Resisting theoretical imperialism in the disciplines of occupational science and occupational therapy

Karen Whalley Hammell

Key words:
Feminist theory, postcolonial theory, models.

Correspondence to: Dr Karen Whalley Hammell, Honorary Research Associate, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada. **Postal address:** Box 515, Oxbow, Saskatchewan, Canada S0C 2B0. Email: ik.hammell@sasktel.net

Background: Claiming that the degree of consensus within an academic discipline is a marker of sustainability, some occupational scientists have challenged members of their discipline to work towards philosophical and conceptual consensus. However, because dominant theories of occupation reflect specific Western perspectives, proposing consensus suggests either that the global majority ought to conform to Western perspectives or that Western perspectives are assumed to be universal.

Method: Issues confronting occupational theorists (scientists and therapists) are not unique. Accordingly, this paper employs illustrative examples from feminist theory displaying the assumption of universal perspectives and propensity to theoretical imperialism. These examples are used to highlight the necessity and value of incorporating cultural diversity within theory.

Discussion: Dominant feminists' theories were challenged by women of colour, third world and colonised women, lesbians, and disabled, working class, older and poor women, and their underlying universal assumptions were exposed as heterosexist, classist, ableist, racist and an inadequate basis for theory. This review suggests that knowledge is partial and situated, and that theories prevail due not to their intrinsic superiority but to superior power.

Conclusion: Occupational scientists and occupational therapy's theorists are exhorted to draw from a diversity of cultural perspectives, such that theories are inclusive rather than exclusive.

Introduction

In a recent paper discussing the future development of occupational science, Rudman et al (2008) reported:

> … authors within and outside occupational science have pointed to the degree of consensus or coherence within a discipline as a central marker of sustainability and vitality and, in turn, have challenged members of [their discipline] to work towards consensus regarding philosophical beliefs, central constructs and/or research agendas (p138).

The idea of intellectual consensus has obvious appeal for occupational scientists striving to consolidate a knowledge base, demonstrate a coherent set of principles, maximise research efforts and assert the value of their discipline. It also has appeal for those who believe that for a profession, such as occupational therapy, to function and thrive, there is a need for a shared philosophy. However, because dominant theories of occupation used by both occupational scientists and occupational therapists reflect the specific perspectives of a minority of the global population (Iwama 2005a, Hammell 2009a), the conjecture that consensus is currently possible suggests either that those in the majority world ought to acquiesce to the beliefs, constructs and agendas of importance to occupational scientists in English-speaking, urban areas of the minority (Western) world, or that

the opinions and perspectives of occupational scientists in the minority world are universally shared.

Occupational science and occupational therapy are not synonymous, of course, with occupational therapy being governed by ethical concerns that may not trouble occupational scientists. Nevertheless, because 'occupational science cannot survive without occupational therapy, and occupational therapy needs occupational science to remain substantive and changing in response to societal needs … the relationship between occupational science and occupational therapy is best described as symbiotic' (Clark 2006, p172). Thus, a call for consensus – or conformity – in occupational science is of relevance and concern to occupational therapists. Moreover, the issues inherent to this debate are of importance to the intellectual underpinnings of occupational therapy and thus to the practice of occupational therapy throughout the world.

Philosophers contend that science ought to be understood as historically and socially located – the product of the interpretations and perspectives of humans – such that claims to objectivity are unsustainable (Kuhn 1962, Latour 1987). Further, Rudman et al (2008) noted that 'many philosophers of science have argued that multiple and divergent perspectives are necessary for scholarship to thrive' (p138) and that 'the quest for and establishment of a singular paradigm can lead to intellectual confinement, stagnation and insularity' (p138). They therefore suggested that 'critical reflexivity, in combination with dialogue, is essential for occupational science to thrive' (p138). Their call for critical thinking echoed that of Kronenberg et al (2005), who argued that occupational therapists must 'think and act critically, become aware of the value patterns and assumptions embedded in our theories and avoid contributing to the oppression of the very people we intend to help' (p xvi).

