

Resituating the meaning of occupation in the context of living

Kirk Reed

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Primary Supervisor: Liz Smythe

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgments), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

Dated

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank the many people who have contributed to the journey of this study. I am reminded of the Maori proverb;

He aha te mea nui o te ao?

He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!

What is the most important thing in the world?

It is people! It is people! It is people!

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This study was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (ref no: 04/66 April 2004).

Abstract

This study explores the meaning of occupation, defined as a “conceptual entity... [which] includes all the things that people do in their everyday life” (Sundkvist & Zingmark, 2003, p. 40). Using a phenomenological hermeneutic method informed by the writings of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), this study provides an understanding of the meaning of occupation interpreted from the perspective of 12 New Zealand adults who experienced a disruption to their occupations.

The review of the literature suggests that early writers from the time of the Bible identified that occupation is not ‘wide open’, there are many factors that shape how and when a person engages in an occupation, which in turn shapes the meaning of occupation. Within the occupational therapy literature, discussion of the meaning of occupation is overshadowed by describing and defending practice. In occupational science scholars and researchers have focused largely on understanding occupation from a conceptual perspective rather than the ontological meaning of occupation. The exploration of the meaning of occupation is being advanced by only a few.

In this study participants told their stories about their occupations. Data were analysed by identifying key themes and engaging in a hermeneutic thinking process of going back to the work of Heidegger and Gadamer. Writing and re-writing was the method used to bring new understandings to the data. The findings of this thesis suggest that the meaning of occupation is complex, and tends to remain hidden. Analysis focuses on the call, Being-with, and possibilities. The call to occupation seems to be in response to what it is we care about or what concerns us. Being-with others while engaging in an occupation creates a bond and mood; the meaning of occupation changes depending on who the occupation is done with or without. The meaning of occupation is also revealed in the possibilities that are opened up or closed down. Occupation shows both ourselves and others what it is we are capable of in the journey of who it is we are

becoming. Each of these facets of meaning work in unison and can be likened to three cogs in a wheel, each interconnected with the others.

The thesis concludes by recognising that not all voices have been heard and argues for uncovering more about the meaning of occupation from the perspective of lived experience. A challenge is made to consider the meaning of occupation not as something that is individually derived but as something that is connected to the broader context of the world and others in the world.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As an occupational therapist who worked with people with severe and enduring mental health problems for many years, I often reflected on what it was about occupation that was so fundamental in recovery from mental ill health. As a recent graduate I ran a weekly cooking group for people who had been admitted to an acute mental health unit. I remember from the cooking group that what I saw was occupation in action. What I noticed was often in conflict with the reports from medical and nursing staff. I observed people fully engaged in what they were doing, able to concentrate, work together, seek assistance when need be, and who were genuinely pleased with their finished product. The occupation seemed to have a positive impact on the health and well-being of the people that attended, but there was never enough time to find out more about why this was. My sense was that although the notion of meaningful occupation seemed to be at the heart of practice of occupational therapy, there was nothing I read or learnt about in my occupational therapy education that gave me any real insights into the meaning of occupation. I could see it in action, but the literature to support this was not something that I was aware of.

As I became increasingly interested in the meaning of occupation, I began to think about the meaning of occupation. Were the meanings I associated with what I did the same as those of others? I believed that it was important to understand more about the meaning of occupation if I was to be an effective occupational therapist. Talking with my colleagues I discovered that they had experienced similar tensions when trying to work with clients and had turned to psychology in particular for the explanations they were looking for. However the answers seemed to focus on attempting to understand what motivated a person to engage in an occupation or what a person's usual routine of occupations were. It seemed to me, as an occupational therapist, that the meaning of occupation was at the crux of understanding occupation and therefore working with the notion therapeutically, but this had somehow been side-stepped by the profession. It was

not until I started post graduate study and was introduced to occupational science that I found a platform to understand more about occupation. However, while I delved in and out of the occupational therapy and occupational science literature I still could not find the answers I was looking for. The meaning of occupation continued to remain elusive. It was these experiences and questions that provided the catalyst for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study is on the meaning of occupation and the research question asks: what is the meaning of occupation? The study explores the experience of 12 New Zealand adults aged between 27 and 67 in order to uncover the meaning of occupation. Occupation for the purpose of the study is seen as more than just vocational pursuits, it is understood to be all the things that people do throughout their day. Wu and Lin (1999) raised the issue that “the concept of occupation has long defied satisfactory definition by occupational therapists or occupational scientists” (p.5). There are numerous definitions of occupation which will be explored further in Chapter Three. However, occupation can be considered to be central to a person’s identity and competence, seen to influence how a person spends time and makes decisions, has an element of needing to be endorsed by a person’s cultural or social group, has common components such as groups of activities, and contains a sense of intentional and purposeful action.

The need for this study arises from my background as an occupational therapist and the notion that “meaningful occupation is a hallmark of occupational therapy. The role of occupational therapists is to enable people to engage in occupations that are meaningful in daily living” (Griffith, Caron, Desrosiers & Thibeault, 2007, p.78). Yet for me as an occupational therapist I had difficulty coming to understand the meaning of occupation for the clients I worked with. The complexity of the meaning of occupation is captured by Hasselkus (2002), an occupational therapist who pointed out that:

...often we do not know on an explicit level, nor are we able to articulate the meanings of events or relationships in our own lives;

how much more difficult, then, it is to know and understand the meanings of events and relationships in other people's lives. And yet, that is what we try to do, as people going about our daily routines in a social world, as occupational therapists in our practice, as researchers studying occupation in peoples lives. (p. 7).

The purpose of this phenomenological hermeneutic study is to uncover the meaning of occupation. In the view of Heidegger, meaning is "that from which something is understandable as the thing it is" (King, 2001, p. 6). A thing can only be understood in the context of human experience and the world in which it belongs. This is perhaps best explained by giving an illustration. If for example we consider the meaning of an ordinary every day object such as a 'pen', the meaning of the pen is not in our understanding of the word 'pen' or in what the pen is made of. The meaning of the pen lies in what the pen is used 'for', such as writing a birthday card to a family member. The 'for' shows that in advance the pen is understood as the thing it is, and that is in the context of the human world. The meaning of the pen lies in its purpose, the connection with the family member, the anticipation of how the card will be received, and in the other objects that are in the world; the card, the desk to write on and so on. The meaning also sits in the horizon in which our everyday understandings moves, "The horizon of our world is primarily "meaning giving"; it is a meaning in which we constantly move as a matter of course, so that it usually remains implicit" (King, 2001, p.7).

As such I have come to understand meaning of a thing, such as occupation, through the context and purpose of that thing in relation to the world and others in the world. Meaning may be personally and socially derived from our past, from our unique values and histories and the culture and community in which we are born into and live. My understanding of meaning is that it may change over time as meaning unfolds throughout life. Understanding meaning in this way will bring additional insights to the meaning of occupation, both to occupational therapy and occupational science. As Kielhofner in 1995 pointed out "it is a long standing adage that, to be effective occupational therapy must be meaningful to the patient. However there is limited discussion in the literature of the field concerning how patients actually experience meaning" (p. 265). Since 1995 the literature that does

explore the meaning of occupation sketches an obscure relationship between meaning and occupation. The notion that meaning as a subjective, dynamic experience defined by the person and given worth by society is highlighted (Townsend, Stanton, Law, Polatajko, Baptise, Thompson-Franson et al. 2002, Christiansen, 1997) and the link between meaning of occupation and spirituality is explored by Christiansen (2007), Thibeault (1997), Egan & DeLaat (1997) and McColl (2000). There is very little empirical research on the meaning of occupation to support the diverse opinions within occupational therapy. There have been some qualitative pilot projects in occupational therapy (Unruh, Smith & Scammell 2000; Vrkljan & Millar-Polgar, 2001, Griffith, Caron Desrosiers & Thibeault, 2007) which begin to explore the meaning of occupation and bring an ontological perspective to the meaning of occupation.

Kielhofner's words from 1995 still resonate; there continues to be limited discussion in the literature about the meaning of occupation. This point is reiterated by Doble and Caron Santha (2008), which adds to the urgency for this study. They surmise that "while the notion of meaning clearly shapes individuals perceptions of their occupational lives and the satisfaction derived, we have not been able to understand how meaning is generated and thus, what steps can be taken to enhance meaning" (p. 189).

This study seeks to uncover the meaning of occupation as the thing that it is, situated in the world with others. The aim is to bring to the fore the meaning of occupation from an ontological perspective, to open up the meaning of occupation from the perspective of lived experience.

In terms of the lived experience we have all had the experience of engaging in occupation in one way or another, yet that experience is often taken for granted as it is inextricably bound together in the flow of life. We engage in occupation even when we sit and appear to 'do nothing' and do so with no thought of how occupation is defined. It simply is what it is. This study begins by asking 'even though we have had the experience what was/is the meaning?' and seeks to understand that which is taken for granted in our everyday lives. Because

occupation is so taken-for-granted, this study turned its attention to people who had experienced some sort of disruption to their everyday lives, recognising that meaning may show itself more clearly because of the ‘attention’ provided by the disruption. Occupational disruption is described by Whiteford (2000) as a temporary or transient state where a person’s normal pattern of occupational engagement is disrupted due to significant life events, environmental changes, becoming ill or sustaining an injury from which a full recovery is expected. She further highlighted that an occupational disruption is a “temporary state and one that given supportive conditions, resolves itself” (Whiteford, 2000, p. 201).

In our everyday lives we all engage in occupation all of the time. We are likely to have a broad but shared understanding of what the physical doing of an occupation looks like in our own culture. By observing someone, we might recognise that they are cooking a meal. This is because cooking a meal in our own culture looks like a certain series of tasks and involves certain objects or tools. On one level everyone ‘knows’ what is involved in cooking a meal and understands what we are talking about when we say we are going to ‘cook’. We assume that we know what occupation means for others based on our own experience of doing that occupation. Occupation is all around us. As Hasselkus pointed out “it can be heard in both the everyday and the dramatic aspects of our lives – in the pin cushions and thimbles, while watering the flowers and while making cookies... All the days of our lives, occupation speaks” (2002, p. 134). Yet the meaning of occupation is often unspoken and this is what creates its complexity. For example, cooking in preparation for the visit of a close friend may be very different from the experience of cooking for oneself after a busy day at work. Following a well known recipe will be a different experience from trying a brand new recipe. The unspokenness also raises the question of how well we understand the complex interwoven layers, that like a kaleidoscope, are ‘different again’ in each new situation.

Selecting the Methodology

Selecting a research methodology required not only finding an approach that was compatible with the research question, but also one congruent philosophically with the researcher and the research context. In seeking to uncover the meaning of occupation hermeneutic phenomenology has been chosen, allowing an insight into the everyday world of the participants' from their perspective. Hermeneutic phenomenology is both interpretive and descriptive and is particularly useful when wishing to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of lived everyday experiences (van Manen, 1990). It allows the researcher to uncover meanings that may have become hidden or taken for granted and to become more fully aware of the phenomenon of interest. van Manen (1990) described hermeneutic phenomenology as "a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the logos of other, the whole, the communal, or the social" (p. 7). The research is thus situated in the world of human experience. It also recognises the relationship of the researcher to the phenomenon under investigation. The philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutic phenomenology provided a good fit, not only with my research question, but with my own world view.

The study will be guided by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002). Heidegger's writing focused on ways of understanding everyday experiences of the human life world, in particular ways-of-being-in-the-world. Heidegger acknowledges the inter-connectedness of the person and their world and the multiple realities of lived experience. Gadamer's writing focused on historical understanding, where past and present fuse and where language is the core of understanding. During the data analysis process I became increasingly aware that other philosophical ideas could assist in the interpretation of the interpersonal aspects of the meaning of occupation, and so this study is also informed by the writing of Buber (1878-1965).

Pre-understandings and Horizons

Within phenomenology and hermeneutics, it is acknowledged that a researcher comes to his or her inquiry with prior understandings and from a place from

which the world is viewed. These pre-understandings and horizons are an accumulation of culturally held beliefs, ideas, historical events or practices (Gadamer, 1960/2004, Heidegger, 1927/1962). Such understandings include the perspectives that the researcher brings to the research (van Manen, 1990). The purpose of this section is to make explicit as possible my own pre-understandings and horizons in relation to this study. This will draw attention to what may have influenced how I have conducted this study from my personal experience, my experience as an occupational therapy practitioner and educator, and my knowledge and experience as a post graduate student.

The Researcher and the Research Process

The journey to starting this study is marked with key life events and experiences. As a New Zealander I grew up in the 1970s and 1980s in what was a fairly typical middle class New Zealand family with British and New Zealand heritage. It was a family who valued spending time together. We were expected to be there for evening meals and to help in the garden at weekends; our time together was spent doing. Success was measured by helping others or contributing to the family rather than by individual achievement or material gain. On reflection these are all important in contributing to my pattern of occupational choices.

A significant milestone in the journey toward this study happened in 1988 when I embarked on a career in occupational therapy. After leaving school and joining the Royal New Zealand Navy, I sought a second career option as an occupational therapist to allow me to work with people. I was drawn to occupational therapy because it entailed working with people who had had a disruption to their health and focused on getting them back to independent living. As an occupational therapy student I was introduced to the notion of occupation. This was in conjunction with learning about anatomy, psychology, sociology and the medical treatment of a range of conditions, which all went toward informing my world view. I recall being fascinated by discussions about occupation with one tutor in particular. There was a depth and richness to the interpretations she had about everyday occupations that were powerful and somewhat mystical.

In my final year of training, I had a placement in a large mental health hospital. It was during this placement I witnessed my supervisor engage a client in a game of scrabble. The client, who was often distressed by the symptoms of their illness, became totally focused on the occupation. They became a person playing scrabble rather than someone with a mental illness. It was through occupation that the person was transformed for that period of time. This stands out in my memory, in a similar way to the cooking group I reflected on earlier, as experiences that demonstrated how occupation can be used in a way that both maintained people's skills and relieved them from the symptoms of their illness. These observations made me question what it was about occupation that made it work in this way. I wanted to understand more about how the supervisor matched the person and the occupation so quickly and effortlessly to create such a benefit for the client.

Occupational Therapy Practice

As my professional career progressed, I became concerned with how to best enable clients to engage in the occupations they wanted or needed to do. This was restricted by working in a health system that was focused on reducing symptoms, maintaining client safety and discharging people home rather than considering their occupational needs. I now recognise that the type of occupational therapy I engaged in was not grounded in occupation. I became incredibly skilled at recognising signs and symptoms, assessing client's risk factors and being knowledgeable about the side effects of medication. There were times when I was able to engage in occupational therapy that had an occupational focus. These times were when the power of occupation was able to be used to its full potential in the way I had seen it used by my supervisor. Unfortunately the value of occupation often went unrecognised by the other members of the multi-disciplinary team I worked with. This lack of recognition fuelled my desire to want to understand more about occupation so I could explain, with increasing evidence, what I was doing and why. This desire led me to undertake post graduate study.

Post Graduate Study

It was during my post graduate study as a master's student that I was introduced to occupational science. This allowed occupation to be the focus of my learning. The more I learnt and understood about occupation the more I wanted to know. There was a shift in focus away from understanding occupation in terms of a therapeutic tool to be used in therapy to a much broader exploration of the notion of occupation. I began to question what it was about occupation that people found personally meaningful. What was it that attracted a person to one occupation and not to another? What was it about some of the occupations people engaged in that were perceived to be unhealthy or unlawful which still made them want to do that occupation? My motivation for understanding more about occupation was to gain insights into how occupation could be used more effectively as both the means and the end of therapy. I perceived that occupational science could inform my practice as an occupational therapist and allow me to explore occupation. Although post graduate study created a greater understanding of occupation as a concept, I still did not have the understanding about the meaning of occupation I desired. It seemed that the real meaning of occupation continued to elude me.

A Different Kind of Practice

In 2000 I made the transition from direct involvement in practice to occupational therapy education, engaging in theoretical teaching and educational administration. This created an opportunity to reflect on the gulf that existed between my knowledge and understanding of occupation and the reality of occupational therapy practice. My reflections highlighted how difficult it is to convey the complexity of occupation without drawing on one's own experience of occupation. My role as an educator has allowed me to introduce the nature and value of occupation to occupational therapy students as they begin their journey of exploration. The questions the students ask me, fuel my desire to know more and challenges me to be clear about, and to continue to explore, my own understandings of occupation so as to generate lively debate and discussion, and help students grasp the possibilities of occupation-focused practice.

To uncover my personal pre-understandings about occupation I kept a reflective journal. Following a lecture to first year students, where the students asked me more about the notion of occupation I made an entry in the journal to record the following pre-understandings:

Our individual experience of occupation is non-repeatable. It happens in a time and a place and has social meaning. My experience of cooking a meal only ever happens once and it is my experience! I recall what is like when I am at home at Christmas time with my family and the coming together of family in the cooking of the meal, we all do our little bit to contribute, but mum always has the oversight of the whole meal. This is completely different to the experience of coming home from work and having to cook for myself and eat alone in front of the television. I had never thought of occupation in this way until today's lecture. Occupation is a clearly identified individual experience that only the person experiencing the occupation can really understand what that occupation means to them.(Journal Entry: July 2003)

As my journey as a post graduate student continued, I was drawn to the work of Heidegger; Heidegger's work of exploring the meaning-of-being has taken my exploration of occupation to a much deeper level.

Professional and Theoretical Contexts of the Research

While the notion of occupation is broad and crosses many boundaries, the study sits within specific contexts. These include occupational therapy and occupational science.

Occupational Therapy Context

The study takes place in the context of knowledge and understanding about the therapeutic use of occupation from occupational therapy practice that has developed in the Western world. Occupational therapy emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, drawing on principles and perspectives of the Moral Treatment Movement. As the profession developed, occupational therapy situated itself as a "field that appreciated the importance of occupation in human life, addressed problems of occupational disengagement, and used occupation as a therapeutic

measure” (Kielhofner, 2004, p. 43). Facing pressure from medicine to articulate empirical evidence for practice during the 1940s, 50s and 60s, the profession turned to the mechanistic paradigm. During this time therapists focused on how dysfunction in internal systems translated into limitations in capacity. The focus of occupational therapy was on reducing limitations and allowing a person to become more functional.

By the late 1970s leaders in the profession began to call for a return to a focus on occupation. The profession rediscovered the importance of engaging clients in everyday occupation and as Polatajko (1994) highlighted occupational therapy once again became “a discipline focused on occupation” (p. 51). Whiteford, Townsend and Hocking (2000) reflected on the renaissance of occupation which began in the 1960s and gained force in the 1990s. They emphasised the lack of unity in the profession as a key contributor to the rekindling of the interest in understanding occupation. The shift in focus away from the mechanistic paradigm meant a renewed interest in among other things, the occupational nature of humans and occupation based practice. Up until the 1990s the underlying knowledge contributing to the practice of occupational therapy had traditionally originated from other professions such as psychology, sociology or medicine. Throughout the development of occupational therapy various attempts have been made at understanding more fully the notion of occupation. With the resurgent interest in occupation, occupational therapists such as Clark (1993), Wilcock (1991), and Yerxa (1998) identified the need for a body of knowledge that focused on the multi-faceted nature of engagement in occupation and its use in therapy. It was from these beginnings that occupational science originated.

In tandem with the development of occupational science, Whiteford et al. (2000) commented on the developing occupational focus of occupational therapy practice, research and education. In more recent times occupational therapists have explored occupation as a determinant of health, as the core of occupational therapy services and as a focus of assessment. The values and beliefs that Canadian occupational therapists hold about occupation were identified by Townsend, Stanton, Law, Polatajko, Baptiste, Thompson-Franson, et al. (1997).

These values and beliefs include that occupation “gives meaning to life, is an important determinant of health and well-being, organizes behaviour, develops over a lifetime, it shapes and is shaped by environments, and that it has therapeutic effectiveness” (Townsend et al., 1997, p. 31). As Thibeault (2006) noted “occupational therapists are artisans of meaning, enabling clients and communities alike to give shape to what matters most” (p. 164). For occupational therapy the intention has not necessarily been to develop knowledge about occupation but to have occupation at the fore front of practice, research and education. The profession of occupational therapy was and has been instrumental in the creation of occupational science and in doing so, it could be argued, has handed the development and generation of knowledge about occupation to occupational science.

Occupational Science

In addition to occupational therapy, this study takes place in the context of a developing knowledge base about the notion of occupation in its broadest sense. This sits under the umbrella of occupational science which has the aim of advancing understanding of occupation. Occupational science is concerned with the study of humans as occupational beings and originated as an academic discipline in the late 1980s. It is generally accepted that occupational science emerged from occupational therapy (Clark, Carlson & Polkinghorne, 1997). Occupational science has been defined as a basic science which “deals with universal issues about occupation without concern for their immediate application in occupational therapy (application will be determined by practitioners)” (Yerxa, Clark, Frank, Jackson, Parham, Pierce, et al., 1990, p. 4). In addition occupational science is described as being strongly grounded in narrative methodologies to enhance understandings of how people attribute meaning to their occupation (Yerxa et al., 1990). There have only been a few occupational scientists that have taken up the challenge of using narrative methodologies to explore the meaning of occupation, namely Hannan (1997), Hocking, Wright-St Clair and Bunrayong (2002), Howell and Peirce (2000), Hull Garci and Mandich (2005), Leufstadius, Erlandsson, Bjorkman and Ekland (2008), Scheerer, Cahill, Kirkby and Lane (2004), and Wright-St Clair, Bunrayong, Vittayakorn, Rattakorn and Hocking

(2004). These studies in the occupational science literature reveal particular instances of meaning and show that occupations hold rich meanings for the individuals engaging in those particular activities. The literature also highlights that the meaning of occupation can not be assumed by those observing the occupation, the meaning is specific to that occupation and that person. The research so far has shown some of the meanings of occupation but does not reveal the kinds of meaning nor what those meanings are in relation to. These studies and other literature will be explored further in Chapters Two and Eight.

