Critical Transformative Dialogues: A Research Method Beyond the Fusions of Horizons

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Abstract: The way we interpret texts in hermeneutic research has evolved from guidelines for interpreting biblical texts to engaging in question and answer conversations with the aim of finding mutual understanding, to challenging reached mutual understandings and finding meaning beyond the dialogue partners' understanding. We present a progression and blending of different hermeneutics from the fusion of horizons approach of GADAMER's philosophical hermeneutics, through the GADAMER-HABERMAS debate to explore the interface between interpretive and critical approaches to text interpretations, to arrive at a research strategy that was created out of this debate. This strategy, critical transformative dialogues, emphasises a) a deep understanding of the phenomenon being researched as well as b) a sceptical stance to this newly found deep understanding and c) the value of dialogue in transcending a fusion of understandings to achieve transformative action. This strategy is explored in a project in the health sector in which the phenomenon being investigated, as well as the research approach, created emancipatory dialogues in practice.

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Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpreting texts. The origins of hermeneutics lay in the interpretation of biblical texts (FERRARIS, 1996). In the 21st century texts include a range of media and just as the media have changed over time, the methods of hermeneutics have also evolved from procedural processes to a range of strategies with a greater emphasis on interpretation through the particular historical and cultural contextual frameworks of the researcher. [1]

We contend that there is an important place in current research that seeks to interpret and transform 21st century human practices for the use of 21st century understandings and strategies of human interaction. In such research the idea of dialogues implies both text author (the source of the text) and text interpreter (the researcher) being engaged in a critical conversation. The word critical we use in the sense of the critical social sciences to mean challenging the status quo, its influences and assumptions, and seeking to positively change these, hence we use the term transformative. As presented below, the model of critical transformative dialogues is a strategy for today that seeks understanding, shared knowledge construction and transformation through dialogue. This strategy has been created from a research project (TREDE, 2008) that required a way of blending philosophical and critical hermeneutics and saw the debates between GADAMER and HABERMAS as a starting point for this creative process. [2]

1. The Texts of the 21st Century

Consider the texts that people of all ages engage with today. A text is essentially a medium for conveying a message. It is an intention to communicate, more than mere information; it embodies meaning intentions of the author and can evoke meaning interpretations in the reader. Beyond written texts the concept of texts has been expanded to include notions of conversations, interviews and dialogues (SVENAEUS, 2000). Texts can also be pictures, films, music or other means of expression (WILLIS, SMITH & COLLINS, 2000). Texts can include existing texts as well as texts that are purposefully constructed during the research process (KINSELLA, 2006). Many of these texts are ephemeral, embodied, experiential as well as the more traditional literary, scholarly and enduring written formats. [3]

Readers have the capacity to make texts relevant to current situations. They can interpret texts in ways which may not be envisaged by the authors (DENZIN & LINCOLN, 2000). A useful analogy is to consider interpersonal communication as a form of dialogue in which each party brings their own background to bear on the interpretation of the "text" of the conversation. Such a dialogue occurs when the researcher interprets texts within his/her own context; a dialogue occurs between the text (i.e. the absent author) and the researcher. A similar process occurs when a researcher creates qualitative research designs based on an interpretation of an existing research approach or an interpretation of the philosophical stance (e.g. idealism). The researcher engages in a dialogue with existing research approaches to create a tailor-made strategy that suits the research goals, scope and context. [4]

2. Hermeneutic Inquiry and Meaning Making

Hermeneutic inquiry is enjoying attention in these post-positivistic times where increasing emphasis is placed on sense-making and meaningful knowledge rather than declarative technical knowledge (KINSELLA, 2006). It has been suggested that hermeneutic inquiry is the basis of all qualitative research (SCHWANDT, 2001) but it can be specifically used as a research approach to expose and clarify assumptions and interests that inform interpretations. "Hermeneutics has to do with a theoretical attitude towards the practice of interpretation, the interpretations of texts, but also in relation to the experiences interpreted in them and in our communicatively unfolded orientations in the world" (GADAMER, 1996, p.112). Hermeneutic inquiry is mindful of relationships and contexts and how these shape dialogues and interpretations. [5]

3. Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Fusion of Horizons

In his theorising of *philosophical hermeneutics* GADAMER (1996) challenged the universal truth claims inherent in the scientific methods of the empirico-analytical paradigm. He asserted that the way we interpret phenomena reveal our sense making perspective which in turn is influenced by our life experiences including cultural, personal and professional dimensions. GADAMER called these perspectives our horizons. He asserted that we all have limited horizons and preconceived ideas and we bring pre-judgements (i.e. expectations, bias, anticipations) to our interpretations. By engaging in dialogues with texts we can gain a deeper understanding and a fusion of our horizons with the text. [6]

GADAMER (1996) asserted that we live within traditions and cannot escape from them. They are our past and inform our way forward. Tradition, historicity and our situatedness inform the limits of our interpretive possibilities. GADAMER affirmed that there is a finitude to understanding which means that we cannot understand outside of our situatedness. It is important to remain genuine in searching for shared meaning. This suggests a self-limiting character to reflection and dialogue (CAPUTO, 2000). Paradoxically when we know our limits of understanding we also know that there is understanding beyond our own horizons. Knowing these limits can enhance our understanding of the status quo. The focus of interpretation remains on reflection and understanding without necessarily incorporating transformation beyond the status quo although this may be an unintended outcome. These limits of philosophical hermeneutics are located in the interpretive intent whereas critical hermeneutics aims to progress this enhanced understanding towards change and emancipation from previous horizons. [7]

4. Critical Hermeneutics as an Approach to Dialogue and Interpretation

HABERMAS developed his theorising of critical hermeneutics from a critical social science (CSS) perspective (HABERMAS, 1972). CSS emerged from Critical Theory and philosophical hermeneutics (AGGER, 1998). In his influential book *Knowledge and Human Interest* HABERMAS (1972) drew explicit connections between interest and knowledge. He claimed that all knowledge is implicated by interests. Each domain develops knowledge that is valid and important. Technical interests produce factual knowledge and are best placed in empirico-analytical paradigm; historical-hermeneutics interests produce shared meaning and are best placed in hermeneutics of the social science paradigm; and emancipatory-cognitive interests produce transformative knowledge and are best placed in critical hermeneutics and action learning of the CSS paradigm. [8]

A critical perspective describes a position of scepticism and critical reflection regarding the status quo. At the centre of critical dialogues is liberation from unnecessary and unreflected constraints, including the constraints incurred by knowledge limitations. By exposing the interests, reasoning and questioning of interpretations researchers create new understanding and this newly gained knowledge can result in emancipation. A critical perspective intentionally attempts to shed more light on the ontological and epistemological stance that guides the researcher's knowledge generation. [9]

HABERMAS (1984) argued that dialogues that are conducted with dialogue partners who do not explore beyond their horizons are stifling and are merely *transactions of information* because such dialogues remain within existing value frameworks, traditions and horizons. The importance of critical dialogues is that they focus on freeing speech partners from their limited horizons by exposing their unreflected prejudices and the preconceived ideas that they bring to the dialogue. Dialogues lead to emancipatory knowledge when they are free of domination, coercion and unnecessary constraints. Such conditions have been described by HABERMAS (1984) as ideal speech situation and they require sophisticated skills of introspection, curiosity of otherness and a willingness to uphold reason over power. [10]

5. Enhancing Interpretations Through a Debate of Philosophical and Critical Hermeneutics

Both, philosophical and critical hermeneutics, subscribe to openness to self, to the other, and to the subject matter. Openness can lead to rethinking self and thinking with the other to find new common understanding. However, the philosophical hermeneutics perspective describes interpretations as consensual engagement whereas a critical perspective describes them as a self-critical, sceptical engagement. Unconditional openness and willingness to cooperate in dialogues to reach mutual understanding can be misused. The differences in these dialogues in purpose and aim are illustrated in Table 1.