The aims of this paper are to suggest that calls for intellectual consensus within occupational science are premature, to support those philosophers of occupational science and of occupational therapy who seek to inform their theories from a diversity of perspectives, and thus to contribute to critical reflexivity and dialogue. To illustrate how diverse perspectives can challenge assumptions of universalism and a propensity to theoretical imperialism – and can enrich significantly a discipline's theoretical literature – it draws from those critiques of feminist theory articulated by women from the global majority, whose perspectives differed from dominant norms. The paper explores theoretical imperialism as this pertains to theories of occupation and advocates for the decolonising of theory in the disciplines of occupational science and occupational therapy.

Terminology

This paper introduces concepts that may be unfamiliar to some occupational therapists. For example, the term *theoretical imperialism* describes a process by which theorists develop and perpetuate theories that privilege their own perspectives while overlooking, ignoring or silencing the perspectives of others (Mann 1995). Throughout history, imperial cultures, such as the European colonialists, exercised power and reinforced domination by establishing the parameters of permissible thinking and by suppressing challenging ideas (Mohanty 1991); imperialistic theorists do the same.

Closely aligned with theoretical imperialism, the concept of *hegemony* was adopted by the disabled Italian political theorist Gramsci (1971) to describe the process through which a dominant group exerts power over a subordinate group: not by physical force, but through the diffusion of 'common-sense' ideas that make the norms and values of the dominant group appear natural, or 'correct' (Bocock 1986, Frankenberg 1988). Critical disability theorists, for example, note that dominant cultural norms 'always reflect the interests of those within particular social groups or societies who have the power to define situations and the resources with which to ensure that their own definitions are accepted as true' (Swain et al 2003, p20). The consequence of hegemony, therefore, is that 'the dominant group's vision of reality [is] presented as universal and valid for all groups' (Abberley 2002, p132). Importantly, the concept of hegemony contends that ideologies, beliefs and theories prevail, not due to their intrinsic superiority or inherent 'truth' but as a consequence of power (Foucault 1980).

The assumption of universality is a characteristic effect of hegemony and is also characteristic of ethnocentrism. *Ethnocentrism* refers to the belief that one's own culture is superior to others and is the standard by which all other people should be judged (Leavitt 1999). Ethnocentrism is often manifested in the assumption that one's own values, priorities and perspectives are universal rather than culturally specific.

This paper draws heavily from the insights of postcolonial theorists. *Postcolonial theories* are those that expose and contest the ways in which a dominant social group privileges its own values and norms by defining, marginalising and excluding others who have less recourse to social power (Said 1979). Postcolonial theorists demonstrate how colonialists historically privileged white, European, Christian 'norms' to reinforce and justify inequalities in power, and they demonstrate how colonial theorists do the same (Said 1979, Young 2003). Postcolonial thinkers are particularly concerned with the assumption of universalism, claiming that this is a fundamental feature of colonial power because the 'universal' features of humanity that are promoted always constitute the characteristics of those who occupy positions of dominance (Ashcroft et al 1995).

Finally, the word *discipline* has two meanings, both of which are relevant to a study of theoretical conformity. One definition refers to a branch of learning, such as physics, geography or occupational science. Discipline is also defined in terms of subjection to mortification and punishment; thus, to discipline is to bring under control.

To illustrate the propensities for theoretical imperialism, hegemony and ethnocentrism discernible in a discipline's assumptions of universal perspectives, the following section employs examples of challenges from within feminist theoretical literatures. This illustration is intended to illuminate and precede discussion of similar issues and challenges within the discipline of occupational science.

Universal assumptions, partial perspectives and theoretical imperialism

Until the late 1980s, white, Western, middle-class women expounded feminist theories and developed a feminist agenda, apparently confident in their assumption that all women shared their own experiences and that their theories therefore addressed universal perspectives and priorities (Young 1990). Instead of viewing their perspectives as partial, or situated, feminists believed them to be universal, even insightful. In short, they failed to recognise their perspectives as perspectives (Young 1990).

Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist philosophies have always contended that knowledge is inevitably partial (Kupperman 2001). More recently, postcolonial and postmodern thinkers have asserted that our interpretations of what we perceive are influenced both by contemporary beliefs and by perspectives derived from our location or position as the member of a particular gender, sexual identity, class, ethnicity, education, profession and so forth (Haraway 1988, Alcoff 1991, Said 1993), an insight shared by philosophers of science (Kuhn 1962, Latour 1987). Thus, our perspectives are always partial and incomplete, and never objective. As the postcolonial theorist, Said (1979, p10), noted: 'no one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his [sic] involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society'.

By the late 1980s, Western feminist theorists were compelled to acknowledge that all knowledge is 'situated': that no person has more than a partial perspective on the world, and that knowledge is imprinted by the time, context and social positioning of its creators (Haraway 1988). When feminist theorists eventually accepted that intellectuals are not the bearers of universal values (Foucault 1980), and that knowledge is both partial and situated, the need for a diversity of perspectives was apparent.

Once a diversity of perspectives penetrated the realms of academia, mainstream feminists' assumptions about the universal nature of women's experiences were exposed as heterosexist, classist, ageist, ableist and racist, because they ignored important differences among women that were shaped, for example, by race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, disability, age, religion, financial status, culture, language, history and development (hooks 1984, Young 1990, Kitzinger

and Wilkinson 1996). Thus, mainstream feminist theories were criticised as being 'insufficiently attentive to historical and cultural diversity, and they falsely universalize[d] features of the theorist's own era, society, culture, class, sexual orientation, and ethnic, or racial group' (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, p27).

When their opinions eventually infiltrated the feminist theoretical literatures, women of colour, third world women, colonised women, lesbians, and disabled, working class, older and poor women noted that because the dominant feminist theories had been constructed by privileged white women in Western societies, these reflected the theorists' own partial perspectives and their own problems and priorities (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, Mohanty 1991, Riger 1992). White women, it was argued, had been blinded by their own cultural norms and had narcissistically universalised their own experiences (hooks 1984). Thus, despite undeniably good intentions, white, middle-class feminists were exposed as being theoretical imperialists, and those feminist theories they had assumed to be insightful and universal were exposed as inadequate, often irrelevant and, at times, oppressive (Young 1990).

The following section sketches some of the critiques that served first to destabilise and subsequently to enrich feminist theories.

Feminist perspectives from the global majority

Black American women, who felt marginalised by theories articulated within their own country, noted that by focusing on patriarchal oppression, white feminists had sidestepped their complicity as oppressors of black women (hooks 1984). Third-world women claimed that their concerns aligned more closely with those of third-world men than with middle-class, white, Western women (Mohanty 1994). This perspective was shared by queer theorists, who argued that, because feminist research purporting to explore the situation of 'women' was premised on a false universalism, it had overlooked the reality that the experiences of lesbian women had more in common with those of gay men than of heterosexual women (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, Stein and Plummer 1994). Further, queer theorists argued that transsexuals, transgendered people and intersexuals (formerly termed hermaphrodites) demonstrated that the categories 'male' and 'female' lack rigid boundaries, thereby challenging feminists' belief that the world can be neatly divided into two genders (Marks 1999, Davis 2002). In India, the Hirja are accepted as a third gender, and scientists contend that the interplay of genes, hormones and anatomy can produce at least five distinguishable genders (Barnartt 2001, Roughgarden 2004, Callahan 2009). Thus, dominant feminists' assumption that everyone's sexuality conformed to their own was said to constitute 'compulsory heterosexuality' or 'heterosexism' (Butler 1999).