I believe that the literature from occupational therapy and occupational science has identified that the notion of the meaning of occupation is worthy of further exploration. The methodological approach that is at the heart of this study will seek to reveal understanding in relation to the research question, what is the meaning of occupation? The structure of the thesis that seeks to uncover new understandings of the meaning of occupation will now be outlined.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter One, “Introduction” has set the scene in relation to the purpose of the study, my pre-understandings and horizons, and why I selected hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology and research method.

Chapter Two, “Literature Review” contextualises the study by providing an historical overview of the Western literature regarding how occupation and the meaning of occupation has appeared and come to be understood over time. This chapter follows some of the key historical influences that have impacted on peoples occupations and considers how occupational therapy and occupational science have contributed to understandings of the connection between meaning and occupation.

Chapter Three, “Philosophical Underpinnings” describes the philosophical ideas that have provided a framework for this study. Drawing on the work of Heidegger (1889-1976) and Gadamer (1900-2002) this chapter provides an overview of how

the key philosophical notions of these authors have informed and guided the study.

Chapter Four, “Method” moves from the philosophical ideas that underpin the study to lay open how the research was done. It describes the process of participant selection and interpretation of the data, and outlines a framework on which the trustworthiness of the study may be considered.

Chapters Five to Seven presents my interpretations of the meaning of occupation. Chapter Five, “The call” provides an interpretation of the significance of the meaning of occupation and uncovers what is at the heart of occupation in relation to Heidegger’s notions of ‘The call’ and ‘Dasein’. Chapter Six, “Being-with” uncovers the meaning of occupation particularly in relation to Heidegger’s notion of ‘Being-in-the-world-with-others’. Chapter Seven, “Possibilities” provides my interpretation of the meaning of occupation in relation to Heidegger’s notion of ‘Possibility’ in the journey of always already becoming.

Chapter Eight, “Discussion” brings the meanings of occupation uncovered in this study together. The metaphor of three cogs in a wheel is used to show how the three facets of the meaning of occupation work in unison. This chapter considers what the findings of this study might mean for occupational therapy practice, education and occupational science. In addition, potential ways forward for understanding more about the meaning of occupation are suggested.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Gadamer (1960/2004) suggested that coming to understand is based on what has influenced us from the past. We come to every situation with prejudices or pre-judgements which have been shaped by what we have read, learned or heard within the traditions of our own culture. To enable hermeneutic understanding to be achieved, it is essential that the pre-understandings that we bring with us are recognised in order to situate current understandings with those from the past. Gadamer talks of understanding coming from “traditionary texts” or those historical ontological understandings that have been passed down in language and text, and to which we have a connection. These texts may go unnoticed; however they still affect our understanding. From a hermeneutic perspective, exploring traditionary texts means more than just going back and exploring past meanings. These meanings then need to be connected with present ideas, understandings and interpretations.

My personal journey through this study has engaged me with literature from the initial planning stage to the concluding discussion. I am aware that I already understand the notion of occupation as it has been presented in the Western literature both during and prior to this study. Indeed I have been engaged with the literature related to occupation since I first became an occupational therapy student in the late 1980s. The literature, or in hermeneutic terms the “text”, that has been reviewed draws from the general literature that surrounds us and the professional literature of occupational therapy and occupational science. The literature that has been selected builds on establishing meaning and reveals a taken-for-granted shared understanding of occupation to bring it into question. In this chapter, literature relating to both occupation and meaning is reflected on as a way of showing what has influenced my understandings as I have engaged in this study, and to open the discussion of the possible meaning of occupation.

The Scope of the Literature Review

In order to consider the traditions on which this study is founded, I undertook a search of the professional literature using the CINHALL, Proquest 5000 and Medline databases. Literature published over a ten year period from 1997 to the present was the focus of the search. In addition, I reviewed significant articles and older texts that have contributed to Western understandings of both occupation and meaning. It was difficult to locate a large amount of literature outside the profession of occupational therapy or the field of occupational science in relation to occupation, in the broad sense in which it is discussed in this study. In relation to how we understand meaning in our lives, I have included professional literature from psychology, sociology and philosophy. The review of the literature not only seeks to understand the foundation of the notion of occupation from a historical perspective but also how we understand meaning in our lives. In the final part of the review I reflect on the literature that considers the connection between meaning and occupation.

As a notion, occupation is as old as time. People have been active and engaged in doing things throughout history. However the doing generally went un-noticed or was not remarked upon until the word occupation came about. The key to understanding an experience such as occupation is only possible, according to Heidegger (1927/1962), through an analysis of the sentences or words that we use to talk about that experience. Language shows us the world in such a way that we can speak about it. It is a kind of pointing out or showing; a highlighting of certain things and not others. It shows what is there to be spoken about. For Heidegger the 'essence of a thing' is what matters to us about it and how one relates and is concerned with it. "Its essences' means: it comes to presence, it matters to us enduringly, moves or makes a way for us and concerns us" (as cited in Wrathall, 2005, p. 92).

In the initial part of the review I will focus on and consider how occupation, and in particular the meaning of occupation, has appeared through time in the literature and explore some of the key historical influences on people's doing. In order to come to understand the meaning of occupation it is necessary to explore

the historical context in which occupation shows itself. This reveals occupation over time and from these understandings the meaning of occupation can emerge. Engaging in a hermeneutical study requires us to “place ourselves in the others situation in order to understand it” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 302). In doing so the horizon from which we understand occupation and the meaning of occupation becomes clear. This allows us to understand the “meaning of what has been handed down” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 302). The hermeneutic way is not to accept these understandings from a historical standpoint. Rather it is beholden on me in line with the methodology to show the horizon and how it has changed over time in order to come to new understandings. This will be done by noticing the words, how they are brought into play, and the context in which they have been used, to highlight what is and what is not spoken about. I will then move on to uncover the history of the word occupation. This will encompass where the word occupation came from, how it was used, where it appeared in the Western literature and how it has changed over time. I will then reflect on the connection between the notion of occupation and the development of the profession of occupational therapy. This will give a sense of how understandings of occupation have developed over time, particularly in relation to the establishment of both occupational therapy and occupational science. Finally, occupational therapy and occupational science literature will be considered to see how occupation has been defined and described in the context of these disciplines in the twenty first century.

Occupation in Western History

The word ‘occupation’ is relatively new, emerging in the 12th Century (as will be discussed later in this chapter). Yet, just because there was not a word to signify what we now call ‘occupation’ does not mean that it did not exist for the very nature of being human is to be engaged in activity. To begin this review of literature I therefore turn to some of the classic texts of ancient times to see how occupation showed itself. This is important as this study seeks to return to the ‘being’ of occupation, which has always existed.

The types, nature and on some occasions the experience of occupation are captured in literature extending from Biblical, to Ancient Greek and Roman Times, to the Middle Ages, the period of Renaissance and Reformation and more recently the Industrial Revolution. This literature ranges from works of non-fiction to works of fiction and while the authors may not have had occupation as the focus of their work, none-the-less, stories of occupation exist and provide a glimpse of the range of occupations that people have engaged in.

The Bible

One of the early descriptions of occupation dating back to 'Before Christ' is found in the Old Testament of the Bible. The Bible is without doubt, one of the most read history books in the Western world and details how people lived and what they did during biblical times. In the book of Proverbs, Chapter 31 the 'Ode to the capable wife' describes the usual types of occupations a capable wife might engage in along with some of the traits that are necessary for her to be considered capable.

A capable wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm all the days of her life.
She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.
She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from far away.
She rises while it is still night and provides food for her household and tasks for her servant girls.
She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong.
She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.
She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all her household are clothed in crimson.
She makes herself coverings
Her clothing is fine linen and purple. (New Revised Standard Version Bible, 1989, p. 740)

Not only is the capable wife trustworthy but her capability is demonstrated by the range of occupations she engages in. It would seem the broader the range of occupations that she is able to master in order to provide for others, the more capable she is deemed. This particular excerpt focuses on the kinds of occupations that are engaged in, which suggests that the meaning is linked to the importance of service to others and the self-less good of being occupied for their benefit and for her own well-being. In addition, the excerpt shows the resources that lend themselves to occupation and that occupation clearly was done ‘for the sake of’, determined by community, relationships and values. Turning to the Ancient Greeks and Romans, the literature from these times provides descriptions of the occupations of an elite few and is centered on self improvement and development.

The Ancient Greeks

The early Greek civilisation was strongly influenced by the writings of Plato and Aristotle (Bloom, 1968). Plato’s Republic reveals his thoughts on how occupations should be divided in society, which would require:

...free citizens to be unencumbered by actual work. Crafts, professions, agriculture are all to be discharged either by slaves or by aliens, who are normally allowed to reside for twenty years, though the senate and assembly may allow them to remain for life. The citizens themselves have their military and political duties; apart from that their business is to ‘attend to their spiritual and physical excellence’, supervising their households and estates. (Crombie, 1962, p. 181)

In Plato’s view, a low regard was expressed for manual labour and a high regard for leisure. He considered that time should be spent in contemplation, philosophical thought and self development in order to achieve happiness. Hard labour was seen as brutalising of the mind, making men unfit for thinking. The notion of the natural slave was a solution for getting the necessary work done, so the rest of the city could be free for the more worthwhile and meaningful pursuits of music, poetry and philosophy which lead to inner beauty and eternal truth (Dargie, 2006). In later times Galen (131-201AD) identified occupations for the maintenance of health, which were mainly sporting in nature. He also identified

work occupations that were good for physical development such as wood splitting, ploughing and digging (Gill, 2006). Occupation was seen as value laden.

The Ancient Romans

The empire of the ancient Romans was dominated by military conquests which led to an affluent and powerful nation. Occupations were centered on military tasks such as training for war and constructing weapons, and on the political and administrative organisation of the empire (Poliakoff, 1995). As the Roman Empire evolved there was a move away from traditional occupations related to agriculture, particularly as the population became more urbanized and as a class structure developed. The values of Roman society gave “prestige to wealth and work based on the land, while wealth and work based on trade, money lending and piracy was least prestigious as an occupational activity. The poor – whether peasant, slave or artisan – were looked down upon” (Applebaum, 1992, p. 94). The hierarchy that existed during these times saw a wide gulf exist between the luxury and leisure-loving rich and elite, and the masses of farmers and urban dwellers. While the elite engaged in political and leisure pursuits, the work on the farms and in the workshops was carried out by farmers, tradesmen and slaves. As Roman society developed, the new urban populations had considerable free time and so leisure became important to the Romans (Kelly, 1990). Where the Greeks used free time for learning, discovery and enlightenment, the Romans used free time for sports to maintain physical fitness for war (MacDonald, 1981). The Emperors of Rome had amphitheatres, baths and arenas constructed for the population in order to provide entertainment to occupy the free time of the masses, so as to distract them from becoming involved in political affairs. Occupation was deeply embedded in society structure, values, and politics.

Middle Ages

The fall of the Roman Empire and the spread of Christianity had a significant impact on the occupations of people. The Catholic Church preached hard labour, good works and self deprivation, and prohibited most kinds of leisure occupations except those relating to religious observance and worship (Kelly, 1990). Work was glorified and idleness thought to be evil. Occupations such as hunting, music

and dance were reserved for the landed gentry and political leaders, and were primarily in preparation for war and training for feuding noblemen.

During this period, ill health was seen to be linked to immoral actions. It was therefore deemed necessary to engage in occupations that were morally correct, which included hard labour and those that sought forgiveness or acknowledgement from the higher powers. For the masses, hard work prevailed except for holy days and religious festivals where singers, dancers, jugglers, magicians and fortune tellers provided entertainment (Rosenwein, 2004). A sense of people's everyday lives at that time is revealed in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which tells the story of a certain day in April in the mid 1380s spent at the Tabbard Inn in Southwark, London. Chaucer's work is considered to be fiction, although pilgrimages as he described were common during that time. In preparation for the journey to Canterbury to pay homage to the tomb of Thomas Becket 29 pilgrims were staying at the Tabbard Inn. Chaucer tells the tales of an array of men and women from a range of occupations and social and moral backgrounds. His portraits capture the full spectrum of medieval society from the Miller, the Knight, the Merchant, the Monk, the Ploughman and the Shipman to name a few.

The alignment between occupation and moral good is illustrated in Chaucer's description of the Ploughman, the brother of the Parson, as a man who:

...had pulled many a cartload of dung. He was a good and faithful labourer, living in peace and perfect charity. He loved God best with all his heart, at all times, whether he was grieved or pealed, and next he loved his neighbour as himself. He would thresh and also dig and delve for Christ's sake, for every poor man without pay, if it was in his power. (Beidler, 2006, p. 43)

Through the Ploughman's hard physical work, there is a sense of him being at peace with himself through his service to God. His occupation as a Ploughman has meaning because it allowed him to show God and others that he is a good person. His occupation allows him to demonstrate some of the characteristics of a good person such as working hard, being charitable and loving and working for

God. The Ploughman makes a connection between what he does and how he is viewed by God and others. He does not question what he does; rather he sees his occupation as a way of using his personal capacities to the best of his ability to serve God. The meaning of occupation in this story is shown as being 'more' than the job itself.

Renaissance and Reformation

The Renaissance was an intellectual and cultural movement that began in Italy and spread to Northern Europe. It flourished in the 16th century, and during this time there was a revival in educational occupations such as art, architecture and the philosophy of 'humanism'. Throughout this period leisure occupations became more available to the masses (Kelly, 1990), with such things as the development of printing presses and new paper making industries enabling literature to become affordable and accessible. Previously literature had been the exclusive domain of the clergy (McGrath, 1990). Occupations such as farming, working in the fields or animal husbandry prevailed, along with the production and manufacture of buildings for daily life.

The Reformation was also occurring during the 16th century in Europe. This movement began as an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church, as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the church, which was not just religious, but social, political and economic. The Reformation resulted in the establishment of an independent Protestant Church and from the Protestant Church came the Protestant Work Ethic (Ellingsen, 1999). The origins of the trend towards a secular work ethic can be traced to the work of John Calvin (born Jehan Cauvin, 1509-1564) a French Christian theologian. Up until the time of Reformation, it was believed that what one did was based on an eternal calling by God. Calvin challenged this belief and proposed that "it is not God who has called them into a particular sphere of activity; one is called by society or by an inner sense of purpose, to enter a given field of action" (McGrath, 1990, p. 252). Work was transformed from being viewed as a "distasteful and degrading activity to be avoided if possible, to a dignified and glorious means of affirming God and the world he created" (McGrath, 1990, p. 245). These changing views of work in relation to religious and secular beliefs had a significant impact on the

occupations people engaged in (Marshall, 2003). Work was idealised and leisure distrusted as being evil. Any time spent away from work was only seen as a useful means to refresh men and women for their continued devotion to God and work. The meaning of occupation as established by the Protestant Work Ethic shows how the individual gets caught up in social and religious movements that dictate behaviour and values.

Industrial Revolution

During the 18th and 19th centuries, populations in England were uprooted from the land and small villages to the cities. The clock became more heavily utilised which “gave the eighteenth century employer the ability to precisely measure time and thus to quantify, control and eventually to intensify the pace of work” (Cross, 1990, p. 58). This led to a new societal and occupational structure based on time, where a worker clocked on and off, and led to longer working hours. Occupations were centered on hard labour in mines and cotton mills. The ownership of the tools of trade shifted from the individual or family to those who controlled the factories. The shift from country to towns meant the availability of new and cheap products and the collapse of family-run cottage industries (Adler, 2000). Children were often viewed as cheap labour and many forms of play were considered to be evil. Technology is seen as transforming occupational activity. Yet there is an underlying ‘feel’ for the meaning experienced by the people who lived through this revolution.

During the late 19th century, industrialisation with the development of the use of machinery and the factory system was the major influence. The Scientific Management Movement developed by the American, Fredrick Taylor, also played a major part in re-shaping work occupations; Taylor sought to find ways of using people as effectively as possible in industrial organisations (Applebaum, 1992). The drive for maximum productivity led to the division of labour into small, repetitive tasks that workers had little control over. This highlighted the negative impact of occupation on a person’s health, by changing the locus of control from an internal to an external source and by placing high expectations on a person related to productivity and efficiency that often exceeded their capacity. Taylor’s Scientific Management Movement supported a new way of thinking and working

which was dominated by reductionism, analysis and mechanistic function. The meaning of occupation thus became linked to logical, rational, and objective measures.

In contrast, the Romantics, Ruskin, Morris and other pioneers of the Arts and Crafts Movement were committed to counter-acting what they saw as the dehumanising effects of industrialisation. Their vision was a reaction against the work practices that had been imposed. The Arts and Crafts Movement promoted the production of products that would enrich people in their homes and workplaces in the hope that making, having, and using beautiful things would transform individuals and society (Naylor, 1971). This gives a sense that occupation had meaning related to privilege and functionality.

Summary

The review of literature from a historical perspective reveals a time that the word ‘occupation’ did not exist and that it has only recently come into use. While occupation as understood in the context of this study still took place, the things that people did were not referred to as occupations simply because it was not until the 12th century that the word occupation came into use. The Bible and Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales both provide an insight into the typical occupations that were occurring at their respective times in history. The literature from the Ancient Greek and Roman times shows occupation to be linked to maintaining health, well-being and a sense of happiness. The social structures of the time allowed the hard physical labour to be carried out by others, freeing time up for the elite to engage in what were considered the more worthwhile occupations of philosophical thinking and contemplation and developing physical ability. This shows that occupation is not ‘wide-open’, many influencing factors shaped what a person decided to do, how they did it and what was considered to be the right kind of occupations to engage in. These influencing factors are many and varied and range from societal values, religious beliefs, philosophy, government, technology, gender, class, and geography. The increasing use of the clock during the Industrial Revolution, for example, had a significant impact on how time spent in work occupations was monitored and controlled. While occupation as a notion, during these early times, may have generally gone unnoticed, there were multiple

traditions that influenced both the understandings and the experience of occupation. In the next section I will explore how, as the English language developed, the word occupation came into being. This allowed the broad range of things that people did, to come together and be considered under a collective term.

Etymology of Occupation

In line with a phenomenological hermeneutic study it is important to go back to the language and words that we use. From Heidegger's perspective "words used in everyday talking do not get their meaning from anywhere. Once one has been socialised into a community's practices, as long as one dwells in those practices rather than taking a detached point of view, words are simply heard and seen as meaningful" (Dreyfus, 1991, P.219). The aim of this section of the review is to bring into the open the word occupation and to bring it back to its original meaning by exploring the development of the word and how it has been used.

The word occupation was not in common use in early times and as such there was not a word that captured the essence of occupation. Etymology, the study of the sources and development of words, shows us how words come into general use and how their meaning shifts over time. The Oxford English Dictionary (Simpson & Weiner, 1989) identified that the term occupation stems from the Latin root word "occupare", meaning to seize. Some time in the 12th century the Anglo-French word "occupacioun" had come into being, with multiple meanings including: to seize, to take possession or to be employed. Occupacioun inferred the action of occupying or of being occupied. In the literature the earliest use of occupation in the sense of being occupied, employed or engaged in something can be traced back to circa 1340 and the prose of Hampole. In 1467 there is a link between occupation and the English Guilds, and Ruskin in his essay titled *Arrows of the Chace* espoused that "the character of men depends more on their occupations than any teaching we can give them" (as cited in Cook & Wedderburn, 1903, p. 541). From the early 12th century it appears that occupation has been used to describe a sense of doing or of being engaged in something that builds character and which in England at least, was linked to professions through the Guilds. Occupation has been more recently defined as "the action of

occupying or being occupied, or that in which action is embodied” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 46).

Occupation as the Basis of Occupational Therapy

As the profession of occupational therapy developed, occupation became a notion that was named, framed and conceptualised as the domain of a professional group. Up until the establishment of occupational therapy, no one particular group had recognised occupation as a notion that could form the basis of a profession. In this section of the review I will show how occupation became more recognised and formalised. I will present this history in a broad outline, as there is obviously much more than can be recounted, beyond the scope of this literature review.

The development of occupational therapy considered the use of occupation in the context of health. From early times, occupation can be traced to have either positively or negatively influenced health. As previously acknowledged, scholars such as Galen (131-201 AD) identified occupations for the maintenance of health, while during the Industrial Revolution those such as Taylor and the Scientific Management Movement manipulated occupation to focus on the end product. This contributed to occupation having a negative impact on workers’ health.