Hermeneutic interpretations	Philosophical	Critical
Interest and motivation	Pragmatic	Ideal
Purpose	Consensus	Emancipation
Ontology	Maintaining ontology	Constantly transforming ontology
Aim of interpretations	Understanding	Transforming
Reason is linked to	Tradition and historicity	Emancipation
Tradition and prejudgement	Acknowledgement of tradition	Critique and resistance to tradition
Understanding	Deeper	Sceptical

Table 1: Distinctions between philosophical and critical hermeneutics interpretations [11]

In philosophical hermeneutics dialogue partners are free to engage with otherness to as deep a level as each partner wishes to take it. Otherness implies a curious engagement with interests, values and difference beyond one's own horizon. The fragility of such thinking together is open to distortion and dominance. The aim of finding common ground and shared meaning may conceal hidden intentions and dominance. Deeper dialogues that explore the interests and values that underpin otherness may produce shared understanding but such dialogues could be distorted when based on uncritical or even coerced conversations. Deeper dialogues could compromise the desire for emancipation. A critical hermeneutics perspective on dialogues also focuses on this openness and makes it a prerequisite yet a problematic one. HABERMAS asserted that the quality of openness between dialogue partners is not discussed by GADAMER. HABERMAS argued that the key to critical interpretations is an acute awareness of the role of power, authority and dominance and a clear intention to honour reason over power. A coercion-free situation is a precondition for critical interpretation. When dialogue partners sense unreflected arguments based on authority rather than reason then caution to openness might be warranted. A critical dialogue partner balances the level of critical distance and engaged involvement. [12]

GADAMER (1991) rejected the critical hermeneutics notion of a critical outsider stance to dialogue. He asserted that we cannot think beyond our horizons, we can only expand it. He declared that our understanding is limited (CAPUTO, 2000) and that HABERMAS proposes unrealistic dialogue conditions. GADAMER (1992a) qualified his notion of tradition and authority asserting that authority is inevitable and there is no need for a discussion whether authority exists or not. He rejected a notion of authority that is rigid and that can typically be described as *just because someone important is saying something does not mean it is right*. Instead he described the notion of authority as guidance, mentorship and as a desirable role model. GADAMER advocated for an authority that enables learners

to develop their own identity and their own freedom how to think and practice. Authority does, however, reflect the relations of power that may exist between dialogue partners. GADAMER critiqued that in our current professional world and industrial society productivity appears to be the most important criteria to judge practice. Creativity and individuality might be of secondary focus because they are the engines to transform the current power orders, democratise the way we relate to each other and expand knowledge. A critical stance nurtures creative and other than technical ways of thinking and being in practice. GADAMER agrees with this argument and he carefully stated that deeper understanding does not mean that *the dominant ways* should remain but rather that change and freedom needs to come from within. GADAMER (1992b) claimed that if the progressive left such as critical theorists and HABERMAS in particular allege deeper dialogues as reactionary and stifling then they were misusing his thoughts for their political gain. GADAMER cautioned that everything could be used politically. HEIT (2006) asserted that HABERMAS had political intentions when he developed the theory of communicative action and advocated for public dialogues. HABERMAS confirmed his political motif of his work in his Kyoto speech (2004) where he stated that "… [professors], too, are participating citizens. And on occasions they also take active part in political life as intellectuals". [13]