Disadvantaged by structures of power that feminism had neither noticed nor addressed, disabled feminists were among the last category of women whose voices penetrated the realms of feminist theorising. When this eventually occurred, they catalogued a significant list of theoretical omissions and commissions that centred on dominant feminists' universal assumption that all women valued autonomy and physical ability, and perceived caring for others to be a 'burden' (Morris 1993, Lloyd 2001). Disabled women noted that feminist theories portrayed women as the victims of a patriarchal society that confined them to their homes and placed them at the service of men, and that this ignored the situation of disabled women confined within institutions where they were prevented from having either homes or partners (Hammell 2006). Further, they challenged feminists' portrayal of motherhood as oppressive and their depiction of reproductive rights as constituting the right *not* to bear children, noting that their own history of compulsory sterilisation, presumed asexuality and assumed incompetence had denied many of them the right to have and to care for their own children (Thomson 1997, Sheldon 1999). Disabled women also observed that when feminists first addressed disability issues, they elected to champion the rights of those women they perceived to be burdened by the care of disabled people (for example, Ungerson 1987, Dalley 1988). By identifying their interests with women who most closely resembled themselves, mainstream feminists had overlooked the reality that the majority of disabled and older people are also women (Morris 1993, Lloyd 2001).

Moreover, mainstream feminist theorists continually asserted that power is associated with masculinity (hooks 1984, Hartsock 1990), yet disabled men and women in hospitals and residential institutions experienced powerlessness relative to a powerful, predominantly female staff (Meekosha 1998). Although it is inarguably true that power is distributed unequally in society, women who are neither white nor able-bodied found that its distribution depended upon a more complex equation than the simplistic male/female dualism proposed by mainstream feminists (Vernon 1999).

By indulging their own perspectives, and by developing theories, constructs and research agendas based on the presumption that these perspectives and beliefs were universal, dominant feminists had unwittingly engaged in theoretical imperialism (Kitzinger and Wilkinson 1996). This prompted Alcoff (1991) to ponder: 'we are authorized by virtue of our academic positions to develop theories that express and encompass the ideas, needs, and goals of others. However, we must begin to ask ourselves whether this is a legitimate authority' (p7). When the opinions of women whose perspectives differed from the theorists' norms were finally heard, feminist theorists were 'challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, and of short-sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences' (Mohanty 1991, p7). More recently, theorists of occupation have been challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, and

of short-sightedness, in defining their theories in terms of middle-class, white, able-bodied experiences (Hammell 2009a). The rich kaleidoscope of perspectives that eventually penetrated – and enriched – mainstream feminist theorising, and that has been glimpsed in this section, suggests the wealth of knowledge that remains untapped within current theories of occupation.

Theoretical imperialism and theories of occupation

The examples provided so far show that mainstream feminist theories ignoring important differences among women that are shaped by race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, disability, age, religion, financial status, culture, language, history and development were exposed as heterosexist, classist, ageist, ableist and racist (hooks 1984, Young 1990, Kitzinger and Wilkinson 1996). Similar observations have been made more recently, concerning theories of occupation: 'the assumptions underpinning occupational therapy's theories of occupation are culturally-specific, class-bound, ableist and lacking in supportive evidence' (Hammell 2009b, p107).

Nicholson (1990, p1) observed: 'From the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, feminist theory exhibited a recurrent pattern: Its analyses tended to reflect the viewpoints of white, middle-class women of North America and Western Europe.' Theories of occupation have perseverated in this pattern for considerably longer, such that dominant theories of occupation have all been developed in middle-class, urban areas of the English-speaking nations of the white Western world.

The Kawa Model (Iwama 2005b, 2006), originally developed in Japan, has been posed to occupational scientists and occupational therapists as a different way of conceptualising occupation and its relationships to wellbeing, and this model is 'a direct challenge to the implicit, assumed universality and dominance of the occupational models developed in the Western world' (Townsend and Polatajko 2007, p279). Regrettably, this challenge seems to have been ignored or dismissed rather than acknowledged and addressed, with few Western theorists exploring the implications of this Eastern-influenced model for those models being promoted strenuously within the occupational science and occupational therapy literatures.