The Moral Treatment Movement, which developed in Europe during the Age of Enlightenment, strongly influenced the development of occupational therapy. Brockoven, a psychiatrist, insisted that “the history of moral treatment in America is not only synonymous with, but is the history of occupational therapy before it acquired its 20th century name occupational therapy” (1971, p. 225). The Moral Treatment Movement is founded on the work of Philippe Pinel (1745-1826), a French Philosopher and William Tuke (1732-1822) an English Merchant-Philanthropist who developed principles of Moral Treatment and applied them to the insane in institutions in France and England respectively (Pinel, 1806/1962; Tuke, 1813/1964). Moral Treatment grew out of the “fundamental attitudes of the day: a set of principles that govern humanity and society; faith in the ability of the human to reason; and the supreme belief in the individual” (Bing, 1981, p. 502). Moral Treatment saw a change in the notion that the insane were possessed by the

devil. A distinct method of therapy evolved and mental disease came to be seen as the legitimate concern of humanitarians and physicians.

In Britain at The York Retreat, an asylum for the insane, Tuke drew on his beliefs as a Quaker and recognised that:

...in itself work possesses a constraining power superior to all forms of physical coercion, in that the regularity of the hours, the requirement of attention, the obligation to provide a result detach the sufferer from a liberty of mind that would be fatal and engage him in a system of responsibilities. (as cited in Foucault, 1961/2006, p. 247)

Tuke was influential in establishing a philosophy of discipline and hard work rather than external control of mental health. At around the same time as The York Retreat was using occupation to assist in the recovery from mental illness, Pinel in France recognised the value of occupation. He established an environment of work programmes allowing those with a mental illness, previously constrained in chains, to be liberated. Pinel noted that even “the natural indolence and stupidity of ideots (sic), might in some degree be obviated, by engaging them in manual occupations, suitable to their respective capacities” (1806/1962, p. 203).

Across the Atlantic in the United States of America (U.S.A.), Thomas Story Kirkbride in 1833 implemented a regime of Moral Treatment in The Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane. Annual reports detailed that more than 50 occupations were on offer including lectures, gymnastics and magic (Handbook for attendants on the insane, 1896). Due to the American Civil War (1861-1865), the economy became highly taxed which left limited resources for health care provision and in a bid for efficiency, activity rooms became wards, as the demands for services increased. At the same time scientific trends were beginning to challenge the philosophy of Moral Treatment and the way work was carried out. The decline of Moral Treatment was identified by Pelouquin (1998) as being closely related to “a lack of inspired and committed leadership willing to articulate and redefine the efficacy of occupation in the face of medical and social changes” (p. 544). These

changes saw the responsibility for health care in particular move from the asylum to the doctor.

Occupation continued to be recognised as a contributor to ill health and as a factor in maintaining health. Vernon Briggs, in 1911, described how patients' engagement in occupation had a positive effect on their health based on several occupational initiatives occurring in various sites across the U.S.A.. Just prior to this in 1906, Susan Tracy, a nurse and teacher, developed a course on invalid occupations for nurses (Woodside, 1971). Tracy is credited by some to be the first occupational therapist of the 20th century and a book of her work was published in 1912 (Tracy, 1912/1980). Also occurring about this time was the work of Adolph Meyer (1866-1950) a psychiatrist, humanist and mental hygienist, who immigrated to the U.S.A. from Switzerland. Meyer took on board the work of John Dewey and in 1892 professed, "doing, action and experience are being" (as cited in Breines, 1986, p. 46). Meyer articulated that the activities expressed in living, demonstrate mind-body synthesis and that individuals can only be studied as whole people in action. In 1922, Meyer published a paper entitled "The philosophy of occupational therapy" and because of this he is often heralded as the philosophical father of occupational therapy.

Leading up to the establishment of occupational therapy as a profession was the work of Jane Addams at Hull House where Meyer also had some involvement. Hull House was a settlement home for new immigrants and was influential in establishing the Arts and Crafts Movement in America. The Arts and Crafts Movement, of which Ruskin and Morris were leading proponents in the United Kingdom, holds views about work and a simple life, which includes restoration of the human spirit through engagement in honest craftsmanship. Morris associated the experience of pleasure with skilfully creating an object. He affirmed that:

...art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe that he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness; and especially this is so when he is at work at anything in which he especially excels. (1883/1915, pp. 41-42)

These beliefs informed the delivery of services in mental health, tuberculosis sanatoria and physical health settings, and saw manual training as a solution to the problems created during the industrial era. In 1911 Eleanor Clarke Slagle, a social work student attended a course at Hull House on curative occupations and recreation. She later became the Director of the Henry B. Favill School of Occupations, which is thought to be the first formal school of occupational therapy. Slagle's work, which incorporated ideas from Addams, focused on habit training through meaningful use of time and purposeful activity. Slagle included the concept that:

...for the most part our lives are made up of habit reactions. Occupation used remedially serves to overcome some habits to modify others and construct new ones, to the end that habit reaction will be favourable to the restoration and maintenance of health. (1922, p. 14)

Thus Slagle actively promoted the use of occupation in relation to health and was influential in the development of occupational therapy.

In Britain, occupation had become recognised as important in the treatment of people with mental disorders and was beginning to be accepted as having value in the rehabilitation of people with physical conditions (Amar, 1920). This was the case especially across Europe, following World War One (1914-1918), where occupation was seen as important to the curative process and the economic future of returning servicemen. It was the British Red Cross that "took a lead in establishing programmes of occupation and entertainment for injured servicemen" (Wilcock, 2002, p. 62). At about this time, occupation was being used by Sir Pendrill Varrier-Jones as the basis of treatment for people with tuberculosis. Varrier-Jones held the view that the treatment of tuberculosis should not be left to medicine alone and as a result created Papworth Village, a combination of hospital, sanatorium and industries. For Varrier-Jones:

The true colony consists of a sanatorium, in which all that is best in sanatorium treatment is carried out, but with the addition of an industrial section where the treatments may be prolonged and training in suitable occupation begun. To my mind a man engaged

in productive work, keeping his wife and children, ceasing to be a danger to the community, is a more economical proposition than a similar person propped up by poor relief, a danger to his family and to the community, as well as an unproductive unit thereof. (as cited in Fraser, 1943, p. 52)

During the 1920s there was growing acceptance of the specific use of occupation as a treatment method which was coined “occupational therapy”. Wilcock (2002) pointed to the increasing acceptance of occupational therapy as a result of the medical profession endorsing the new profession, this saw the increasing employment of occupational therapists by local authorities as they gradually assumed responsibility for the care of people with disabilities. During the Great Depression of the 1930s there was a period of high unemployment and as a result there was general recognition that engagement in occupation was necessary for well-being (Rerek, 1971). As occupational therapy began to gain momentum, formal professional structures such as associations and Schools of Occupational Therapy were established in the 1930s.

As the ravages of World War Two (1939-1945) took hold, occupational therapy was again recognised as a key component in the rehabilitation of injured service people. The view of occupation during this time was more of a diversion away from the pain and trauma of injury and incorporated teaching new skills to allow the injured soldiers to have a vocation when they were able to be discharged from hospital (Dudley Smith, 1945). However occupational therapists’ use of craftwork as a therapeutic tool was restricted by both the British Government and a lack of resources. It was during this period that remedial approaches were introduced into the profession as a viable tool in the rehabilitation process. As the profession developed so did national and international professional bodies. The World Federation of Occupational Therapists was established in 1952 with seven founding countries including the U.S.A., United Kingdom, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, Israel and Denmark (Smith & Hopkins, 1978). The purpose of the World Federation was to promote and advance occupational therapy on the international stage (Mendez, 1986).

In 1940 Margaret Inman, one of the early graduates of the Dorset School of Occupational Therapy, sailed to New Zealand to become the first qualified occupational therapist to work in this country at the Auckland Mental Hospital. On her arrival Inman appraised the content of the occupation classes at the Hospital prior to beginning the first occupational therapy training school in New Zealand. Hazel Skilton one of the first students enrolled in that training programme gives an account of the early development of the profession in New Zealand in her book “Work for your Life” (1981). The philosophy and teachings at the school appear to reflect the developments in occupational therapy occurring in the United Kingdom. Skilton points to World War Two as having a significant impact on the development of occupational therapy in New Zealand, as the Health Department began to make provision for the wounded servicemen returning home from the war. Skilton recalls what she learnt:

We not only became adept at basket making, weaving of all kinds, leatherwork, toymaking, woodwork and seagrass stool seating, embroidery and bookbinding, but also planning projects for the patients and teaching them in daily classes. At every stage Miss Inman would show us how all these activities could be adapted to help patients with many kinds of illnesses, disabilities and injuries. She showed us how we could plan progressive projects for a patient to help him towards his rehabilitation. (1981, p. 12)

In both the United Kingdom and New Zealand there was ongoing growth and development of the profession following World War Two (Rosser, 1990). During the 1950s the focus of rehabilitation changed from getting servicemen back to work, to focusing on the importance of domestic work and independence of those with long term disabilities. Occupational therapy came under increasing pressure from the medical profession to “establish a theoretical rationale and empirical evidence for practice” (Kielhofner, 2004, p. 44). During this time it was difficult to measure restoration of the human spirit through craftwork with the technologies of the day. As a result the profession began to explain practice in terms of a biomedical perspective, which included reductionist views of the body as a well-oiled machine. This was in contrast to the views of the founders of occupational therapy, such as Meyer, who considered mind-body synthesis to be fundamental in the use of occupation in a therapeutic way. This view of occupation and the

connection to health was slowly eroded as the focus of occupation became misunderstood (Engelhardt, 1977). The use of occupation in practice began to alter in response to the challenge to provide evidence of the effectiveness of occupation. This in many ways limited the types of occupation that could be used to those that demonstrated a level of effectiveness from a bio-medical perspective.

As occupational therapy progressed into the 1960s, the focus of practice continued to be based on concepts from medicine which pervaded both physical and mental health. Psychodynamic concepts used by psychiatrists were deemed to be more important in occupational therapy mental health practice than concepts of occupation (Fidler & Fidler, 1978) which led to an emergence of therapeutic communities and group and industrial therapy. In physical health the focus was on “understanding function and dysfunction in terms of neurological, anatomical and intrapsychic mechanisms” (Kielhofner, 2004, p. 46). In this view of occupation, occupation was focused on as something that calls on muscle strength, joint flexibility, stamina and changes in behaviour. These were things that could be observed and measured and could therefore provide the empirical evidence that was required to support the effectiveness of occupational therapy.

As the profession expanded and diversified, there was a call to reinstate the aims and functions of occupational therapy. Wilcock (2002) surmised that during this time “general treatment responsibilities were to assist the recovery of patients from mental or physical illness. Training patients to use returning function or residual ability to gain social and vocational readjustment” (p. 289). The focus on the use of occupation as therapy shifted to centre on function rather than diversion, and fostering independence, responsibility and resettlement in relation to the demands of home or job.

The move towards community rather than institutional care in Britain during the 1970s, saw a move towards standardised occupational therapy assessment and community based care. Medical advances which resulted in shorter hospital stays meant that the role of occupational therapy was focused on assessing and improving function in order to expedite discharge home (Wilcock, 2002). During

this period there was a phase of professional self doubt as the philosophical base of the profession was challenged (Kielhofner & Burke, 1977). Shorter hospital stays meant the loss of relationships with patients and limited opportunities for patients to engage in occupations as they had done in the past. The influence of the medical profession also saw a move towards increased specialisation by occupational therapists based on knowledge of medical conditions rather than knowledge of occupation.

In the latter part of the 20th century there was a renaissance in the commitment to occupation as a necessary component of health. Within occupational therapy there was a growth in models of practice such as A Model of Human Occupation developed by Kielhofner (1985). This model was created to be used with any person experiencing problems related to occupation and was concerned with “the motivation for occupation, pattern of occupation, subjective dimension of performance [and the] influence of environment on occupation” (Kielhofner, 2004, p. 148). As the renaissance continued during the 1990s the word occupation was being used more universally. Hagedorn (1995) identified that occupation was the unique element forming the focus and vehicle for occupational therapy. There was also an increase in occupational therapy research as the profession responded to the call to focus on specific occupational themes (Wilcock, 1991). These research themes included studying human occupation, occupational function, occupation for health and the subjective experience of participation in occupation. One of the approaches considered by Hasselkus that could potentially limit further understandings of occupation by the profession of occupational therapy is the conceptualisation of occupation “within a problem framework. We have linked our focus on occupation to a context of disability – making everyday occupation part of the problem” (2006, p. 630). While there was a renewal of ideas during this time about the importance of occupation linked with the notions of enabling and empowering people within their own communities and linking self health to occupation, as Hasselkus warned it was important to consider occupation in its broadest context.

The interest in occupation linked to human life, health and well-being is evident in the development of occupational therapy. The desire for further knowledge and understanding of occupation led to the development of occupational science. Occupational science distinguishes itself from occupational therapy by being concerned with creating a basic understanding of occupation, without immediate concern for the application of that knowledge. Early advocates of occupational science such as Zemke and Clark (1996) suggested that the study of occupation would enhance occupational therapists' appreciation of the role of occupation in life and health.

Summary

As the word occupation came into being and the notion was named and framed, it soon became more noticed. Occupation became linked to religious virtues rather than personal characteristics. The Moral Treatment Movement, founded on beliefs of an individual's ability to reason and that mental illness was not as a result of an external force, recognised the value of occupation in the treatment of people with mental illness. The underlying beliefs of the Moral Treatment Movement contributed to the establishment of occupational therapy in the early 1900s. This new profession claimed occupation as its domain of concern and built on the growing recognition of the connection between occupation and health. Occupational therapy in its formative years was also strongly influenced by: the Arts and Crafts Movement, Adolph Meyer psychiatrist and mental hygienist, and Eleanor Clarke Slagle who had an interest in habit training.

The use of occupation in the realm of healthcare soon shifted from being used solely in the treatment of mental health conditions and was extended to physical conditions, especially across Europe following World War One. Occupation was seen as an important part of treatment to allow injured servicemen to return to the front, or in the case of people with tuberculosis, to regain a level of economic independence. The professions of medicine and psychiatry became highly influential in challenging occupational therapy to provide evidence to show how and why occupation contributed to health outcomes. As a result the way in which occupation was used and understood from a holistic perspective changed. The use of occupation altered from being used for diversion or resettlement to being used

to increase function in the home or workplace. The actual engagement in occupation became something that could be manipulated and used for remediation as part of a person's overall rehabilitation programme, to the point where occupation or parts of occupation were prescribed. This meant that much of the value of the experience of occupation was lost.

As occupational therapy developed and became increasingly professionalised with the establishment of Schools of Occupational Therapy and national and international associations, there was a call during the 1960s by members of the profession to reclaim the aims and functions of occupational therapy. The profession considered itself to be in a phase of uncertainty as a result of the dilution of the understanding of occupation, which had been strongly influenced by biomechanical and psychodynamic paradigms. Much of the literature during this time focused on describing and defending practice, and providing evidence for practice based on these dominant paradigms, rather than focusing on understanding occupation from the lived experience. It was not until the 1980s that models of practice with a strong occupational element began to emerge. The resurgence of interest in occupation led to the call to focus research on occupation, particularly the link between occupation and individual and community health. The establishment of occupational science created an avenue to lead and show the way for generating a greater understanding of occupation.

Having explored the historical understandings of occupation in relation to health and the influence this has had in creating the profession of occupational therapy, I will now turn to more recent understandings of occupation. As previously indicated, these recent understandings have been influenced by developments in occupational therapy and occupational science.

Contemporary Understandings of Occupation

The notion of occupation in the recent literature is presented in a range of ways. This section of the review will focus on descriptions and definitions of occupation and key terms associated with occupation. Occupation has been described by Sundkvist and Zingmark (2003) as a conceptual entity which “includes all the

things that people do in their everyday life” (p. 40) and by Wilcock (1998) as all doing “that has intrinsic or extrinsic meaning” (p. 257). This certainly gives the sense that occupation is something that is all encompassing without any bounds and as something that all people do. In addition, the meaning occupation holds at individual and societal level are presented in the literature as a key concern. It has been proposed that for occupation to have meaning there needs to be “an interaction between concrete, symbolic and self-reward values of a person’s occupational continuity” (Persson & Erlandson, 2002, p. 15). These recent views of occupation are complimented by components of definitions which were brought together in the Journal of Occupational Science Occupational Terminology Interactive Dialogue (2001). The dialogue included a definition from Yerxa, Clark, Frank, Jackson, Parham, Pierce, et al. (1989) who considered occupation to be chunks of activity within the ongoing stream of human behaviour, self initiated, socially sanctioned and a complex phenomenon. Similarly, McLaughlin Gray (1997) described occupation as units of activity, classified and named by the culture. Occupation is seen as purposeful activities that fill a person’s waking hours and something that is ‘more than just doing’ by Sabonis-Chafee (1989). Kielhofner (1995) considered occupation to include action and doing in the physical and social world. These ideas were brought together by Crabtree (1998), who defined occupation as “intentional human performance organised in number and kind to meet the demands of self maintenance and identity in the family and community” (p. 40).

The extent of occupation is also denoted by the American Occupational Therapy Association Commission on Practice (2002), which used the term occupation to “capture the breadth and meaning of everyday life activities” (p. 610); they viewed occupation as the means and outcome of occupational therapy intervention. Likewise, when Wilcock (2003) interviewed occupational science and occupational therapy students, the students simply described occupation as employment, a career path, day-to-day tasks and something that takes up time. In summary then, occupation is considered to be central to a person’s identity and competence, seen to influence how a person spends time and makes decisions, has an element of needing to be endorsed by a person’s cultural or social group, has

common components such as groupings of activity and in addition, has a sense of intentional and purposeful action.

An important point made by Sundkvist and Zingmark (2003) is that a consensus has not been reached on the complex meaning of occupation. This supports the discussion by Christiansen (1994) and Law, Steinwender and Leclair (1998) who recognised the complexity of attempting to understand occupation. There is a sense that the authors of the reviewed articles assume that the reader comes to this literature with a pre-understanding of occupation. This is reflected in the literature which alludes to occupation in so many different ways and with no clear agreement.

A key point that has been made is that occupation is often socially and culturally sanctioned and defined. This indicates that different cultural groups will have their own unique understanding of occupation. Darnell (2002) pointed out that occupation, as understood by occupational therapists, is from a Western point of view, that social recognition is important to the value placed on an occupation, and being occupied is socially valued. When considering occupation from the viewpoint of other cultures, it is important to acknowledge that the focus may not necessarily be on productivity as it is in Western culture. The focus of occupation may be to support the extended family or to be in balance with nature. This seems to suggest that understandings of occupation are much broader than those that are created by the individual, but extends to understanding being generated by groups of people. Similar points about the culturally specific nature of occupation are acknowledged by Townsend (1997), in that she agrees that occupations are named to represent purposes and goals, and to express personal and cultural ideas. More importantly she agrees that occupations are named and valued differently in each culture.

Just as occupation is understood differently within different cultures, so too are the ways in which occupations are performed. This point is critical in that occupational performance is a key concept within occupational therapy. The notion of occupational performance is the focus of Van't Leven and Jonsson's

(2002) article, where occupational performance is not defined but is presented in terms of how it is linked to a person's identity and how it was experienced by participants in their study as "doing and being in an atmosphere of doing" (p. 152). This leads the reader to be unclear about the perspective that is being taken in terms of occupational performance, however, an assumption that occupational performance is important to maintaining identity appears to be made. The link between occupation and identity is also made by Andresen and Runge (2002) who explored senior's perspectives of occupation and report from their findings that humans constitute themselves through occupation. Reid, Laliberte Rudman and Herbert (2002) also looked at occupational performance and described it more clearly as "the ability to choose and satisfactorily perform meaningful occupations that are culturally defined" (p. 262). Central to both occupation and the performance of occupation is a sense that occupation has to have meaning to the person engaging in it, and that an important way of understanding how meaning is ascribed to occupation is via a person's cultural or social group.

Social Perspective

Various authors have explored meaning as being situated within a person's social or cultural world. From a psychological perspective, Reker and Wong (1988) proposed a continuum of contexts in which meaning is situated. At one end there are self definitions and at the other end social definitions, where a person's sense of meaning depends on various factors such as the depth and breadth of experience. Additionally, the dynamic interplay between individuality and conformity is acknowledged by Berman (1993), a psychologist, as the place where meaning in life originates. Berman suggested that as life plays out across the lifespan there is a never-ending search for uniqueness and self hood amid the search for community and belonging. Similarly Bruner (1990), also a psychologist, considered meaning to be something that is negotiated with others and passed between them, something which is real, that people construct in their social world. In relation to this study, these perspectives might be interpreted to imply that the meanings created by people in relation to occupation can be socially constructed and passed down and across generations. Bruner also considered that meaning is not just something that exists in a person's head; it is located in a cultural and historical context. As Bruner pointed out, within a

person's world there tends to be some kind of doing or occupation, the meaning of the doing is influenced by the person's social, historical, and cultural context.

