I will expand on Paul's response to the picture story and will argue that differentiation is a particular problem for CWS in this research. Likewise, in Tom's first story, in which the main character went home and brought a picture with him, there seems to be splitting. He brought the picture in and the focus of the story was a dog that became very aggressive. This state of aggression, which seemed to be split off, overwhelmed the sense of an individual and even the name of the main character was changed from Timmy to Dale. The individual was restored through the help of a friend who found the picture and hung it on the wall. Furthermore, in the results

chapter I wrote about the efforts that Frank took to keep the parents separate, namely by placing a child between them.

Projection of aggressive parts has also featured in my analysis of the responses of CWS, for example with the burning of the dinner in the response of Frank when the main character was not allowed to see his friend, and also the explosion of the TV when the main character of Sally was excluded from her parents' company in the living room. The use of projective identification was also pronounced in Tom's response to the exclusion situation, in which the child was asked to give the parents some time alone together. In the response the parents did not retain their identity in their own right as they become submerged in the child's phantasy of a baby being born. This was in contrast to Britney, a 9 year old CWNS, who had phantasies and/or fantasies about being with her father, but creatively arranged for mum to go to work for this to happen. This allowed the child to spend the day with dad. In Britney's case there was a gap between the ph(f)antasies and the reality which the participant was to negotiate and symbolize.

### **Object relations of children with a stutter**

A primitive functioning of children with a stutter was also suggested by the nature of object relations that was apparent in their responses. In contrast to the object relations of CWNS the responses of the children

with a stutter suggested a lot of primitive phantasy in their object relations. The older children with a stutter had more aggressive attacks on objects and/or fusion between objects. In the responses of the younger CWS there was a strong suggestion of a severe superego.

The use of these primitive defences and the object relations suggest a paranoid-schizoid mode of functioning, and as such could offer support for understanding the core problems in stuttering within a Kleinian and Bionian frame of reference. As Hinshelwood writes, 'Primitive states reveal themselves in attacks on the capacities for thinking, for reflecting and for making emotional links' (1994, p.96). Likewise Rosenfeld, paraphrasing Bion, describes alpha function as 'necessary for .. a normal ability to think and function' (Rosenfeld, 2001, p.43). Rosenfeld continues: 'As the child gradually learns to accept his good and bad impulses [initially through reverie], he develops a self capable of dealing with internal and external conflicts' (ibid). An attack on (or a lack of) alpha function or attack on an internal space could account for the extreme nature of the responses of the children with a stutter, namely concrete thinking and aggressive impulses. It could be argued that the stems provoked a lot of primitive anxiety in the children who stutter and there was not a containing apparatus that had been internalized that could contain these experiences and give them a proper psychic existence. Therefore the children with a stutter had to resort to primitive



defences, such as splitting and projection. However, as Hinshelwood points out primitive defences 'defend against the psychotic anxiety, but... also provoke it' (Hinshelwood, 2016, p. 411). In contrast, children with no stutter showed themselves more capable of maintaining a symbolic 'relation to the outside world' (Klein, 1930, p.221), i.e. to the stems presented to them.

In the last section of this chapter, in which I account for the findings of the empirical research as a whole, I will make the argument that an important way that the CWS can be distinguished from the CWNS is that the children with a stutter had a problem with differentiation, and there was very scant dialogue in their responses.

### **Problem differentiating between characters**

It was found in the empirical study that children with a stutter of both age groups had problems of differentiating between characters, and that there was scant dialogue between the characters. Accepting limits between characters was more prominent for the CWNS of both age groups, and although dialogue among characters was more an aspect of the older group of children with no stutter, it was also present in the responses of the younger group of CWNS, for example in the holiday story of Sylvester.

This lack of differentiation between characters emerged strongly in the responses of CWS. It was suggested for example by the lack of response to the picture in the picture stories of Arthur and Jack, which suggests an attack on creativity and individuality; individuality also seemed to be crushed in Jack's holiday story when it seems that he was being punished for expressing where the family should go on holiday; a problem with differentiation was also suggested by the fact that the family did everything together in stories one and four of Paul; by the difficulty of Paul and Frank to accept the stem from the interviewer, and by the lack of difference between parents and children in Sally and Tom's stories. Here, for example, is Paul's full response to the picture story, in which the main character had drawn a picture at school and has just arrived home:

I: Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: The little brother taps his dad on the shoulder

I: Taps his dad on his shoulder

P: And he said that there is someone at the door and even his mum, so they all went to the door

I: ok they all went to the door

P: and opened it

I: ok

P: the it was that little girl at school, and she gave the picture to them; they loved the picture

I: they loved the picture

P: they were surprised it was a picture of a Bubbleman

I: ok Bubbleman

P: they all surprised they said they said they could watch a film together

I: ok

P: and then they all sat on the sofa

I: ok  
 P: (tries to put figure on the sofa)  
 I: If you put the small ones towards the front they sit better  
 P: (puts all the dolls in a line on the sofa) that goes over there  
 I: ok  
 P: they all liked the movie  
 I: they all liked it  
 P: and then after it finished  
 I: ok  
 P: all of them went to feed their pets  
 I: they all went to feed their pets  
 P: the pets walked (incomprehensible) (stands all the figures up and moves the pets towards them)  
 I: ok  
 P: after they stroked them it was bedtime  
 I: ok  
 P: and the pets went to sleep  
 I: ok  
 P: and they went to sleep  
 I: ok. They all went to sleep  
 P: and everyone thought what a lovely day  
 I: what a lovely day. Is this the story finished?  
 P: Yep  
 I: ok thank you very much. Thank you

There seems to be no difference here between the family members as they all did everything together, and they all thought the same. What surprised me a lot was the phrase 'it was that little girl at school'. Max had been named by the participant as the main character in the story and a family member, but in this story he had been transformed into 'that little girl at school'. I think it could possibly be the case that psychological distance was created between the family and the main character by the phrase 'it is that little girl school', both in terms of the main character being referred to as a girl when in fact he was introduced as a boy, the

same sex as the participant, and in terms of being referred to as a person from school. This psychological distance could possibly be explained by the fact that the main character had been away from a family unit that did everything together, i.e. he had been away at school and therefore different, and so he could have been temporarily split off. If this is the case, this would suggest a strong need for sameness.

A lack of differentiation between the characters of the children who stutter in this empirical research echoes a key finding in the case studies that I discussed in chapter three. I found that problems with separation and merging with the object were distinctive features of the analysands with a stutter.

### **Envy**

A difficulty for CWS in accepting differences could suggest envy, or fear of envy. For Klein 'primary envy is an innate aggression and sadism towards the good object' (Hinshelwood, 1991, p.173). This leads to the problem of oral ambivalence and the taking in of the good object (Wassef, 1955). Klein emphasizes that separation is dependent on having had established a good relationship with the object. In the present empirical research when interacting particularly with Frank, a CWS, I felt I had to struggle in order to be able to present the actual stem. Frank got frustrated a few times when I insisted on finishing the stem, and he would move his finger between the tables as if to keep his

feelings in check, as noted earlier. Frank also had strong ideas at times about who should be in the stories, and got annoyed and found it hard to accept that in a particular story I was using certain characters. It seems that Frank is showing difficulties in tolerating a stem and interviewer as separate from himself. The generational limit between mum and child was attacked in Frank's response to story three when his main character was told he couldn't see his friend and immediately afterwards mum's cooking got burnt. In her responses Sally, a CWS, showed that she found it difficult to accept differences between the children and parents. She seemed to work hard to set up a false equality between the children and the parents, for example when parents and children took part in a pretend tea-party after the TV blew up, thus rendering the parental links sterile, and when the parents and children took part in competitions to decide the holiday destination. The destructive forces of envy was shown, I think, when Sally couldn't tolerate the relationship between mum and dad in the exclusion situation, and the links between mum and dad were attacked as the situation went out of control over the choice of TV channel and the TV exploded. I will expand on the relationship between envy and difficulty in tolerating differences later in the chapter.

### **Scant dialogue in the responses of children with a stutter**

Another important finding from this empirical study was scant dialogue between the characters of the children with a stutter. This was vividly depicted in the picture story of Frank. The child brought a picture home, showed the picture to the family and, with no interaction, put it back immediately in his school-bag, which was then put in the cupboard. A strong expectation of dialogue that didn't materialize was in Tom's response to story 3 when the main character ran out of the house and was found by his dad, who, without uttering a word to him, dragged his son home. It was perhaps significant that the dad happened to be at the house of the friend of the main character, where the main character had run to after his dispute with mum. This could suggest difficulties in differentiation between the main character and the parents.

The empirical research strongly suggests that there could be a strong link between symbolization and differentiation. The children with no stutter were more capable than CWS of maintaining limits between characters and not denying the conflicts inherent in the stems; at the same time there was a lot of evidence that they could transform the emotional conflict in the stems into stories or solve the issues through dialogue. In contrast, the children with a stutter showed that they had problems differentiating between characters as well as preserving the emotional conflicts of the stems; at the same time there was scant dialogue in their responses and there was little evidence in the

responses of CWS of staying with both sides of an emotional conflict and transforming it into a coherent story.

I think these differences between CWS and CWNS can be made sense of in the following brief way. If limits between characters and also limits of stems are accepted, that is to say there is differentiation, this demands mature mechanisms such as dialogue in order to respond to conflict. However, if limits are not accepted and stems are responded to by primitive defences such as denial or distortion, this means that dialogue or elaborated stories are not needed to contain the emotional disturbance provoked by the stems. Principally regarding this research this means that the conflict pertaining to the stems needed to be maintained in order for proper symbolization to occur. This is coherent with Segal's thinking that there is a close relationship between object-relations and symbolization, and also Bion's proposal that for thinking to take place there needs to be the capacity to bear the frustration of a negative realization, i.e. when a desire has not been satisfied.

I think a problem with successful container-contained can add depth to this explanation. Earlier in this chapter I referred to Bion's thinking that when there is a disturbance between the mother and infant, and the infant is forced to go on feeding for survival, this can mean that a psychical connection, or a potential for a psychical connection with the primary carer is split off and attacked due to a fear of hate or envy

regarding the breast. Psychological satisfactions, such as love and wisdom, are then deflected onto the material. The potential for alpha function developed through a container-contained relationship is reduced. In other words 'a self capable of dealing with internal and external conflicts' (Rosenfeld, 2001, p.43) is restricted in its potential for growth.

Successful containment helps to provide the limits and the gap that are necessary for the development of thought. A container that contains psychological phenomena is necessary as it introduces a sense of a distinct other. Without this sense of a distinct other separation/differentiation is very problematic. Cartwright expressed it in this way: 'the container represents an interruption of the dominant symmetrical logic of the unconscious and introduces a sense of "otherness" at preconscious levels of mind' (Cartwright, 2010, p.134). Cartwright (2010) argued that the mother/container can fulfil this function because she is perceived both as an 'extension of self (symmetry)' (p.133) and as separate. Mellier (2014) expanded on Cartwright's thinking by arguing that after successful containment 'a mental apparatus with its systemic internal distinction between conscious and unconscious and its border with external reality [emerges, and that] there is an establishment of a double limit: conscious/unconscious, internal/external' (p.2), and I think as well psychological/material. In other words, these achievements, i.e. the distinction between the psychic and the material, are contingent on the



quality of object relations. If the capacity to distinguish these limits is precarious, this means that later the person with a stutter, as I argued in the second part of chapter three, is particularly susceptible to a confusion between the domains of thought and action in communication, i.e. the stutter as the symbolic enactment of fusion or aggression against the object rather than the communication of ideas. However, when these limits, facilitated by containment, can be tolerated, thinking is allowed to develop. Thinking, in turn, helps to bear inner frustrations (Bion, 1962) and conflicts, and to make further differentiations.