In contrast to philosophical hermeneutics, critique and resistance are in the foreground in critical hermeneutics. Acceptability is ensured through critical collective agreement and not through the limits of interpretive capacities. GADAMER (1992b) claimed that his book Truth and Method helped HABERMAS to fine-tune his notion of reflexivity. HABERMAS moved towards a paradigm of critical consciousness raising and public discourse. Dialogues and their interpretations were located within the political arena. HABERMAS (1992) described the ideal dialogue situation with an acute awareness of power influences to real-life situations. He leaves it up to the individual to move in-between the real and ideal, the insider and outsider stances, in order to develop capacity towards the ideal. And GADAMER reasserted that he was talking about insights (*Erkenntnis*) and if we have real insights they can lead to liberation and freedom. HARRINGTON (1999, pp.381-2) suggested that GADAMER's and HABERMASian dialogue models should be seen as a concept "characterizing the moral and political responsibilities of researchers in relation to civil society and the public sphere of institutional accountabilities". [14]

As a response to these political dimensions, HABERMAS (1992) made explicit distinctions between different contexts of dialogues. There are public discourses, political dialogues, and academic research dialogues. HABERMAS asserted that as academics we should be able to

- use our rational expert knowledge to inform and work in public,
- consciously take sides and be aware of own bias,
- respond to relevant themes by providing factual knowledge and good arguments. [15]

Critics of HABERMAS dismissed his theory of communicative action and ideal speech situation as idealistic and utopian because such dialogue requires not only highly developed communication skills but also a constant sceptical and critical stance towards self and others. Critics also argued that somehow the ideal speech situation assumed the possibility of ideal objectivity. HABERMAS acknowledged his critics but insisted that these sophisticated conditions are needed to create ideal speech situations. They are not utopian or moral but they are the conditions for reciprocal dialogue, critical knowing and reflected rational action. Mutual understanding is only mutual when it is free of coercion and provides opportunities to not only hear the voices of marginalised or even silenced groups but to integrate them. [16]

HABERMAS maintained that deeper interpretations can lead to naïve understandings of interpretations and to distorted knowledge. Critical dialogues provide opportunities to illuminate difference in tradition, cultural background and ways of reasoning. A critical perspective allows dialogue partners to expose assumptions and tensions within a tradition from an outsider detached stance even if it is only temporarily. Such critique resists pseudo-consensus, manipulated dialogues and making assertions based on distorted (naïve or superficial) knowledge. [17]

This debate between philosophical and critical approaches to interpretation points to a need to find a way of using both positions. Hermeneutic research is contextual inquiry and contexts should include the moral-political as well as the pragmatic-cultural dimensions. The philosophical perspective points to the importance of a situated, transparent insider role in interpretation in order to produce practical, realistic knowledge. The critical perspective adds critical reflection and scepticism to interpretative endeavours. It points to the importance of an outsider role of interpretation in research in order to produce critical knowledge. Each perspective has the potential to inform the other and when blended produce better quality interpretations (KINSELLA, 2006). [18]

6. Developing a Critical Transformative Dialogues Design

Informed by the philosophical literature on hermeneutics Franziska TREDE (2008) (FT) conducted doctoral research supervised by Joy HIGGS (JH) and Rodd ROTHWELL (RR). This involved the design of a blended approach informed by philosophical and critical hermeneutics plus an action learning component which we coined 'critical transformative dialogues'. In action learning, participants are co-researching their own practice through critical self-reflective processes. Becoming aware of their practice potentially enables participants to transform and improve their professional practice (KEMMIS & McTAGGART, 2005). The research context was health care with a focus on physiotherapy practice in hospitals. This context was a useful opportunity to investigate translating democratic relationships and its ideal speech situation into practice and to critique the strong biomedical tradition of physiotherapy grounded in technical interests. The health care context typically resonates with therapeutic and (patient) coping dimensions rather than with pedagogical let alone

emancipatory dimensions. Pedagogy refers to the therapist taking on a facilitative and information sharing role rather than a provider role. When combined with an emancipatory intent this results in the therapist seeking to learn as well as helping the client to learn, and to emancipate themselves and their clients from existing conditions that oppress them. [19]