Making a Link between Meaning and Occupation

The concept of meaning has been an important aspect of occupation throughout the history of occupational therapy, as the discovery of meaning is one of the key features of occupation. This is supported by Jackson, Carlson, Mandel, Zemke and Clark (1998) who proposed that "the ability to find meaning through occupation is a central consideration in people's lives" (p. 328). Attempting to understand the meaning perceived by an individual is essential to clarify the true nature of occupation. Persson, Erlandsson, Eklund and Iwarsson (2001) take on board Nelson's (1987) notion of 'occupational form', Nelson identified that the purpose of engaging in an occupation can be a source of meaning, but at the same time the purpose can evolve from the meaning. Persson et al. also acknowledged that meaning is linked to occupation as it helps make sense of chaos and that the process of ascribing meaning is multifaceted. Occupation can therefore be seen to bring about change, in the sense that it may bring order to chaos. From an occupational therapy perspective the change that occupation is expected to lead to is usually viewed in terms of positive change. However, occupation can also have negative impacts on a person's health and well-being such as mortality or injury associated with some occupations such as back injury and nursing or carpal tunnel syndrome and administrative work. While the meaning of occupation may be considered to be a hallmark of occupational therapy as identified by Griffith et al., 2007. The notion of meaningful occupation or the meaning of occupation has a surprisingly limited profile in an authoritative source on occupational therapy such as "Occupational Therapy for Physical Dysfunction now in its sixth edition (Vining Radomski & Trombly Latham, 2008). In this textbook the notion of occupation-as-end, is considered in relation to meaning, Trombly Latham (2008) highlights that occupation will be meaningful if it is based on a person's values acquired from family and cultural experiences, the sense of importance a person places on participation in certain occupations or performing in a particular manner, from the person's estimate of his or her reward in terms of success or pleasure or possibly from a threat of bad consequence if the occupation is not engaged in.

The positive transformative potential of occupation is highlighted by Townsend (1997) who identified that occupation enables humans to develop as individuals and as members of society. This transformative function of occupation is often overlooked because occupation is generally viewed from a market perspective where the focus placed on occupation is work related, seen in terms of organisation of labour and measured as an economic unit in terms of the end product. Engagement in occupation allows people to direct aspects of their lives and realise dreams and goals. Four features of the transformative power of occupation identified by Townsend (1997) are: learning, organising time and place, exercising choice and discovering meaning. By engaging in occupation, Townsend proposed that humans are able to discover meaning; either meaning about themselves or the meaning an occupation has to them. Notably she did not make explicit how an individual generates meaning, the elements of significance, or the process involved in ascribing meaning to an occupation.

The meaning of occupation is also generated through social organisations. Social organisations establish how much value is placed on an occupation and organisations of power shape how occupations are performed. Persson et al. (2001) identified that the power of organisations is often embedded in documents such as job descriptions, organisational structures, and codes of conduct. This gives a sense of the multifaceted way in which the meaning of occupation is established, either by the values placed on the occupation from an external source such as an organisation or internally by engaging in occupation, which can lead to meaning being generated. As discussed, discovering meaning can occur by performance of actions. Persson and his colleagues highlighted that it is important to understand why an occupation is being performed. This can lead to values being assigned to an occupation and occupational value being created. Three types of occupational value identified by Persson et al. are:

- Concrete value – this value is associated with the outcome of the occupation, where there is a product that has value to the person who has made the product

- Symbolic value – this is where engagement in the occupation leads to identification with a subgroup, the occupation is linked to personal, cultural or universal identification
- Self reward value – this includes immediate rewards as a result of the occupation, such as enjoyment and flow.

One of the ways in which occupational value is assigned is through identification with a group, in that occupation creates a sense of belonging and feelings of importance which contribute to a person's identity. This concept was discussed by Magnus (2001), who described meaning as being connected to how occupations are seen in the culture to which a person belongs, and frequently, as allowing others to create and associate the identity of a person by their occupational engagement. When a person experiences occupational loss for example, the meaning associated with that occupation becomes more apparent. Not being able to perform an occupation means a need to change one's self image. Magnus found that situations requiring performance of the lost occupation were avoided to evade a change in self image. The visible doing of something maintains a sense of self both to the person and to those around them; the self is connected to the doing. In a similar vein, Blair (2000) acknowledged that occupation is helpful during life transitions in the way that occupations affect the sense of self through intra and interpersonal dynamics that are expressed in symbolic doing. Blair suggested it would be valuable to explore how and why occupation is helpful in life transitions.

Occupation can also be used as a means of survival from a traumatic event both during and after the event. As described by Lentin (2002) meaningful occupation can give relief from trauma and this can be essential in helping a person manage biological, emotional and psychological consequences of trauma. Central to maintaining self esteem and restoring identity following chronic illness, Reynolds (2003) summarised that there is "some evidence that artistic leisure occupations offer a means of reconstructing positive identity" (p. 119). Likewise the contribution occupation makes to managing and expressing identity, linking people to others, organising time, connecting people to the past, present and

future, and maintaining a sense of control was described by Laliberte Rudman, Valiant Cook and Polatajko (1996). The important contributions occupation can make to maintaining well-being have been identified by these authors in terms of identity and managing transition. How the meaning connected to occupation is developed and what is required to make an occupation meaningful is less clear and will now be discussed.

An increase in depressive symptoms and stress related health problems was identified by Persson and Erlandsson (2002) in relation to occupation that lacks meaning. They recognised that in order to understand the value of occupation, there needs to be time for reflection, where meaning can be experienced. Similarly the link between time and meaning, where occupation has meaning at a temporal level and where the meaning is greater when it is goal focused and related to well-being is highlighted by Hasselkus (1989). She re-iterated that a fundamental area of required research is to understand the nature and meaning of occupation and to continue to gain new understandings of the meaning of daily occupations. Hasselkus (1989) stated that “to understand the meaning of an activity and to promote health through that meaning is the essence of occupational therapy” (p. 654). Often the daily occupations people engage in are automatic, which implies we do not take the time to reflect on them. This raises for me the importance of time in the process of generating meaning.

The ways in which the meaning of occupation changes became evident to Laliberte Rudman et al. (1996) in their study, when healthy people talked about occupation, those occupations that have meaning were not basic occupations such as cooking or grooming. They highlighted that when basic occupations become automatic, the meaning is diminished until a time when a person is no longer able to articulate them. This suggests to me that there are layers of meaning connected to occupation, in that as an occupation is mastered the nature of meaning attached to that occupation changes. In a similar way, Hannam (1997) questioned the importance of meaning embedded in everyday occupation and how those that do not have access to familiar routines, produce similar layers of meaning within everyday occupations. She highlighted the need to explore the importance of

everyday occupations in terms of the practical role they play in containing accumulated meaning. Laliberte Rudman et al. also identified the need to further study the relationship between occupation and well-being, the contribution of occupation to identity, the complexity of the sense of control associated with occupation and to explore the meaning of occupation in a person's current context. The idea that meaning attached to occupation alters is also identified by Townsend (1997), who pointed out that exercising choice and control is inherent in occupational engagement. Choice and control are exercised by deciding which occupations to engage in or not, how we engage in them, how long for and how much effort we invest in an occupation.

In contrast to Laliberte Rudman et al. (1996) who highlighted that basic occupations do not have meaning, the meaning of cooking and recipe work for older Thai and New Zealand women was explored by Hocking, Wright-St. Clair and Bunrayong (2002). In their interpretive research they found that for the Thai women in particular, the meaning of food was "related to the physical shape of the food or the way that the ingredients blend together" (p. 120). In preparing the food the older Thai women impart a long life connection and unity on those who share the food, wrapping them into a network of family, friendship and spiritual relationships. For the New Zealand women, links were made between meaning and occupation in the way that the women prepare food and that "they subtly include traditions from their own childhood, recipes handed down to them or accessed from old recipe books, and objects that symbolise personal or family history. In this way, they continue or institute traditions within their own family" (p. 121). The study by Hocking et al. brings to the fore the connection between occupation and meaning. For the Thai women Being-with is important and brings together people in a network through food. For the New Zealand women the meaning of the occupation lies in the preparation of food and its connection to past, present and future.

When seeking to clarify what is required to make an occupation meaningful, Law (2002) suggested that there needs to be a balance between the challenge of the activity and the skills required for the individual to perform the occupation. She

also proposed that there must be a feeling of choice and control, along with a supportive environment, to facilitate easy attention to the activity. Law raised the need to disentangle the complex relationship between the person, environment and occupational performance and suggested this could be achieved by an increased understanding of occupation. One of the ways of attempting to understand occupation evident in the literature is to place occupations into categories. However, there is currently no categorisation of occupation that explicitly includes meaning. Some authors such as Pierce (1998) and Baker, Jacobs and Tickle-Degnen (2003) raised the topic of measuring meaning. Baker et al. used the Meaning of Work Survey in an attempt to do this and measured work centrality, work beliefs and valued work outcomes in their study. Their findings suggested that those that have work as a central role in their lives have better health. Understanding the meaning of work to workers can be an important element in developing an understanding of the links between occupation, meaning and health. Baker et al. also suggested that there needs to be a better understanding of beliefs and valued outcomes associated with occupations other than work and that it would be helpful to develop methods for measuring meaning.

When describing the characteristics of occupation as an intervention, Pierce (1998) indicated that the meaning of occupation could be measured using the following characteristics:

- Occupational appeal – how desirable or attractive an occupation is
- Occupational intactness – the degree to which an occupation is being used in treatment and how it is perceived as occurring in its usual non-treatment context
- Goal fit – the degree to which the therapeutic occupation matches the client's goals.

From an occupational science perspective Hannam (1997) identified characteristics that were similar in terms of what makes a particular occupation appealing, when she observed a small sample of people drinking tea. The meaning

of the occupation of tea drinking was communicated by the participants in the following observable ways:

- Reasons for drinking the tea – relaxation, refreshment, hospitality
- Sensory awareness – the feel of the china, appreciating the taste and smell of the tea
- Objects used – special tea service, best china, type and quality of tea
- Temporality – past experiences of tea drinking, making connections with family and friends, time out
- Social context – hospitality, sharing, having visitors, time of crisis
- Changes in lifestyle – a time to talk and reflect on life, solve problems, remember the past.

Additional insights arise from a study that explored occupation in relation to young children with autism. Spitzer (2003) in the occupational science literature highlighted that the purpose or meaning of an occupation may be difficult to determine when verbal communication is not clear or is not apparent. Using observed behaviours of the children with autism, Spitzer identified that “individual meaning and purpose are subjectively experienced and only signs of subjective meaning can be observed” (p. 70). She proposed “that individual occupational meaning can be understood or at least approached through a two part process” (p. 71). The first part is to analyse the entirety of another’s engagement in daily occupations and the second is the deliberately sought after sharing of experiences about events or things. Interestingly Spitzer challenged the notion that meaning making is a conscious reasoning and self awareness process. Instead she identified that for the children in her study:

...occupations transform a chronology of actions into a meaningful whole by connecting actions together. The child experiences the meaning in the doing in that his or her actions are connected to interests and past experiences... it is the connections that define the occupation, make it into a “whole”, and create its meaning. (2003, p. 75)

Spitzer makes some interesting points, first that the meaning of occupation is embodied and that the meaning comes from the doing. She also pointed to the temporal nature of the meaning of occupation in that it is connected to past experiences.

In relation to the meaning of occupation being linked to what it is we care for, Reid (2005) proposed a model of occupational presence drawn from research undertaken with older adults who were engaged in virtual occupations. She proposed that presence is a state of consciousness, of “being there”, which exists when engaging in occupations. Reid indicated that “meaningful occupations are the product of a person doing something that meshes with his or her abilities and interests” (p. 111).

The work of Pierce and Baker, Jacobs and Tickle-Degnen in particular raises the question of the purpose and possibility of accounting for meaning in a quantitative way. The importance of this possibility is likely to be due to the desire of occupational therapy as a profession and of occupational science to be based in the scientific paradigm, which has traditionally been perceived as more credible (Wilcock, 1991). Questions about the possibility of measuring meaning have been raised by Townsend (1997), but in opposition to developing categories. She questions the value in having standardised categories of work and other occupations especially when each of these is named and valued differently by different cultures. Townsend proposed a shift from the market driven view of occupation. She suggested this shift might lead to social and economic re-organisation that would allow individuals to balance their occupations and to re-organise their lives to re-discover meaning. This proposal gives a sense that the way in which occupation is currently understood in Western culture is strongly influenced by the philosophy of a market driven economy. These underlying ideas reinforce the view that occupation is a commodity to be brought, sold and traded.

If the view of occupation as a commodity continues, the possibility of experiencing meaning through occupation is under threat. As Persson and Erlandsson (2002) pointed out, the connection between meaningful occupation

and health is commonly described in a way that likens humans to machines, which is a view that can be traced back to Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes suggested that the body works like a machine and that the mind and body are separate. He proposed the notion of dualism or the mind-body split, where the mind controls the body. The work of Descartes set the agenda for the philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem which continues today (Almong, 1995). Because of this view of humans, people are expected to work harder, faster and more efficiently just as machines are expected to; this leads to an increase in occupational pace. This increased pace means reduced opportunities to reflect on occupations or the meanings these occupations have for individuals. In today's world, a meaningful life is often associated with increasing material standards, where the focus is on the product rather than the process. Use of time tends to be focused on quantity rather than quality and as a result occupations are often superficial and shallow as we do not have the time to reflect on them and to give them true meaning.

Summary

In recent times the resurgence of interest in occupation within occupational therapy and occupational science has led to a wealth of definitions of occupation but with no clear consensus. This lack of consensus is perhaps indicative of the diversity of the nature and scope of occupation. What has become apparent is the way in which occupation is socially and culturally influenced by what has gone before. As our past is constantly changing, so to is the way in which we understand occupation. There has been ongoing discussion in the literature regarding the connection between meaning and occupation in order to uncover what is considered to be one of the key features of occupation. However the literature has tended to be concerned with either describing a means to 'measure' the relationship between occupation and meaning or with uncovering and conceptualising how meaning is attributed to occupation. What is missing from the literature is sufficient description of the experience of everyday occupations and the meaning of occupation from a lived experience perspective.

Conclusion

Exploring and reviewing the literature has allowed me to reveal the many and varied dimensions that show themselves in relation to occupation. I have discovered multiple traditions that have, to some extent, influenced occupation throughout time and colour current understandings of occupation. The experience and meaning connected to occupation has generally gone un-noticed. It was not until the word occupation came about in circa 1340 that the notion of occupation could be explored and the experiences related to occupation revealed. As occupation became more recognised, particularly in relation to health and well-being by such groups as the Moral Treatment and the Arts and Crafts Movements, a shift occurred where occupation moved from being taken for granted to something that was noticed as having a connection to health. The establishment of occupational therapy in the 1920s saw occupation become the domain of a professional group and the notion of occupation became conceptualised in a particular way in relation to health. In doing so what was once taken-for-granted and not noticed by others was replaced with a focus on exploring occupation in terms of its component parts as a means to improve health. As a result the value of the experience of occupation was somewhat overlooked and the meaning of occupation left un-explored.

In more recent times, particularly with the development of occupational science, there has been an increased focus on exploring the connection between meaning and occupation. More often than not, this has been from the pre-conceived notions of occupation that have been articulated in the literature rather than from the perspective of lived experience. As I came to this study and to this review with my own understandings and beliefs about the meaning of occupation, I recognise you as the reader have also done so. We each now have a responsibility to be open to, and consider what the other voice has to say. Being open in this way allows us to search the literature further and to connect with past and present ideas and interpretations. As we do, we will find new meanings and come to our own understandings of the meaning of occupation.

CHAPTER THREE

Philosophical Underpinnings

Koch (1996) suggested that acknowledging the philosophy underpinning a study provides a soundness that would not otherwise exist. In this chapter I will introduce the philosophers and their philosophical notions that have been used to guide and direct this study, in order to show the interconnectedness between the philosophy from which the study originates and the methodology and method used. This chapter will outline the work of Heidegger and Gadamer as the two philosophers whose work underpins this study. The aim is not to give an overview of the entirety of their work but rather to highlight the key notions that have guided both my thinking and the processes that were developed while conducting this study.

Having been drawn to interpretive phenomenology because of its congruence with my own understandings of people and the world, the journey to understanding the philosophical notions that sit at the foundation of the study has allowed me to view the phenomenon through lenses I was not previously familiar with. As with other phenomenological researchers I have had to come to understand the complexity of new words and notions as part of the process. In terms of Heidegger's work I will explore his views on phenomenology and the notions of: the meaning of Being, Being in the world and Dasein. I will then move on to explore Gadamer's work related to hermeneutics in particular the notions of openness, prejudice and horizons.

Phenomenology

This study is situated in the tradition of phenomenology, which emerged at the end of the 19th century. Edmund Husserl (1859-1939) is considered to be the founder and central figure of the phenomenological movement (Cohen & Omery, 1994). Husserl criticised the positivist sciences and proposed an alternative to try to re-integrate the world of science and the "lifeworld". He called for the return to the lived world and world experience by coming back to the question "what, then,

are things?” The foundations of phenomenology in Husserl's view are that subjects are connected to the world where human beings come to a situation conscious of something that he called “intentionality”. As noted in Chapter One, a key aspect of Husserl's work was the notion of bracketing or putting to one side pre-conceived ideas so that phenomena would come directly into view. He considered that this would defend the validity and objectivity of the interpretation against the self-interest of the researcher thereby introducing the idea of rigorous science to phenomenology. The notion of bracketing does not sit comfortably with my own worldview. This is because of my own life experience where I, without thinking, draw on a range of knowledge and previous experience to come to understand complex situations, particularly in my practice as an occupational therapist. The knowing is always already there from which I come to fresh interpretations. As part of the process of growing and developing I have reflected on my understandings which have been challenged as new understandings have emerged. This notion of reflecting and considering previous experiences is one of the reasons I find myself more aligned to the work of Heidegger.

Heidegger the Person

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was born in Southern Germany, and was raised a Roman Catholic. He received his doctorate in 1913 and went on to work as Husserl's assistant. Husserl and Heidegger had growing intellectual differences and by 1920 had split, in part due to Heidegger's affiliation with the Nazi party and Husserl, who was Jewish, being barred from the University in which they both worked. Heidegger's career as a Lecturer at the Universities of Freiburg and Marburg led him to eventually gaining a full professorship at Marburg University. What was considered his greatest work “Being and Time” was first published in 1927 and translated into English in 1962. His career as an academic went from strength to strength until the end of World War Two when he was stripped of his right to teach.

As I began to understand the complex work of Heidegger I also gained insights into Heidegger the person and needed to convince myself of his trustworthiness. Since the end of World War Two, controversy has surrounded Heidegger's work because of his affiliation with the Nazi Party. Heidegger's documented connection

with the Nazi Party began when he accepted the Rectorship of the University of Freiburg in 1933, which was the year he became a member of the Party. Given that Heidegger's support of the political party can not be denied, I have attempted to understand his involvement with Nazism within the historical context in which Heidegger was placed. According to Young (1998), Heidegger was deeply conservative with a romantic attachment to his own national culture. At the time Heidegger was writing, German society was under going significant upheaval with a move toward urbanisation and capitalism, a trend occurring in other major European countries. Heidegger harked back to a cultural vision that lay in traditional values and beliefs centred on a sense of community and simple artisan based values. It seems that in the ideology of Fascism, Heidegger saw a political party that sought a return to these traditional cultural values and beliefs. As Hitler gained increasing influence at the helm of the Nazi party there was a shift to the extreme end of National Socialist beliefs, which saw the implementation of a policy of racial cleansing. Certainly it appears that Heidegger was in favour of what he saw as the positive aspects of Fascism, rather than the negative aspects that were advocated and implemented by Hitler. While it will never be clear exactly what Heidegger's political beliefs were, the issue of him being a member of the Nazi Party continues to be debated in the literature (Feldman, 2005; Harman 2007; Milchman & Rosenberg 2003; Young 1998), particularly regarding how and if Heidegger's political beliefs influenced his philosophy. To date, there are not any clear conclusions.

While Heidegger's political beliefs need to be acknowledged, I find that understanding his beliefs in the social and political context in which he was writing and working allows me to move past the negative association with the Nazi Party. As a consequence, I come to this study not only challenged by Heidegger's complex writings but by his complex beliefs. While acknowledging these beliefs and his association with the Nazi Party it is his writing that I have found thought provoking. His work has led me to be more open about the meaning of being and to look beyond the taken for granted. It is therefore the work of Heidegger in which this study is grounded.

Heidegger's Phenomenology

Heidegger describes phenomena as “that which shows itself in itself” (1927/1962, p. 52) and is a distinctive way in which something can be encountered. Yet he warns that “it is even possible for an entity to show itself as something which in itself it is not” (1927/1962, p. 51). It is possible that an entity looks like but is not that thing, it is a semblance. In addition, it is likely that something can appear but not show itself, such that “anything which thus fails to show itself, is also something which can never seem” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 52). The thing may indicate the phenomena and relate to it, but is not. Heidegger suggests that our understandings of being can remain hidden or that it may become “covered-up”. The phenomenon may at some point be uncovered and then later be covered up again. In addition an entity within the world may be so obvious that it goes unnoticed in the course of everyday activity. Finding a way of uncovering and discovering phenomena is the challenge for phenomenology. Heidegger tells us that phenomenology “is the science of the Being of entities” (1927/1962, p. 61). Phenomenology seeks to describe experiences as they are lived by the person in the everyday and to allow the phenomena to be interpreted and organised. Phenomenology can reveal that which is present but which is not already obvious.

The phenomena being explored in this study is the meaning of occupation. I have made the assumption that meaning is likely to be hidden in the doing of occupation. The meaning is likely to be disguised or covered-up, because occupation is our every day doing and happens with little consideration. Heidegger's notion of revealing the phenomena challenges me to look beyond the description of everyday activities and to peel back the layers searching for what is already there.