In the responses of CWNS, I mentioned numerous examples in the results chapter where differentiation was maintained between the child and parents and the emotional disturbance provoked by the stem was transformed into stories or dialogues that can contain the emotion. I would like to give another example of this now. Britney, a 9 year old girl (CWNS), as a response to the story in which the main character was not allowed to see her friend, was initially able to express her feelings of aggression towards mum, then later she could express feelings of togetherness with mum. She used a dog and cat to do this symbolically. At first the dog chased the cat, then the cat could be with mum and the dog with the main character, and finally they could all be together watching TV, with the cat beside the main character and the dog with mum. This differentiation and transformation of emotion is less a feature,

however, in the responses of CWS. Significant features in the responses of CWS were scant emotion or overwhelming emotion, i.e. a lot of aggression or fusion.

The split I mentioned earlier between material and psychical that Bion states ensues from a fear of envy or hatred regarding the breast ensures not only that the infant does not have the potential experience of psychic containment but also that the link with mother which is retained is experienced predominantly on a physical level. This could be compared to a psychic withdrawal and resonates with the process of pathological projective identification in Klein's formulation. Grotstein, paraphrasing Klein, argues that the self enters into 'a state of identification with the object to become the object and through unconscious imitation, either passively disappears to a degree and/ or at the other extreme may seek aggressively to take over the identity of the object altogether' (Grotstein, 2005, p.1054). This is in contrast to successful container-contained in which 'in phantasy ..[the ] infant can ..put part of himself into his mother and receive part of her into him without either ceasing to exist outside each other (Britton, 2002, p. 170). In successful containment there is the potential for psychic growth.

When there is a problem with a psychic relationship with the breast Sullivan, as I wrote in chapter two, expresses it in this way: 'There is no self in the experience: there is a breast that is good [or bad], not an "I"

having an experience' (Ibid, p.71). Without the culling implicit in the process of psychic containment, Amir (2014) refers to a flooding of 'chaotic bodily sensations' (p.114), which cannot be properly symbolized. The representation is experienced as indistinguishable from the thing-in-itself (Bion, 1962/1983b). I think this makes separation extremely difficult because it is a question of experiencing either a full physical link with mother in phantasy, or no mother, or rather a no-mother experienced as a bad mother. A psychic link has not developed through container-contained.

This point can be exemplified by an analysand with a stutter that Bion referred to in 'Attack on linking' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017). Bion felt that the analysand was ready to verbalise in analysis an aspect of his personality in relation to the mother, but what came out instead was a severe stutter, with sounds that 'bore resemblance to gasping for breath; gaspings were interspersed with gurgling sounds as if he were immersed in water' (Bion, 1959, in Bronstein and O'Shaughnessy, 2017, p.4). Bion understands this as an attack on linking, that is to say a swamping of emotional links by primitive states. I think instead of a psychic connection to the analyst, there is an immersion in the physical, which I think preserves a physical connection in phantasy with the mother/analyst.

This resonates strongly with the splitting of the mother into mother as presence and mother as function that Britton referred to (Britton, 2002). This splitting helps to preserve mother as presence as the good mother, implying that mother as function or source of meaning is the bad mother that needs to be attacked.

Before looking at how experiencing the relationship with the primary carer in a predominantly physical way bears on the empirical data, I want to cite from the case-studies that I discussed in chapter three. I think these case-studies offer good support for the argument that for CWS the experience of relating with the primary object is predominantly in the domain of the physical.

In chapter three I wrote about merging as an important finding that emerged from the case-studies on analysands with a stutter. Glauber, for example, did not want to analyse his analysand, Hunt, if his analysand moved in with his girlfriend as he felt strongly that there would not be a separate person to analyse (Hunt, 1984). A quotation used by Hunt in connection with fusion is also relevant here. He wrote about it as "neither life nor death, but as it were as after-dinner sleep, dreaming of both." This evokes a languid physical state, and reflected his relationship with his girlfriend; he felt intensely close with her, and this could change into a state of experiencing her as 'cloying, controlling and suffocating' (Hunt, 1984, p.467). This resonates strongly with Amir's thinking that

without the development of symbols the only escape from mother's love is to hatred (Amir, 2014). I also referred to a dream of Mark in chapter three in which he felt that he has to physically extricate himself from his mother in order to be free (Wilkinson, 2001). Wilkinson, in reference to the relationship between Mark and his mother stated that 'separateness was not to be conceived of' (ibid, p.257). In chapter three I also discussed in depth the case study of Mr. A, who experienced his relationship with his primary objects as a phantasy of an anal claustrum (Plankers, 1989).

I think the split that Bion refers to between a psychical link and a material link could play an important part in these relationships experienced as physical. It is a phantasy, and which resonates strongly with what Lacan refers to as the Real (Amir, 2013).

### **Overwhelming emotional connection or little connection**

In the present empirical study the characters of the children with a stutter either had an overwhelming emotional connection or the emotional connection with the stem or other characters or the emotion was scant. In contrast the children with no stutter showed evidence of retaining a separation between the characters, i.e. limits between the characters are respected, and using symbols to maintain an emotional connection between the characters. Amir expressed it in this way: language 'implies

both an adherence to the object as well as the capacity to let it go and recreate it within' (Amir, 2013, p.2).

This extreme contrast in the responses of CWS, namely scant emotion or excessive emotion, puzzled me for a long time. In chapter 3, I also remarked on an association made in the psychoanalytic case-studies between the stutter and either excessive emotion and/or excessive inhibition. This extreme contrast might also relate to research that suggests that there are two neurochemical subgroups in stuttering, one group that responds in treatment to dopamine and gets worse on a dopamine blocker, and one that responds to a dopamine blocker and gets worse on dopamine (Fish and Bowling, 1965; Langova and Moravek, 1964; Alm, 2004; Laufer *et al.*, 1957). I will expand on the potential for a link between psychoanalytic research on stuttering and these findings regarding dopamine in the concluding chapter. Bion's thinking around a problem with container-contained, and an associated quality of object relations, and consequently a problem with the transformation of phenomena such as emotions into symbolic form could account for these extremes in the responses of CWS. In this paradigm an infant/child can retain connection with the primary object through either excessive emotion or no emotion. In reference to an undifferentiated inner object world Bion stated:

The patient feels the pain of an absence of fulfilment of his desires. The absent fulfilment is experienced as a 'no-thing'. [ i.e. experienced as a physical object]. The emotion aroused by the 'no-thing' is felt as indistinguishable from the 'no-thing.' The emotion is replaced by a 'no-emotion' ... 'Non-existence' immediately becomes an object that is immensely hostile and filled with murderous envy towards the quality or function of existence wherever it is to be found' (Bion, 1970/1983a, 19-20).

This can account for the strong libidinal impulses in the responses of CWS, i.e. when desires are satisfied and the primary object is experienced as present, and for either very aggressive emotions or the lack of emotions, i.e. when there is a negative realization of a desire and this is associated with a bad object. Bion argued that it is only when a negative realization can be tolerated, and not experienced as a bad object, that thinking, or symbolization, can take place. I think Kristeva is saying something similar: 'Upon losing mother and relying on negation, I retrieve her as a sign, an image, a word' (Amir, 2014, p 3). Without the benefit of successful container-contained relationships, which support separation and the function of symbolization, there is either strong libidinal impulses or a feeling of non-existence. With the older CWS I argued earlier that the object relations had an explosive nature. With the younger CWS there was either the strong expression of libidinal desire, namely in the excessive food consumed in the stories of Frank and Paul, or the absence of/ scant emotion in the stories of Jack, Arthur and John. Rather than an expression of a psychic link with the object, the

agglomeration mentioned earlier could be seen as a link with the material object that has been split off from the relationship. This could result in the greedy consumption of food and activities seen in the stories of Paul and Frank. The scant responses in the stories of the other participants in this younger group of CWS could be seen as an expression of a lack of supplies or deprivation. Moreover, behind this absence of emotion presented in the stories of some of the younger CWS, there was evidence at times of intense emotion underneath the surface; for example in the story of John when the main character wasn't allowed to see his friend and he said this was ok but this was accompanied by a severe stammer.

The link between excessive emotion or scant emotion and experiencing a physical connection with the primary object in phantasy is strongly suggested by the function of symbols in the responses of CWS. With a lack of differentiation, Segal argues the function of symbols is 'not felt by the ego to be symbols or substitutes, but to be the original object itself' (Segal, 1957, p.393). In the responses of CWS the symbols used at times are closer to what Segal refers to as symbolic-equations rather than symbols that properly contain experiences. In Frank's story, for example, mum's dinner got burnt when the main character couldn't see his friend. The character couldn't contain his aggression, and the concrete burning of the dinner was indistinguishable from his aggression



towards mum. Likewise, in Sally's story the exploding of the TV was indistinguishable from the main character's aggressive impulses against the parental couple.

Understanding a core issue for children with a stutter as residing in a physical connection with primary objects in phantasy can account for other features in the responses of CWS. Attacks on creativity, individuation and envy, features of the responses of CWS I have mentioned previously in this chapter could be understood as a by-product of being in an undifferentiated state with primary objects. In this undifferentiated state Lopez-Corvo (2006) wrote about envious attacks on individuation and autonomy, and an attack on internal spaces, i.e. the container. This can be seen in the empirical study, for example, when Frank's character was not allowed to see his friend he responded by saying that the dinner was burnt. Interestingly Mr. A. from the case studies in chapter two also caused explosions in the oven as well as fires in the barn. This was related to the intense envy implicit in Mr. A's intrusion in the inner space of mother, i.e. the claustrum (Plankers, 1989). Since as Freud points out this internal maternal space is associated with the creative source of the union between mother and father (ibid, p.241), this made Mr. A. prey to this intense envy.

In the present empirical study an undifferentiated state can also account for Paul's response to story one and four in which the whole

family operate in unison, for example they all fed the pets together and all went to bed at the same time. This also puzzled me for a long time, but I think it can be explained by a person being linked to mother in phantasy within a predominantly physical domain. I think in this state of mind there is not an internal space in which a person can think autonomously. There is no space to be different from the other. Bion would state here that the inner space, where emotional linking can take place, was attacked by primitive states.

This state of mind in which there is no space to be different resonates with the findings from the case studies in chapter 3. In reference to the anal claustrum of his stuttering analysand Plankers wrote about 'claustrophobic experiential world in which all obstacles that are encountered between self and object must be eliminated' (Plankers, 1989, p.239). In fact with Mr. A. there was no space for aliveness, or there was an attack on life itself. In reference to his childhood Mr. A. said that he had a preference for dead things, since with living things there can be losses. He stated: 'I wouldn't be able to tolerate that' (ibid, p.251). Likewise, in the case-study on Mark no space was allowed between him and the analyst. His analyst felt separation was 'doomed to failure because of the insistence on sameness which had been such a feature of their [Mark and mother] relationship' (Wilkinson, 2001, p.264).

I have argued that a state of undifferentiation, linked to a problem with successful container-contained, can account for important features of the responses of CWS. Amir, using the framework of Lacan also refers to a merged state with the primary object. She provides an example of an analysand for whom nausea was 'a shackling to the traumatic Real which tells no story and wants to hear no story' (Amir, 2014, p.121). What Amir expresses can sometimes resonate strongly with Bion, for example 'words and thoughts, within the domain of the Real, are identical to external objects' (ibid, p.125), and 'a violent refusal of psychic existence' (ibid, p.129).

However, there were certain features of the responses in the data of this present research that, as far as I am aware, are not accounted for within a Lacanian framework. What came across in the data is the primitive nature of the object relations of the children who stutter, i.e. a severe superego and a more mature relating in the responses of the children with no stutter, i.e. acceptance of limits between characters. There were defences used in the responses of the children with a stutter that suggest strongly a Kleinian or Bionian framework, i.e. destructive projective identification, and agglomeration. Furthermore, as far as I am aware, within a Lacanian framework there is not a concept like container-contained which can account for how differentiation from the primary object can occur and how the projection of stimuli can be

replaced by a mental apparatus that can give the emotional experience a proper psychic existence, and thereby make it more manageable.