FT commenced her critical transformative dialogues with the CSS literature. The method and findings of this informal literature review is discussed in detail elsewhere (TREDE, 2008). She interpreted the CSS literature for its relevance to physiotherapy practice. She also explored what reference the literature of health care practice, in particular medicine, nursing and health promotion, made to the CSS paradigm. Five CSS components were identified with relevance to physiotherapy practice and they are listed under Section 7.1 below. Informed by this dialogue, FT then described the current status quo in physiotherapy practice by fusing horizons with the physiotherapy literature and voices of practising physiotherapists, and then critiquing this dialogue using critical lenses developed from the first critical transformative dialogue. One of the key aspects of this research was to describe, interpret and then critique the status quo of physiotherapy practice in collaboration with research participants (practising physiotherapists) and to develop an emancipatory patient-centred practice model. The participants were all practising physiotherapists and the assumption was that current physiotherapy practice and its contexts were not emancipatory. The next step was to explore the ideology, power relations of professional relationships and the practice epistemology that underpinned the practice of participating physiotherapists. A critical analysis of power relations, values and subjectivity were necessary and intentionally included in this research. [20]

Critical interpretations are underpinned by aspirations towards people-centred, emancipatory research framework based on social justice and emancipation whereas the majority of research approaches are still predominantly based on unequal researcher-research participant relations. The researcher assumes the role of interpreter or diagnostician whereas participants take on the passive role of compliance and information source. Adopting a critical dialogue approach in health research implies a transformation of the role of the prime researcher as well as that of research participants. This research adopted a blend between the interpretive and critical paradigm approaches. Interpretive approaches were used to describe current practice and critical approaches were used to promote critical understanding and change in practice by the participants. [21]

7. The Four Critical Transformative Dialogues (CTD)

The dialogues are summarised in Table 2. The texts consisted of relevant literature and interview transcripts. Each dialogue cycle consisted of three stages: (1) a text construction informed by a purpose and specific research questions, (2) text interpretation informed by critical hermeneutics, and (3) development of a product (critical insights) from each CTD cycle. The product from each CTD cycle informed the starting point for the next cycle. Each CTD cycle involved a different set of research participants to ensure that the deeper understanding of the prime

researcher was critically dialogued with new outsider participants. Apart from critiquing the interpretations of the prime researcher (F. TREDE), each new group of research participants, along with the doctoral supervisors (JH, RR) critiqued the previous groups' interpretations of clinical practice. This succeeded in combining deeper understanding with critical understanding within and between dialogue cycles.

Titles	1st text **Understanding CSS Theory**	2nd text **Physiotherapy Status Quo**	3rd text **Trialing CSS**	4th text **Envisioning CSS**
Purpose	Understanding core essences of CSS	Describing and critiquing the status quo of current physiotherapy practice models	Trialing CSS as a practice model by individual physiotherapists	Envisioning CSS as a physiotherapy practice model
Questions	What is CSS? What are the relevant themes of CSS that could inform broad health care practice models?	What do current physiotherapy practice models look like?	What would trialing a CSS model in practice be like? What are the strengths and limitations of these CSS applications?	What might CSS-informed physiotherapy practice look like? What are the pros and cons of such a CSS approach to physiotherapy practice?
Texts	CCS and CSS related health-related literature review	CSS-related physiotherapy literature review, transcripts from participants	Transcripts from participants	Transcripts from participants
Approach	Philosophical hermeneutics	Critical hermeneutics with elements of philosophical hermeneutics	Critical hermeneutics with elements of philosophical hermeneutics and action research	Critical hermeneutics
Text construction	Literature review	Literature review, single in-depth semi-structured interviews, workshop 1, field notes	Action plans, series of in-depth interviews, workshop 2, field notes	Deeply reflective and critical interviews

Titles	1st text Understanding CSS Theory	2nd text Physiotherapy Status Quo	3rd text Trialing CSS	4th text Envisioning CSS
Researcher actions	"Dialogue" with authors through published literature	Reading, dialoguing with participants	Teaching, reflecting, trialing, dialoguing and critiquing with participants	Dialoguing and critiquing with participants

