# Deleuze and the New Materialism(s) comes to SFP

**Introduction**

This paper explores a relatively new paradigm known as the new materialism(s) as it relates to Solution-focused practices(SFP). As Wittgenstein (1958) once pointed out " problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known" (§109). Whilst that is no doubt true, once we see clearly we notice other things that we had not noticed before; that is to say we have a certain perspicuity once problems have dissolved. So as this paradigm unfolds for you, most readers will find little in the way of new information, but hopefully a perspective that allows them to notice things they hadn't noticed before. That is my best hopes for this paper.

The first section explores briefly how SFP developed, and in particular how the broader field of psychotherapy embraced the "linguistic turn", and with it postmodernism and social constructionism. But Gregory Bateson, one of the intellectual giants of the early foundations of these forms of psychotherapy left the field with a heavy heart, because he did not like where it was going. Shortly after Bateson left Steve de Shazer arrived, and started his journey which led to SFP. At the same time, in France, Lacan's brightest student Félix Guattari teamed up with the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, and between them developed some of Bateson's ideas.  So the second section of this paper is on Deleuze's ideas, as they were developed in tandem with Guattari. for that set the groundwork for the new materialism(s). The third section gives a summary of the new materialism(s), especially Karen Barad's work. There is a related paradigm in biology called developmental systems theory, which I think makes the new materialism(s) easier to understand. Finally we come back to SFP and how this new paradigm might play out in it.

**A Little History**

As we know, SFBT developed from Steve de Shazer's interest in Milton Erickson's cases. He tells of how he first attempted to discern the underlying rules that were guiding Erickson's interventions, and he came up with 4 rules which he used to make 5 piles of cases; the 5th pile for all those "weird" cases he hadn't worked out the rule(s) for yet (de Shazer, 1985). About 50% of cases were in the "weird" pile.  This inspired de Shazer to start doing therapy himself, and thought he was emulating Erickson in that about 50% of his cases fitted into one of the 4 rules piles and the rest were in the "weird" pile. But when he watched a film of Erickson 15 years later his immediate reaction was "..he's doing it all wrong" (McKergow & Korman, 2008, p. 35). At that point he appears to have modified his rule piles; now proposing that Erickson was tying tasks to the client's goal(s), with an essential difference to others that his therapy was also brief (De Jong, 2019). This was a time when psychoanalysis was still dominating planet psychotherapy, despite Erickson and the Palo Alto group starting a revolution in the 1950s towards brief therapy. Others were also looking at Erickson. Haley, the most frequently cited therapist by practicing American psychologists in the 1970s

(Richeport-Haley & Carlson, 2010), claimed Erickson as the progenitor of his Ordeal therapy and the inspiration to his strategic therapy (Haley, 1984).

A reader might be forgiven for thinking, as a result of reading the otherwise excellent summary of the development of SFBT by Korman, De Jong, and Jordan (2020), that de Shazer invented (or discovered) the distinction between the "family-as-a-system" and "therapy-as-a-system". However that honour goes to Wittgenstein's cousin, Heinz von Foerster who introduced the world to second-order cybernetics (or cybernetics of cybernetics) in 1968 (Scott, 2004). There was a flurry of papers in the late 1980s and early 1990s marking what was called "linguistic turn" (or postmodernism) when that idea came to family therapy (e.g., Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; de Shazer, 1991; Epston & White, 1992, Hoffman, 1990). But as we shall see, the "linguistic turn" is now being regarded as a narrow interpretation of second-order cybernetics as well as slightly misguided by the emerging new materialism(s) paradigm.

Bateson (1972) had earlier pointed out that although philosophers had separated epistemology (how we know anything) from ontology (what things are), to a naturalist they cannot be separated. This is because one's (largely) unconscious "beliefs about what sort of world it is will determine how he [sic] sees and acts within it", and vice-versa (p. 320). So when the "linguistic turn" (or postmodernism) entered family therapy, and for that matter social sciences in general, it embraced epistemology and said next to nothing about the ontology of the world. For example Paré (1995) wrote that with postmodernism there is a shift in "its focus to an epistemological domain, and leaving aside its former preoccupation with the 'real' world, which concerns ontology" (p.3). This is rooted in Kant, who proposed that all knowledge is interpretive as he argued that we don't have direct access to the thing-in-itself (*ding an sich*), thus setting us up to think that all knowledge is subjective and we should have a scepticism towards anyone claiming universal truths. Appeals were often made to quantum theory, because Heisenberg's uncertainty principle has it, that in effect, the most sensitive realities are so sensitive that any attempt to look at them changes them. This was the big idea in all the sciences in the twentieth century. But as we'll see the new materialism(s) is challenging this.