The Meaning of Being

Heidegger's life work rests on the fundamental question what is the “meaning of being?” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 24). This question has drawn inspiration from a number of other philosophers including the early Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle. These philosophers along with Heidegger do not answer the question directly. Rather Heidegger challenges us to discover the meaning of being. He

asks us to consider Being not as a substance or process or event but rather as a central aspect of who a person is. Being is a phenomena and the nature of that phenomenon is that it conceals and hides itself. It is said that “‘Being’ is the most universal and emptiest concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 21). Being is familiar, natural and so close to us that we do not actually recognise it and, as such, we struggle to show what it is.

Dasein

Heidegger considers that one of the unique characteristics of human beings is that we exist in the world with other people and we are able to wonder about our own existence. Heidegger (1927/1962) uses the term “Dasein” to describe the unique characteristic of reflecting on and wondering about our existence. For Heidegger the essence of Dasein is in its existence. Dasein has the ability to understand its being in terms of its existence in the world with others. The world is the context for existing and Dasein can never be separate from the world. It is only by being-in-the-world that we are able to find meaning and understanding.

Being-in-the-world

Being-in-the-world is the characteristic way in which Dasein exists; Dasein is inseparably connected to the-world and by being in the world Dasein exists with others. It is through being with others that Dasein’s being is disclosed. King (2001) indicates that the literal translation of Dasein is “being there” (p. 48), where the ‘there’ is the world and Dasein is always there, in the world. It is the world that places us in context with other people, tools, equipment and everything else that we are aware or unaware of. We become familiar with the world in our everyday existence. Heidegger tells us that Dasein gets lost in the everydayness, where everydayness according to him is the “average, undifferentiated way in which Dasein exists over most of his lifetime, living unto the day, taking for variety what the day brings, what chances and events, what successes and failures come to him from his world” (King, 2001, p. 41). It is in this everydayness that meaning can be found, but is not obvious. Familiarity with the world allows us to focus on the ways in which we make use of it. When we are able to focus on the ways the world becomes available to us, Heidegger calls this the ‘as-structure’. When this occurs, the way in which the world can be used becomes more

meaningful to us. Heidegger warned that “Dasein’s fundamental tendency is to turn away from himself to a self-forgetful absorption in his occupations in company with other people” (as cited in King, 2001, p. 41). It is with relative ease that we become lost in the everydayness and because of this, meaning may seem to be self evident and not worthy of investigation.

Meaning

Dasein as a self-interpretating being is in a world where meaning is created. Meaning according to Heidegger, is that “from which something is understandable as the thing it is” (King, 2001, p. 6). Meaning enables us to understand things as they are and we are only able to understand a thing from a world of human existence. Yet in our everydayness the meaning of being is hidden. The nature of Being as a phenomena is that it disguises and conceals itself. In attempting to find meaning, Heidegger’s notion of horizon is fundamental. It is from the horizon of being in the world that we primarily understand things. King (2001) tells us that “the world of our own existence is the horizon in which our everyday understanding moves” (p. 6). For me this means that we interpret our everyday experiences through the eye of background meaning which includes our past knowledge, attitudes and experiences. Heidegger’s view is that our understandings are passed down through the language and culture that we were born into. We are never free from our pre-understandings and it is from this horizon that our understanding moves. It is the horizon of our world that is primarily “meaning-giving”.

For this study, I must let the meaning show itself from the horizon of the people telling the stories. This will require letting the story unfold with all the details of the story coming forward as is deemed relevant by the person telling the story. I must also be aware that I need to go beyond what is taken for granted to uncover meaning. This will require me to look further than what appears at first glance. In addition, I must also remain aware that the meaning of occupation will be found in the occupation itself.

Being-in-the world with Others

Heidegger (1927/1962) describes Dasein's basic structure as a "Being-with". When we participate in the human world we do so with other human beings. It is in a world with others that Dasein exists "essentially for the sake of others. He understands them in advance as the selves who are in the world in the same way as himself" (King, 2001, p. 76). It is in our everyday contact with others that we constantly compare ourselves to them. It is through their eyes that Dasein understands itself and measures itself on what these others have and do not have, what they have achieved and what they are able to do. Heidegger describes these others as the "they". Dasein is a way of being that is concerned with its own Being, yet it must constantly conform and assign itself to the occupations, roles and equipment provided by the they. The they stipulate and determine what Dasein does and how Dasein behaves and functions within the world. Dasein is constantly comparing itself to others and how Dasein is conforming to what the 'they' have stipulated. King (2001) explained that "Dasein draws the possibilities of his being from what is prescribed and decided on by others" (p. 81).

It is in the difference from the other, that Dasein understands itself. There is a distance created between how similar or different Dasein is to the other and it is this distance that separates Dasein's possibilities from the others which Heidegger calls "distantiality". Possibilities are only recognised in the doing of something and where Dasein comes to understand itself by what it can do, or not do, given its own possibilities within the world in which it exists. Dasein may also get lost in the averageness of the they. We find ourselves conforming to what is expected and this creates a "levelling down" of all possibilities of Being. This is where we become more like the other and conform to what is generally accepted by the wider whole.

Being-in-the-world with others has particular relevance for this study, as participants will be influenced by the other. This may mean that they only tell me what they believe I need to hear. I therefore, will need to draw from them the stories of their occupations that are most relevant to them. In addition the notion of the they, suggests that people are likely to have a sense of what it is the they

expects them to do and which occupations are given value. I need to be aware of the views that both the participants and I hold about occupations and how these beliefs may influence what they tell me and what I hear.

Understanding

From Heidegger's perspective, Being is understanding. Human beings always have an understanding of what we are already familiar with. We understand in relation to what we can do given our own possibilities in a particular situation. We project available ways to be-in-the-world, which involves understanding what matters. Understanding according to Heidegger occurs on three levels which he calls the "fore-structure", "the fore-having" and the "fore-conception". Fore-having is where our understanding is grounded in what has gone before and is our everyday interpretation. Our fore-sight is what we see in advance or have in view and is how we envisage the future, and lastly our fore-conception which is an interpretation that has already been decided on (Dreyfus, 1991).

The stories from the participants in this study will describe the occupations they engage in and each person will have their own fore-having or understanding of what it is like to engage in those occupations. The participants are also likely to understand the possibilities of themselves as they engage in that occupation, such as how well they will or will not be able to perform the occupation. The challenge for me is to go beyond the obvious and uncover the layers on which this understanding rests.

Moving to Interpretation

Heidegger describes how discourse expressed through language is the way in which we convey Being-in-the-world (1927/1962, p. 204). When we speak, we present our interpretation and therefore our understanding of the world. It is through language that Dasein is disclosed. Disclosedness may occur not only through talking but also hearing. Dasein hears because it understands. Keeping silent can also show understanding. In keeping silent a person can develop understanding because it is the keeping silent "that gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent"

(Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 208). For Heidegger language is the fundamental way in which meaning is shared: it is what helps us understand Being-in-the-world. I will now turn to the work of Gadamer to show how his work, which built on Heidegger's, can assist with uncovering meaning.

Adding the Philosophical Thoughts of Gadamer

Gadamer (1900-2002), a student of Heidegger, extended Heidegger's work by asking "how is understanding possible?" For Gadamer the "real power of hermeneutic consciousness is our ability to see what is questionable" (1997, p. 13). Gadamer placed a strong emphasis on language and the importance of dialogue. He highlighted the significance of the movement between question and answer and how this informs our understanding. Gadamer also described the importance of the question we ask as a way of discovering something new. In this section, I will explore Gadamer's notions of openness, prejudice and horizon before moving on to uncover the notion of the hermeneutic circle.

Gadamer's work is important because he asked that we "remain open to the meaning of the other person or text" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 271). This openness means that you do not go in search of agreement of your own understandings: rather you are prepared to let the text tell you something new. It is in the difference between one's own understandings and what the text presents that new understandings can emerge. In letting new understandings come forth, it is important that the interpreter becomes aware of the understandings that they carry with them and that the interpreter identifies his or her own bias or prejudice. Gadamer's notions remind me to be open to new possibilities and to allow participants to take me with them in their conversations. He points out that it is "the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what really speaks to us" (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 272). For me this means that in the process of engaging in hermeneutic interpretation I will need to uncover and make explicit my own prejudices about the meaning of occupation. This will allow the meaning of occupation to show through from the text of the participants in the context of my own understandings.

Prejudice

“Prejudice” from Gadamer’s perspective means “a judgment that is rendered before all elements that determine a situation have been finally examined” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 273). He identified two kinds of prejudice, one “due to human authority and that due to over hastiness” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 274). Gadamer seems to suggest that we may simply accept what has gone before because it comes from an authoritative source and that in our haste we do not critique knowledge or understanding in terms of its credibility. I need to ensure that I have not been too hasty in accepting understandings about occupation that have developed over time and which are situated in text books and other learned material. Indeed the nature of hermeneutic inquiry necessitates that I make explicit what my understandings of occupation are in order to be open to the possibility that what I have accepted and acted on as the truth in the past may not necessarily be the case.

Horizon

Gadamer emphasised the importance of questioning from within our “horizon” and extended Heidegger’s notion of horizons to mean “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 301). The person who does not have a horizon is said not to see far enough beyond that which is nearest to them. Gadamer (1960/2004) explains this further, “a person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small” (p. 302). The surrounding horizon is set within a historical context, where the past is always in motion: it is never at a standstill. The temporal nature of horizons means that as we move into a horizon, so the horizon moves with us and is always in motion. Horizons are always subject to the effects of history, “the horizon of the present can not be formed without the past” (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 305). A fusion of horizons is created when our past and present horizons unite and it is at this point that we can begin to understand. To bring about this fusion in a regulated way is what Gadamer calls the ‘historically effected consciousnesses’.

In order to make my horizon explicit part of the journey of conducting this study has been to situate myself in terms of who I am in my professional and personal

roles and what the theoretical and philosophical influences on my horizons have been, as noted in Chapter One. The purpose of doing this is to uncover what has gone before and to present my horizon as part of the process of understanding.

Importance of Language

Underpinning hermeneutics is Gadamer's notion that "language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs" (1960/2004, p. 390). In hermeneutical interpretation language is much more than mere words, it is bound up with our traditions, with our present and in negotiating and making sense of the world. Language has a fundamental connection with our understanding of Being and the world. It is through language that we are able to understand the nature of Being, to ask questions and to engage in dialogue. Without language there would be no written words, no text to interpret and as a consequence there would no shared understanding of the meaning of occupation. Gadamer (1960/2004) pointed out that we need to be aware that entering into dialogue supposes a common language. I need to be aware in terms of this study that when a participant uses words to describe their experiences I may take from these words a particular meaning, just as you the reader may see another meaning. As Gadamer highlighted "a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth" (1960/2004, p. 385). It is language that allows a thing that already exists to emerge; language is the way in which understanding and agreement come about and the way in which a fusion of horizons takes place. Without language there would not be dialogue and without dialogue, understanding would not come into view. According to Gadamer "the meaning that is transmitted to me from the past is one which challenges me, and which I always interpret in the light of my own possibilities, of my categories, or, better of my language" (Grondin, 1999/2003, p. 59). The next section will explore the notion of the hermeneutic circle as key part of coming to understand.

Hermeneutic Circle

The notion of the ‘hermeneutic circle’ was first used by the hermeneutic scholar Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher gave the circle emphasis and made it the heart of his theory of interpretation. He described the circle thus:

There is... an opposition between the unity of the whole and the individual parts of the work, so that the tasks could be set in a twofold manner, namely to understand the unity of the whole via the individual parts and the value of the individual parts via the unity of the whole. (1998, p. 109)

Although Heidegger did not describe the circle in this way, he did note the importance of the circular movement in the process of interpretation. For Heidegger the idea of a circle was relevant because it “exposes the fact that every interpretation arises from a prior project or prior understanding” (Grondin, 1999/2003, p. 80). It was Gadamer who returned to Schleiermacher’s description and associated the circle as the whole and the parts, particularly in relation to the interpretation of text. For Gadamer the circle invites engagement in a process where there is constant revision that is linked to fore understandings about the subject at hand in a context of anticipation about future understandings. The circle evokes a sense of constant movement that is influenced by prior understandings and a quest for and a move toward new understandings. According to Gadamer “all understanding emerges with the aim and in a context of meaning, of which the circle invites us to take note” (Grondin, 1999/2003, p. 84).

The notion of the hermeneutic circle allows new understandings to come to light from the interpretation of the text from the historical, cultural and literary contexts in which the text originated and was interpreted. As with this study, the circle has no beginning or end, it is in a constant state of flux, expanding and moving forward as new understandings come to light. The idea of the circular nature of understanding will guide my interpretation in this study. Rather than seeing this study as an end point, it is part of the whole that contributes to the understanding of the meaning of occupation. As I hear and read participants’ stories I need to explore both the parts of what they are telling me and consider these parts in

relation to the whole experience. I will also remain open to having my understandings expanded as I uncover the meaning that lies hidden in the text.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the philosophical notions which will guide this study. The journey has involved coming to understand the work of Heidegger and Gadamer as they relate to this study. Rather than provide a summary of their significant works, I have focused on aspects of their philosophical approaches that ground this study. In particular I have articulated that this study draws on Heidegger's notions of Dasein, Being-in-the-world-with-others, meaning and understanding. Heidegger's fundamental question, 'what is the meaning of Being?' has challenged me to look beyond the obvious and to show that which conceals itself. I have summarised Gadamer's key notions of prejudice and horizon and highlighted the importance of language in the context of which understanding emerges. I have also explored the hermeneutic circle as a notion that acknowledges new understandings are continually expanding and moving forward and that in the interpretation of text both the parts and the whole are considered. In the following chapter I will describe how this philosophical base has guided the development of my own process of inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR

Method

This chapter describes the way in which I strove to access and research the meaning of occupation, the phenomenon of this study. I now needed, as Heidegger (1927/1962) suggested, to find my own way of accessing and revealing the meaning of the phenomenon. The nature of phenomenology is that it does not provide prescribed steps for research inquiry. The challenge for me has been to engage in a process of inquiry that would provide access to the phenomenon while ensuring that the process was consistent with the principles and tenets of phenomenology. One such tenet is that phenomenological inquiry is grounded in the notion of reflexivity (Grondin, 1999/2003). Showing how reflexivity was incorporated into this study is an essential part of the method. Another important aspect of this chapter is to make explicit the interpretive trail. The interpretive trail, as well as adding rigour to the study, will allow the reader to begin their own conversation with the texts, stories and themes which will generate fresh understandings from the interpretations presented (Whitehead, 2004). Weinsheimer (1985) contended, “our own understandings, like those of our predecessors, however apparently definitive, never seem to be the last word” (p. 177). In this chapter I show what I did and identify: the principles of phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry that have been drawn on, participant selection, the process for data gathering and analysis, and finally how issues of trustworthiness were considered.

Principles of Phenomenological Hermeneutic Inquiry

The aim of phenomenology as described by Heidegger (1927/1962) is to come to an understanding of the meaning of the nature of Being and to provide an interpretive description of experience. The meaning, and indeed the phenomenon, may be hidden in the everydayness of the experience. Phenomenology seeks to uncover the phenomenon and allow it to show itself. Phenomenology “offers accounts of experienced space, body, time and human interactions as we live

them” (van Manen, 1990, p. 184). One of the difficulties with phenomenological inquiry, as van Manen reminded us, is that it is not that we know too little but that through our pre-understandings we know too much. In-line with interpretive phenomenology I have begun, in Chapter One, to make my pre-understandings explicit in relation to ordinary everyday occupations that people engage in.

The notion of a hermeneutic researcher developing and following a step-by-step process of inquiry does not sit well with this methodology. In this regard Diekelmann (2005) described interpretive thinking as “a proceeding rather than a procedure” (p. 5). Rather than a set process the researcher engages with the text of the participants and a process of inquiry emerges. The researcher responds to the process as it happens, reading and re-reading the text, delving into philosophical works, writing and re-writing, moving forward as new understandings emerge. This method according to Diekelmann:

...is rooted in being on a way but not from a fixed point toward a predetermined end. Being on the way is a limit, not where something comes to an end, but where anything is enabled to reveal an ownmostness that is not necessarily rooted in human cognition but which humans must necessarily relate. (2005, p. 7)

As the process of inquiry developed I became aware that the key to coming to understand both the work of the philosophers and the meaning of occupation was to write. When I read the work of the philosophers I had a sense that I understood. It was not until I had to describe philosophical notions in my own words that I came face-to-face with my own lack of understanding. Gadamer (1960/2004) drew attention to hermeneutical practice citing Schleiermacher who distinguished between “a looser hermeneutical praxis, in which understanding follows automatically, and a stricter one that begins with the premise that what follows automatically is misunderstanding” (p. 185). It was in the process of engaging with writing that I began to question and draw on the interpretations of other scholars. The writing allowed what I was thinking to be seen. It was during this process that colleagues and supervisors asked ‘what does that mean?’ and so I had to read some more, each time returning to what I had written, seeing the gaps and re-writing to show the new understandings. The writing is a journey, a “going

with the process” of reading what is written and coming to new understandings. It is also about being aware that it does not end and will never be exact. As Gadamer explained “written texts present the real hermeneutic task. Writing is a self-alienation. Overcoming it, reading the text, is thus the highest task of understanding” (1960/2004, p. 392).

Approval for the Study

Ethical approval for the study was sought and granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee in April 2004, (Appendix 1). As a Pakeha¹ researcher I was aware of the requirement to consult with Maori² under the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi³ and I sought advice from Maori as part of this process. This was in order to develop a network for support and guidance if any participants identified as Maori or if any specific issues related to Maori arose. A letter detailing the outcome of the consultative process from Karen Below is provided (Appendix 2). No particular cultural issues arose and specific cultural advice was not required. Approval was granted to recruit between 6 and 12 participants who met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria stipulated that participants; were able to communicate effectively in English, were aged 20 or older and had experienced an occupational disruption which could have included a change in job, retirement, or the way in which their occupations were usually carried out.

Recruiting and Selecting Participants

Because I set out to explore the meaning of occupation I wanted to recruit participants who were able to articulate a range of occupational experiences. Experiences following an occupational disruption were the ‘way in’ to conversations, enabling participants to reflect on how their occupations had changed. It is the things that we no longer have or are no longer able to do that we

¹ A non-Maori New Zealander. This term was originally used to refer to the peoples who colonized New Zealand in the 19th century. It is now used generally to refer to people of Caucasian origin who identify as New Zealanders.

² A member of the people living in New Zealand before the arrival of European settlers.

³ The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between Maori and Pakeha, underpins all political and social activity in contemporary New Zealand society.

become most aware of. This is reflected in Gadamer's (1997) story of the pocket knife:

But in fact one cannot simply lose his pocket knife in such a fashion that it is no longer present. When one has lost a long familiar implement such as a pocket knife, it demonstrates its existence by the fact that one continually misses it. (p. 235)

As an example, in losing one's job, the meaning of 'work' is understood more clearly than for the person who continues to go to work day after day. The nature of hermeneutic phenomenology requires participants to be able to offer insightful reflections and share their stories in a way that gives the full sense of their experience. Therefore participants needed to be able to articulate their stories clearly in English. In addition, as the researcher I needed to have access to the participants to enable face to face interviews. The practicalities of this meant that participants needed to live within the broad urban and rural geographical area in which I am located.

Participants were recruited to the study using purposive sampling by the way of an intermediary or third party. Informal professional and personal networks were used to enlist the intermediaries who were supplied with information sheets about the study (Appendix 3). The involvement of an intermediary was to ensure that there no coercion from myself as the researcher toward potential participants to engage in something they did not want to.

When the intermediaries had identified someone who they felt may be interested in participating in the study they supplied an information sheet and consent form to the potential participant. It was agreed that participants would then contact me directly by email or telephone, or if they preferred give permission for the intermediary to pass on their contact details to me. On receiving potential participants' details I would then contact them by telephone to discuss the study, ensure that they met the inclusion criteria and to answer any questions that they had. If participants agreed to take part in the study I would then arrange an interview time and place that was convenient to them. Some participants had

misplaced their information sheet so on first contact I agreed to post another information sheet to them and then arranged a follow up telephone call a few days later to ascertain their interest in taking part.

Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity

Prior to each interview written consent was obtained using a consent form (Appendix 4). Each participant was asked to identify a pseudonym for themselves which was assigned to all audiotapes and transcripts. Only myself and the individual participants knew the pseudonym that they had selected. One participant was asked to select a different pseudonym, as the initial pseudonym selected created confusion between the gender associated with the name and the person's actual gender.

It was agreed with participants that identifying names could be used throughout the audio taping of the interview to allow the conversation to flow. However any identifying names, details or words would be removed from the transcript and a pseudonym applied to the person or people they had named during the conversation. The crafted stories were returned to participants for review at which stage they could amend or delete any parts of the data. All audiotapes and transcripts were identifiable only by the selected pseudonym and were stored in a locked filing cabinet. All computer files were password protected.

The Study Participants

The study participants represent a range of the adult rural and urban population of a large New Zealand city. The participants ranged in age from 27 to 67. They had experienced an assortment of occupational disruptions. Of the 12 participants 10 identified as Pakeha, or with European heritage and two as Maori. A brief description of the study participants is offered in Table 1, which includes their pseudonym, age, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and their occupational disruption. The purpose of this description is to situate their voice in the context of the study. I ask the reader not to focus on the occupational disruption but rather to hear the meaning of all of their occupations.