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO, Kielhofner 2002) and the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance (CMOP, Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists 2002), for example, reflect specific Western understandings of people and their relationships to each other and to the world: both models asserting that individuals interact and engage with, but are divisible from, their social and physical environments (Iwama 2005a). Reflecting Eastern (Chuang Tzu 1964, Kupperman 2001), African (Sherry 2010) and Indigenous (Mark and Lyons 2010) modes of thought, the more recent Kawa Model (Iwama 2005b,

2006), proposes that humans do not engage with their environment through occupation because they are already inseparable from the environment. This model reflects a perception of the indivisibility, interconnectedness and 'oneness' of all life (Chuang Tzu 1964, Kupperman 2001, Mark and Lyons 2010, Sherry 2010): a way of thinking that has implications for how humans relate within every dimension of their social, cultural, political, economic, legal and physical context. Moreover, theorists in some Western scientific disciplines articulate a similar perspective. Ecologists, for example, understand all life to be interconnected, such that humans are inseparable from their physical environments (Suzuki 2002).

The reality that the majority of the global population subscribe to the 'inter-connected' view, reflected in the Kawa Model, does not make this perspective correct, and the 'divisible' perspective (reflected in MOHO and CMOP) incorrect, but it does suggest that intellectual effort is required to address and incorporate different perspectives. However, recent revisions of MOHO and CMOP, undertaken since publication of the Kawa Model (Townsend and Polatajko 2007, Kielhofner 2008), have not yet engaged with the intellectual challenge that it presents to dominant Western models or to the theoretical status quo. It is relevant to recall that the dominance of one theory over another reflects not the superiority of the theory, but a particular alignment of knowledge and power (Foucault 1980); and that when different perspectives arise, 'power, not truth, determines which version of reality will prevail' (Riger 1992, p736).

Clearly, a discipline advocating engagement and participation in occupations cannot personify disengagement and detachment in its own occupations. Yet, in reading the published literatures of the occupational science and occupational therapy disciplines, it is difficult to avoid the impression that theories of occupation 'belong' to white, middle-class, English-speaking Western theorists and it is important to recall that the area of the world self-designated Western, first or developed constitutes only about 17% of the global population. This is, therefore, the minority world. What is often termed the developing or third world constitutes approximately 83% of the global population and is more accurately termed the majority world (Penn 1999). Moreover, occupational therapists' and occupational scientists' physical abilities, social class, race, ethnicity, economic status, language, education, professional status, age, religious tradition, geographical and urban locations differentiate them from the majority of the world's people, and even from many people in their own, minority world. In particular, their positioning markedly differentiates them from the majority of disabled people, 80% of whom live in the majority ('developing') world, with 90% of these people living in rural areas (Marks 1999). Occupational theorists have only rarely sought to explore the needs and perspectives of disabled people in the majority world, and perhaps beliefs, constructs and theories of occupation would look different if we did.

The tendency to expound theories derived solely from the values and norms of a Western viewpoint is viewed by postcolonial theorists as an expression of colonial and imperialistic domination (Young 2003). Because the opinions shared by occupational scientists and occupational therapy theorists in the minority world are not universal but culturally specific (Iwama 2005a), it is clear that the uncritical promulgation of these opinions leads not solely to inadequate, partial theories but constitutes both ethnocentrism (Iwama 2003) and theoretical imperialism (Hammell 2006).

Decolonising theory

Feminist theorists assert that the application of theoretical perspectives can result either in sharpening sensitivity to the experiences of people's lives or in shaping and silencing these experiences (Parr 1998). Despite acknowledgement that human wellbeing and the occupations in which people engage are influenced by physical, social, cultural, political, economic and legal environments, much of the occupational therapy and occupational science literatures focus predominantly on individual issues, such as volition, personal causation, habituation and motor skills. Postcolonial theorists would note that only the privileged can indulge in theory that ignores oppressive economic, political, legal and policy constraints on people's lives.