As a result of the "linguistic turn" social constructionists began urging therapists to stop looking for patterns that could be observed (i.e. ontological patterns), and rather focus on how meaning (or epistemology) arises in human systems (Hoffman, 1993). Derrida (1976) is often cited with his claims that ontological or truth claims occur in most cultures as a means of establishing authority and control over others, so deconstructing them or rendering them relative to a subject was a way of resisting domination. There were critics who pointed out that social constructionists were promoting a radical relativism by denying there is a reality independent of human perception (or interpretation) (e.g. Andrews, 2012). Barad, the principle author of the new materialism(s) pointed out that with constructivism "there is an important sense in which the only thing that doesn't seem to matter anymore is matter" (2007, p. 132). The social constructionist Kenneth Gergen was guilty of this with his infamous quote "... constructionism is ontologically mute" (1994, p. 72). If Bateson is correct in his claim that ontology and epistemology cannot be separated in practice, then Wittgensteinian psychologist John Shotter (2011) attempted to rescue Gergen by arguing

that Gergen isn't endorsing an 'anything goes' form of relativism, but is revealing our ontological status as relational beings living in a constantly changing world. But Shotter was largely ignored.

The reason was largely cultural. Although de Shazer (1989) "murdered" the psychoanalytic term "resistance" (as had Erickson before him with "utilization"), by suggesting it is not the client who is resistant but the therapist; and with that innovation they invited a more cooperative (and potentially creative) style of therapy, it was not sufficient. The reason lies in history. The anthropologist Gregory Bateson had come to psychiatry in 1950, and organised the Bateson Project to explore "strange communication" (schizophrenia), which eventually became the Mental Research Institution (MRI) in Palo Alto. Although they developed a form of family therapy based on cybernetics, the double-bind theory of schizophrenia, and brief therapy; as well as many therapists such as de Shazer coming to the MRI to learn from them, Bateson himself walked away from the form of therapy that was emerging, commenting that it was a "god-awful business" (Bateson & Bateson, 1987, p.204). This was because the whole therapy field (not just family therapy) was devoted to the concept of power, seeing themselves as engineers wanting to leverage change. Bateson believed this engineering attitude is deeply ingrained in Western culture and "led back towards . . . Darwinism [and] survival of the fittest" (Harries-Jones, 1995, p.28). In particular Bateson argued with Haley's use of power, who was using it to develop strategic therapy and ordeal therapy. So with the advent of second-order cybernetics and the death of resistance, although it "softened" the engineering attitude and led to a more cooperative style of psychotherapy, the insistence on the "preferred future" technique is still an engineering lever. However, as we shall see, this attitude is largely absent in Gilligan's (1990) coevolutionary approach to brief therapy. An understanding of Deleuze is helpful in this regard.

**Deleuze**

Gilles Deleuze was a French philosopher who rose to prominence after being sought out by a Lacanian psychoanalyst Félix Guattari in 1968. Guattari was prompted by reading some of Deleuze's writings on Nietzschean and Spinozean inspired "anti-identitarian" philosophy. They immediately hit it off with each other and wrote a book entitled *Anti-Oedipus*, which sold out in France within a few days, promoting them to celebrity status amongst French intellectuals. The sub-title was *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, as Lacanian psychoanalysis has it that our unconscious mind is largely our social milieu, which under capitalism is fostering or constructing us as "desiring machines" (Fox, 2024). (Lacan, like most French intellectuals was influenced by Foucault.) The book was criticized in some quarters for romanticising schizophrenia as a way of escaping the herd instinct that they saw driving capitalism. This was at the height of the anti-psychiatry movement, but the book also appealed to gay activists and Marxists in Germany, Italy, and Brazil, as well as France (Dosse, 2010). Indeed Guattari had ties with the Red Brigade, refusing to condemn their violence. Lacan at first tried to prevent its publication, and refused discussion of it by his students, but eventually came to see that it was a continuation of his own work (Caldwell, 2009). When the second book (*A Thousand Plateaus*) came out in 1980 (with the same sub-title), it was accused of being too difficult to read and interest in them waned. However with the rise this century of the "new materialism(s)", a term first used by Deleuze, interest in Deleuze and Guatarri

