

Review of: "On the ongoing need for naturalistic philosophy to interpret what occupational science is doing"

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Overall, this is an interesting article that is reasonably well-structured and well-written. However, I believe that the argument could be sharpened at various points and readability could be greatly improved by connecting later passages to the initial agenda more explicitly.

I must admit that I somewhat naively accepted to review this paper without actually being too familiar with occupational science. Accordingly, I would like the authors to treat this review as a measure of how intelligible their article is for an outsider rather than a (highly) sophisticated evaluation of its scientific merit. This being said, I will now go through the text providing hopefully constructive feedback and suggestions for minor additions or revisions. For the most part, these should be regarded as "optional" rather than "mandatory." I will also briefly summarize each chapter. If I misunderstood something, I would advise the authors to revise the passage for more clarity as chances are other readers may get it wrong also.

The abstract successfully sets the stage for the article: occupational science is in need of naturalistic philosophy to mediate between its two main modes of knowledge production phenomenological and empirical. The article's first part will introduce this general tension while its second section will look at the work of Ann Wilcock within this context in particular.

Local points:

Perhaps it would be helpful to add a very concise (one-sentence or added to the first sentence) definition of "occupational science" in or after the first sentence of the abstract.

Perhaps the second fundamental concept "naturalistic philosophy" could be very briefly defined also.

Since the entire second part of the essay is on Ann Wilcock, I would recommend to add her name to the keywords.

The introduction succinctly introduces the two main players. Its first two paragraphs introduce "naturalistic philosophy" as the mediator between the subjective knowledge of phenomenological lived experience and objective knowledge production in empirical science. This mediator is frequently stuck in the "aporia" of the two sides contradicting each other. The following two paragraphs introduce "occupational science" and point to the problem that its "holistic revolution" seems

to have stalled.

Local points:

I am a little confused whether “naturalist” (line 3) and “naturalistic” philosophy are the same thing or different concepts. If it was intended to make a distinction here this should be more clearly stated and defined.

Perhaps Dewey's political philosophy should be briefly outlined for readers unfamiliar with it.

I am not too sure whether the phrase “two sorts of experiential knowledge [...] with which naturalistic philosophy is concerned to address” (final paragraph middle) is grammatically correct. It sounds a bit awkward to me.

I.

The first chapter of part I. points to the problem that naturalistic philosophy seems to have played a role in the initial shaping of concepts in occupational science but seems to have lost that role over time. It then introduces Dewey's concept of occupation as a dynamic relationship between the subject and its environment and how this concept changed the focus of occupational science towards a more holistic perspective. An example for this is given by contrasting occupational therapy and biomedicine. In occupational therapy, subjective knowledge becomes the “expert.” However, attention is raised to the point that it is not always clear what “holism” means and that different people seem to see different concepts in the term. Attention is raised also to the problem of accessing the objective dimension of knowledge due to “standpoint bias” by introducing Hocking's “constructivist critique.”

Local points:

I would have liked a summary that clearly states just *how* Dewey's holism changed *which* former assumptions in occupational science.

To me as a philosopher, “holism” is more a theoretical than a practical concept. This original meaning could perhaps be mentioned in addition to the agenda-based definitions by Wilcock, Hocking and Aldrich.

It really does not become clear how one's own subjectivity and the relationship to other agents could possibly be understood in a complementary way in analogy to the physical understanding of the term as for instance in the wave-particle duality of light that the authors suggest by citing Bohr. There is the disclaimer that an explanation shall be delivered on “another occasion” but perhaps this should just be taken out of the text.

The beginning of part I. should be indicated like the beginning of part II. (“I.”, “II.”).

Add blank spaces: “what individuals” and “for self” (paragraph 2).

Erase close bracket: “Dickie))” (paragraph 4).

Add blank space: “aconstructivist” (paragraph 8).

Erase word repetition: “that that occupational science” (paragraph 8).