Women whose perspectives and problems had been ignored or marginalised by mainstream feminist theorising discovered that just at the intellectual moment when their voices began to be heard, the intellectual climate shifted, with dominant feminists suddenly embracing postmodernism and poststructuralism: ways of thinking that de-emphasise the place of personal experience in theory and that deny and repress difference (Young 1990). This prompted Hartsock (1990, p163-64) to lament:

> Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic? Just when we are forming our own theories about the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorized. Just when we are talking about the changes we want, ideas of progress … become dubious and suspect. Why is it only now that critiques are made of the will to power inherent in the effort to create theory?

The word 'consensus' refers to an agreement in opinion. Clearly, theoretical consensus cannot be viewed as legitimate when a diversity of opinions have not been sought, acknowledged or included. To accomplish consensus would require occupational scientists actively to seek the perspectives of people whose culture and life experiences differ from their own Western, urban, middle-class norms; people, for example, in rural communities, low-income neighbourhoods and refugee camps, people who are homosexual, transgendered or intersexual, people living

with serious illnesses, those accorded minority status, such as indigenous people and disabled people confined within institutions, those who live in desperate poverty and, especially, people from countries of the East and South. As feminist theorists discovered, 'starting our inquiries from a subordinate group's experience … uncover[s] the limits of the dominant group's conceptual schemes' (Riger 1992, p733). Moreover, let it not be forgotten that the dominant group is the statistical minority.

Conclusion

The issues raised in this paper – hegemony, theoretical imperialism and assumptions of universalism – are important not solely for the promotion of inclusive and relevant theories of occupation, but also for the survival of the occupational science discipline. In a review of the state of occupational science, Clark (2006) identified several factors that influence the viability of academic disciplines. Having a global perspective was found by Clark (2006) to support viability, whereas theoretical hegemony, the tendency to imperialism and intellectual laziness are all potential threats to the sustainability of an academic discipline.

Postcolonial feminist theorists contend that in a world of persisting inequalities, knowledge cannot be conceptualised in neutral terms but, rather, as inherently enmeshed in power relations (Salazar 1991). There is an implicit message here for occupational scientists and occupational therapists in countries outside North America and Western Europe: resist theoretical colonisation! Recognise that a theory, construct or model developed in a more powerful nation may have achieved widespread use because of superior access to power and superior marketing and not to superior theorising.

Rudman et al (2008, p142) posed the following question: 'How can occupational scientists move forward in shaping an international science that itself does not contribute to global inequality?' They answered their own astute question by suggesting that 'attempts at trans- and cross-cultural thinking and research can add new ideas to existing theories, raise awareness of the assumptions underpinning existing concepts, and help guard against assumptions of universality' (p142).

Drawing primarily from historical records within feminist theory from the 1980s and 1990s, this paper has sought to demonstrate that universal assumptions are, at best, naïve and, at worst, oppressive, and has endeavoured to illustrate how diverse perspectives can significantly enrich a discipline's theoretical literature. It supports the contention, suggested by Rudman et al (2008), that multiple perspectives and critical reflexivity, in combination with dialogue, are essential for occupational science and occupational therapy scholarship to thrive. Because theories of occupation inform the practices of occupational therapists, it is vital that those theories are neither ethnocentric nor grounded on false, imperialistic assumptions.

Key findings
- Dominant theories of occupation are informed by specific Western perspectives, which are not universal.
- Scientific and professional integrity require theories to be informed by a diversity of perspectives.

What the study has added

By challenging theoretical imperialism and the assumption of universal perspectives, this paper demonstrates that theories drawn from a diversity of cultural perspectives are likely to be more inclusive and constructive.