(D&G) has been renewed (Ansell-Pearson, 2017). This interest also extends to Bateson, as he was increasingly cited by D&G, as their work progressed over a twenty year period (Shaw, 2015).

 Wittgenstein (2009/1953) wrote about preparing a place for an idea, and Bateson could be said to have prepared a place for some ideas that came to fruition in D&G, and then were further developed by the new materialism(s). One such idea was Bateson's original anthropological concept of "schismogenesis" which is the idea that there are escalating interactions between two (or more) creatures (or groups) that tend towards a climax or release. They can be as diverse as sex, armaments races, temper tantrums, or the one-sided pursuit of purpose by  culture resulting in ecological disaster (Bateson, 1972). Sometimes the climax is avoided due to a complementary exchange being inserted into an escalating symmetrical exchange between two rivals; or a symmetrical exchange is inserted into a escalating complementary exchange (say the dominant party shows their humanity). Bateson noted that Bali (in the 1930s) could be described as a 'steady state' culture as they had developed child-rearing practices where exchanges seldom escalate. D&G called these non-escalating states plateaus, hence the title of their second book. One example they give is the Chinese Taoists *ars erotica*, where the emphasis is upon the man not ejaculating when sexually coupled. Foucault (1978) also wrote on this as being a way to an ecological ethic. Such practices are meant to temper desire.

A related idea on how to achieve plateau's is to have a "body without organs" (BwO) (Buchanan, 1997). As organs give us desires and make us vulnerable, the only way to be free of exploitation by capitalism and have the body's full potential is to be a BwO. Recently a number of scholars have claimed that the martial arts, tai chi, yoga, and a variety of sporting activities may foster a BwO (Vodka, 2013; Yu & Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016; Stivale, 2022).

Another idea of Bateson's that was furthered by D&G was the idea that we have (or are) extended minds. Bateson puzzled over where the blindman's boundaries are. Are they at the handle of the stick? At the tip of the stick? Halfway down? He concluded these are nonsense questions, because what the blindman is doing is that his attention is flowing round a circuit that includes the feel of the stick on the street, the muscular extensions and contractions of his arms and legs, and the sound of the tapping. When he sits down for lunch a different circuit comes into play. However most people in our culture are trapped in an account of the mind that has it that a passive skull encased brain is receiving and processing perceptions; but that is so old hat (despite being widespread in our culture). Enactivism, especially radical enactivism (Hutto, 2013) takes a more direct embodied cognition approach. We think with our bodies, by making subtle body movements. This has many implications for education (Hutto & Abrahamson, 2022). Heidegger (2010) also saw these circuits of activity; the skilled carpenter having a "ready-to-hand" relationship, or sense of oneness, with her hammer. I feel *my* tyres on the road when driving. In the hands of D&G these circuits of the extended mind thesis become "assemblages". Some assemblages are short lasting, some long. D&G described how a new form of warfare was enacted once the Mongol warrior mastered the horse-stirrup-bow circuit. Flight is an assemblage that includes the bird, its feathers, the thermals, air density, and the wind, etc. Psychotherapy is a mix of "territorialization" where

new components are added to an assemblage, and "deterritorializations" as components are discarded.