### Summary of chapter

Although the sample was small, I have argued that for various reasons container-contained is a particularly useful concept that can help distinguish the responses of children with a stutter from children with no stutter. The children with a stutter can be distinguished from children with no stutter by their difficulties in responding fully to the emotional issues implicit in the story stems. Some of the younger CWS produced very scant responses and did not respond to the emotional issues of the stem, and others of this younger age group produced extended responses, but which were largely irrelevant to the stem. In the older age group a lot of emotion in the responses of CWS was present, particularly aggression but also fusion. However, these responses seemed to be used as a stimulus for a story without much relevance to the stem. From this difficulty of responding to the stem it could be inferred that children with a stutter have a problem with containment. However, since the capacity or not to respond to the emotional issues of the stem does not necessarily suggest a problem with containment, I stated in the methodology chapter that the usefulness of Bion's thinking would need further support, i.e. from an interrelated concept, for example the nature

of the object relations. The current empirical data does suggest the primitive nature of the object relations of the CWS, i.e. fusion, aggression and a severe superego, and the use of primitive defences such as splitting, projection and agglomeration. The nature of the object relations of CWS and the use of primitive defences problematize the potential acceptance and transformation of emotional distress into something more manageable. The empirical data also suggests a link between the lack of differentiation between the characters of the CWS and the use of symbols. In the responses of CWS there was scant dialogue and at times the use of symbolic-equations; in contrast, in the responses of CWNS there was a greater acceptance of limits between characters and the use of symbols and dialogue to remain connected to the object. Bion's theoretical framework has the explanatory power to account for this difference in the two groups- in contrast to the children with no stutter who can operate on a level of psychic containment, the object relations of children with a stutter can be experienced in a physical way. This inhibits the development of a containing relationship in which limits can be learned that can facilitate the development of thought. In other words, the empirical data suggests that children with a stutter are dependent on a physical relationship with their primary carer in phantasy rather than a relationship realized through the use of mature symbols.

**Conclusion:**

**The findings of the study and potential future directions.**

In this thesis I have investigated stuttering from a psychoanalytic perspective. I started with a look at stuttering from within a classical Freudian framework, which especially up until the 1950's but also beyond has been the predominant paradigm by which psychoanalysts have made sense of stuttering. Based on the assumption that there is a close relationship between acquiring a language and relationships I aimed to develop a hypothesis about stuttering from within an object relations framework. A hypothesis based on Kleinian and Bionian thinking emerged as I made sense of psychoanalytic case-studies on patients with a stutter. I was particularly struck by the usefulness of Bion's thinking around containment and attacks on linking as conceptual tools to help to understand stuttering, and I wanted to determine whether there was empirical support for the usefulness of Bion's thinking with a non-clinical population.

Although working with only a small sample, the empirical study did offer tentative support for the usefulness of this theoretical framework, specifically container-contained relationships in understanding stuttering. The framework could account for important features of the empirical data, namely a problem for children with a stutter to fully respond to the emotional issues of the stems, the problematic nature of their object relations, a problem with the differentiation of characters as well as scant dialogue in their responses.

This theoretical framework could also account for the actual stutter: since beta elements are not transformed into alpha elements, a process that is dependent on successful container-contained relationships, they do not take on a proper psychic existence, but rather are experienced as physical, as indistinguishable from the object, and which 'lend themselves to [attack and] treatment by motor discharge' (Bion, 1962/1983b, p.83), i.e. in the form of fragments of speech. From the vertex of communication a discharge of fragments is associated with projective identification and action upon the other, i.e. fusion with or attacking the object, rather than the communication of one's thinking to a separate mind, as is found in the depressive position. Understanding the stutter from the perspective of projective identification allowed me to make a phenomenological link with an understanding of the stutter from the perspective of the drives, i.e. the displacement of libido.

Through this present theoretical exploration and empirical study a space has been consolidated within the psychoanalytic framework for an account of stuttering from an object-relations viewpoint, and specifically from within a Kleinian and Bionian perspective. Tentative support has been given to an understanding of stuttering as a result of early object relations and a problem with the formation of the mind.

One of the strong points in this research is the use of a mixed-methods approach and triangulation. In order to offset the problems



inherent in using only case-studies on people with a stutter who were undergoing psychotherapeutic treatment, the researcher sought confirmation by conducting empirical research with a non-clinical population. Furthermore, in the empirical study the researcher took a quantitative approach that would enable children with a stutter and children with no stutter to be compared numerically, as well as a qualitative approach that would allow the rich data in the stories of the participants to be interpreted from a psychoanalytic perspective. This triangulation of methods allowed the researcher not only to overcome limits that come from single-method inquiry, but also to confirm findings. Jacob (2001) stated that 'often the purpose of triangulation in specific contexts is to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to represent reality'. The researcher found in this present research that the findings from the perspective of the different methods largely converged, namely for the people with a stutter there was a problem with separation, the use of primitive defences, and a thinness of object relating.

### **Future directions**

By carrying out the present empirical investigation with a larger sample in future research, further support for the hypothesis that for children

with a stutter there is a problem with emotional processing as the result of some failure in the container-contained relationship would be gained. With a larger sample size there is also potential scope to discriminate between people with a stutter. Future research could help to determine, for example, if there is a correlation between the severity of the stutter and the capacity to successfully contain or not psychic experiences. Within the present theoretical framework, given the close link that has been argued between emotional maturity and language, it would be predicted that the extent of the problems in the capacity to contain and the extent of the immaturity of object relations would be correlated with the degree of fragmentation of speech. If this were found to be the case, this would add support to the usefulness of this theoretical framework. Moreover, gender differences were suggested by this empirical study, and given the higher rates in male stuttering, a further exploration of these potential differences using a larger sample in future research would be very useful.

### **Implications for speech therapy**

There has been some recent research focusing on the importance of a working alliance between a speech and language practitioner and a client who stutters (Sonsterud, 2019; Manning, 2010; and Plexico et al., 2010). An important aspect of a working alliance in this context is the

therapist and the client sharing goals and discussing the best ways to achieve these goals (Sonsterud, 2019). However, as far as I am aware, there has been a lack of research looking at the relationship between the speech therapist and the client. Tentative support in this current research for the hypothesis that for children with a stutter there is a problem with containment suggests the usefulness in speech therapy of considering further this relationship between the therapist and client. This doesn't mean, however, that currently the relationship itself is not given consideration within the speech and language community. I would like to quote at length a speech therapist as she describes her work with adults who stutter:

Acceptance of the person who stutters as he is, encouraging him to be open, not avoid or hide his stuttering, to praise him when he does stutter, as I remain calm, supportive, not rejecting, not flinching, friendly, respectful, when he is at his most vulnerable, has an immediate effect in the therapeutic setting and slowly generalizes so that he can be courageous enough to start taking risks necessary to work on his speech in outside situations. And then he is able to slowly accept himself, as he is. This, in turn, results in improved speech. Just as in psychotherapy, I become the good parent which he internalizes. Or the voice that counteracts all the automatic negative thoughts/feelings that creep in after years of self-punishing or societal stigma. (Faermak, personal communication)

This present research, which stresses the importance of facing emotions and having support in containing them, suggests that it would be useful to carry out research into dynamics of relating that are specific to the context of speech and language therapy.

## **Integrating psychoanalytic knowledge with understandings from other domains.**

Attempts at integrating psychoanalytic understandings of stuttering with understandings from other domains would be useful in future research.

This present research has looked at the mind and body connection predominantly from the perspective of the mind, and this relationship between the mind and body could also be looked at from the perspective of the body. There are several potentially fruitful directions of inquiries that could help throw light on connections between the mind and body in stuttering, and I will look at these in the following paragraphs.

One direction of inquiry is how containment of emotion can be linked to findings in neuroscience. Toyomura et al. (2018) found that with adults who stuttered there was a positive correlation between the neural activity in the amygdala and the occurrence of stuttering in a speech task with a stranger, and this was accompanied by decreased activity in the prefrontal cortex, which may be a part of the emotion regulation network. Moreover Yang et al. (2017) found that for people with a stutter there was increased functional connectivity of the right amygdala with the prefrontal gyrus. This suggests aberrant interaction for the regulation of emotion (Busan, 2021). These findings appear to be compatible with

the argument put forward in this thesis, namely a problem with the containment of emotions.

A problem with containment can also be integrated with understandings of stuttering from the perspective of levels of dopamine. In the previous chapter I referred to research that suggests that there are two neurochemical subgroups in stuttering, one group that responds in treatment to dopamine and gets worse on a dopamine blocker, and one that responds to a dopamine blocker and gets worse on dopamine. I also referred in chapter 2 to research by Alm (2004) who linked either excessive dopamine levels or scant levels to a malfunctioning of the basal ganglia of people with a stutter, meaning that they do not receive proper timing cues for speech. Given the link that Panksepp makes between dopamine and psychological functioning, i.e. a SEEKING system which, fueled by dopamine, 'makes animals intensely interested in exploring their world' (Panksepp, 1998, p. 52), it might be possible in future research to make a testable hypothesis that overwhelming emotion of a person with a stutter correlates with a sub-group of stutterers who improve with a dopamine blocker, and scant emotion correlates with the group that improve on dopamine. However, this kind of research might not be possible in the short-term. Alm (2004), for example, states that even the hypothesis that there are neurochemical sub-groups in stuttering still needs further investigation. Even more

potentially problematic, however, is the difficulty of integrating knowledge from different domains, or ‘the importation of a concept from one field to the other’ (Mellier, 2014, p. 8). Even though researchers such as Mark Solms would disagree, it is problematic to hold the position, with the *present* state of knowledge, that knowledge from neuroscience and psychoanalysis can be integrated in a meaningful way without understanding from one of the domains becoming the predominant discourse. This gap in epistemology between the mind and the brain recalls the distinction that Freud made between word-presentations and thing-presentations (Freud, 1891).

There is also the potential in future research to link the present findings with findings of researchers such as Porges, who using the concept of the vagus nerve, links the parasympathetic nervous system to downregulation of emotion and as a safe basis for social communication, including speech (Jones *et al.*, 2014). In chapter 2 I mentioned that Porges found that with children with a stutter, in contrast to children with no stutter, there was greater mobilization of the *sympathetic* nervous system when viewing and speaking about a video that induced positive emotions. He also found that, in contrast to CWNS, there can be a dysfunctional activation of both nervous systems in times of stress (Jones *et al.* 2014). An integration of the thinking of Porges on stuttering with a psychoanalytic perspective would entail

tracing the interwoven connections between the physical and psychical; connections that have been largely absent in this present account. It would involve, for example, making the arguments that the sympathetic nervous system, which is associated with a fight, flight, or freeze response, could be compared to primitive defences such as splitting and projection, and also that the downgrading of emotion, sense of safety and social communication that Porges associates with the parasympathetic nervous system could be integrated with mature object relating and containment.

It would also be very useful in future research to explore the connections between the findings in neuroscience that in stuttering there is a problem with an internal timing mechanism, which I referred to in chapter 2, and rhythm as an organizing feature implicit in a container-contained relationship, which I referred to in chapter 3. This research could take the form of investigating whether there was a correlation between the successful containment of emotions in therapy, with improved speech, and enhanced connectivity in the internal timing network. This research would have important implications regarding the interaction between mind and body.

To conclude, the present research has put forward an argument, supported tentatively by empirical data, that stuttering and aspects of the psyche of the person with a stutter can be usefully understood within a

Kleinian and Bionian framework. This work provides an understanding of stuttering that could be consolidated and extended in future research, and could be potentially integrated with the understanding of stuttering from other domain, namely neuroscience. I have also strongly suggested that this present research has important implications for speech and language therapy for people who stutter.