Table 1: Participant Information

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Occupational Disruption at time of interview
Lucy	58	Female	Pakeha	Researcher	Leaving religious order
Pearl	27	Female	Pakeha	Full time student	Leaving full time work to become a full time student
Amanda	32	Female	European	New mother at home	New baby 7 months ago
Stephen	46	Male	Maori	Health service manager	Coming out as a gay man 1 year ago
Jane	43	Male	Pakeha	Truck driver, housewife, grounds keeper	Head injury 6 months ago, going out in public as a transgender person 6 months ago
BJ	46	Female	Maori	Manager of her home, partnership and property	Semi retirement 6 years ago
Bob	45	Male	European	Driver	Major burnout 2 years ago
Claire	46	Female	European	Health practitioner	Started independent practice in 2003, which includes being on-call
Frank	66	Male	European	Owner and manager of a business	Ruptured Achilles tendon 2 months ago
Mary	48	Female	Pakeha	Music teacher, trainee florist	Head injury 4 years ago
Roger	47	Male	European	Trade desk consultant for a building supply company	Immigrated to New Zealand 3 years ago
Sally-Anne	67	Female	European	Home maker, voluntary worker	Retired 2 months ago

Were There Enough Participants?

The nature of this study regarding the meaning of occupation is broad, and as a result I considered it necessary to ensure that I had sufficient data. While there has

been much discussion on the sample size within qualitative research, ultimately the researcher needs to determine sample size. The size of the sample should be based on the nature of the question and the method used, rather than pre-determined recommendations on optimal sample size (Morse, 2000). For this reason and in discussion with my supervisors I sought and was granted ethical approval to recruit up to 12 participants. I wanted to ensure that I was not overwhelmed with data and was able spend adequate time with each of the participants' stories hence limiting the maximum number of participants to 12. As I progressed with the interviews I came to realise that the stories from the participants were rich and experiential. Following discussion with my supervisors the decision was taken to recruit the maximum number of participants to ensure that I had sufficient data on a wide range of occupations. I came to know the stories of the participants intimately and to appreciate what they had shared with me. While there is no doubt that more participants would have added to the diversity and richness of the study I believe that is important to hear the voices of each participant and to dwell with the emerging insights rather than become overwhelmed with stories.

The other question that remains is did the participants that were recruited reflect the diverse nature of the New Zealand population and their occupations? The participants that were selected for the study do not by any means reflect the ethnic diversity or range of occupations that exist within contemporary New Zealand society. This study makes no generalised claims of 'truth' rather it only seeks to question and offer 'thinking', as is the nature of a hermeneutic phenomenology study. As Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson and Spence (2008) pointed out:

The quest of Heideggerian phenomenology is not to provide answers, for that shuts down and closes thinking. It is rather to invite readers to make their own journey, to be exposed to the thinking of the authors and to listen to the call of their own thinking.

The participants experienced a range of occupational disruptions and in some instances the disruption could be considered to be extreme, as for some participants the disruption involved major life changes. This was not my intention

and it was not until I had begun the interviews that the full extent of the occupational disruption became apparent. As I indicated previously, the disruption opened conversations and revealed stories of occupation, it was the occupation rather than the disruption that was the focus of this study.

Collecting the Data

The purpose of the phenomenological interview is to develop a conversational relationship with participants in order to gather descriptions of their experience in relation to the question at hand. The researcher needs to get as close to the individual participant's experience of the phenomena as possible, and descriptions from the participants need to be rich, deep and thick (van Manen, 1990). Interviews were conducted in a setting of the participant's choice, and with the exception of three interviews, the interviews were conducted in the participant's home. The remaining three were conducted at my workplace. Ensuring that participants were comfortable and free to talk allowed me to develop a conversational dialogue in a setting that was agreeable to them. We frequently started with tea or coffee at the participant's suggestion. This set the tone for a relaxed, informal conversation.

The interview was largely unstructured. I opened the interview by asking participants to describe the kinds of things they had been doing over the last week to 10 days. I did not seek specific information on the disruption that had occurred. I sought stories about the everyday occupations that the participant had engaged in. As the conversation unfolded, so too did details of the disruption. I asked the participants to tell me if and how the disruption had impacted on engaging in the occupation in any way, ensuring that the focus of the conversation remained on their occupations. I was then able to follow the lead of the participants, only occasionally having to prompt them to uncover stories of their everyday occupations. There was a fine balance between allowing the conversation to flow and interrupting to seek more detail or clarify a point. Each interview took between 90 to 120 minutes. The interviews took place alongside a person's everyday life and on some occasions were interrupted by a ringing telephone or a family member entering the room. These interruptions tended to be brief

interludes and helped me to get a sense of the participants in the context of their everyday life.

Several participants shared with me that they had not revealed to anyone else the impact their occupational disruption had on their everyday occupations or on those close to them. On more than one occasion a participant was moved to tears as they told their stories. This highlighted to me how personal the stories were and that together the individual participant and I had created a place that was 'safe' enough for them to share their experiences.

The interviews were audiotaped using two tape recorders which were placed strategically close to the participant. The second tape recorder was used as an auxiliary to ensure that nothing was missed. Audiotaping allowed me to immerse myself in the conversation of the participants, to be attentive and to seek clarification if need be. The interviews tended to come to a natural close as the participants came to the end of their stories. At the end of the first interview the participant recalled an important detail which they wanted me to capture which required me setting up the tape recorder again. For subsequent interviews I left the tape recorders running to ensure that I captured the final detail or the last story. Following each interview I made notes of my thoughts and any other details that were relevant to the interview.

Once the interview was completed, the audio tapes were transcribed by a paid typist who had signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix 5). The services of a typist proved beneficial as it allowed me more time to work with the data. Once the transcript was available I would read through the transcript and listen to the tape to ensure that the typist had captured all the detail. This allowed me to re-familiarise myself with the data. The process of deriving narratives from transcripts is not well documented in phenomenological research as Caelli (2001) pointed out. In her research she discovered that "deriving the story from the interview transcripts is indeed an accepted way of proceeding" (p. 278). As with Caelli, I was confronted with a decision about how to proceed without any clear guidance from the literature.

I began the analysis of the data by reading each completed transcript, identifying and marking the parts that described a particular episode of occupation. I removed sections that wandered away from the phenomenon or material that seemed irrelevant. I also removed the questions I had asked, making sure that anything that was relevant or seemed to have directed the participant to answer in a certain way were retained and marked for clarification. I then began reconstructing the stories in relation to the occupations that a participant had described. All of the transcripts contained several stories about the participant's occupations and to identify the stories I gave each one a title. These stories were then crafted into more refined stories using the participants' own words verbatim as far as possible to reconstruct the story in a logical order. The refined stories along with the pieces of transcript, from which they were drawn, were returned to the participants for clarification, addition or deletion of words and for verification. Full transcripts were also provided to participants for their information. The covering letter that accompanied the transcripts (Appendix 6) explained that the nature of the study meant that I needed to refine their stories for the reader and in some cases add details to help make the story clearer. The letter went on to ask the participants to read through the stories to make sure that they accurately reflected their occupations. I did have telephone conversations with several participants to clarify details they had changed when they had returned their crafted stories to me.

Working with the Data

The data I captured provided a range of stories that represented a broad cross section of occupations. When engaging in data analysis the dynamic interplay between six research activities in hermeneutic phenomenological research is discussed by van Manen (1990). These six activities include: turning to a phenomenon, investigating experience as it is lived, reflecting on themes, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, remaining orientated and considering the parts and the whole. The strategies that were developed in the process for data analysis for this study were diverse. Once participants returned their crafted stories and I had made the requested modifications I began to work with the stories of each of the participants. I took each story and read and re-read

it, each time asking questions of the stories to gain greater understanding. These questions included: what ‘calls’ the person to their occupation? What was the experience of doing the occupation like? What did the story tell me about what was not said? What didn’t happen or who was missing? What ‘meaning’ showed through the story?

I would then take a blank piece of paper and note down what ‘seemed to matter’ in relation to the participants’ occupations. At regular intervals I discussed these with my supervisors who shared with me their responses and questions which helped me to see the things I had missed. This in turn led me back to the data with fresh eyes. Gradually I learned to move my interpretation away from what was happening for individual participants to pulling out what was significant in relation to the meaning of occupation across the various stories. As I did so an assortment of themes began to emerge. Initially I identified four themes which were later refined to three. I engaged in a process of “mind-mapping” to clarify these emerging themes. The process of mind-mapping assisted me with ‘coming to see’ both the theme and the elements that were connected with a particular theme. The creative process that I engaged in, allowed me to visually represent: each theme, the elements of the theme, and how they were connected and interconnected. This process assisted in clarifying the essence of and giving a name to each theme. The diagrams related to each theme are attached as Appendix 7 - The call, Appendix 8 - Being-with and Appendix 9 - Possibilities. I then began to write about these themes going back to the work of Heidegger, Gadamer and Buber to bring new understandings to the data. During the process of interpretation it was important for me to informally and formally share emerging themes and notions with research and occupational therapy colleagues. This was to ensure my interpretations were justified. The critique, discussion and the affirming nods suggested that the themes that I had arrived at were supported.

As I continued the journey of writing and rewriting around the themes I would often go down a path that lead me away from the experience of occupation, or I would get lost in the detail of a story. When this happened I would engage in my own occupations, spending time in the garden or going out with friends. This

allowed me to take time away from the data and was often when new understandings arose. I would keep a note book close by to capture these thoughts. As I returned to the writing I would reflect on these jottings in relation to the data. It was during the process of thinking, writing and reflecting, that the connections between the parts and the whole would come into view.

Trustworthiness

One of the tensions of phenomenological hermeneutic research is ensuring that the research stands up to the scrutiny of others and is trustworthy. The nature of the methodology requires meanings to ‘emerge’ from the data in the form of themes or categories whose origins often remain unclear (Clarke, 1999). The challenge for me as the researcher is to establish a framework that makes explicit how decisions were made and how themes were arrived at. In addition the ideas that are presented can not just be the researcher’s own and they must make sense to a range of people. Rolfe (2006) described the challenges for qualitative research in terms of trustworthiness, rigour, validity and quality. He described the processes addressed by Guba and Lincoln (1989), Field and Morse (1985), Koch and Harrington (1998), and Sandelowski (1993). In his critique Rolfe suggested that the search for “a generic framework of assessing the quality of qualitative research should be abandoned in favour of individual judgements of individual studies” (p. 309). In addition to Rolfes’ work I considered a number of approaches to trustworthiness taken by phenomenological researchers (Annells, 1999; Ballinger, 2004; Davies & Dodd, 2002; Koch, 2006; Koch & Harrington, 1998; Maggs-Rapport, 2001; Tuckett, 2005). I decided to select the four criterion proposed by Annells (1999) for evaluating phenomenological research as the most appropriate and straightforward for this study.

The four discrete criteria proposed by Annells (1999) are: Is the research an understandable and appreciable product? Is the process of inquiry understandable? Is the research a useful product - is it able to inform practice and benefit people? Has an appropriate inquiry approach been used? Each of these four criteria will be explored in relation to this study.

Is the Research an Understandable and Appreciable Product?

This criterion is used to consider the presentation of the research report and findings. Annells (1999) suggested that findings should be presented in a way that is interesting, comprehensible and appreciated by the audience. If this research report is to be appreciable and understandable then it must have within it many voices. I have presented preliminary findings to occupational therapy and academic audiences on a variety of occasions. The feedback from these audiences has been reflected on as part of the process of engaging in this study. Throughout this report I have included voices of the participants, scholars and myself to explore and describe the meaning of occupation. I foresee that the text of this study will allow recognition of the experience of occupation and challenge the reader to come to their own understandings of the phenomena.

Is the Process of Inquiry Understandable?

The second criterion identified by Annells (1999) is concerned with having a clearly identifiable trail of decisions related to the method that led to the interpretation. There needs to be a clear trail showing what and how I came to the interpretations I did, based on a credible, logical and understandable process. I also need to be consistent with the philosophical underpinnings that guided this study. It is within this chapter that much of the 'laying open' of the research trail is conveyed. In addition the fore structures, reflective decision making and explicit reasoning that has led to the interpretations has been shown, making each stage of the study and the interpretation of text transparent.

Is the Research a Useful Product?

Annells' (1999) third criterion relates to the usefulness of the study. The study must show that it has potential to impact either theoretically or practically. Within this criterion I have included Ballinger's (2004) criteria of 'utility'. I have constantly remained aware throughout the study of my obligation to professional colleagues and consumers of health services. This study may influence how occupation is understood or equally importantly in influencing change in health, education or social service provision or practices. This will be addressed in the discussion chapter in relation to occupational therapy practice and education, and occupational science.

Is this an Appropriate Inquiry Approach?

The final criterion identified by Annells (1999) addressed the issue of whether the type of phenomenological approach is compatible and suitable for the research question. Furthermore consideration needs to be given to the congruency between the method used and the underlying philosophical notions that guide the study. Within this criterion I have included the notion of reflexivity which is integral in all phenomenological work (Koch, 2006; Koch & Harrington, 1998; Rolfe, 2006; van Manen, 1990). I must declare my own pre-understandings, as I have done throughout this report, and I have described how I remained open to new understandings and possibilities as they arose during the course of this study. Finally the research report reflects the relationship between the question, philosophical underpinnings, the method and the uncovered meanings and understandings.

Conclusion

The intent of this chapter has been to show the connections between the underlying philosophy of this study and the process of inquiry that was developed and which underpins the research. Annells (1999) conceptualisation of rigour in phenomenological inquiry has been used to 'lay open' issues of trustworthiness. In each chapter I have attempted to meet the criteria for trustworthiness. However the question still remains, is this study trustworthy? You the reader will have to judge this based on the context in which this study joins and creates the conversation about the meaning of occupation. In the following three chapters I will present the interpretations of the meaning of occupation.

CHAPTER FIVE

The call

Overview

Our everyday doing is often taken for granted. We simply get on and do the things that we need or want to do. On the surface occupation can appear ordinary, common and unremarkable. Occupation could be seen as a means to an end, getting from A to B, making something or creating connections with others, and yet it is much more. In the everydayness of going about our lives the complexity of what lies behind occupation is easily over-looked and remains hidden. An occupation occurs in a context, in the world and with others. The complexity lies in what at first glance appears to be simple and uncomplicated.

In attempting to uncover the meaning of occupation by drawing on insights from participants' lived experience, these next three chapters will offer interpretations of these experiences. Each chapter is informed by philosophical underpinnings that expose different aspects of the meaning of occupation. This is in no way a complete picture, rather an offering that may lead to and compliment further understandings in the future. While the chapters are presented in a linear format, this is not a true representation as they are inter-connected, like three cogs in a wheel that can only turn in unison with each other.

This first chapter opens the discussion noting that in the busyness of engaging in occupation what calls a person to a particular occupation is seldom clearly visible. From my own experience what is lost in the everydayness comes to the fore at a time of change or crisis. This is when what really matters reveals itself, and as a result there is a call to action. In this chapter the meaning of occupation will draw on Heidegger's notions of the call, Dasein and 'care'. It is through care that what is important or significant to a person can reveal itself in the intensity of the occupations in which he or she chooses to or chooses not to engage. I will show how Heidegger's notions of care, concern, solitude, and attunement and van

Manen's notion of worry reveal themselves. This will bring to the fore what lies at the heart of occupation. By this I mean what is central to a person, what compels them to engage in one occupation over another. I will reveal that the 'heart' is often hidden but includes the concern that a person has for others in the world, the things in the world or the world itself. In addition, I will show that it is through occupation that concern is made explicit in the things a person does or alternatively does not do through the call.

Underpinnings from Heidegger

Heidegger's inquiry into the 'Being' of man is concerned with the ways in which people understand both their own Being and the Being of others. His inquiry is based on the notion of man as Dasein, where "the essence of Dasein lies in its existence" (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 67). This means that each of us has our own Dasein, which we lay claim to and is ours alone. In addition Dasein and the world are inseparable and as such Dasein needs others in the world, to reflect back what it is like. "Dasein needs the world as much as the world, as 'significance', needs it. They need one another in the strong sense that neither can be conceived in the others absence" (Cooper, 1996, p. 30). Dasein's self-reflective nature and the inseparableness of Dasein and the world is illustrated in the following passage about the shoemaker:

The shoemaker who wants to understand himself, what 'makes him tick' looks around him – at this workshop, his family, and so on. For it is from what he is involved in that his 'own self' is reflected back to him. Since each of us is what he pursues and cares for we understand ourselves through understanding our world. (Cooper, 1996, pp. 30-31)

I take this excerpt to mean that we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we care about. We understand ourselves starting from them because Dasein finds itself primarily in engagement with what draws us into activity. In Heidegger's view, central to Dasein's Being-in-the-world is the notion of Sorge, 'care'. It is described by Heidegger as "the primordial state of being of Dasein as it strives toward authenticity" (as cited in Steiner, 1989, p. 100). It is through care that we are able to understand ourselves

and our existence, “each one of us is what he pursues and cares for” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 147). Care is the anxiety or worry that arises out of our apprehension regarding the future, and can be as much related to external causes as the inner state. Heidegger described the complexity of care in more detail, explaining that “the phenomenon of care in its totality is essentially something that cannot be torn asunder; so any attempts to trace it back to special acts or drives like willing and wishing or urge and addiction, or to construct it out of these will be unsuccessful” (1927/1962, p. 238). Care in this regard is not a practical type of care, such as the tasks a caregiver would perform for a sick person, rather it lies much deeper. Care is there before we come into contact with others or with things in the world.

In relation to care are the notions of concern and solicitude. It is in the solicitude, the Being-with that we show care, and it is through care that Dasein begins to understand itself. Solicitude is anxiety or worry for other people. Everyday Being-with-one-another shows itself between two extremes. The first is inauthentic solicitude which is dominating and relieves the other of care and in its concern puts itself in the other’s place, it ‘leaps in’. Heidegger’s notion of leaping in implies a sense of taking over from the other, “in such solicitude the other can become one who is dominated and dependent, even if this dominating is a tacit one and remains hidden” (1927/1962, p. 158). Through care it is possible for the things that matter to show themselves. This allows us to see the world and to see others. The three notions of care, concern and solicitude exist in unison; concern and solicitude are integral to the notion of care. The second notion is concern and is related to equipment. “Concern is guided not by knowledge or explicit rules, but by its informal know-how... the circumspection of concern is understanding as common sense” (Inwood, 1999, p. 36). It is what we care about or what concerns us that calls us to action.

The Call

In telling a story about one’s everyday doing, the story starts at the beginning with the call to care. In the stories of the participants, the beginning is a ‘call’. The call is obscure, it is not words as such, but rather a call of conscience or of interest or attention, that is interconnected with a person’s Being. Heidegger described the call as:

...something which we ourselves have neither planned for nor prepared nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. It calls against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes from me and yet from beyond me. (1927/1962, p. 320)

The call does not necessarily stop a person in his or her tracks, but demands attention, calling the person to action, sometimes coming in the midst of doing something else. The call may come as part of an ongoing project and may or may not be responded to. It is the call that brings Dasein back to itself, to what it cares about. The call leads a person toward his or her possibilities and what he or she cares about. In the journey of becoming “Dasein hears the call by being willing to be called back to his thrown self and summoned forward to his utmost possibility” (King, 2001, p. 123). The stories from the participants’ reveal the call to occupation. They show the meaning of occupation through the essence of the call and what it is that a person cares for or is concerned about.

The Call as Passion

BJ, having retired in her early 40s, now spends much of her day alone tending to her extensive garden on a rural property. She no longer has to respond to the demands of an employer or any requirement to work Monday to Friday. BJ describes spending time in her garden and what her weekends are like:

I’m one of those people that doesn’t finish a job, I wander through the garden and notice what needs to be done. I will go out there with a list of about 10 things that I have noted in my mind from the previous day and I try and get through my list, but I never do, so the list carries on. I might start something and get distracted by something else that needs to be done, so I will go and do that and then come back to what I originally started, but that might not be until the next day. Really I have created this garden so that I won’t ever get bored. Now that I don’t have to go to work I can do the housework when I like and go out into the garden when I like. I don’t have a rigid structure but I keep to the habit of going out into the garden every day. The garden is my passion and my project and I like it looking nice and I get a certain enjoyment from the plants. At the weekends my partner is here during the day so there is another person around and we will go out and do a couple of things or just communicate because we haven’t seen each other all

week. The weekends are a lot more relaxed and my partner will have a sleep-in and then we will have coffee together and decide what it is we are going to do.

For BJ there is a sense that her occupations are different at the weekend because there is someone else there. Her passion shows itself in two ways, the first is her garden and the second is her relationship. She is able to structure her week as she sees fit. Not having the restrictions of going to work means that she can spread the household and other tasks through her week. BJ is in the position of being able to choose how to spend her time. Because her partner is at home at the weekends she dedicates that time to being with her. She is her prime concern. Typically BJ spends her week days alone, attending to the wide range of tasks that are necessary to maintain a large garden. It is in her concern for her garden, for it to look nice, that 'calls' her to the garden. The call comes from what she notices needs to be done, which plant needs to be trimmed or which weed needs to be pulled out. The call is also from within, her garden is her 'passion and her project'. During the week there is little that distracts her from her project, it is the focus of her attention. We each in our own way have something that is our project, something that keeps us grounded and focused. The way in which BJ carries out the occupation of gardening shows others something about herself. She moves from task to task and there is little pressure on completing what needs to be done. If a task is not completed it rolls over to the jobs to be done the next day. She sees the garden as a work in progress; it does not have an end point and it continues to evolve.