The extended mind thesis was further developed by D&G with their claim that Nietzsche's "Ur-Eine" was the unconscious mind, or the primordial unity of which we are part of, but not apart from. Nietzsche held that as we came to live in cities we become alienated from the natural forms of "Ur-Eine", and hence the Lacanian idea, that was taken up by D&G, that we are being shaped by capitalism. More recently it is being claimed that this immanent organising principle is what is known in China as the Dao (Tao), but was not named as such by Nietzsche due to his limited access to Chinese thought (Drury, 2025). D&G also connect this with the seventeenth century philosopher Baruch Spinoza, an early enlightenment thinker who started pondering what the universe would be like if "God" was the universe, and did not stand outside or apart from the universe, as the Abrahamic religions assumed. That is, an immanent position instead of transcendental position. What's more, in this immanent universe Deleuze (following Spinoza) does not distinguish between man [sic] and nature; that man and nature are not two things, "rather they are one and the same essential reality" (D&G, 1977, p.5). For Lacan our sense of being separate only comes as the ego develops, but what Guattari recognised in Deleuze's writings was that this is not fixed, and can be let go of or dissolved, as many others have also said (Drury, 2025). This is the "anti-identitarian" philosophy that is central to understanding D&G. That is to say, we can at times, identify with the whole universe.

A sociological perspective is helpful to understanding how Westerners have such fixed egos, which many anthropologists report that people outside Western culture find peculiar (e.g. Henrich, 2020). The Copernican revolution radically displaced humans from the centre of the universe to a tiny planet on the edge of one insignificant galaxy among millions in an indifferent universe. However the seeds for this were sown much earlier, when the Hebrews came out of slavery in 539 BCE and brought back to Israel and Judea influences from Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic religion. At that point their former polytheistic religion became more monotheistic; "God" went from being clearly a metaphor for the whole universe to a male transcendent entity (Gerstenberger, 2011). So the Copernican revolution just furthered this monotheistic vision of a universe where "God" may well have gone to sleep after setting his mechanical clock-like creation in motion. Given this vision of the universe there can be little wonder that Westerners are alienated from nature, and cling to a "God" who gives them hope. And it is little wonder that most learning psychotherapy want a lever.

**The New Materialism(s)**

By way of contrast the new materialism(s) is giving rise to a much more "dynamic and alive" universe where we play a more central part (Deleuze, 1990, p.45). Karen Barad, whose book has had more than 20,000 citations (Scholz, 2024), endorses this claim with: "this new sense of aliveness applies to the inanimate as well as the animate" (Barad, 2007, p. 437). Jane Bennett (2010), another prominent NMs philosopher claims the inorganic has a vitality or is composed of "vibrant matter". Thus the static inert model of the universe (the billiard ball universe) has given way to a living universe, or a vitalism. Add to this Spinoza's claim

(Deleuze, 1990) that there is no distinction between creator and creation (i.e. "God" is immanent), and we now have a view of a living universe.

Central to Barad, and NMS, is Neils Bohr's understanding of the quantum realm, which she calls his "indeterminacy principle", and this is to be contrasted with Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle".[1] Although Heisenberg came closer to Bohr as time went on, he remained wedded to Kant (which in turn leads to the 'linguistic turn') (Camilleri, 2009). As we have seen Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" claims that we cannot know for certain how it is in the quantum realm owing to the unavoidable disturbance created by our measuring instruments. But Bohr's "indeterminacy principle" is an ontological explanation. It is helpful to understand that in the quantum realm physicists theorize that nature generates complementary properties (e.g. waves and particles, or location and momentum, etc.). Barad claims Bohr was arguing that how he set up his apparatus (which she calls the "agential cut"), was in fact creating the waves (say) he was finding. Set up the apparatus one way he would get waves, set up another he would get particles. Bohr, Barad claims, argued it was the interaction (or what Barad later called the "intra-action") between the "measuring instrument" (or for that matter any other quantum system) and the quantum field that was being "measured", that brought that property into existence. (It is now a bit of a misnomer to say we are "measuring" this, because what we are now doing is creating waves (for example)). And as we are all, at one level, quantum fields, we are bringing forth aspects of the universe. Hence the title of Barad's (2007) book, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

So this leads into Barad's concept of "Intra-action", which differs from interaction, in that in interaction the two poles remain the same, or come first, but in intra-action the two poles are produced as a result of the intra-action. In other words in intra-action the relationship comes first and the two poles or "relata" materialise as a result of the intra-action. This is the vibrant hub of the living universe, and there is now a whole philosophy of science when we shift our focus to the intra-action.