The short second chapter introduces the distinction between “epistemological” and “ontological” meanings of occupation, the former referring to what somebody does, the later latter to what somebody is (“being, becoming, belonging”).

Local points:

This seems to set the tone for the following subchapters. Perhaps readability could be improved by numbering the chapters and subchapters (e.g., 1, 1.1, etc.).

The following short chapter deals with “epistemological meanings” and notes that occupational science understands these in the limited scope of their relation to health.

The following chapter on “ontological meanings” introduces select translations of the word “occupation” in ancient languages and defines the semantic field that the word belongs to in these languages.

Local points:

This passage seems to be essential for the remainder of the essay and should therefore be much better explained. The connections are too vague (frankly speaking I am not sure if I get the point here at all). Clearly explain what the “coloniality of being” is and why the “central question” is if occupational scientists “belong to it.”

Also, while Latin and Greek are somewhat explained, Sanskrit seems to hang in the air. It is mentioned in the beginning but then simply dropped.

Full stop after source, not before: “. (Harper, n.d.)”

The following chapter walks the reader through Hanna Arendt's theory of “colonial society.” The subjective lens of the occupational scientist, then, is subject to these culturally inherited colonialities.

Local points:

The authors claim that “in politically dominant nations around the world [...] coloniality is clearly on display.” I think it might be good to explain what defines “political domination” here and which nations the authors have in mind. I am assuming that meant here are Western states that can be culturally traced back to the ancient Greek model of society that the authors describe. However, does this picture not become increasingly problematic today with e.g., the rise of China and India?

Add blank space: "idea of occupation" (quote).

In the final chapter of the first part of the article, the authors summarize the idea of "occupation" and conclude that the "coloniality of being" has survived in transmuted ways into the present, shaping the view of occupational scientists and thus the doing of occupational science. Therefore, naturalistic philosophy is needed to interpret this doing in the historically grown colonial context that the occupational scientist may well be unaware of. First doubts are cast whether Ann Wilcock's legacy will "survive" this decolonial critique (by citing her admiration of John Locke).

Local points:

Why is it essential to mention John Locke here? Just because he is quoted by Wilcock? Is he just one example of a "colonial would-be scientists" or is he special in some way? The paragraph seems oddly unconnected to what follows.

I would strongly recommend to conclude part I. with a summary of how the central concepts occupational science, naturalistic philosophy, phenomenological and empirical knowledge, epistemological and ontological meanings of occupation, and colonialities of occupation and being are connected. The former terms have been introduced as essential but at this point they have not been mentioned for quite some time. I believe I do understand what the authors want to say but this could be put in a more structured, explicit and reader-friendly fashion.

II.

The second part of the article on Ann Wilcock does not feature a division into (sub-)chapters. It starts out by explaining that Wilcock's legacy is important because it attempts a "synthesis" of occupation as what one does and what one is (constructed to be). This could potentially open up a pathway for a "critique concerning the coloniality" of occupation as being.

It is stated that Wilcock displays an awareness of her own culture-specific bias in interpreting occupation. For instance, she points out that "natural" cultures never developed the colonial concept of occupation. On the other hand, however, she seems to treat these natural forms of living "on a par" with the colonial culture of occupation. Indeed, she seems to equate "natural health" and "occupation" at times.

The authors claim that Wilcock uses the word "being" to signify two different concepts: "being" as one part in the complex of being, becoming and belonging on the one hand, and "being" as the accumulative totality of the "doing" side of occupation and the "being, becoming and belonging" side of occupation on the other.

The authors accuse Wilcock of romanticising the "mythical times" of naturalism, in which her concept of human being as something that evolved to be essentially occupational is located. The "modern ways of doing and being" have been massively transformed by modernity, which is accounted for in her theory by "a romantic nostalgia for what has been lost."

The authors also accuse Wilcock of having overlooked that she was repeating a point that was already put forward “in far greater detail” by Arendt in 1958.