## **Appendix A: The six assessed stems**



**Story one: The Picture story**

In the first assessed situation the interviewer says that mum, dad and the sibling of the main character are at home. The main character is at school, and while s/he is at school s/he makes a really good picture. And s/he thought: 'This is a really good picture I've made, I like this picture. I'm going to take this picture home when I go home from school'. So then school ended and s/he took the picture home and s/he knocked on the door. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens now?'

**Story two: The Exclusion situation**

In the second situation the interviewer says that the main character, mum and dad are at home. Mum says to the main character that dad and she would like to spend some time alone together and asks the main character to play with his/ her toys in his/her room and to make sure that s/he closes the door behind him/her. The main character goes to his/her room and before he leaves the room s/he turns around and sees mum and dad give each other a hug. S/he then goes to his room. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

**Story three: Meeting a friend**

In the third situation mum and the main character are at home. The main character has been waiting all day to go and see his/ her friend, and then says to mum: 'Can we go now to see my friend?' Mum says 'Sorry, not today.' The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

#### **Story four: The Holiday story**

In the fourth situation the interviewer puts all the doll figures at the table and says the whole family are having dinner and talking about their next holiday. Mum says that she would like to go back to the same place as last year, but the main character thinks I didn't like that place very much. The participant is then given the instructions: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

#### **Story five: Conflict with a sibling**

In the fifth situation the main character is at home with his/ her sibling. The main character is sitting in his favourite chair and watching television. His/her sibling thinks that s/he would like to sit in that chair and so pushes the main character off the chair. The main character then says: 'I've hurt my leg'. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

#### **Story six: The burnt hand**

In the final assessed situation the main character and mum are at the stove cooking dinner and dad and the sibling are sitting at the table.

Mum says: 'I've cooked something really special for the family, but it's not quite ready yet.' She then warns the main character not to go too near the stove. The main character smells the food and thinks it's delicious, 'I want some now'. S/he then reaches over and then says 'Ah, I've burnt my hand.' The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

## Appendix B:

### The Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale-Global Rating Method (Scors-G). (Adapted version)

#### Complexity of Representation of people

1. little awareness of self or other
3. tends to represent people and their internal states in minimally elaborated, relatively simplistic ways, or splits representations into good or bad; predominance of external actions.
5. representations of the self and others are stereotypical or conventional; is able to integrate good and bad characteristics of self and others; has awareness of impact on others, and impact of others on self; shows some differentiation; shows different perspectives
7. is psychologically minded, insight into self and others, differentiated and shows considerable complexity.

#### Affective quality of representation i.e. what the person expects from relationships, and how s/he tends to experience significant others)

1. malevolent, abusive, exceedingly high expectations placed on others, very dependent on others
  2. largely negative or unpleasant, but not abusive.
  5. mixed, neither primarily positive nor primarily negative (needs to have some positive to be scored 5), reasonable response from parents
  7. generally positive expectations of relationships (but not pollyannaish), a favourable and affirmative view of relationships
- (Note: where affective quality is absent, bland or limited code 4)

#### Emotional Investment in relationships

1. tends to focus primarily on his/her own needs in relationships, has tumultuous relationships, lacks engagement, very limited relationships, getting rid of others
3. somewhat shallow relationships, or only alludes to others, little engagement or little aliveness in relationship, little dialogue
5. demonstrates conventional sentiments of friendship, caring, love, empathy, engagement (even if in disagreement), gives importance to different perspectives, dialogue between characters

7. tends to have deep, committed relationships with mutual sharing, emotional intimacy, interdependence, and respect, positive connectedness and appreciation of others.

### **Emotional investment in values and moral standards**

1. behaves in selfish, inconsiderate, self-indulgent or aggressive ways without any sense of remorse or guilt, very harsh and rigid towards self and others.

3. shows signs of some internalisation of standards (for example thinks in relatively childlike ways about right and wrong), manic repair (i.e. all is restored and no one is guilty)

5. is invested in moral values and tries to live up to them, shows sign of compassion, tries to repair

7. thinks about moral questions in a way that combines abstract thought, a willingness to challenge or question convention, and genuine compassion and thoughtfulness in actions, i.e. not just intellectualizing)

(Note: where no moral concerns are raised in a particular story, code 4)

### **Understanding of social causality (i.e. coherence and complexity of account)**

1. narrative accounts of interpersonal experiences are confused, distorted, extremely sparse, or difficult to follow, limited awareness and coherence, coherent but very sparse, magical omnipotence, a lot of difficulties in telling stories

3. understands people in relatively simple, but sensible ways or describes interpersonal events in ways that largely make sense but may have a few gaps or inconsistencies, disjointed in places, some difficulties in telling stories, more focus on results/ action rather than process;

5. tends to provide straightforward narrative accounts of interpersonal events in which people's actions result from the way they experience or interpret situations, motivations make sense, addresses the issue, details added, account has appearance of being true, curiosity about other, understands the impact of their behaviour on others and others behaviour on them.

7. tends to provide particularly coherent accounts of interpersonal events, and to understand people very well,

(Note: where participant describes interpersonal events as if they just happen, with little sense of why people behave the way they do (i.e. alogical rather than illogical stories that seem to lack any causal understanding) code 2.)

**Experience and management of emotional impulses.**

1. overwhelmed by strong emotion, shifting of affect, denial of affect, incongruent affect in a response to a negative situation, explicitly changing a narrative restraint, splitting
3. lack of affect or distress where it might be expected, responds to prompt about changing a narrative restraint
5. can manage aggression or strong emotion, can avoid confrontation
7. can express anger/ aggression or other strong emotion and assert self appropriately

( adapted from: Stein, M. B. and Slavin-Mulford, J. (2018) *The Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale-Global Rating Method (Scors-G)*, New York: Routledge

## Appendix C (i)

### Report on a thematic analysis of Tom, a 9 year-old CWS, compared with Pete, a 9 year-old CWNS.

#### Tom

##### Themes

Aggression

Idyllic Union

No dialogue

No individual perspective

There is a lot of aggression in his responses. There is substantial aggression coming from his parents, for example when the dad figure drags the child figure from his friend's house and also when the mum figure throws the television in the rubbish bin. The dog figure also carries a lot of aggression as it knocks down the tv and the little brother figure. The child protagonist's aggression reveals itself when he is frustrated in his desire to see his friend and starts shouting at mum, and when she tried to impose a reasonable limit on him by sending him to his room, he escapes by running to his friend's. The child protagonist's aggression is also shown when he burns himself on the cooker and his response is to run around and knock everything over. The friend of the child protagonist also shows aggression by banging the little brother over the head for

causing an injury to the child protagonist. There is also the destruction of time in the responses as when mum and dad hugging leads to an immediate baby and mum going to the hospital the following day.

The child protagonist's aggression cannot be contained by the reasonable limits imposed by the mother; he just ignores these limits. It can only be restrained by the aggressive, physical actions by the father, for example when he lunges at the boy after he goes hysterical after being burnt and by dragging him home from the boy's friend's home. This suggests an identification with the actions of an aggressive father. Moreover, in his reaction to the authority of the father the child figure was passive; there was no response unlike the reaction to the authority of the mother in which the child figure was wilful as he storms out of the house.

At times during the narratives which have a lot of aggression there are moments in which the participant expresses idyllic states. Differences in opinion between mother and child regarding a holiday led to an argument between mother and father, resulting in the children cooking them their favourite food and tucking them into bed with the pets, a scene that reminded the participant of an idyllic scene of him as a baby with his mother's arms around him and with the cat snuggled up on his



chest. There is also a response in which the whole family are hugging each other, an idyllic scene that follows on from the child protagonist being excluded from a strongly oedipal scene. Perhaps the participant's wish to have the mum figure and later the friend figure at school with the main protagonist in the first story and the excitement with which he expressed this was a way to cope with the feeling of difference that the character experienced being alone at school. This contrasting destructive and idyllic representation is pronounced. There is no sense of a person who can hold conflict or difference in the mind without that escalating into destructive aggression or idyllic unity.

This lack of a sense of an individuated person is given further evidence by the sense that there is no sustained individual perspective in the responses. This lack of an individual perspective is perhaps reinforced by the participant having a lot of problems with the use of pronouns and frequently using the wrong name of the character. In the first story after the boy is let in the house the participant (with mum in hand, puts down Timmy (the main character), then also lifts Timmy) says: 'Dale [actually Timmy] show him [mum] no then they show the family .... they show them..... she (Timmy) happened to draw a picture of a bone'. An important thing to notice here is that is a very quick change in perspective. The participant firstly wanted to say the child protagonist

showed mum the picture but this changes into they (mum and child protagonist ) showing the picture to the family. Then the perspective changes to the dog's perspective. There is no stable perspective from which to view events. In fact it really does become a story of a dog as the picture turns out to be a portrayal of a bone, and the picture gets lost / buried.

In the third story in which the child protagonist cannot go to see his friend the mother's reasonable response to the child gets lost as the child storms to his friend's house. The father's responses are reduced to going 'ballistic' and 'dragging the child home' in the second story and 'lung.[ing] at the child when he goes frantic after burning his hand can only act when driven by angry and aggressive impulses.

A very significant aspect in the participant's responses regarding the lack of an individuated perspective and a lack of interaction beyond aggression or idyllic union is the complete absence of dialogue. In fact the only occasion when verbal communication is even referred to, but without dialogue taking place, is when the parents talk in story 2 and when parents are arguing in story 4. Moments in the responses when you would strongly expect communication from parents like in story 3 when the child shouts at his mother and his dad sees him in his friend's house, dialogue is absent. The reactions of the parents on these

occasions are to send the child to his room and to drag the child from his friend's house. Moreover the main protagonist does not ask mum why he can't see his friend; it is as if this is an action performed by mum on him, which he physically responds to by running away; later his dad does not ask him why he is at his friend's house, rather he responds in deed to the action of the child protagonist. Reactions of the characters are very much action based, for example the children cooking food for the parents and the friend whacking the sibling over the head with the frying pan

Another significant feature of this participant was a mismatch between an eloquent speaker wanting to connect with the interviewer and his responses to the story stems in which there is a lot of aggression and no dialogue. He was calm and came across as an extremely pleasant individual, who was invested in the relationship with the interviewer. He divulged personal information like his fear of his cat dying. In my countertransference I felt closely connected to him and experienced a desire to help him.

### **Report on a thematic analysis of Pete, a 9 year-old child with no stutter**

#### Themes

## **Oedipal theme**

### **Rebelling against paternal authority**

### **Interacting with maternal authority**

There is a clear difference in how the child character responds to mother and father. At times the child rebels against dad's authority i.e. when the child is excluded from the parental relationship and the child is not allowed to watch tv (dad's rule) he sneaks out of the house.

However, the authority of dad is not hostile, and their relationship is benign. It is the dad who greets the boy when he comes back home from school.

In contrast, there is a close relationship between the child character and mum. She invited him to the cinema after he was prohibited from watching tv. There is a sense that the main character is the centre of mum's universe, i.e when they come back from the cinema she waits for him as he plays in the garden.

There is a lot more engagement going on between the child and mother as well as the child interacting with maternal authority.

Generally the child has benign relationships and interactions with his parents and friend and the scenes portrayed are generally mundane,

scenes that could be enacted on a daily basis with family and friends. In a few of his stories the value placed on his friendship with his best friend is evident.