For example in evolutionary biology there is a relatively new paradigm, called Developmental Systems Theory (DST), that is offering an alternative to what is known as the "modern synthesis" (Oyama et al., 2001). Darwin's second book, *The Descent of Man*, which was published 12 years after *On the Origin of Species* is now, as Corning (2023) notes, "coming into view" as a distinct evolutionary theory. Whilst the *Origin* is focused on the individual and the competition for existence; in the *Descent* Darwin shifts his focus to the relationship more by stressing co-operation between species, or coevolution. Bateson also noted that the horse coevolved with the grassy plains; as the teeth, hooves, and size of the horse evolved there was a corresponding evolution of the grasses. Bateson was highly critical of the modern synthesis, which is rooted the *Origin* book. Coevolution, which is central to DST is an example of intra-action, a switch in focus from the relata to the relationship, which consistent with Deleuze's anti-identification stance. Gallagher (2017) has claimed DST as a foundation for enactivism.

DST does not place so much emphasis on the inheritance by genes, rather the environment (or the "nest" in the broadest sense of that term) plays a more important role (Lewontin et al, 1984). For example pecking behaviour has its foundations in the beak resting on the

beating heart in the egg. Parents in many birds and reptiles determine the gender of their offspring by regulating the temperature of the eggs at critical times. Mycorrhizal mushrooms colonize the root systems of trees setting up a symbiotic relationship where the tree supplies sugars to the mushrooms, and the mushrooms supply water and minerals to the trees. Most mammals do not develop their immune system and digestive system without gut bacteria. There is some evidence that in prey mammals they may experience a reduction in pain perception (stress-induced analgesia) by triggering the body's opioid system, when they "give up the ghost" on being killed (much like Obi-Wan Kenobi did in Star Wars) (Sorge et al., 2014). That is to say nature is no longer depicted as "red in tooth and claw" or "nasty, brutish and short". It is more co-operative.

This new view of nature, which Barad calls "agential realism", is consistent with the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas (1974), although his philosophy must be extended to include ecological entanglements (Drury, 2025). Also with this new view we see more clearly that distinctions are not separations; there is only one "atom" and it is the entire universe. So causality is knocked off its throne in science. If a Martian was schooled in Hume's account of causality, and watched as a cat walked repeatedly past a hole in a fence, she would have to conclude that the head causes the tail. There are just assemblages, some very short-lasting, which we see when we follow Deleuze's recommendation that we overcome any illusions of being conscious independent beings, and recognise that we are a part of the world, but not apart from it. Intra-action is now seen the innate organising principle of the universe.

As we have seen Nietzsche's *Ur-Eine* has been compared with the Dao, and yin-yang compares favourably with Barad's intra-action when we consider that yin-yang implies *hsiang sheng*, which translates as "mutual arising" (Watts, 1975, p. 22). The yin-yang symbol, known as *taijitu* is on Neils Bohr's coat of arms. Besides the taijiu symbol of yin-yang the graphic work of M. C. Escher can also be seen as representing intra-action or yin-yang (or coevolution). In many of Escher works figure and ground create each other. For the mathematically minded this also parallels Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form* (1969), which is a mathematical treatise on how forms emerge. Both Barad and Spencer-Brown explore the processes of emergence, which for the non-mathematically minded is best seen in Escher's *Verbum* where we see the gradual emergence of distinct forms from the intra-activity in the quantum realm.

So in summary, a new tool for science is emerging by way of the new materialism(s) of Barad and others, which is called "intra-action". This began with Spinoza in the seventeenth century when he started pondering what an immanent universe would look like. This is far from complete but it resonates with both the findings in quantum physics as well as East-Asian philosophy. It came to the attention of the social sciences with Deleuze, but we can see its roots in such notables as Bateson, Dewey, and Wittgenstein. It is showing its worth in biology, ecology, education and ethics. It has even ventured into liberation theology and its development of therapeutic communities that empower marginalised people (Mamic, 2016). Let us now look briefly at how it may effect solution-focused practice.

