

Mapping the becoming of the novice physiotherapist

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Abstract:

We are interested in the processes which shape the ‘becoming’ of the novice physiotherapist. Our starting point was data generated with subjects within the first five years of their professional career, working in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our analysis was guided by the approach (and ‘posthuman’ philosophy) that Braidotti takes to map the fluid in-between flows of situated and embodied subject positionings. This cartographic process acts to consider locations in space (geo-political and ecological dimensions) as well as in time (historical and genealogical). The figurations we trace are not from one subjectivity to another but of an embodied subject always in-formation. Looking to construct alternative figurations of power relations of affirmation and resistance, our analyses, although themselves in a state of becoming, showed these novice practitioners unprepared in their preparedness, confronted with paradox, uncertainty, and emotion. We noted the geo-political influences of Christian and capitalist imperatives on the becoming of the novice physiotherapist—their desire to do a ‘good job’, and an assumption that as a subject they could be an asset to be capitalised upon. We noticed the genealogical figurations of the physiotherapy professional (as mechanical, as helpful) and the clash of this with happenings in their ecologies of practice. We question how possible it is to prepare these novices for these conflicts or is this an inevitable process of becoming in the postmodern world and the profession in the time of advanced capitalism.

Keywords: becoming; posthuman; figurations; subjectivity; capital

Presenter biography:

Christine Cummins is a Senior Research Officer in the Centre for Person Centred Research at Auckland University of Technology. She has extensive experience working on research projects that seek to re-vision rehabilitation practice to optimise outcomes for people living with the consequences of injury or illness. With a background in Sociology, she has an interest in using post structural approaches to critically explore the structures and practices that contribute to rehabilitation outcomes.

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