The following paragraphs claim that mindful doing, displayed also in the inability to decide on a course of action naturally (lost in a world that increases in complexity too quickly for the subject to catch up with the changes?), has replaced the natural concept of occupation as being.

Concluding what appears to be the first part of the second half of the article, the authors summarize that Wilcock's OPH model has been most readily embraced by people who attempt to go back from an alienated “modern” human condition to some romanticised “natural” condition. The problem is that Wilcock fails to clearly define what “natural” actually means in this context. Thus arises a need for ongoing naturalistic philosophical interpretation of occupational science.

Local points:

I think it could possibly be made clearer what kind of self-awareness Wilcock actually possessed in regard to her limitations. The quote in which she states that cosmological, biological, and sociocultural evolution all make human being essentially occupational seems to contradict the claim that her theory has any kind of awareness of the culturally constructed, colonial nature of occupation.

Have the “mythical” or ancient ways of occupation been “lost” or have they been “transformed?” I assume it is the latter, of course, but what has been “lost” then?

Is the entire first part of II. up to the second paragraph of page 12 concerned with the ontological aspects of Wilcock's claim? If so, can this be made more explicit? In any case, there seems to be a clear transition to a new topic (“epistemological aspects”) here which could perhaps be accounted for by adding chapter headings in part II. of the article (like in part I.).

Add full stop after “shift between two versions of occupation” (p. 10).

Add blank space: “occupationalbeings” (p. 10).

Erase comma before “A report on the banality of evil” (p. 11).

At times, the writing is not very elegant and could be improved: “changing circumstances may alter the [...] types of circumstances;” “changes change the possibilities” etc.

What appears to be the much shorter second chapter of the Wilcock part of the article examines the epistemological aspects of Wilcock's work. It is pointed out here that it can be problematic to apply Wilcock's picture of meaningful occupations in modern settings, as for instance the negative effects of smoking illustrate. Subjectively meaningful activities, it seems, are by no means inherently linked to physical well-being, as Wilcock claims. However, it is suggested that this critique misses the “positioning of the ontological terms within the concept of occupation” that can only be

achieved by naturalistic philosophy.

Local points:

It does not become clear here if the authors want to refute the critique they introduce or regard it to be accurate but incomplete.

Why is there a line break towards the end of the lengthy quote on p. 12?

The conclusion repeats that Wilcock's work aims at a synthesis of occupation as doing and being. It defends Wilcock's agenda against the critique of destructive occupations by stating that her aim was to call for a return to (unduly romanticised?) "naturalistic occupations." It is mentioned that Wilcock's model, as has been said in part I. of the article, may be open to a "critique from the perspective of the coloniality of being." The authors point out that there are contexts in which the subjectivity of the patient cannot be taken into account.

Local points:

Is the work of Eric Schliesser mentioned in the main parts of the article? If not, it may not be a good idea to first introduce it in the conclusion, especially not without going into any detail, which seems like name dropping without purpose.

Various footnotes end sentences without a full stop/period.

General points:

It seems like that the main point of the entire article is to call for naturalistic analysis of occupational science without doing as much as to suggest even a first idea of how this should be done. I would have expected at least a first push into this direction in the conclusion. At the very least, the authors should give readers an idea of how further research can build up on this paper to close these gaps.

The "coloniality of being" seemed essential in the first part of the article and got pretty much dropped altogether in the second, which seems a little odd. In the conclusion, it even seems to be suggested that the "coloniality" may be of minor importance for criticizing or understanding Wilcock's work after all, which seems rather odd too. The authors should make clear why the coloniality is important and why this does (or does not) apply for analyzing Wilcock's work.

I would suggest to close the article on a "so what?" summary of how its central concepts (phenomenological and empirical knowledge, epistemological and ontological meanings of occupation, etc.) are connected and how they connect to the analysis of the work of Ann Wilcock. This article raises many interesting issues. The discussion of Wilcock is interesting too. To my mind, however, the connections are not clear enough.

I hope my comments will be helpful for the authors to make a good article even better.