**Solution-Focused Practice**

I begin this section with something of an apology. All the great mystics, such as St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Nargarjuna, St. Thomas, and Shankara approached "God" by the sculptural method, which is known as apophatic theology or negative theology. This is the method of cutting away concepts to reveal what is. A form of it is known as maieutics[2] or Socratic questioning which is central to SFP and a few other forms of psychotherapy (Özkapu, 2022). One of the many ways of understanding Wittgenstein, is through the lens of apophatic theology (Mitralexis, 2015). His instruction to throw away the metaphorical ladder at the end of the *Tractatus* is a recognition that to really understand this work you have to get beyond it. In Zen, if someone was to say "The mountains and hills, are not these the body of the Buddha?" the master would reply "Yes, but it's a pity to say so."[3] In enactivism "know that" knowledge gives way to "know how" knowledge (Drury & Tudor, 2024). However as you probably know, it takes much longer to lead a person to a truth if you use the Socratic method, so my apologies for directly pointing to what is best revealed through apophatic reasoning.

In apophatic reasoning, like in the agential realist account, knowledge is not acquired by seeing from above or outside, which was the Cartesian method. Rather knowing is an embodied practice, developed through material interactions, like with other animals. Immanence rather than transcendence. The role of theories is to provide a frame for "know that" knowledge, and as enactivists and new materialists prefer "know how" knowledge they say "abandon all theory" (Rhodes, 2025).[4] Knowing that Steve de Shazer claimed that Wittgenstein, Buddhism, Erickson and the MRI were major influences in the development of SFBT, it is in this sense I believe his frequent claim that "solution focused brief therapy has no theory" holds (Korman et al, 2020, p. 47). He hasn't developed a theory so much as he has developed a practice. Wittgenstein (1958) once commented that he could imagine a person learning chess without learning the rules (§31). In the solution focused world Ben Furman's (2023) "kids skills" resonates with this idea of, in the words of Wittgenstein, "dissolving problems". It is more "know how" than a form of "know that".

A problem with theories or "know that" knowledge is that we become bewitched by them as Wittgenstein was fond of pointing out. One of the major ways that bewitchment occurs is when this "know that" knowledge is elevated above "know how" knowledge; this occurs frequently in law when the spirit of the law plays second fiddle to the letter of the law. I think much the same has occurred in SFBT by elevating the "preferred future", which I see as one technique of eliciting a solution, over the much broader base of co-creating a solution. Historically, I think the point of departure was a little after the "nymphomania case" (when Steve de Shazer and the couple realised they had an insomnia problem, not nymphomania) (Korman et al, 2020). Shortly after that case SFBT became preoccupied with the clients future at the cost of the broader opportunity to further develop a coevolutionary path in SFP.

Milton Erickson once commented "Too many psychotherapists try to plan what thinking they will do instead of waiting to see what the stimulus they receive is, and then letting their unconscious mind respond to the stimulus" (Gordon & Meyers-Anderson, 1981, p.17). Trusting the unconscious, or intuition, is key here, because in intuition (or the unconscious if

you like) will be closer to the logic of intra-action. ("Trust the Force, Luke.") Consider, if you will, that on the surface the opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but as Freud (1910) pointed out, sometimes in dreams and the unconscious (and this also applies to some words such as 'cleave'), meanings can have both a positive sense as well as their opposite. He wrote sometimes there is "a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing" (p. 155). Today we can recognise this as an example of intra-action, but even Freud recognised at the point of origin, words can have this double meaning because we only know 'strong' by comparison with its opposite 'weak'; and so we shouldn't be surprised to learn that in Egyptian there is a word that means both 'strong' and 'weak'. This capacity to hold and explore opposites is seen by psychoanalysis as a feature of the creative process and the unconscious (Bleger, 2013; Loveday, 2017). Taoism has a similar logic; that laws and crimes coevolve, as does beauty and ugliness.[5] And as the opening comment of this paragraph of Erickson attests, therapist and client can coevolve a style together that taps the creativity of both. But as the Deleuzian family therapist Nichterlein (2025) says, this requires "grit", which is the capacity to "sit comfortably in the liminal zone where new – unforeseen and unforeseeable – becomings are to emerge" (p. 15).