Table 2: Critical transformative dialogues: Four texts [22]

7.1 Dialogue cycle 1: Conceptual CSS model

The first text construction was a literature review of CSS and CSS related health literature. FT engaged in a question-answer dialogue with the relevant literature to gain deeper understanding of CSS and its relevance to physiotherapy. The guiding question was *what is CSS and what is its relevance to physiotherapy practice?* The literature review of the debate between GADAMER and HABERMAS could be seen as a CTD. Their debate had critical transformative elements because both philosophers shifted their views and continued their journeys to explore their non-consensual arguments. The literature review between the CSS text and CSS related health text can be seen as another dialogue. These literature dialogues resulted in deeper understanding of CSS and its relevance to physiotherapy practice. Five components of CSS that had relevance to physiotherapy practice were identified: *capacity for critical self-reflection, redefining professional identities and roles, democratising professional power relations, rethinking rationality in light of professional practice epistemologies, and rethinking the practice context*. The text construction was based on philosophical hermeneutics since the goal was to gain a deeper understanding of CSS and its potential application to the field of practice. Text interpretation had critical elements because FT was searching for dimensions in the literature that mentioned critique of knowledge and ideology as well as transformation, liberation and emancipation. [23]

7.2 Dialogue cycle 2: Critique of status quo

The second text was constructed based on new horizons gained from text 1. FT engaged in a question-answer dialogue with the physiotherapy literature of practice models and their underpinning philosophical perspectives. Details of the content and critique of current practice models can be found in TREDE (2008) and TREDE and HIGGS (2008). Special attention was given to searching for the five identified CSS components as mentioned in Section 7.1 in physiotherapy practice models. In addition, interviews with the physiotherapy participants were conducted using question-answer dialogues to gain deeper understanding of how physiotherapists perceived their practice and what values informed their practice.

Eleven physiotherapists, who comprised the first participant group, were interviewed. The interview questions consisted of descriptive and critical dimensions as advocated by LAWLER (1998), MINICHIELLO, ARONI, TIMEWELL and ALEXANDER (1996), and WILLIS and SMITH (2000). The core questions were: Can you describe the kind of physiotherapist you are, or the kind of physiotherapist that you could identify with? How do you know what your patients need? What are the biggest challenges for physiotherapists? The physiotherapy literature review and the interpretation of the interview text were critically analysed. FT searched for evidence of critical awareness of the interviewees regarding the interests and challenges framing their practice. Text 2 interpretation produced a critique of the status quo of physiotherapy practice. [24]

7.3 Dialogue cycle 3: Trialing CSS

The third text was constructed based on new horizons gained from text 2. Nine physiotherapists who comprised the second participant group, contributed in critiquing text 2 and constructing text 3. The aim was to attract participants for the third dialogue cycle who were ready to critique and transform their practice. These participants consented to trial CSS components in their practice. Dialogue cycle 3 had three parts: (1) a pre-implementation workshop, (2) implementation/trial of CSS, and (3) a critical appraisal workshop. [25]

In the first workshop the participants were invited to review FT's critique of the status quo of physiotherapy practice derived from the previous cycle. The participants in this group were considered to be insiders because they were physiotherapists and they were also outsiders looking at the experiences of others from the previous group. This insider-outsider position encouraged group 2 to be reflective and critical with their profession and at the same time it illuminated their own practice. Critiquing text 2 prepared this group for trialing CSS components in their practice. Group 2 engaged in a critical debate on the diversity of current practice approaches and the potential for a CSS practice model to be used in physiotherapy practice. During the workshop participants wrote their critical comments about current physiotherapy practice on newsprint and debated the value of CSS for their practice. The pre-implementation workshop explored three key questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of current physiotherapy practice?
2. What is CSS?
3. How could participants (individually) explore CSS in their own practice? [26]