In contrast, at the weekend BJ has a fixed amount of time to spend with her partner. There is an impression that she wants to make the most of this time together, that in her solicitude for her partner she wants to create a relaxing atmosphere which allows her and her partner to come together. The occupations she engages in at the weekend are done in negotiation and partnership with the other. They are not things done for the sake of doing something. They are done for the sake of being-with her partner. There is a sense that BJ worries about her relationship and in doing so carefully selects what she and her partner do together to allow a re-kindling and a re-connection to maintain the being together. The

worry keeps her in touch with the one for whom she cares and prompts her to create an atmosphere where they can be together side-by-side as they make their way forward.

In our dealings with the world, concern shows itself as “producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining... All these ways of Being-in have concern as their kind of Being” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 83). The occupations that we engage in have care at the heart of them, yet it is in our actions or activities that concern becomes an outward showing of that care. The things that matter to us show up through care. It allows us to see the world and others around us. BJ’s story shows that she is responding to things in the world, she is tending to and looking after her garden just as she is tending to and looking after her relationship. The meaning of occupation shows itself in what a person cares about and what calls them to action. Care calls for engaged action and attentiveness. BJ’s occupations show others what is at the forefront in terms of her care, thus revealing something about herself.

The Call as Poised and Ready to Respond

The level of worry that Amanda experiences in relation to her baby, influences what she does or does not do. Amanda describes the occupation of going for a walk:

If we go out for a walk with the baby, it has to fit into her routine, so we can’t just decide to go walking. As far as I am concerned, the walk has got to be the right time for the baby. I find it stressful if the baby starts to cry when we are out. Recently we went walking with the baby and we decided to stay out for longer than usual and have a coffee at a local café. My partner kind of talked me into it even though I knew we had been out for longer than usual. I thought it would be nice to be out having coffee and then the baby started to cry. All of a sudden the coffee wasn’t nice to have anymore because I was just so focused on this little baby that was upset.

Amanda is most concerned about making sure that the baby's needs are taken care of, this is her priority. She is ready to respond to the baby at a moments notice. The consideration of the baby's needs is what dominates the decision of when and how long to go for a walk for. This is over and above any thought she has for herself or her partner in terms of them spending time together or doing something that they would like to do. There is a sense that Amanda can not help but feel responsible for the baby and she is consumed by the anticipation of responding as soon as the baby cries. There is a tension that exists between having a cup of coffee with her partner, being-with-him as partner, and 'leaping in' and responding to her crying baby. The call to be mother is already there but she is called to action as mother as soon as the baby starts to cry. Her priority is for her vulnerable baby. She quickly moves from a person having a coffee in a café to a mother with a crying child. The worry about her baby is intense and the call to 'leap in' is immediate. She is overwhelmed by the call to be mother to the point where she must attend to her baby. The meaning of the occupation lies in tending to the most vulnerable. In Being-with her partner and baby, the 'leaping-in' to take care of her baby takes precedence over the Being-with her partner.

The Call as Thinking Ahead

Claire's job as an independent midwife means that she is on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week and has a lead role in the birth of a baby. She describes how being on call as a midwife has altered how she does the supermarket shopping:

I have changed my shopping habits. I go to the supermarket more often and buy less. I kind of walk in and think 'right priorities, what do I absolutely need' and that is usually veggies and fruit. I can't bear the thought of the whole trolley full of stuff which has been carefully picked out being ruined because I suddenly need to leave to attend to a call.

Responding to her caseload takes precedence over the other occupations Claire would like to engage in. The call to be a midwife impacts on Claire's everyday occupations. She is always planning ahead. Despite there being no immediate need to attend to anything work related it is the anticipation of receiving a telephone call and what the call may mean that she worries about. Claire, who knows the status of the women on her caseload, is constantly aware of what she

might need to do in response to a telephone call. She is in a continuous state of worry about what may come. There is a 'waiting towards' and she is poised, waiting for the moment when she is required to respond as midwife. It is in the care for the women on her caseload that puts her other occupations such as going to the supermarket in conflict with her work occupation. The women on her caseload are Claire's priority and their needs are ever present. In her solicitude for the women she worries about the 'what ifs'. The meaning of occupation shows itself in the tension that exists between what needs to be done for the self and that of being ready to 'leap in' and respond at a moment's notice. For Claire the call to be midwife is ever present and she is ready to be claimed by the call to help the women on her caseload.

For something to come near to us and for us to be concerned about it we need to be what Heidegger calls "attuned". It is on the grounds of attunement that "Dasein is approachable, concernable, touchable, strikable, capable of being affected and moved by whatever may approach him from the world" (King, 2001, p. 57). Attunement allows Dasein to be thrown open and to be affected in various ways by whatever may come near to it from the world. It is the way in which things are uncovered and disclosed and is the way that Dasein is open to the call. The stories from BJ, Claire and Amanda show attunement to weeds in the garden, the baby's cry or the woman about to give birth.

The Call as Tending to Relationship

Amanda describes cooking an evening meal for her and her partner:

When the baby is having her afternoon nap is when I start thinking about what my partner and I will have for dinner. Now we make an effort to sit at the dinner table and have our evening meal. It is a really good opportunity to have a conversation.

Amanda shows her solicitude for her partner through the occupations of cooking and having an evening meal together. The occupation of preparing the evening meal gains meaning to her because it is what brings her and her partner together. The evening meal is an opportunity for them to be as one. As the day goes by it seems that her attention is caught by the solicitude for her to tend to the

relationship. In the solicitude she worries, and in the worry she is called to action. Being in a relationship is about supporting and looking out for each other. Amanda tends to the relationship by having a meal ready for her partner in the evening. The occupation of getting the meal ready is much more than the task itself. It has the potential to strengthen or undermine the partnership. The meal creates an opportunity to be together and has the potential of being harmonious and strengthening the relationship or creating tension. It is through occupation that Amanda is able to tend to and do something to contribute to the partnership. Together they have made a point of being at the dinner table at the same time. This provides the opportunity for Amanda to be-with her partner and to have time for them to connect with each other. The evening meal and conversation is significant because it is not just about food or conversation for the sake of eating or conversing. It is significant because it is an opportunity for them to take the time and make the effort to be there for each other as two people in relationship.

In Amanda's story the meaning of occupation is revealed in providing an opportunity to let the relationship grow and develop. She has provided the opportunity for her and her partner to be together and in doing so is anticipating that this will preserve and perhaps enhance their relationship. While both need to eat, it is the occupation of 'eating together' that makes the experience more than meeting nutritional needs.

The Call as Thinking

Frank, who is in sixties, ruptured his Achilles' tendon and has a cast on his leg as part of the treatment for the tendon. He describes cooking a meal for himself and his wife:

I have never been so pain-in-the-arse organised as I have become and I have to be careful that I don't inflict this on others because I have become a control freak. You sort of take for granted being able to move around, but since the accident I have learnt that to get the meal you actually have to have your head together and then you can go and do it. For example you go to the vegetable area and get the potatoes, the pumpkin and whatever else you need and then you go to the fridge and get what you need from there... so you don't have to go back and get anything else.

There is a sense that cooking allows Frank to show his wife what he is able to do. At the same time the occupation draws his attention to what he is not able to do and what he is doing differently. Frank now has to think about what is involved in cooking and how he can move about the kitchen in the most efficient way. In his worry Frank has become aware of the minutia of what is involved in cooking a meal. It would seem that until the injury he had given little thought to where items were located in the kitchen and how many times he moved back and forth. Frank is mindful that his mood and attitude to cooking has changed to that of being a 'control freak'. For Frank the occupation of cooking a meal has moved from something that was embodied, where he has been able to just-get-on-with-it, to something that has become carefully planned and co-ordinated. Cooking the meal has become a thinking exercise rather than a free flowing physical activity. He now makes decisions about what he needs and how to go about getting those things in the most efficient way. In other words the same occupation now takes more thought, energy and planning.

Cooking has moved from something that was ready-to-hand, in that Frank previously just got on and did the cooking. After rupturing his Achilles' tendon he is no longer able to move about so easily and so the occupation became unready-to-hand. For Frank, cooking the meal is now present-to-hand as he has to think about what it is he is doing and how he does it and at the same time he is reflecting on how he was able to cook in the past. He is worried about the other, his wife, and what his not being able to do will mean for her. In a way he is worried about the 'what ifs', about what the future will hold for him and his wife. He is called to cook a meal not through obligation or duty, but to show what it is he is able to do. It would seem that occupation can never be taken for granted. An occupation is only easy when numerous factors come together to make it so. Taking away one factor, such as ease of movement in Frank's situation, means that everything changes.

The Call as Responsibility

Claire, the midwife, describes her experience of going on a planned evening out with her husband and some friends:

We were going out to dinner with some friends from overseas. I was quite looking forward to going out and was all dressed up. When we arrived at the place for dinner and had been there about five minutes I could hear my phone ringing. I had to leave and go and see the woman who had gone into labour. It was devastating as I really wanted to stay for dinner, but really I had no choice but to go.

The call to be midwife comes in the midst of being out to dinner and Claire is called to action by the telephone. Her sense of responsibility towards the woman shows itself. This meant leaving the dinner and attending to a woman who had unexpectedly gone into labour. The call to be midwife is omnipresent and came when she least expected or wanted it. On this occasion the call put her two occupations in competition with one another. She chose not to engage in the occupation of being out to dinner; instead she 'leapt in' to care for the expectant mother. For Claire there is a tension between her occupations. In her solicitude for the women on her caseload, the call over-rides the other things that she is doing; it dominates and comes in the midst of 'anything'. The tension of making a choice between her two occupations creates a sense of resentment, as Claire feels there is actually very little choice except to go, she simply has to go and be midwife. It is the call that has given one 'no choice'. The obligation to 'leap in' is stronger than the call to 'be-with' her husband and friends. The meaning of occupation reveals itself in its unexpectedness and highlights that the worry is always there. In the worry a person is ready to respond to the care that they have for another.

The Call as Getting Myself Together

Following an accident where she sustained a head injury Mary describes how she is worried about herself and what her future holds:

I remember thinking at one stage, it was about eight months after I hit my head, what more can be taken away from me? Physically I was so incapable. I could hardly do anything visual like read, or drive, or watch television. All you are left with is your thoughts and emotions and if you haven't got good thoughts then you are in trouble. I knew the most important thing for me was getting myself together for myself and for my daughters and husband. I wanted to get my thoughts in a good place, because that is what it says in the Bible, and then everything else would come together. Now I feel like I'm in a good place in myself and I am actually choosing to

occupy myself with the things that I like doing, things that I am passionate about, like floristry. It feels like a step in the right direction.

Not being able to engage in her usual occupations leaves Mary to dwell on the hopeless, helpless side of herself to the point where she can no longer see a future for herself. The focus of the other is still present and she is left to worry about what she is no longer able to do. It is in the not being able to do that she worries and the worry is from the solicitude she has towards her daughters and husband. She is focused on getting herself 'together' to be mother and wife to her daughters and husband. In her solicitude she is apprehensive about what the future will hold. It is not until words from the Bible 'leap-in' that Mary has a sense of direction and she is able to stop dwelling on herself. The non-doing has given her the opportunity to find something she would like to do and that can show her family that she has the capacity to do things. For Mary, the worry prompts her to engage in the occupation of floristry. This gives her a sense of hope for the future. It is through occupation that she is able to show both herself and her family that she is improving and her family has the opportunity to 'leap ahead' and let Mary stand on her own two feet. This small step gives Mary some hope that she will be able to take on some of the tasks both she and her family associate with being mother and wife. Being able to engage in an occupation has significance for Mary because it shifts the anxiety from not being able to do anything to worrying about how she can return to be as mother or wife. Being 'able' to do matters more than what the actual doing is.

The Call as Having to Choose

The impact of being on call and available means that Claire is not able to attend a local tennis club meeting despite being the Secretary of the Club. Claire describes not being able to go to her meeting:

At the time I was thinking I should be able to get back for that meeting. We only meet once a month and I didn't want to let them down. I had a woman going into the caesarean theatre. I was trying to placate her knowing that the hospital was frantic and that the theatres were busy. I guess my sense of frustration just grew because yet again the hours just drift on by, perhaps in some ways unnecessarily. It is feeling like being pulled but knowing that there

is no choice, that being an independent midwife means that I make a commitment, you follow through on it no matter what.

Instead of going to her meeting she has to 'leap in' and attend to a woman who is experiencing difficulty giving birth. Claire worries that the woman will be all right, while at the same time she is frustrated at not being able to attend her meeting due to factors beyond her control. The place where she carries out her work occupation determines what she is able to do. The job of being a midwife means that she not only has responsibility for the woman in her care but to her partners in the independent midwife practice and to other health care professionals in the hospital. There is a tension of responsibility. The call to care for the woman and to be midwife is resolute, it is what she must do. At the same time she is letting down the people who would be at the tennis club meeting. Being responsible to each of these is something that Claire takes seriously and that means she worries about attending to the tasks she is called on to do so as to not let the other down. This shows the complexity of occupation in the sense of the multiple calls that exist. In her solicitude she wants to be able to attend to each of these in a way that she feels is to the best of her ability. Being a midwife gives Claire the means to care for others, yet at the same time she speaks of being overwhelmed. It seems that occupation is significant or dominant depending on the level of choice and control we have over the occupations before us. For Claire the possibility of not responding to the call of being a midwife does not seem to exist, she is hemmed in and has no choice. She is constantly waiting to respond to the call.

The Call as Angst

Roger who recently immigrated to New Zealand with his wife and family did not have a job for quite some time. Roger describes what it has been like arriving in a new country and being out of work:

The biggest thing about changing countries, beside the money aspect, is not having the stability of a job. I have been pondering and thinking about how I sell myself because I haven't been able to find a job like the one I had at home. I can't help but think about what I used to do and what the people back home are doing and the kind of good life we used to have. I have started a self

development course which is basically a self analysis, where you are reflecting on yourself, where you are now and where you are going. I have picked up a lot of points and hopefully I can carry forward to the end and get what I want out of life. I'm also worried about what the impact of not working will be on my family. It is very difficult for us to survive on what my wife earns.

There is a sense that without having a job a feeling of angst and insecurity arises. Having a work occupation is what gives Roger a sense of being grounded. This relates to being stable, of having his life in order, providing for his family and doing things in a way that he usually does them. The time away from work and his career has allowed him to think about himself. While on the surface Roger seems concerned about himself, there is a sense that being unemployed and not having a job in his field has created a deeper sense of instability and worry. He has begun to question what he has achieved thus far in life, what he would like to achieve in the future and how this compares with how things would have been if he had not moved to New Zealand. Not having a stable job has challenged his sense of place and purpose within the family. While his attention seems to be about himself, he is also worried about what the future will hold for his wife and children and how this compares with what others have. The worry is in relation to others, particularly his family and how he will provide for them. It seems that in his solicitude for his family's future he worries and is, in a way, burdened by the worry. The worry itself becomes a meaningful occupation which acts as a catalyst for exploring options in relation to employment and providing for his family.

The Call as Living with Loss

The head injury Mary sustained raises her awareness of how she is unable to engage in some of the usual occupations she would do with one of her daughters. Mary describes what it is like when she is not able to do the things she has done in the past:

What was really hard was with my youngest daughter. She used to say things like 'why can't you take me shopping like a proper mother'. That was really hurtful. I spent a lot of time in bed and I would lie there and worry and try to be the best wife and mother I could be. It is a really interesting position to be in, as my role as mother was a non functioning one. I had to think how I could be a mother in a different way. Those were all kind of huge losses and

also my relationship with my husband. I mean that was really huge, I couldn't be the wife he wanted me to be, that was just really difficult... having a head injury changed my life, but I was really aware of how much it changed the life of my husband and daughters.

Not being able to engage in her usual occupations has significance to Mary because it means that she is not able to be a mother in the way that she usually would and this creates a sense of loss. Mary and her daughter see mothering as an occupation. For them mothering involves carrying out certain tasks. In not being able to do what is expected, her daughter sees Mary as less than a mother. Similarly while Mary is still the same person, she is no longer the same wife. Not being able to do the things that her daughter and husband expect a 'proper' mother and wife to be able to do creates a sense of tension. While lying in bed her thoughts turn to how she can be the best wife and mother she can be, but her thoughts are not open or available to others, they are private and are not shared. Her attempts at being the best wife and mother go un-noticed. The worry seems to overwhelm Mary as she lies in bed and thinks about what it is she can not do. It seems that for those close to Mary, and for Mary herself being a good mother needs to be demonstrated through actions. In not being able to do, she worries because she is not able to meet their expectations, but the worry keeps her close to those she really cares about.

Mary experiences a sense of non-functioning and a lack of clear purpose. The care is still present but in what Heidegger would call a deficient mode. Not being able to take her daughter shopping makes Mary question who she is. Without being able to physically do the tasks of being a mother it would seem that Mary is not able to be with her daughter as mother-and-daughter. There is a sense of not knowing how to be, she is not able to show her care in the way she has in the past. Despite Mary having had a head injury she seems to worry more about her family than herself. She is particularly concerned with how she can be with her family in the ways that she and her family expect her to be. Her past experiences of being a wife and mother gave her a sense of identity and a clear role and purpose within the family. It is not that she no longer cares, but that her head injury makes her unable to show her care in action. Now others are 'leaping in' for her taking over

the tasks that she would have usually done. Her solicitude for her family means she struggles to come to terms with limitations her head injury has placed on 'being wife and mother', yet she still tries.

The Call as Fulfilling Responsibility

Bob who lost his permanent job as a courier driver describes what it is like moving to a temporary driving job:

Now at least I have a job and can support my family. The new job is not stressful and the people are always having a bit of fun. It's not permanent but it's been good because I've felt like I don't have to make any decisions. It's relaxing in that way. It's taken a lot of work pressures and decision making away. I don't worry so much.

Once he is working and earning money again, Bob has a sense of hope and he seems to worry less. However the worry soon changes from not having a job to worrying about earning enough money to support his family. It seems that the worry is always present. The worry is at the forefront and in his worry, those that are important to him show through. What calls him is not the money as such, but providing for his family. He seems to be constantly thinking about how he can provide for them. The occupation of worrying becomes overwhelming when there are no solutions and other occupations are in danger of being abandoned altogether.

The Call as Worry

Following an accident that ruptured his Achilles' tendon Frank is aware that his wife is watching him while he is cooking. He describes how the occupation of preparing and cooking a meal is looked over by his wife:

I want to cook, but my wife is reluctant to let me. When I am cooking she looks across and says 'that is too difficult' or asks me 'why are you doing it that way?' She just wants to remove any possibility of an accident, so I suppose part of it is her concern that if something happened to me, she would struggle.

Frank's wife is ready to 'leap in' and help him if need be, but in the meantime she is in the mode of 'leaping ahead', letting Frank stand on his own two feet. In the cooking of the meal it comes to light that Frank is worried for his wife. He has

become aware that his wife is worried about him and he wants to show her that he is improving so as to reduce her level of worry. The worrying is reciprocal. The occupation of cooking in this instance reveals how being-in-relationship is about looking out for one another. Frank and his wife are concerned for each other. Yet there is a tension that exists between Frank and his wife, who is waiting to see if she should 'leap-in' to help Frank or 'leap-ahead' and allow Frank to cook the meal by himself. For Frank the tension exists in wanting to show his wife that he does not need her help. While he seems annoyed by his wife's fussing and fretting, he is also reassured, knowing that she is waiting on the periphery to assist him if need be. The meaning of the cooking resides in the tension that exists between the two of them, on one hand there is a sense of trust in the other's ability and on the other hand a readiness to take-over and provide support.

It can be through occupation that the tensions between authentic and inauthentic solicitude can be seen. Authentic solicitude can be either helping the other to stand on their own two feet or allowing the other to achieve the undertaking for themselves, whereas inauthentic solicitude can be stepping in and undertaking it for them, thus making the other dependent. The tentative nature of what might happen next is revealed in Frank's story. That in the Being-with there is a sense of uncertainty but at the same time a sense of comfort knowing that the other is there waiting to 'leap-in'. This story also reveals van Manen's (2002) notion of care-as-worry. van Manen suggested that "worry-rather than duty or obligation-keeps us in touch with the one for whom we care" (p. 266). It is the worry that calls us to respond to those in the world around us. Frank's story shows us that he is aware of the concern that his wife has towards him. He responds to his wife by showing her what he is able to do. The meaning of occupation shows itself in what we do for the 'other' to reduce their worry. Worry also reveals itself in the following story from Bob.

The Call as Being Saved From Worry

Bob's occupation of working as a courier driver had significance to him because it allowed him to provide for his family. Bob describes the importance of his work occupation and what it was like when he lost his job:

I wasn't making much money and I was worrying, worrying, worrying the whole time. I wanted to make sure my family was doing alright financially. When I lost my job I was just thinking the whole time. Thinking, thinking, thinking, I thought about suicide and all those sorts of things. I needed something to do and I was in no position to go for a job. It was brilliant when a mate offered me a job, it really took my mind right off things. It was a big saviour. It meant I could still look after my family.