### **Comparison between Tom and Pete**

There are significant differences between the two participants. With the child with no stutter the responses express everyday events, in which the protagonist spends time with his family or with his friend. There is no extreme aggression, and the idyllic union with mother in which he is playing and mum is waiting for him in the background has a different quality from the idyllic union with the child who stutters in which all the family hug each other and the protagonist puts mum and add to bed with the pets. There is not the same emotional intensity involved. In the responses of the child with no stutter to the task there is quite a lot of dialogue. Although there is a limited engagement with the father, it is a benign relationship. The responses do reveal problems in accepting authority of father. In this respect there is a contrast in how the participants respond to this authority. The child with no stutter rebels against it, i.e. by sneaking out, whereas the child with a stutter submits

to it, i.e. as his dad lunges on him. The child with a stutter seems powerless in relation to his father. It is significant that the child with no stutter can communicate with the mother about wants; whereas the child who stutters can only respond to her through actions, i.e. running away. With the child with no stutter there is a sense of separate individuals with a mind, in which the child can ask why and can persuade mum to take a course of action. In the inner world of the child who stutters there doesn't seem to be a mind, only a world of actions. Actions in which the protagonist can either do what he wants or is physically restrained by father. It does not seem peopled with separate individuals with a mind who communicate with one another.

## Appendix C(ii)

### Report on the thematic analysis of children who stutter as a group (age range –5-6) September 6, 2018

There is very little connection to emotional self or inner states, and very little dialogue or connection with other. When Arthur brings a picture home there is no response to this and in the story the fact that Arthur has missed out on what the family was watching on tv while he was away is emphasized rather than the picture. This same participant ends up getting punished for being naughty when the family all go on holiday where he wants to go rather than where mum wants to go. Punishment is a predominate theme in this participant's stories. When his mother doesn't allow the main character to go and see his friend he automatically sees this as punishment. When the interviewer reminded the participant that mum and dad wanted to spend some time alone together the participant interpreted this as the main character doing something wrong and needing to be told off. In the picture story another participant, Frank, focuses on the process of taking the school bag off his back, taking out the picture, showing it and then putting it back in the school-bag and then putting the school-bag in the cupboard. The emotion is kept under wraps. When there is an emotional conflict with another, as for example in story 3 the mum character does not allow the main character to go and see his/ her friend that day at least two of the characters are not able to respond to mum about this, but need to go away and think about what to do. One of the other participant's speech becomes disorganized at this point, and stutters more. He eventually says that he can play with his little brother. It can be assumed here that this situation causes strong emotion, but either the character doesn't have access to this and / or it can't be expressed. For the two main characters who had to go away to think about it suggests that there was a problem, but they didn't have access to the emotion. In one of the character's responses the exclusion from the parental interaction leads to a feeling of being relaxed and happy (maybe he is relieved—the pressure from him?) or maybe any painful emotions connected with this situation have been split off. With particularly three of the participants there is very little interaction with the interviewer.

Generally in the participants' responses there is no addressing emotional conflict. Frank, just after not addressing the emotional conflict between the mother and main character, becomes very indecisive about what the characters do: he says 'then they could go to bed actually they could watch tv.. no they could go to bed'. The conflict with the mother

has produced anxiety; he doesn't know how to respond because of an inner conflict. I think there is no room for conflict with mother. When the main character of Frank is told he can't see his friend that day he doesn't respond, but immediately afterwards there is an explosion in the oven and the dinner is burnt. The conflict or aggression can't be expressed verbally but is in his psyche.

Closely linked to this theme of little access to emotions either intrapsychically or interpsychically is a lack of or no dialogue in the responses. Responses are very scant in three of the participants; the other two's responses are very much taken with a lot of ritualistic responses around sleeping and eating. For all of the participants the responses are concrete actions, Rather than in touch with emotion. Paul's's characters do things in unison: they all watch tv together and after that they all feed the pets together. In the oedipal story the parents' wishes and indeed the parents themselves disappear when the boy sneaks into the parents' room suggests they go to the park and then answers himself that they will go. With Paul I think there is a sense of phantasies overriding a sense of reality. Maybe the desire for oneness with mum leads to the disappearance of the parents. This could also be seen when he is the driver of the car. When a character is introduced to him with a name he immediately gives a new name. Characters can change sex.



## **Appendix D (i)**

### Information Sheet for Parents

Title of the Project: Understanding the inner world of children who stutter.

Researcher: Raymond Ingram

#### Invitation to our study

If your child is between the ages of 4-10, I would like to invite him/her to take part in this research project. Your child should only participate if s/he wants to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage him/her in any way. Before you decide whether you would like your child to participate, it is important for you to read the following information carefully. Contact me directly (see contact details below) if there is anything you do not understand or if you would like to discuss the project.

#### Background to the project

My name is Raymond Ingram and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Essex. I am interested in the inner world of children who stammer and in particular in how children, both children who stammer and fluent speakers, represent significant others in play. In the research the participant is presented with the beginnings of everyday home situations in play and then asked to complete them, both verbally and through playing with the dolls. These responses are video recorded and the researcher will use this and a subsequent transcript to analyse the data. This is a feasible approach to understanding the inner world of the child, and could provide useful insights into the child who stammers.

#### What the project entails for your child

There are 8 situations (including a practice situation and a winding-down situation) that your child will be asked to respond to, and each situation requires the participant to show what happens as well as to respond verbally. An example of a situation is: This doll Kevin is drinking juice with his parents. Kevin is thirsty and reaches over and spills the juice. 'Now show me and tell me what happens next.' The session will be video recorded and will last around 30 minutes.

### Where will the research take place?

The researcher would prefer if the research took place at your child's school. A large number of schools in Colchester know about this research, but there is no guarantee that the schools involved will be aware of the study before being contacted about your child. I will contact the head of the school by email, explaining that you and your child have agreed to take part in the study and asking whether the school can accommodate the research at a time and place that is convenient for your child and school. I will also ask if there is a person responsible in the school with whom I can liaise with before and after the research regarding your child's welfare. In this email I will also raise the question whether by your child participating in the research this could lead to further stigmatization and of the need to discuss how this could be prevented. Your child will be alone with the researcher and for this reason the researcher has DBS enhanced clearance. The research will take place in a room that is easily accessible by members of staff; however, if someone enters the room the research will be momentarily halted so as to ensure confidentiality. If you are not comfortable with the research taking place in your child's school, we can arrange a convenient time for the research to be carried out at your child's home.

### What if it is too much for your child?

In the unlikely event of your child getting distressed or agitated at school I will stop the research, and with the assistance of the person responsible will try to understand the reasons for the distress or agitation. Your child will be reassured that stopping the task is ok and will not have any impact whatsoever on his/her school work. This problem will also be reported back to your child's teacher and a decision will be made whether to take further steps, for example contacting you. If the research is at home and you or your child get agitated or distressed the research will be stopped. I will talk to you and your child and try to understand the reasons for the anger or agitation, and will support you in the best way possible. This support might entail involving my supervisor and/ or the Research Governance and Planning Manager at the University of Essex.

### Limits of confidentiality

The researcher will not tell anyone what is told to him unless he thinks someone might be hurt. After listening carefully to your child the first

step that the researcher will take is talk to his supervisor to decide on the best course of action.

### Informed consent

Should you agree for your child to take part in this project, you will be asked to sign a consent form before the project commences.

### Withdrawal

Your child's participation is voluntary and he/ she will be free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. If you or your child wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify the researcher (see contact details below). In this case no further data will be collected from the participant. If any data have already been collected, upon withdrawal, this data will be destroyed, unless you inform the researcher that you are happy for the researcher to use such data for the scientific purposes of the project.

### Data gathered

The researcher will collect the following data for each participant: age, gender, and profession of parent(s), and address of the participant (if the interview is held in the participant's home). This data will be stored safely in electronic files with a secure password and will only be accessible to the project researcher and his academic supervisor. There will be a written record of the video recordings in the form of a transcript. The video recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

### Findings

After the end of the project, the findings will be written up as part of my PhD research and anything that can help identify your child will be removed. I will be happy to provide you with a lay summary of the main findings.

### Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact the researcher who will do his best to answer your questions(see contact details below). If you continue to have concerns or you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the researcher's supervisor (see below). If you are still unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager, Sarah Manning-Press (sarahm@essex.ac.uk).

### Where to go from here

If you and your child are interested in taking part in the project, contact me directly. We can then arrange a time and place that is convenient for you and your child to carry out the research. I am also happy to reply to any questions you may have.

### Contact details

#### Researcher

Raymond Ingram, PhD candidate, Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Email: ringra@essex.ac.uk. Phone: 07484172572

#### Supervisor

Sue Kegerreis, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Email: skeger@essex.ac.uk

#### University of Essex Research Governance and Planning Manager

Sarah Manning-Press, Research & Enterprise Office, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, CO4 3SQ, Colchester. Email: sarahm@essex.ac.uk. Phone: 01206-873561

**Appendix D (ii)**

Title of the Project: Understanding the inner world of children who stammer.

Chief Investigator: Raymond Ingram

Tick ( if appropriate)

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.
  
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/ she is free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty.
  
3. Although the story approach is very safe, I understand that it might cause moments of discomfort.
  
4. I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the project, and that the strictest confidentiality will be maintained.
  
5. I understand that the data collected in this project will be used anonymously for the publication of findings, and that the information collected will be used to support other research in the future, and may be shared anonymously with other researchers.
  
6. I agree for my child to take part in the above study.
  
7. I give permission for my child to be video recorded.

Participant Name

Date

Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name

Date

Researcher Signature

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Appendix D (iii) Information Sheet for Children with a stutter (5-6 year olds)



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Hi, my name is Timmy and I stammer. Raymond is a researcher, and he wants to know more about me and stammering. One afternoon I am going to sit down and tell him stories. He would also like you to tell him stories

Would you like to?

This is what he will ask you to do, but only if you want to:

He will use dolls to tell you the beginning of 8 stories and will then ask you to complete them. He will film you while you tell the stories and it will take 30 minutes altogether. How does this sound?

You will tell the stories at school. At school a teacher may be with you, but she can't repeat anything you say because it is your story and not for anyone else.

You can say as much or as little as you want and if there is one story you don't like you don't have to say anything at all. You can stop at any time and that's ok. Your teacher or your mum and dad and Raymond will talk with you if you have any worries.

Your stories are just for you and Raymond , but if you tell him something that really worries him about you or anyone else he might need to tell other people.

If you want to tell him stories talk to your mum and dad. They will get in touch with Raymond.

Bye from Timmy.



Appendix D (iv) Information sheet for children with a stutter (8-10 year-old participants)

Hi, my name is Raymond. I stammer and I also research stammering.



I would like you to tell me stories because I want to understand more about children who stammer, so I am asking them to tell me stories.

Would you like to tell me stories?

This is what I will ask you to do, but only if you want to:

I will use doll figures to start 8 stories and will then ask you to complete them. You will tell the stories with me at school or maybe at home. I will film you telling the stories and altogether it will take 30 minutes. How does this sound?

You can say as much or as little as you want and if there is one story you don't like you don't have to say anything. You can stop at any time and that's ok. Your teacher or your mum and dad and I will talk with you if you have any worries.

Your stories are just for me, but if you tell me something that really worries me about you or others I might need to tell other people.

If you want to tell stories talk to your mum and dad. They will get in touch with me.

Bye for now,  
Raymond

IRAS Project number 224114 (Version 2.0) 23/01/2018

Appendix E: Letter from Speech and Language Provider to children with a stutter

Quality and Operations  
659 – 662 The Crescent  
Colchester Business Park  
Colchester  
Essex

Name *[to be inserted]*  
Address *[to be inserted]*  
Address *[to be inserted]*  
Address *[to be inserted]*  
Post Code *[to be inserted]*

Tel: 01206 833030  
Fax: 01206 852011

To be dated

Dear *[name to inserted]*

**Re: Understanding the inner world of children who stutter**

I am writing to you to forward you an invitation to take part in a research study organised by Raymond Ingram, a PhD candidate at the University of Essex. His research is aiming to gain a better understanding of the inner world of children who stammer. The participants will be children between ages of 4-9 years and this is why you have received this invitation. The study has received all required regulatory approvals.