At the end of the workshop participants were invited to write their own action plans about what they were willing to explore, critique and or change in their practice in order to introduce CSS themes/approaches into their practice. [27]

In part 2 participants implemented their action plans over a nine-month period and FT conducted 2-3 interviews with each participant during this nine-month period. These interviews were unstructured, aiming to help participants feel in

control of their reflections and transformations. Some participants thought aloud in monologues during the interviews, whereas others used FT as a facilitator for their reflections, as a resource person for further readings, or as a person to share their critical insights about current systems and structures in their workplace. Occasionally FT was asked what her opinions were. The goals here were to foster awareness and reflection, not for FT to impose ideas about "the right or best way" to practise. FT happily let herself be drawn into critical debates and offered her perceptions, since the goal was to raise awareness and prompt exploration. Participants seemed to have no difficulty challenging and/or confirming FT. Some participants used these interviews as CTDs. They critiqued themselves, they drew FT into debates, challenged her reasoning and emerged from those interviews with heightened critical understanding of their practice. For some this led to practice transformations. However, other participants used the interviews as monologues or opportunities to confirm their current practice. [28]

Part 3 concluded this third dialogue cycle with a critical appraisal workshop. Group 2 participants were invited to collectively take stock and appraise the relevance and value of CSS in physiotherapy practice. They shared their experiences and conclusions. Participants raised many questions that illuminated the challenges of putting CSS dimensions into practice within a complex health care system that was not actively supportive of emancipatory action learning processes. The third dialogue cycle was predominantly grounded in action-learning research. It included individual and collective debates, critique, critical self-reflection and transformative opportunities of the current status quo. [29]

7.4 Dialogue cycle 4: Visioning and embodying CSS

Text 3 interpretation revealed strengths and weaknesses of a CSS model for physiotherapy practice. In order to refine and substantiate the emerging CSS model, the question that informed the fourth text construction was: How do physiotherapy champions of patient-centred, emancipatory care visualise a CSS framework for physiotherapy practice? A third group of physiotherapists were recruited for this cycle. Participants of the third group were identified as champions by physiotherapy networks of the research team who described these champions as person-centred, critical thinkers. They were invited to critique the CSS model as it emerged from text 2 and 3. They were also invited to share their stories of CSS practice. Group 3 participants engaged in single critical interviews with FT. It was her role to set the scene (explain the previous dialogue cycles and findings) and moderate their critique and shared vision. The aim of the interviews was to gain critical understanding of these participants' thinking, their values, practice approaches and professional identity in order to gather evidence from physiotherapists who could visualise a CSS framework. It was stressed to this group that their role was to give FT a reality check of the model she had developed thus far. The aim was to explore the fine line between utopian and feasible approaches to implementing CSS in physiotherapy practice. [30]

8. Themes/Principles of CTD Methodology

From the blended design of philosophical and critical hermeneutics utilised in this research five themes were identified that inform critical transformative dialogues and these are discussed below. [31]

8.1 Dialogues with different dialogue partners

A key characteristic of CTD is to engage with various dialogue partners. During the CTD cycles in this study, the dialogue partners consisted of three different groups of physiotherapists, two different sets of relevant literature texts and two supervisors. FT conducted critical dialogues with all of them. Engaging with different groups of participants ensured that each group could critique and build on the interpretations of the previous group as well as critique FT's new horizons. Deeper interpretations were transformed into critical interpretations which in turn were informed by deeper interpretations and challenged again. [32]

