

Review of: "Occupation from a perspective of complementarity - Part 1 - Background to the development of a concept"

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The article raises an important point about the opening up of interdisciplinary boundaries to better understand human phenomena in cultural context, and I found it very useful for explaining the scientific study of human 'being' in context from a holistic perspective.

Here, the concepts of complementarity and intersubjectivity are used to better understand occupational science. By returning to the fundamental description of what is the phenomenon (complementarity), as well as the person and the phenomenon (intersubjectivity) the authors build an argument that will have a potential application for a much wider range of scholarship in the field of human social sciences.

Complementarity: The person and the phenomenon as well as relations between phenomena, as the extension of the Ying-Yang's respective 'internal' dynamics would also need to be attended to, in addition to their mere presence. This reminds one of the Inclusive separation model promoted by Jaan Valsiner (Valsiner, J. (2012). *A guided science: History of psychology in the mirror of its making*. Transaction Publishers.). This construction resonates well with the application of complementarity to human developmental phenomena by including the logic of inclusive separation!

From the article:

"It recognises the involvement of the experimentalist in the production of the phenomena. The phenomena require a description of the entire experiment, one that invariably includes the experimenter.....Bohr's (1948) reinterpretation avoids describing phenomena as pictures of objects, as was the case in the 1928 definition, one that led to an unresolvable dispute among physicists. It also introduces complementarity between phenomena as being about knowledge, rather than as being about objects assumed as distinct from the knower."

In the advancement of the science of human phenomena, such complementarity in theoretical construction is a key to advancement. This advancement can take place also by recognising the value of borrowing from and including ancient perspectives from other knowledge systems like Chinese and Indian (Hindu) philosophy that have since ancient times, recognised, acknowledged and worked with complementary systems. Rather than treating these as obsolete ideas that bear no relevance to scientific understanding, they become particularly relevant. Let us take the example of the relationship between science and spirituality as an example. In Eastern philosophical systems, science and religion were

not opposed. In fact, science was practiced in religious institutions, as a deep contrast with Western ideology where the two have been opposed. Breaking down the separation between these two fields in fact helps in advancing ideas to better understand humans in their lived spaces by acknowledging ideological differences that seem (on the surface) irreconcilable. The authors make references to something similar while discussing “rules of different disciplines”. As noted by the authors, disciplinary barriers are in fact an impediment to the advancement of science, notwithstanding the rules. What applies here to the holistic perspective for understanding occupations, could of course, also be applied to the study of mental health, or poverty, for example.

I really liked reading about Duranti’s reference, and would greatly benefit from reading a bit more about this in the article, where it bears only a mention. “As we discuss below, we take an interpretive point from Duranti (2010), who in a scholarly article on the topic of intersubjectivity (a term originally proposed by Husserl, 1931) described intersubjectivity as ‘conditions of possibility’ that are inherent, both consciously and unconsciously, in human social relations of any sort (including between physicists).”

This section of the article reminds me of the well-known quote from Arendt:

“If people were not different, they would have nothing to say to each other. And if they were not the same, they would not understand each other.” (Arendt 1958: 155, *The Human Condition*).

Further extensions of the variation of pronominal usages and ideas about the self can also be found in Ancient Hindu philosophy, namely Advaita Vedanta that proposes non-dualism of self and other. I add this since I found DasGupta’s reference in the footnotes.

I am happy to provide a review of this article for publication in Qeios.