The enclosed Participant Information Sheet and consent form explain the study in more detail. If you would like to find out more and are interested in taking part, please contact the researcher directly on email - [ringra@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ringra@essex.ac.uk) or by telephone 07484 172572

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Liz Buxton**  
**Assistant Director of Quality**

## **Appendix F**

### **Interview Schedule**

After greeting the participant and introducing himself the interviewer will start with the presentation of a Birthday party. The functions of this situation are to familiarise the participant with the research tool, to allow the child to give names to the main character and also to his/ her brother/sister, and to ask for the child's assent in taking part in the research. The response to this situation is not assessed or video recorded.

The interviewer presents the doll figures and asks the child to give them names, and will state that it is the main character's birthday. On the kitchen table the interviewer puts a pretend cake and asks the participant to show and tell the interviewer what happens next. This situation is not video recorded. Afterwards, the interviewer will ask the participant if s/he is comfortable in taking part, and will remind the participant that s/he can stop at any time.

### **Story one: The Picture story**

In the first assessed situation the interviewer says that mum, dad and the sibling of the main character are at home. The main character is at school, and while s/he is at school s/he makes a really good picture. And s/he thought: 'This is a really good picture I've made, I like this picture. I'm going to take this picture

home when I go home from school'. So then school ended and s/he took the picture home and s/he knocked on the door. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens now?'

### **Story two: The Exclusion situation**

In the second situation the interviewer says that the main character, mum and dad are at home. Mum says to the main character that dad and she would like to spend some time alone together and asks the main character to play with his/ her toys in his/her room and to make sure that s/he closes the door behind him/her. The main character goes to his/her room and before he leaves the room s/he turns around and sees mum and dad give each other a hug. S/he then goes to his room. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

### **Story three: Meeting a friend**

In the third situation mum and the main character are at home. The main character has been waiting all day to go and see his/ her friend, and then says to mum: 'Can we go now to see my friend?' Mum says 'Sorry, not today.' The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

### **Story four: The Holiday story**

In the fourth situation the interviewer puts all the doll figures at the table and says the whole family are having dinner and talking about their next holiday.

Mum says that she would like to go back to the same place as last year, but the main character thinks I didn't like that place very much. The participant is then given the instructions: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

### **Story five: Conflict with a sibling**

In the fifth situation the main character is at home with his/ her sibling. The main character is sitting in his favourite chair and watching television. His/her sibling thinks that s/he would like to sit in that chair and so pushes the main character off the chair. The main character then says: 'I've hurt my leg'. The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

### **Story six: The burnt hand**

In the final assessed situation the main character and mum are at the stove cooking dinner and dad and the sibling are sitting at the table. Mum says: 'I've cooked something really special for the family, but it's not quite ready yet.' She then warns the main character not to go too near the stove. The main character smells the food and thinks it's delicious, 'I want some now'. S/he then reaches over and then says 'Ah , I've burnt my hand.' The instructions given to the participant are: 'Can you show me and tell me what happens next?'

The final situation, which is not assessed, is an opportunity for the participant to wind down. The participant is told that it is the weekend and the whole family would like to do something together. The instructions given to the participant:

‘Can you show me and tell me what happens next?’ This situation is not video recorded.

This is followed by a debriefing in which the child is asked how s/he feels after telling the stories. The interviewer will bring up any concerns he may have about the child when speaking to the parent or teacher afterwards. The teacher or parent will be asked to contact the interviewer if they have any concerns.

The whole interview will last around 30 minutes.

## Appendix G(i)

Transcript of Frank, a 5 year-old child with a stutter

I: The next story the family's at home. That's the tv

P: (incomprehensible) (picks up oven)

I: That's the oven

P: Ok

I: that's the tv. The family's at home

P: and the sofa

I: can you put mom and dad and George can you put them at home

P: Well they are sitting on the sofa (puts them on the sofa) (reaches for Evelyn)

I: Evelyn's at school. That's the friend so we will take the friend away.

I: that's the family watching TV. Evelyn's at school

P: Yep

I: At school today Evelyn drew.

P: Liebe Evelyn drew a picture of

I: Fred can I start the story then you finish

P: OK

I: at school today Evelyn drew a really nice picture and Evelyn thought after school today I want to take the picture home

P: yep

I: School finishes and Evelyn goes home (Takes Evelyn home) Evelyn knocks on the door

P: (starts story)



I: Frank can you show me and tell me what happens next

P: Dad goes to open the door

I: Opens the door

P: liebe. Evelyn comes in and then she sits down

I: okay and then Evelyn comes in and then she sits down

P: (incomprehensible) she doesn't sit down, she gets her bag of there

I: takes her bag

P: yep liebe off her back

I: ok she takes her bag off her back

P: (incomprehensible) liebe and then she takes her  
big picture out of it

I: takes the picture out

P: liebe and then she shows everybody and then she put it back in her bag and  
then she puts her bag in the cupboard

I: okay puts her bag in the cupboard

P: (incomprehensible) (points) puts it in there and then she sits down again and  
watches telly

I: and then watches TV

I: does anyone say anything about the picture

P: well mum and dad say well done Evelyn that's a really good picture

I: that's a really good picture

P: Yeah. And then they carry on watching telly then mom gets up

I:ok

P: and goes to put dinner in the oven

I: mom puts dinner in the oven

P: yeah then she (lifts table ) table then they have some (incomprehensible) roast chicken

I: okay so have some roast chicken

P: yeah then she put some plates on the table

I: ok and then she put some plates on the table

P: when it's cooked she puts some on the plate

I: okay put some food on the plate

P: liebe pretend that there is more food on the plate

I: ok

P: everyone goes and sits down

I: everyone goes and sits down. Dad stands

P: liebe and mum stands

I: that's George and Evelyn

P: and then they turn the telly off (lifting mum)

I: okay and they turn of the TV

P: so and then she (incomprehensible)of the oven

I: she switches off the oven yeah?

P: yeah then they have their dinner

I: then they had dinner

P: then they have more then they have some cake

I: then cake

P: liebe and that's the cake

P: for pudding

I: ok cake for pudding

P: and then she and when they have had that she puts the plates away

I: she puts the plates away

P: (incomprehensible) washes them up in the washing up bowl

I: and then she washes up plates

P: and then she puts them away

I: puts them away

P: and then they watch some telly

I: watch some telly

P: and then they go to bed

I: then it's bed time

P: (lifts blocks) I am going to have one long bed

I: that's a very long bed

P: yep (arranges three beds) there are four people. I know these might have to share a bed and then mum and dad have their own bed.

I: ok . is this the story finished .

P: Yes

## Story 2

I: let's go on to the second story. In the story we've got TV again. That's the TV. In this story mum and dad are watching tv. And here we only have Evelyn , George is not in this story.

P: one more block. (reaches for block and puts in between mum and dad, for Evelyn) (reaches for Evelyn)

I: Can I start the story, and then you can finish

P: ok

I: (puts mum and dad back together)

P: Evelyn can (pointing to block)

I: dad says to Evelyn Evelyn mum and I want to spend some time alone together and then says to Evelyn can you go to the room and play with your toys.

Evelyn goes to the room. This is her room here. She looks around and she sees mum and dad they give each other a hug. Evelyn goes to her room. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: and then mom and dad called liebe Evelyn back down the stairs and she comes (incomprehensible)

I: sorry mum and dad call Eveyln down the stairs

P: yep and then they watch tv

I: I thought mum and dad wanted to spend some time alone together

P: yeah but they had their time alone

I: they had their time

P: then they wanted their children back .

I: ok and they wanted their children back

P: liebe and they all get up and then they then they actually just mum goes to make lunch

I: mum goes to make lunch

P: (brings mum to cooker) to make lunch

I: ok

P: (puts table and chairs) puts plates on the table

I: plates on the table

P: (lifts mum) (incomprehensible ) everyone that dinner is ready

I: so dinner's ready

P: (lifts mum ) turns off the oven

I: turns off the oven

P: and the tv. They can sit down and dad can stand (putting mum on chair)

I: mum sits down

P: and Evelyn sits down

I: maybe we could use that for a chair.

P: oh yeah

I: maybe dad can sit there.

P: and then they eat their dinner

I: and then they eat dinner

P: then they finish off the chocolate cake

I: some more chocolate cake

P: (incomprehensible) party and then they all go back to bed

I: and then they go to bed

P: (sets up bed) puts mum and dad

I: that's mum and dad

P: ?

I: it's difficult with mum's hair

P: (puts child on bed between mum and dad's bed)

I: they are all sleeping. Is this the story finished now?

P: yep

Story 3

I: let's go on to the next story . The next story we only have two characters.  
There's Evelyn and mum

P: and then

I: only two characters. Evelyn and mum are at home. Evelyn has been waiting  
all day to go and see your friend

P: yep

I: Evelyn says mum can we go now to go and see my friend. Mum says not  
today

P: (tries to come in) (looks a bit put out when I continue)

I: Now can you show me and tell me what happens next

P: ( reaches over for blocks for the two characters)

I: If you put them near the front they sit better

P: (puts Evelyn and mum on the blocks)

I: mum and Evelyn

P: and then they (incomprehensible) the tv out

I: tv

P: and then (reaches for another character)

I: in this story we just have mum and Evelyn

P: all right and then they (incomprehensible) banging sound and mum said  
(incomprehensible)oh no that's the dinner burning and then she turns off the  
oven off and gets the food out

I: ok gets some food out ok

P: (lifts table)

I: table chairs

P: (incomprehensible)

P: (puts plates on table) (puts Evelyn and mum at the table) and then they start eating

I: then they start eating

P: then when they have had it they have some yogurt for pudding

I: they have yogurt for pudding

P: and then they and then Evelyn goes up to her room and leaves mum downstairs for some quiet time and then she comes into her room (lifting blocks)

I: that's Evelyn in her room

P: yeah she looks around and then she goes on her bed

I: Evelyn goes on her bed

P: and then she has a little nap

I: a little nap

P: and she goes downstairs and mum says to her it's time for bed and then she goes to bed

I: ok

P: and then mum goes to her bed

I: ok

P: and that's the end

I: that's the end

Story 4

I: The next story the whole family is having dinner can we put the whole family at the table? We can use these for chairs can you put the whole family at the table mum and dad Evelyn and George

P: (lifts friend) (incomprehensible) he's just a friend

I: he's just a friend

P: and then mum (putting characters at the table)

I: all falling off put some food on the plates that's Evelyn and that's George

I: the whole family are having dinner and they are talking about their next holidays

P: yeah

I: and mum says I'd like to go back to the place we went to last year

P: liebe (tries to come in)

I: can I start and then Fred can you finish I'd like to go back to the place we went to last year but Evelyn thinks I didn't like that place very much can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: dad says I know what to do, let's go to Spain instead

I: dad says let's go to Spain instead

P: liebe Mum and George agreed with them

I: mum and the children agreed with dad

P: and then and then start getting down from the table (Knocks over table)

I: that's fine

P: down there then they could go to bed actually they could watch tv

I: they watch tv

P: ( showing some frustration)no they can go to bed

I: ok

P: then they wake up and they have breakfast

I: breakfast ok

P: (puts family at the table)

I: mum dad Evelyn and George



P: then they have breakfast (incomprehensible) then they watch telly

I: then they watch telly

P: big

I: that's a very long sofa

P: yeah

I: the small ones Fred if you put them near the front they sit better ok good

I: mum and dad they all watch tv

P: (lifts dad) and then mum gets down I mean dad gets down and says to everyone what would you like for lunch

I: ok

P: and they all said the same thing. They all said cheese on toast

I: cheese on toast ok

P: and then dad goes to make it

I: dad makes the cheese on toast

P: and then it's all ready (puts plates on the table)