8.2 Differentiating between deeper/interpretive and critical dialogues

The difference between deeper (philosophical hermeneutic) and critical (hermeneutic) dialogues is that *deeper* has the aim of understanding whereas *critical* has the aim of emancipation. The latter approach focuses on pursuing and creating uncoerced spaces for dialogue and reasoning whereas the former focuses on deepening understanding within specific historical horizons. Deeper understanding and shared interpretations located in philosophical hermeneutics appear to be a promising strategy to describe a phenomenon and construct a text. In-depth interviews, especially when they are one-off interviews, lend themselves to a question-answer dialogue methodology. Asking descriptive frame questions such as *what is it like being a physiotherapist, what are your main challenges* informs in-depth interviews and creates deeper understanding. Finding common ground between the dialogue partners (interviewer and interviewee) and sharing deeper understanding is the crucial starting point for a critical interpretation of this deeper understanding. The hermeneutic circle describes a dialogue that does not necessarily expose domination and distortion in the practice/phenomenon being examined. There is a risk that the initial good intention to find common ground is misused to manipulate shared understanding. This risk is averted by placing a deeper dialogue into a new critical dialogue. The essence of a critical dialogue is to question shared understanding. Critical frame questions such as *why are you thinking this, how do you know what you know, why am I concluding this* are the basis for critical interpretations of deeper understanding. [33]

8.3 Blending deeper and critical dialogues

The basis of a critical transformative dialogue is conversing with others without unquestioningly accepting their position and without forcing one's own values onto the other, but instead focusing on emancipation from unreflected constraints and assumptions. To be open is a prerequisite for dialogue, however, openness

can also lead to losing self and creating tensions and unhappiness. Being open and yet sceptical, being comfortable with ambiguity, and being comfortable with extending one's comfort zone represents blending deeper with critical perspectives. CTD can be described as a spiral where deeper understanding informs critical understanding which in turn informs deeper understanding and so on. New knowledge is generated through many CTD cycles weaving in and out of philosophical and critical hermeneutics approaches to interpretation. [34]

8.4 The researcher as dialogue partner and critical interpreter

FT as a researcher occupied various roles in the CTD method. She is a physiotherapist which made her an insider amongst her physiotherapist participant groups. There was a high probability that interviewees could comfortably speak their familiar language with her and feel they were understood. However, as a researcher she at times occupied the outsider stance position challenging interviewees, questioning their thinking and inviting them to do the same with her. Interview questions weaved in and out between deeper and critical understanding, and between philosophical and critical hermeneutic approaches to dialogues. The CTD method provided opportunities for both shared understanding and common values as well as for scepticism, exposing pre-judgement, interest and assumptions. [35]

8.5 Credible interpretations

The CTD cycle ensured credibility by making interpretive lenses explicit. This included the disclosure of the researcher's assumptions, bias and pre-judgements within text interpretations; exposing and moderating contradictions; questioning interpretations; constantly revisiting sceptical stances but then also asserting a stance in order to steer away from relativism. By blending deeper with critical understanding and by scaffolding one dialogue cycle on top of the next cycle comparison, critique and coalescence of findings from the different dialogical spaces were realised. CTDs provide credibility that the research products represent a collective critical voice rather than simply the voice of the prime researcher. [36]

9. Conclusion

In this paper we have contributed to the dialogue concerning philosophical and critical hermeneutics and drawn attention to the need to conduct text interpretations with critique and scepticism. Text interpretations based on philosophical hermeneutics alone are problematic as they do not necessarily acknowledge power relations, knowledge distortions and the importance of critique and scepticism. Text interpretations based on critical hermeneutics alone are problematic as they do not necessarily acknowledge the power of tradition and a basic human desire to find consensus rather than being sceptical about self and others. We have presented a hermeneutic approach to research that integrates both critical and philosophical perspectives in order to blend their dualities and foster credible text interpretations. We adopted abstract and

concrete blending via dialogue and transformation. It is important to have ideals when conducting research and it is crucial to know short-comings and to acknowledge powerful influences because they maintain the researcher's dignity and authenticity, and preserve some kind of control over text interpretations without compromising credibility and rigour. We advocate CTD as a useful tool when choosing to work within transformative paradigms and change processes where the underpinning values consist of inclusiveness, critique of status quo, transformation and emancipation. [37]

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