References

Abberley P (2002) Work, disability, disabled people and European social theory. In: C Barnes, M Oliver, L Barton, eds. *Disability studies today.* Cambridge: Polity, 120-38.

Alcoff L (1991) The problem of speaking for others. *Cultural Critique, 20,* Winter, 5-31.

Ashcroft B, Griffiths G, Tiffin H (1995) Introduction. In: B Ashcroft, G Griffiths, H Tiffin, eds. *The post-colonial studies reader.* London: Routledge, 55.

Barnartt S (2001) Using role theory to describe disability. *Research in Social Science and Disability, 2,* 53-75.

Bocock R (1986) *Hegemony.* London: Tavistock.

Butler J (1999) *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity.* London: Routledge.

Callahan GN (2009) *Between xx and xy: intersexuality and the myth of two sexes.* Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (2002) *Enabling occupation: an occupational therapy perspective.* 2nd ed. Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.

Chuang Tzu (1964) *Basic writings.* (Trans. B. Watson.) New York: Columbia University Press.

Clark F (2006) One person's thoughts on the future of occupational science. *Journal of Occupational Science, 13(3),* 167-79.

Dalley G (1988) *Ideologies of caring.* London: Macmillan.

Davis LJ (2002) *Bending over backwards: disability, dismodernism and other difficult positions.* New York: New York University Press.

Foucault M (1980) *Power/knowledge.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Frankenberg R (1988) Gramsci, culture and medical anthropology: Kundry and Parsifal? Or rat's tail to sea serpent? *Medical Anthropology Quarterly, 2(4),* 324-37.

Fraser N, Nicholson LJ (1990) Social criticism without philosophy: an encounter between feminism and postmodernism. In: LJ Nicholson, ed. *Feminism/postmodernism.* New York: Routledge, 19-38.

Gramsci A (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hammell KW (2006) *Perspectives on disability and rehabilitation: contesting assumptions; challenging practice.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier.

Hammell KW (2009a) Sacred texts: a sceptical exploration of the assumptions underpinning theories of occupation. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 76(1),* 6-13.

Hammell KW (2009b) Self-care, productivity, and leisure, or dimensions of occupational experience: rethinking occupational 'categories'. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 76(2),* 107-14.

Haraway D (1988) Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14(3),* 575-99.

Hartsock N (1990) Foucault on power: a theory for women? In: LJ Nicholson, ed. *Feminism/postmodernism.* New York: Routledge, 157-75.

hooks b (1984) *Feminist theory: from margin to center.* Boston: South End Press.

Iwama M (2003) Toward culturally relevant epistemologies in occupational therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 57(5),* 582-88.

Iwama MK (2005a) Situated meaning: an issue of culture, inclusion, and occupational therapy. In: F Kronenberg, SS Algado, N Pollard, eds. *Occupational therapy without borders.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 127-39.

Iwama MK (2005b) The Kawa (river) model: nature, life flow, and the power of culturally relevant occupational therapy. In: F Kronenberg, SS Algado, N Pollard, eds. *Occupational therapy without borders.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 213-27.

Iwama MK (2006) *The Kawa Model: culturally relevant occupational therapy.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier.

Kielhofner G (2002) *A Model of Human Occupation: theory and application.* 3rd ed. Baltimore, MD: Williams and Wilkins.

Kielhofner G (2008) *Model of Human Occupation: theory and application.* 4th ed. Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.

Kitzinger C, Wilkinson S (1996) Theorizing representing the other. In: C Kitzinger, S Wilkinson, eds. *Representing the other.* London: Sage, 1-32.

Kronenberg F, Algado SS, Pollard N (2005) Preface. In: F Kronenberg, SS Algado, N Pollard, eds. *Occupational therapy without borders.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, xv-xvii.

Kuhn TS (1962) *The structure of scientific revolutions.* London: Chicago University Press.