I: cheese on toast

P: (puts family on the table) then they all have their lunch

P: and then they and then they start and these two go up for their room

I: who Evelyn and George

P: and then they have a nap

I: ok they have a nap

P: mum and dad stay down here and watch liebe telly

I: they watch tv

P: and that's the end

### Story 5

I: Fred the next story we only have two characters. We only have Evelyn and George

P: (picks up Evelyn and George)

I: that's the tv

P: (moves around the tv I presume so the screen is facing him)

I: Can I have (takes characters from hands of participant)

P: (now rests hands on table)

I: Evelyn is watching tv and sitting in her favourite chair

P: (while listening he puts the screen back in the right position)

P: ok

I: George looks George thinks I'd like to sit in that chair. George goes over, knocks Evelyn off the chair Evelyn falls and Evelyn says I have hurt my leg

P: ( is subdued—still with head resting on arm on table. In other stories he wanted to come in quickly. Here he is observing)

I: now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: (immediately gets up, gives the interviewer a look of defiance?) (lifts George and as if about to cry/ frustration?) and then George he mm he he mm (lifts cooker looks inside it and takes out tray and looks at it, plays with it) he starts starts liebe (lifts Evelyn ) (incomprehensible) starts to watch tv

I: George starts to watch tv

P: (look around him a lot looks at camera) Evelyn (incomprehensible ) another good chair (puts chair alongside the first chair) and she her best chair and she sits on that

I: sorry

P: libe I mean Evelyn gets her best chair and she sits on that

I: Evelyn sits on that chair. ( more stuttering in this story and more playing with other things and looking around---looking at interviewer and camera) ( runs tray along border between tables)

P: and then Evelyn (long pause . looks behind him and to his side as if looking for something to say) Evelyn has makes some lunch

I: makes some lunch

P: because she is like 8 and (Incomprehensible) George is only five

I: George is only 5 , yeah

P: Yeah (incomprehensible) she's like 9 liebe I mean she makes lunch

I: Evelyn makes lunch

P: then they have some lunch

I: then they have some lunch

P: (long time thinking about what to say) they have some lunch then they go to their rooms

I: then they go to their rooms

P: (incomprehensible)have a little play on their bed

I: have a little play on their beds

P: and then they get a little snack downstairs

P: then they have that

I: have a little snack then have that

P: then they carry on playing with their toys

I: carry on playing with their toys

P: (incomprehensible) Evelyn goes and makes some pizza

I: Evelyn goes and makes pizza ok

P: (puts plate on table and then puts blocks) (changes mind and reaches for chairs) (incomprehensible) )(Puts chairs at table)

I: Evelyn makes some pizza

P: (puts dolls at table) and then they have it then they have a yogurt

I: after the pizza they have a yogurt

P: and then they and then they and then they go to bed

I: then they go to bed

P: and that's the end

I: that's the end of the story

### Story 6

P: can there be a (incomprehensible) story with just mum and dad?

I: in this story

P: dad and George

I: dad and George are at the table and at the oven is mum and Evelyn

P: (incomprehensible)

I: Can I start and can you go on

P: yep

I: Mum says to the family I have cooked something really nice tonight.

Something really nice for the supper but it's not quite ready yet. Then mum says to Evelyn don't go too near the stove. Evelyn smells the food that smells really nice I want some now. Evelyn reaches over Ah I have burnt my hand. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: (incomprehensible)

I: Sorry I didn't understand

P: Evelyn gets sent to her room for a bit

I: Evelyn gets sent to her room

P: for (incomprehensible) minutes and then mum calls her down (mum calls her down) and says dinner is ready now

I: dinner's ready

P: comes down and on the table (puts food on the plate)

I: ok the dinner's on the table

P: then they start eating and when they had that they have some a yogurt

I: ok

P: then they have some yogurt

I: they have some yogurt ok

P: (yawns)

I: you seem tired

P: yeah (incomprehensible)

I: then they go to bed

P: (puts everyone to bed)

I: and that's the end

## Appendix G(ii)

Transcript of the assessed situations of Trev (a 6 year-old CWNS (boy))

I=interviewer

P=participant

T. =main character

R.=sibling

(slight changes to the tapescript are made to keep the identity of the participant hidden)

I: In the next story T. [name of main character] is at school and the family are at home. That's the tv. That's the sofa and chairs.

P: incomprehensible

I: Mm?

P: incomprehensible

I: Ok T. is at school. Can you put the family at home?

P: (puts family at home)

I: mum she sits there. R. [name of sibling] stands there and dad sits there. T. is at school and at school T. drew a really nice picture. T. thought after school I want to take the picture home. School finishes and T. goes home. T. knocks on the door. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Mum and dad say hello

I: Mum and dad say hello.

P: They [T. and R.] play some games.

I: They play fun games

P: They watch television

I: They watch television

P: They go upstairs and play with the lego

I: They go upstairs and play with the lego

I: and does the family say anything about the picture?

P: What a lovely picture!

I: What a lovely picture!

[Pause]

I: is this the story finished?

P: nods head in agreement

I: thank you

P: (pointing to cooker) (incomprehensible)

I: Oh yes We will use that in a different story

I: In the next story there is a television

P: (picks up plate)( incomprehensible) is that a plate?

I: yes that's a plate and frying pan

I: mum is here and dad (puts mum and dad beside each other on sofa) and in this story there is only T., mum and dad. Mum and dad are watching tv and in this story dad said to T. mum and I want to spend some time alone together, so can you go to your room and play with your toys.

P: (incomprehensible)

I: we will have him in a different story.

P: (points to wall) incomprehensible.

I: The wall . This is the living room and this is T.'s bedroom. Dad says to T. mum and I want to spend some time alone together so can you go to your room and play with your toys. T. goes to his room and he looks and he sees mum and dad give each other a hug, then T. goes to his room. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next.

P: T. plays with his toys

I: T. plays with his toys

P: and then he asks if he can watch tv for a bit

I: then he wants to watch tv for a bit

P: then he watches tv

I: he watches tv. Where, in his room?

P: no in the living -room

I: but I thought mum and dad wanted to spend some time alone together

P: ( shaking his head and pointing to his room) ( incomprehensible) bed

I: bedroom

P: yes then he watches tv

I: he watches tv

P: then they [the parents] finish chatting

I: they finish chatting

P: then he goes to his room and he said he wants to do some reading

I: he wants to do some reading

P: he finishes his book

P: he finishes his book

P: and dad gave him a reward for reading



I: dad gave him a reward (intonation rising on reward as if to check) for reading

P: (nods in agreement)

P: (silence)

I: Is this the story finished?

P: (nods in agreement)

I: yeah thank you

I: the next story we have two people. in the next story we have mum and T.

P: some people don't have their dad because their dad lives (incomprehensible) sometime

I: dad lives

P: somewhere else

I: somewhere else

P: sometimes

I: yeah in this story T. has been waiting the whole day to go and see his friend. T. says to mum can we go now to see my friend. Mum says T. sorry not today. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Her mum said maybe you might be able to have a little time with your friend

I: ok

P: and then he comes back (incomprehensible) a little more time and mum says no

I: mum says no

P: then she asked could he play in his bedroom

I: mum asked T. to play in his bedroom

P:( incomprehensible) watch tv when he wasn't supposed to

I: he watched tv

P: when he wasn't supposed to

I: when he wasn't supposed to

P: then his mum told him off

I: his mum told him off

P: then he has to do to his reading again

I: (incomprehensible)

P: (incomprehensible)

I: thank you

I: the next story the family are having dinner (puts out table and chairs)

P: (incomprehensible) people sitting here

I: (incomprehensible). Can you put the family at the table?

P: (puts family at the table)

I: mum sitting there, dad sitting there, T. is there , and R. is there

I: the family are having dinner and they are talking about their next holiday. Mum says I want to go back to the place we went to last year, but T. thinks I didn't like that place. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: They go there and then had a nice dinner. mum goes there and dad says (indicating the two boys) ( incomprehensible) then mum goes to that place and they have a holiday somewhere else

I: who is they, you mean the whole family?

P: ( incomprehensible) the mum went to place we went to last year dad and those two went to a different place

I: they go to a different place

P: they didn't like

I : they didn't like that place

P: Yes

P: when they went there they played games

I: they played games together

P: they played with card games, then they come back home

I: they played card games, then they come back home

P: then but mummy's not back here (points at mummy)

I: mummy still isn't back yet

P: yeah. then they play watch some tv

I: they watch tv

P: they play games like hide and seek

I: they play hide and seek

P ( incomprehensible) then they play with their lego then their dad does some work and mum comes

I: their mum comes

P: then the mum does some work as well

I: and mum goes to work

P: Finished

I: thank you

P: I think one more story

I: no two more and that's us finished

P: they might have finished PE by now

I: after the stories I'm taking you to the PE class

I: in the next story there is the tv

P: (reaches for cooker) (incomprehensible)

I: In the last story. this story.....

P: what is that?

I: that's the tv

P: why did you not use that the last time?

I: because I didn't see it. so T. is in his favourite chair watching tv and his little brother R. wants to sit there so R. comes over and knocks T. off the chair and T. says ah I've hurt my leg. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P (incomprehensible) mummy and daddy come to see what happened. he bruised his leg and had to go to hospital

I: he had to go to hospital

P: then he tells his little brother off because he knocked him over

I: T. tells his little brother off

P: because he knocked him over

I: ok

P: then he can't walk, he had to hop back home

I: then he had to walk back home

P: HOP

I: ah ok HOP back home

P: because he can't walk with his leg that's hop and then dad said are you all right now and then he said yes, then he starts watching tv

I: starts watching tv

P: and then R. also watches tv and R. stands up as a punishment for knocking him over as a punishment

I: he has to stand there

P: (incomprehensible) and then the story's finished

I: and then the story's finished

I: now then the last story (moves cooker)

P: (incomprehensible) the kitchen

I: finally the kitchen (puts frying pan on cooker)

P: frying pan as well

I: frying pan mum and Trev sorry mum and T. are at the stove

P:( incomprehensible) like that (picks up mum, looks at hand and places at the other side of the cooker near the frying pan)

I: At the table is the family. Can you put the family at the table?

P: (puts dad and R. at the table) and then incomprehensible (points towards T. and mum)

I: so

P: trying to help mum cook

I: mum says tonight I have cooked something really special really for the family, but it's not ready yet . Mum said don't get too close to the stove. It's hot, don't touch it

P: it's too hot

I: T. goes over that smells really nice. I want some now. T. reaches over ah I've burnt my hand, I've burnt my hand

P:( incomprehensible)

I: now can you show me and tell me what happens next

P: then mum says oh dear (incomprehensible) go to the doctor's

I: ok

P: then mum walks over and says to dad T. burnt his hand (brings dad and mum over to T.) (incomprehensible) should go to hospital just like what mum said. Mum stayed (incomprehensible) (brings mum to oven) (lifts dad and T.) (incomprehensible) dad and T. walked to the hospital

I: dad and T. go to the doctor's

P: (incomprehensible) (lifts brick and sets it down as bed) bed

I: This is the bed

P: when you get hurt the doctor

I: I see

P: I have been on one before

I: Have you?

P: (moves dad around with T. on the bed) (incomprehensible) shy (dad touching T. on hand) (lifts dad and T.) and then (incomprehensible) hand

I: (incomprehensible)

P: and then they go back home (takes dad and T. back home) (incomprehensible) (puts T. at table) daddy and mummy cook from now on they didn't touch and then the dinner's ready

I: then dinner's ready

P:(incomprehensible) here (puts frying pan on stove) (puts plate on table) then (puts dad and mum at the table) they both sit, the story's finished and then they eat food

I: they they eat food

P: and it's finished

I: ok thank you very much

### Appendix G (iii)

Transcript of assessed situations of John, a 6 year-old CWS (boy)

P.=participant

I.=Interviewer

Riley=main character

George=sibling

Max=best friend

I: the family's at home. Maybe take all of this all away. That's the tv

P: (nods head slightly)

I: This is like the very hard sofa

P: (smiles)

I: At home is Can you put the family at home there's dad mum and

P: Max

I: Max is the friend, yeah mum dad and John are at home. Can you put them at home?

