

Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion: Panopticism and Technologies of Power in Occupational Therapy Curriculum

Tania Rauch-van der Merwe

UFS, Bloemfontein, Free State, South Africa

Introduction: Occupational therapy has recently celebrated its 100th year of existence. It may be argued that it is a profession that discursively emerged as a counter-resistance to the destructive imprints resulting from World Wars I & II; with a professional philosophy underpinned by humanist and existentialist values. However, the profession also remains to carry the inscriptions of its Eurocentric foundations ensuing in unabating reproductive patterns of inclusion and exclusion - underlined anew by regenerated calls for decolonisation in higher education.

Objectives: This paper focuses on how an occupational therapy curriculum as discourse reproduces patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Method: A genealogy of governing, expert, architectural and autobiographical texts was performed, situated within a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

Results: The mechanical workings of the metaphoric Panopticon reveals how one of its operational functions is to employ technologies of power such as the 'mechanistifications' of docility; infatuation with detail; autonomization; self-monitoring and exceptionalism - all undergirded by its archaeological foundations of moralism and civility and resulting in epistemic injustice.

Conclusion: In order to dislodge the architecture of the Panopticon and disarm its technologies of power, a radical understanding and application are required of the praxis of decolonisation of the occupational therapy curriculum as well as counter measures against the objectification of the student becoming the reproductive subject: ultimately re-enacting the technologies of power. All of this toward co-creating the possibility of conditions for an epistemically just curriculum.