Kupperman JJ (2001) *Classic Asian philosophy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Latour B (1987) *Science in action.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Leavitt RL (1999) Moving rehabilitation professionals toward cultural competence: strategies for change. In: RL Leavitt, ed. *Cross-cultural rehabilitation: an international perspective.* London: WB Saunders, 375-85.

Lloyd M (2001) The politics of disability and feminism: discord or synthesis? *Sociology, 35(3),* 715-28.

Mann HS (1995) Women's rights versus feminism? Postcolonial perspectives. In: G Rajan, R Mohanram, eds. *Postcolonial discourse and changing cultural contexts: theory and criticism.* Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 69-88.

Mark GT, Lyons AC (2010) Maori healers' views on wellbeing: the importance of mind, body, spirit, family and land. *Social Science and Medicine, 70(11),* 1756-64.

Marks D (1999) *Disability: controversial debates and psychosocial perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Meekosha H (1998) Body battles: bodies, gender and disability. In: T Shakespeare, ed. *The disability reader: social science perspectives.* London: Cassell, 163-80.

Mohanty CT (1991) Cartographies of struggle: third world women and the politics of feminism. In: CT Mohanty, A Russo, L Torres, eds. *Third world women and the politics of feminism.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1-47.

Mohanty CT (1994) Under Western eyes: feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In: P Williams, L Chrisman, eds. *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory.* New York: Columbia University Press, 196-220.

Morris J (1993) Feminism and disability. *Feminist Review, 43,* 57-70.

Nicholson LJ (1990) Introduction. In: LJ Nicholson, ed. *Feminism/postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 1-16.

Parr J (1998) Theoretical voices and women's own voices. In: J Ribbens, R Edwards, eds. *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research.* London: Sage, 87-102.

Penn H (1999) Children in the majority world: is outer Mongolia really so far away? In: S Hood, B Mayall, S Oliver, eds. *Critical issues in social research: power and prejudice.* Buckingham: Open University Press, 25-39.

Riger S (1992) Epistemological debates, feminist voices: science, social values and the study of women. *American Psychologist, 47(6),* 730-40.

Roughgarden J (2004) *Evolution's rainbow: diversity, gender and sexuality in nature and in people.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rudman DL, Dennhardt S, Fok D, Huot S, Molke D, Park A, Zur B (2008) A vision for occupational science: reflecting on our disciplinary culture. *Journal of Occupational Science, 15(1),* 136-46.

Said EW (1979) *Orientalism*. London: Routledge.

Said EW (1993) *Culture and imperialism.* New York: Vintage.

Salazar C (1991) A third world woman's text: between the politics of criticism and cultural politics. In: SB Gluck, D Patai, eds. *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history.* London: Routledge, 93-106.

Sheldon A (1999) Personal and perplexing: feminist disability politics evaluated. *Disability and Society, 14(5),* 643-57.

Sherry K (2010) Culture and cultural competence for occupational therapists. In: V Alers, R Crouch, eds. *Occupational therapy: an African perspective.* Johannesburg, RSA: Sarah Shorten, 60-77.

Stein A, Plummer K (1994) 'I can't even think straight': 'Queer' theory and the missing sexual revolution in sociology. *Sociological Theory, 12(2),* 178-87.

Suzuki D (2002) *The sacred balance.* Vancouver, BC: Greystone.

Swain J, French S, Cameron C (2003) *Controversial issues in a disabling society.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thomson RG (1997) *Extraordinary bodies: figuring physical disability in American culture and literature.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Townsend EA, Polatajko H (2007) *Enabling occupation II: advancing an occupational therapy vision for health, well-being and justice through occupation.* Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.

Ungerson C (1987) *Policy is personal.* London: Tavistock.

Vernon A (1999) The dialectics of multiple identities and the disabled people's movement. *Disability and Society, 14(3),* 385-98.

Young IM (1990) *Justice and the politics of difference.* Princeton, NJ: University Press.

Young RJC (2003) *Postcolonialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.