Also, as Nichterlein also makes clear "grit" cannot be learned through simple education, it is a "know how" skill, much to the chagrin of the psy *dispositif* (Foucault, 2006). The psy *dispositif*, which consists of institutional policies, disciplinary practices of professional licensing boards, professional examinations, and so on, and are largely based on the medical model and require ongoing education. Social science researchers are increasingly confronted with a growing number of ethical clearance procedures (which is part of the surveillance technique first identified by Foucault), that Haggerty (2004) calls "ethics creep".  I contend that there is a similar "ethics creep" plaguing psychotherapy, which is evidenced by the growing number of complaints to licensing bodies (e.g., Veness et al, 2019). Although this tends to mainly serve regulatory theatre more than remedial justice (although sometimes it is far more harmful) (Guta, et al, 2013), it has a "chilling effect" on creativity and risk-taking. Nikolas Rose (1996) has shown how the psy-professions have become entangled in these regimes of accountability, which has narrowed therapeutic space and what counts as legitimate care. So to enter the "not knowing" space, the liminal zone, where new becomings might emerge, requires some courage.

Utilising outcome measures as developed by Duncan and Miller may be of some assistance in countering the looming shadow of the *dispositif* (Duncan et al., 2010). However, in SFP, as the "nymphomania" case also makes clear, there is nothing like an array of examples due to our human propensity for mimicry. This establishes a culture of practice, which should allow practitioners to sit more comfortably in the liminal zone, for with many examples SFP can broaden its base. I am particularly fond of the examples in the collection *Sweet fruit from the bitter tree* (Andreas, 2011). One involves an author (Perez) in Glasgow late one night being approached by a group of young men, whose leader stated "I'll have your wallet". Perez quickly replied "You have my wallet, that's wonderful", and started shaking his hand. This led to the whole group sharing in the search for the supposed "lost wallet". Or Michael Gardner's chapters on the "dork police", who when called to a domestic violence situation started doing "warm up" exercises, which cracked up the assailant. This is reminiscent of

Bokuden's school of "no-sword swordsmanship" (Suzuki, 1959, pp. 74-75). I am also attracted to Turnell's 'Signs of Safety', due to creative use of a solution focus (Turnell & Murphy, 2017). *The Journal of Solution Focused Practices* is ideally situated to establish such a culture by publishing a variety of cases.

**Conclusion**

A new paradigm has arisen with the new materialism(s), and its principle tool is Barad's intra-action. This stems from Bohr's take on the problem of indeterminacy in quantum physics, but we see it realised most simply in co-evolution. Intra-action takes the relationship as being fundamental, and the relata are a product of the relationship. We see this expressed as the taijiu (yin-yang) symbol from Chinese philosophy, but we also see it in M. C. Escher's graphics. It has also brought the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze to prominence.

For psychotherapists this paradigm invites us into recognising the coevolutionary relationship we have with our clients. Historically it takes us back to the "linguistic turn" (approximately 1980), when epistemology came to dominate our thinking. We now see ourselves as having an ontological base as we co-create with our client(s) new becomings. Hopefully, this will co-create a broader base for solution focused practices. This can be seen as a further step to an ecology of mind.

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[1] There is some confusion due to Heisenberg idea being referred to as the "indeterminacy principle" also, but I suggest Heisenberg's as the "uncertainty principle" and Bohr's as the "indeterminacy principle" for the sake of clarity.

[2] Maieutics comes from midwifery and means to elicit knowledge from a person that is already, in a sense, known to them.

[3] This is the extended mind thesis.

4 Think what you are doing when you use a word like "theory" or "hypothesis"; this is often a way of saying, in less fancy language, that you have a suspicion that it might be this. A part of you is on hold as you ponder this suspicion. You don't want to get stuck here; you want to get back in the flow (the Dao). If your hypothesis or theory turns out to be true, you'll also return to the flow. Like a Daruma doll, you wobble when your qi is raised above your dantien (tantien).

5 "One to you is pleasure and pain, one to you is loss and gain, one to you is fame and shame," whispered the Dao to the ego. "As you choose beauty, so you define ugly; as you pursue good, so you create evil; as you decide your joy, so you design your sorrow".