P: (puts George in between mum and dad)

I: That's not John.that's Riley (exchanges them)

I: Riley's at school today and at school Riley drew a really nice picture After school today I want to take the picture home with me. School finishes and Riley goes home. Riley knocks on the door. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: mum answers the door

I: mum answers the door

P: and then she sees that Riley's home and she lets him in

I: She lets him in

P: and he and he and he shows mum the picture he made and mom said that's lovely

I: mom said that's a lovely picture

P: (nods head)

I: is this the story finished?

P: (nods head) ( mouth covered with hands)

I: lets go on to the second story. The second story we also need the tv. The second story is mum and dad are sitting together. Dad says to Riley, Riley mum and I want to spend some time alone together. Can you go to your room and play with your toys. Riley goes to his room and looks around and he sees mum

and dad give each other other a hug. Then Riley goes to his room. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: dad? Riley opens his toy books

I: he opens his toy books

P: he (incomprehensible) his toys and dad said I will check on Riley

I: Dad said I will check on Riley

P: and then he does and Riley's on the floor playing with his toys

I: Riley's on the floor playing with his toys

P: and dad says it is bed time

I: dad says it is bed-time

P: Riley goes to bed and he says good night

I: Riley goes to bed and says goodnight

P: (nods)

I: and how does Riley feel?

P: kind of frightened

I: frightened Why?

P: because he thinks there is a monster in his closet

I: he thinks there is a monster. (slight trace of smile on face) Is this the story finished?

I: Let's go on to the next story. The next story is (alarm goes off). What's that?

P: I think it is the fire alarm

I: I am just thinking is it safe to stay here. It's stopped so it is ok



I: the next story we only have two characters. There is mum and Riley. Riley has been waiting the whole day to go and see his friend and he says mum can we go now to go and see my friend and mum says sorry not today. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next

P: Riley said (incomprehensible) because because because because (incomprehensible) Riley can still play with his little brother

I: Riley can play with his little brother? (silence) is this the story finished?

P: (nods head)

I: ok the next story is the whole family are having dinner. That's the table, some chairs . Can you put the family at the table?

P: (puts family at table)

I: if you put the small one towards the front. Maybe if you put it on this chair

P: (incomprehensible)

I: the whole family is having dinner and they are talking about their next holiday and mum says I would like to go back to the place we went to last year but Riley thinks I didn't like that place very much. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: dad says maybe this year we can take it maybe each year we can take it in turns. Last year it was mum's turn this year is Riley's turn, then it's George's turn and then it's dad's turn

I: so the whole family they take it in turns to go on holiday (silence) is this the story finished?

P: and they've finished dinner and mom said to Max and Riley go up and we will call you down when dinners ready I mean when desserts ready

I: we will call you when desserts ready

P: (nods head)

I: is this the story finished?

P: (nods head)

I: ok fine

I: in the next story there are only two characters. there's Riley and George. That's the TV. That's the chair and here Riley's sitting on his favourite chair.

George looks at Riley and thinks I'd like to sit on that chair, so George goes over and knocks Riley off the chair and Riley says ah I have hurt my leg. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next

P: dad Riley said you could have asked but George said sorry I didn't know I should have asked because the little one (incomprehensible) in trouble.

I: John didn't know he had to ask

P: Yep

I: is this the story finished?

P: (nods head)

I: one more story and we are finished. The family are at the table. At the table is dad

P: (puts mum at table)

I: at the table is dad and George (puts Riley and mum at cooker) Mum says to the family I have cooked something really nice for the family, but It is not quite ready yet. Mum says to Riley don't get too close to the stove. Riley smells the dinner; that smells really nice I want some now. Riley reaches over I have burnt my hand. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: mum said I told you not to touch it (incomprehensible)

I: mum said

P: Riley said can I put some water and mum said yes then mum said I told you it would be ready in a minute. Riley went to the tap and put some water on it and when he comes back and dinner's ready and he sits at the table and when he finishes it and puts some water on the burn and then he goes to bed

I: ok puts some water on the burn then he goes to bed. is this the story finished?

P:

I: ok. That's us finished. Thank you

## Appendix G (iv)

Transcript of the assessed situations of Tom, a 9 year-old boy with a stutter

I=interviewer;

P=participant

Timmy=main character

Leo= sibling)

I: In the next story there is Timmy. Timmy is at school

P: (excited) We pretend the mum also works at school. She is the teacher. (this was said in excited voice)

I: in this story no. The family is at home. Timmy's at school and the family are at home.

P: alright

I: That's the television. Ok, Can you put the family at home?

P: (Reaches for Timmy)

I: No Timmy's at school

P: Is this... (Lifts mum and puts her on the sofa)

I: That's mum

P: (Lifts best friend) but he's not really part of the family. Can he be at school too?

I: (laughs) yes he's at school

P: Timmy is too young to go to school.

I: You mean Leo. So Timmy's at school and at school today Timmy drew a really nice picture and Timmy said when I go home today I'm going to take the picture with me.

P: yeah

I: school finishes and Timmy goes home and he knocks on the door. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: (Goes to pick up Leo then lifts mum) The mum goes and lets him in

I: Mum lets him in ...ok

P: (has mum figure in hand, then also lifts Timmy) and then Dale show him [mum] no then they show the family.. why do I keep knocking things over? That's really annoying, then they show them but the dog

I: ok

P: (incomprehensible) she happened to draw a picture of a bone

I: ok Timmy drew a picture of a bone.

P: (with dog in hand) The dog knocks Leo over, the dog took the picture

I: the dog took the picture

P: and started running and in the process broke the tv (he smiles)

I: and in the process broke the tv

P: (incomprehensible) Dale rushed over to see if Leo was alright. Leo had to go to hospital

I: they took Leo to hospital

P: Yes Leo's best friend Mike had to look after him and search for the picture. They found it

I: Ok

P: They found the picture hanging on the wall

I: they found the picture on the wall

P: no they found the picture and hung

I: Ok they found the picture and hung it on the wall.

I: in the story did mum and dad say anything about the picture?

P: (incomprehensible)

I: Did they say anything about the picture?

P: Yes they said it was fabulous

I: Let's go to the next story. The next story we need the tv again ok so that's the tv and then we use this here (pitting up blocks to make a barrier)

P: is this the simmer?

I: mm?

P: is this the simmer? cinema?

I: that's the divide. that's the living -room, that's the bedroom

P: Ah..... (incomprehensible)

I: In this story mum and dad are watching tv can I take this? (takes figure from participant) Dad says to Timmy mum and I want to spend some time alone together Can you go to your room and play with your toys (child smiles) Timmy says ok so Timmy goes to his room and then he turns round and he sees mum and dad give each other a hug

P: a hug? ( as if checking)

I: a hug

P: yeah

I: Timmy goes to his room (participant rubs his eyes. looks tired) Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: ( lifts Timmy ) Timmy was curious He went down to see. They wanted to talk about the new baby girl. Timmy ran upstairs and woke up Leo and told him. They both ran up and hugged their mum and dad.

I: they hugged their mum and dad

P: Then they went to sleep and then the next day the mum went to the hospital.

I: I thought in the story mum and dad wanted to spend some time alone together. They wanted to spend some time alone together

P: but Timmy was curious and got so excited and completely forgot

I : and forgot what mum and dad said.

P: nods head

I: Is this the story over?

P: Yes

P: Who is going to get to see this video?

I: only me, after I need to write down what you say

P: yep

I: Only myself gets to see the video

P: Ok

I: Let's go on to the next story. In the next story we have mum and Timmy. You've got Timmy. Timmy has been waiting the whole day to go and see his friend. Timmy says to mum let's go now and see my friend. Mum says sorry Timmy not today. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Timmy starts crying (incomprehensible) ( child doll hitting mum)

I: Timmy starts crying

P: And yelling at mum.

I: Yelling at his mum

P: Mum looks offended and sends him up to his room, but Dale just runs away

I: Timmy just runs away

P: runs straight to his friend's house. Who could be his best friend's mum?

I: I don't have any more characters. Timmy goes to his friend's house

P: and (incomprehensible) does he realize that his dad is there

I: His real dad was at Timmy's friend's house

P: yeah.He goes ballistic

I: he goes ballistic

P: he gets dragged out of his house and put into his room.

I: Gets dragged home and put into his room.

P: That's the end

I: Thanks very much. .

I: Next story is a family dinner. Can you put the family at home? They're all having dinner. Can you put the family at home? That's the friend take him away.

P: ( Putting family at table) cat and dog

I: Cat and dog

P: (Puts oven tray on table.) It's like a snacky dinner

I: A snacky dinner

P: Have you ever had a snack dinner?

I: (Incomprehensible)

P: Pringles sausages and all that

I: Yeah

P: That's my favourite dinner

I: That's your favourite dinner.

P: The trouble is my dad doesn't actually like it very much so..

(incomprehensible) which is a little annoying but oh well

I: The smaller ones if you put them closer to the front they will probably sit better. The family are having dinner and are talking about the next holiday. Mum says I'd like to go back to the place we went to last year, but Timmy thinks I didn't like that place very much. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Dad agrees with Timmy and Leo agrees with mum, so they start arguing

I: the whole family start arguing.

P: No just mum and dad.

I: mum and dad start arguing

P: Timmy and Leo start panicking and both run off and try to come up with a plan

I: So they try to come up with a plan.

P: When they come up with a plan they got a frying pan and made their favourite soup which stopped them from arguing and then they buy them some more time to come up with a plan

I: so they tried to buy some time

P:they come up with the idea tuck them up and put them to bed and let them snuggle up with the cats and dogs

I: mum and dad go to bed and snuggle up with the cats and dogs.

P: that's the end

I: That's the end of the story.

I: let's go on to the next story in the next story Timmy is watching tv and he's sitting in his favourite chair

P: (incomprehensible)

I: he's sitting in his favourite seat and then Leo comes along and he thinks I want to sit there. Leo goes over , pushes Timmy off and sits on the chair. Timmy says I have hurt my leg. Now can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Mum and dad rush over .Mum starts yelling at Timmy and actually takes the tv and throws it in the trash.

I: throws the television into the trash.

P: Yes. Timmy's leg, one of the bones snapped in two.

I: one of the bones was snapped in two

P: He was carried to hospital. Meanwhile his best friend came over, and Timmy told him and he got the frying pan and started whacking Timmy with it.

I: started whacking Timmy?

P: no whacking Leo

I: with the frying pan.

P: That's all I can think of

I: That's fine. Ok Thank you very much.

I: the next one is in the kitchen in this story Mum and Timmy are at the stove. The family are sitting at the table. Can you put the family at the table?

P: (incomprehensible) There was a thought that was Timmy. Why (incomprehensible)

I: ok thank you ... In the story mum says I have cooked something really nice. Really nice for the family but it's not quite ready yet. Mum says to Timmy don't go too close to the stove..Timmy smells the dinner. That smells really nice I want some now. Timmy reaches over 'Ah I've burnt my hand'. Can you show me and tell me what happens next?

P: Timmy runs around screaming knocking everything over

I: Timmy knocks everything over

P: Everything I mean everything when I say everything (hint of pleasure saying this but not sadistic)

I: everything

P: ( has mum and Timmy in his hand) (incomprehensible) mum (incomprehensible) horrible (mum is now on the floor) and dad lunges at him

I: lunges at Timmy

P: (incomprehensible) and takes him to the hospital.

I: takes him to the hospital

P: and he just spends a whole month at the hospital and that's the end.

I: he spends a month at the hospital and that's the end. ok thank you very much



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