There is a sense that for Bob providing for his family is the number one priority. His way of looking after them is having a job and earning money. Providing for his family is something that he is constantly concerned with and is at the centre of his attention. It seems to surround and consume him. Bob takes being responsible for his family seriously and because of his sense of responsibility he worries about earning enough money as a courier driver to provide for them. For Bob it is the money that matters more than his work occupation, but it is not to earn money for the sake of having money, but rather having money as the means to care for his family. Thus his work occupation has meaning to him because his focus, his solicitude, is for his family. The period of not working has left him with time on his hands and alone with himself. In the not doing he worries about what the future may hold and how he will provide for his family. The worry is intense and consumes him and he can not see past the worry. During this time Bob dwells with the hopeless, helpless self, to the point where he considers taking his life. In his solicitude for his family, he worries and the more he worries the more he cares and what he cares about shows itself in the worry. In this way the worry becomes overwhelming and it is a burden on him. There is tension between worry that motivates one to action and too much worry that pulls one into crisis. It is only when a friend 'leaps-in' to rescue him with a job opportunity that Bob feels saved and is able to be concerned for the other. In his worry Bob has taken up the opportunity that was offered by a friend. The occupation of working has significance to him because it permits him to stop dwelling on himself and to take on the occupation of 'responsibility' for his family. Working in this instance is about much more than work itself.

The Call as All Consuming

Amanda, a new mother, describes how she has been trying to get to visit a local craftsman who has been making some jewellery for her:

The jeweller is just up the road and it would take about 10 minutes, once I was there, to get everything done with him that I need to. I have been trying to see him for two or three months now. But I know that it would probably take 40 minutes to an hour to pack up everything for the baby and get there. It should be easy, but it is easier to stay at home and play with the baby or hang out the washing.

Amanda voices a sense of frustration that she is not able to get to the jewellers for the 10 minute consultation. For Amanda leaving home and going out is a major undertaking where she would need to make sure she has everything she might need for the baby. Because of her need to 'leap in' and respond to her baby's every need as soon as it arises, the occupation of taking care of the baby is all consuming. In her care for her baby she worries about being satisfactorily prepared for all eventualities. The worry seems to overwhelm her to the point where she is unable to leave home in case she does not have what she needs in order to take care of the baby. The tension between doing something for herself and looking after her baby is apparent. This is to the point of making a choice between looking after the baby or doing nothing else. The call to be mother is stronger than the call to have something nice for herself. In being mother, staying in the safety of her home in some way seems to reduce her anxiety, freeing her to focus on the occupation of being mother. The meaning of occupation reveals itself in the response she has to her baby, Amanda's constant care about the baby is what calls her to action.

Summary

The meaning of occupation is often not obvious and remains hidden. None-the-less what matters shows itself in the occupation we choose to do or not do and the care and concern that person has is revealed in the occupation they are called to. Just as in the story of the shoemaker, the participants' experiences show that what calls us comes from within but is at the same time connected to the world and

others in the world. The call is not obvious, it is not words as such but rather something that is complex and lies at the heart of who we are. The basic nature of Dasein, according to Heidegger, is of care and concern. The care and concern of the participants' shows itself in the occupations that they are called to. This is particularly evident when the call is related to providing for or being responsible for another. BJ's story of her garden and her relationship show, for example, that the meaning of occupation comes from being responsible, tending to, nurturing and looking after.

The call to care may also cause us to worry. It is not worrying for the sake of worrying, but worry in relation to the call and to what we see as our duty or obligation. It is in the worry that our occupations can be put in conflict with one another and can lead us to be torn between the possibilities of what the future holds. Indeed we may be so paralysed by the call to care and in the ensuing worry that we end up doing nothing at all. The experiences of Claire, the midwife, and Amanda the new mother show how multiple calls are overwhelming and may take away choice. The meaning of occupation may also show itself in the anticipation of who it is we are becoming and what may come in the future. The call of possibilities and what we care about may mean we choose one occupation over another because of how we imagine the future to be in the quest for becoming our authentic self. We are constantly caught between looking forward, to-ing and fro-ing between the past and the present as we move toward the future. Each of the stories from the participants in their own way reveals what it is they care about and what calls them to occupation. The call to care takes place in the context of the world and other in the world, which in turn reflects back to a person what it is he or she cares about.

Occupation reveals the call as this or that. The call can be as *passion* and show itself in the way that we tend to or look after something or someone, or the way we prioritise one occupation over another. The call can also show itself as *ready to respond* or as *thinking ahead*, when we are ready to 'leap-in' and change what it is we are doing at a moments notice. In our concern for others, the call may show itself as *angst* or *worry*, where the angst or worry keeps us close to and in

touch with those we care about. Mostly the meaning of occupation reveals itself in the call to another person or to something in the world around us. Occupation is not merely an activity. It is “for-the-sake of” meeting needs of self or others that the call is responded to or not, depending on limits and possibilities. Thus to understand the meaning of occupation one must ask ‘what calls you to do this?’, ‘what calls and holds your thinking or interest?’ Occupation does not happen in a vacuum, but is immersed in the fabric of one’s situated life.

CHAPTER SIX

Being-with

Introduction

The purpose of this, the second of the findings chapters, is to show occupation as occurring in a world with others. Without the other, the occupation or solitary occupation may lose or may have a different kind of meaning. The connection we have with others as we engage in occupation often remains hidden or lost in the everydayness of our doing. The experience of engaging in an occupation may often mean that we are thrown into a range of connections that we did not imagine. An occupation might call us to be with others or the other might call us to an occupation. The work of Heidegger and Buber will be drawn on in this chapter to help uncover how the ‘other’ contributes to the meaning or significance of occupation. In doing so, the nearness or farness of the connection may be exposed.

Underpinnings from Heidegger and Buber

Heidegger described being-in-the-world as a world that is shared with others, in that “the world of Dasein is a with-world. Being-in is being-with” (1927/1962, p. 155). He suggested that “being-with” others is the fundamental nature of man’s existence. According to Heidegger “being-with is a basic structure of Dasein’s Being, more basic than relating to particular others” (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 149). It is in the being-with others that we are able to know more about our possibilities and what it is that concerns us. Dasein in the world of being-with others finds itself in what it “does, uses, expects, avoids” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 155). The others Heidegger was referring to in being-in-the-world-with-others are “those from who, for the most part one does not distinguish oneself – those among whom one is to” (1927/1962, p. 154). Others are those that are all around us, those that we blend in with. Heidegger was not necessarily concerned with the dynamics of the relationship, rather he was more concerned with the influence of others on our Being and how Dasein understands itself by being-with others. Dasein’s relation

to other Daseins is shown by Heidegger to be “fundamentally different from his relation to things. Being-with-others like himself belongs directly to Dasein’s existence and helps constitute its world forming character” (King, 2001, p. 64).

Buber (1878-1965) a philosopher writing in a similar era to Heidegger, offered another lens to guide the analysis of the interpersonal aspects of Being-with. Buber through his work “pointed to the life of dialogue” (Kramer, 2003, p. 4). Central to Buber’s thinking was the belief that the true nature of the human person can only come into being through human relationship and that “all real living is meeting” (Kramer, 2003, p. 22). Buber described human life as being lived on a continuum; a continuum of relating with humans, with nature and with spirit forms. At one end of the continuum is the I-Thou relationship and at the other is the I-It. An I-Thou relationship implies a togetherness or close bonding where dialogue becomes genuine and where each of the participants is involved and fully present to the other or others. They openly pay attention and are willing to be non judgmental. The I-It relationship, in contrast, is where a person or nature is objectified and the relationship becomes focused on meeting a goal. In essence, this kind of I-It relationship is functional and purposeful.

Participants in this study revealed the meaning of context, and more specifically, the people present or absent when they engaged in occupation. In relation to the meaning of occupation, where they were, and who they were with mattered.

Being With as Being Wanted

Sally-Anne, having worked for the last 26 years and now retired, is in a position of being able to select with whom and how she would like to spend her time. Sally-Anne describes the choices she sees open to her:

I would like a bit more space to do what I want and I am worried that my time will get swallowed up by people wanting me to do things. I wish to do things like being able to see my grandchildren, they grow up so quickly and that is one of the reasons why I felt like I would like to retire so I could be of more help to my daughter.

There is a sense that Sally-Anne is fearful that she will end up doing things with people who she does not really want to spend time with or that her time may be consumed doing things for people other than those most important to her. She gives the impression that there are a number of people that would like to spend time with her or to use her time. These people are “turning toward” her and are seeking her out. However Sally-Anne is not turning toward them. Instead she is “turning away” from them as she waits for the opportunity to spend more time with the people that she would really like to spend time with. Sally-Anne has a desire for there to be a genuine relationship with her daughter and grandchildren. It would seem that it is her preference to wait so she can take part in occupations which will enable her to have contact with her extended family. For Sally-Anne the occupations that are going to have the most significance for her will be those that involve a connection with her family. That is, the meaning of occupation lies in the relationship that a person has with the person they are doing the occupation with or for. Sally-Anne is seeking a genuine relationship with her daughter and grandchildren. While she might be seeking this, there is a possibility that her daughter and grandchildren may not want to turn toward her in the way she would like them to. The meaning of occupation can not be willed. It is open to the reciprocal desire of the other to become involved.

Sally-Anne’s story, and a story from Lucy that follows, show Buber’s I-Thou notion, where he described his vision of genuine dialogue as being a turning toward the other. In the process of turning there is a double movement “there is a turning toward whoever or whatever presents itself to us and there is a turning away from everything that would prevent us from entering into a genuine relationship with another” (Kramer, 2003, p. 163). Buber suggested that it is through genuine relationship that we get a sense of a memorable bond and a genuine connection. As he described it, a genuine dialogue is in the process of turning toward the other person and when the turning is mutual a “memorable common fruitfulness is brought into existence. Each person stimulates and is stimulated by a meaningful newness that bonds the two” (Kramer, 2003, p. 160).

Being With as Being There

For Stephen, who has recently come out as a gay man, the experience of being a father to his children has changed. He not long ago moved out of the family home and describes one of the things he misses about not being there:

It sounds like a silly thing but when I lived at home one of the things that I would do is go and kiss my kids goodnight. Now I can't do that and it makes me sad. I can no longer be there for them. My children don't accept my sexual orientation and they won't talk to me about it. Now that I have left home they don't have me on tap like they used to. If they wanted anything I was always at home or at work, they could always contact me. They still can, it is just that they don't want to. I hear from them that I'm not there for them anymore, but in my head I am there for them emotionally if not physically.

Saying goodnight to his children is no longer possible because Stephen is not physically in the family home. He sees fathering as an occupation which he is not able to carry out in a way that he or his sons expect because of the physical separation. In his solicitude for his children, he is aware of how much they mean to him and in his awareness he worries about them. Kissing his children good night has meaning to him because it is one way of showing how much he cares for them. It may be that given the situation he misses that his children can no longer experience his presence as 'father' and that in the not being present he worries. The worry has brought to the forefront the importance of his relationship with his children. For Stephen it seems that to be a 'father' means that he needs to be physically present with his children but he comes to see that his children also need to want to have contact with him. Stephen misses 'being father' and is distressed that his children no longer experience his presence as such. There is a sense that he is worrying about what the future may hold in terms of being 'father'. The lack of physical contact and the estranged relationship creates a sense of tension and while the solicitude remains, he is not able to show being-as-father in the way that he has done previously.

This story reveals that the meaning of occupation is fluid and depends on past experience of that occupation. In attempting to maintain the closeness with another we seek to repeat those occupations that are deemed to maintain that

closeness. When a person is no longer able to engage in an occupation in the same way, they worry about how this will impact on the relationship with the other and how they will be able to show their care. From Heidegger's perspective the absence of the 'other' can be stronger in terms of emotional angst in their absence than in their presence. The angst brings Stephen back to himself and leads him to reflect on what is important to him.

Being With as Calling on Experience

Lucy, who left the community of religious sisters she belonged to after many years, began a job facilitating workshops related to the Treaty of Waitangi. Lucy describes what it was like to be in one of the workshops:

The workshop draws on a person's sense of who they are and their family background. I really love this kind of work, where you are calling on the experience of people and getting them to look at something which might be new and challenging.

The occupation of facilitating the workshops has significance to Lucy because of the people that attend the workshops and who she gets to know. The nature of the workshop seems to encourage personal disclosure, by engaging others in the process of self-reflection. This means that there is an opportunity for Lucy to be-with others in a way that allows her to create a connection with them. The Being-with is in the moment of the workshop rather than in a sustained relationship. There is a sense that what gives this occupation meaning for Lucy is the getting to know people, the turning toward the members of the workshop and having a genuine relationship with them. The elements that Buber describes in turning toward are shown in Lucy's actions, as there is a sense that she is being fully present in listening to the workshop members. In listening to them she is trying to make the other present and willing a connection to happen with the people attending the workshop. There is a sense that Lucy is eager to create a genuine relationship; that she sees this as being important in the work that she does. While Buber would say there is no clear method to create a genuine relationship, he does point to a person needing to "completely shift attention toward others, and in the process, toward dialogue itself" (Kramer, 2003, p. 170). The meaning of

occupation in these stories seems to lie in a willingness to address and respond to the other openly and honestly in order to fully experience Being-with the other.

Being With as Timing

Amanda's experience of keeping in touch with family and friends via the telephone highlights that the nature of Being-with is influenced by the timing of when it happens. Amanda describes a phone call with her mother:

I was in the shower, thinking about all the things I had to do today and was interrupted by her calling about buying me something. What she was calling about seemed incredibly trivial to me, so I cut the conversation short. Then I felt a bit aloof and bad that I didn't give her the attention I think she deserved. I know if I can plan a call when I know that the baby is asleep, then I can be much more relaxed and attentive to the conversation. I can sit on the couch and give the conversation my full attention. I like keeping in touch with my friends and family and knowing what is going on their lives, and it feels good when I can have a proper conversation with them and get all the news.

Amanda was in the shower, a private, quiet place busy thinking when she is interrupted by a telephone call from her mother about something that seemed trivial to her. This was a bad time for her mother to ring. Amanda is not engaged in being-with her mother as she is focused on having a shower and planning her day. If her mother had rung about something important, being disturbed may have gone by almost unnoticed but in this instance the nature of the relationship with her mother is quite different to how it usually is. Amanda was not present in the dialogue with her mother on this particular occasion and has turned away from the relationship. This shows what matters is in 'this' moment and for Amanda the call from her mother did not matter. As a result of this turning away she now feels bad about how she treated her mother.

I sense that the unplanned and spontaneous nature of the phone call frustrated Amanda and that on this occasion the relationship she had with her mother is an I-It relationship. Amanda was not fully present in the relationship; she is very aware of her time and more concerned with other things she wanted to do that day. In her role as a mother, her priority is on the things she needs to do in order to care

for her baby rather than attending to the relationship with her mother. This Being-in relationship is different depending on who she is talking to, how the telephone call was initiated, and how it sits in relation to other occupations. It would seem that the occupation of contacting friends and family is more satisfying to her if there are fewer distractions which allows her to give the conversation her full attention. In Amanda's story the importance of timing in the Being-with shows itself. At times there is a turning away from people where at other times we may turn towards that person. The turning towards or away from affects the experience of the occupation and the experience of the self. The meaning of the occupation for Amanda is influenced by the timing of the occupation.

In contrast to the telephone call when she is busy, Amanda describes the occupation of having a telephone call when she has time to have an in-depth conversation, get all the news and make a genuine connection with the person she is talking to. There is a sense of making the space for the relationship to occur and that in a way this is on Amanda's terms. When she is ready to turn toward the other and is in the right space, Amanda can get lost in the conversation and really connect with the person that she is talking to. These types of telephone calls with friends or family are significant to her, because they are not just any telephone call. A strong bond is established and the two people are connected simultaneously for the duration of the call. The occupation of making or receiving a telephone call shows Buber's notion of a continuum, the unexpected call from her mother is at one end of the continuum and in contrast the call where she has the time to take an active part in the conversation at the other. The meaning of occupation reveals in itself in the willingness, or not, to engage in an occupation with another. Being open and available to enter into the relationship impacts on the nature of occupation. If the time is not right to enter into genuine dialogue, then the meaning of the occupation will change. In the same way, just because one person is ready to enter into the genuine dialogue does not mean the other is in a place to do so.

Being With as Intimacy

The nature of relationship is also evident in Pearl's story. Pearl is a full time student and describes her experiences of being taught in two different ways, one

involves tutorials with a female lecturer and the other involves a large lecture with a male lecturer:

I much prefer the smaller classes because it is smaller and more intimate. The lecturer will start talking about a chapter, telling us stories from her own experience and we are given a chance to talk to each other. In the big lectures it is so different. It is less personal, I just sit there and take in as much as I can, and it is much harder not having the interaction with the lecturer. I get a sense he does not even know who I am.

For Pearl the smaller tutorial group creates a sense of intimacy where she can develop a connection with the other students and the lecturer. The lecturer telling stories from her own practice and sharing personal experiences creates a real bond with Pearl where they seem equal partners in the learning process. This is compared with Pearl's experience of the large lecture where she sits and takes in as much as she can but where there is no interaction with the lecturer. As a consequence there is a sense of her feeling remote and un-connected. This feeling of remoteness is not just physical in terms of the physical distance between the lecturer and Pearl but an emotional distance. The lecturer is far away and unconnected to the point where Pearl anticipates that the lecturer does not even know who she is. Buber would call this an I-It relationship, where there is no genuine connection and both parties are there for a purpose, for the lecturer to deliver the content and for Pearl to be the student. Getting lost in the learning happens for Pearl when there is a real connection between her and the teacher. The occupation of learning shows itself as partnership. In contrast not having a connection with the teacher impacts on the occupation in a way that makes it remote, distant and done for the sake of getting it done. The meaning of occupation shows itself in the people in partnership, having a relationship where both are willing to listen and take an active part in the relationship. Where this does not occur, the meaning of the occupation is influenced. Pearl's experience shows that where there is intimacy or closeness, the occupation has a different meaning than when the intimacy does not appear to be present.

Being With as Spending Time Together

Roger, a recent immigrant to New Zealand from South Africa describes how he spends time with his son on a paper run:

He could use his bicycle but I drive to make it quicker but also so we can spend some quality time together, where we can talk as we go. I don't mind spending the time with him and thought afterwards that we can spend time together like this on the paper run and he accepts it, rather than playing chess or whatever.

It is through the occupation of the paper run that Roger has created an opportunity to spend some time with his son and get to know him. This does not seem to have been possible in the same way with previous occupations. It seems that Roger has experienced what Buber would call an I-It relationship with his son in the past and is now attempting to establish an I-Thou relationship through occupation. It is in the occupation of the paper run that he is trying to create a bond and he has been careful in selecting an occupation that he perceives will be acceptable to his son. It is not only helping his son deliver papers that is of interest to Roger, but being able to spend quality time with his son and to connect with him. The occupation, in Roger's eyes, is the means to create an opportunity for genuine dialogue with his son and is a way for Roger to turn toward his son. In doing so Roger is able to show himself as Father. The occupation in this story shows meaning as it is an attempt to enter into an I-Thou relationship. It is more than an occupation for the sake of doing something, or getting it done in less time, but rather an occupation as the means to a relationship.

Being With as Finding The Time

In a similar way, Bob, who worked long hours as a courier driver, has little opportunity to catch up with his friends. He described going to golf:

Golf was the only time I could see my mates. I never used to go out at night, people used to ask me all the time, but I couldn't do it, I was just too worn out. We used to start golf at 4:30am and would finish in time for me to get home by 7:00am so I could get to work.

Bob, in an almost desperate way, attempts to have a connection with his friends. Being worn out stopped him from having an opportunity to see his friends and thus have a genuine relationship with them. The rare contact he had with his friends through playing golf seems significant to Bob, particularly in the way that they accommodate his work commitments. For Bob there is sense that what is important about the game of golf is not the golf itself but the opportunity to meet up with his friends. It is through the occupation of golf that the turning toward shows itself and creates the possibility for Being-with. This is made all the more precious because it is difficult to achieve. In a way he and his friends are willing an I-Thou relationship and are seeking a real connection. The meaning of occupation shows itself not only in the doing of an occupation but in the possibility of Being-with his friends and being-in relationship with them.

Being With as Working Together

Pearl who is now a full time student describes two experiences of cooking a meal at home with the woman she rooms with:

Usually when I cook it is with a particular flat mate. Often we plan what we will be having during the day with a few phone calls until a decision is made about what we have and who will buy what. My flat mate has her own way of doing things. I usually do a lot more of the preparation and cleaning up while she does more of the actual cooking. We work together like a well oiled machine. When we are cooking we will be chatting and having a glass of wine. When I cooked alone it wasn't nearly as much fun, in the end it felt like something that needed to be done. All I did was cook and watch a bit of television.

Cooking the meal with her flat mate is much more than just the cooking of food. There is an air of occasion, excitement and anticipation which builds up over the day as they make phone calls to each other to plan what they will have. It would seem that the lead up to and cooking of the meal requires input from both people, that they come together and are both involved in the negotiation and decision making around what they will cook and who will purchase what is needed for the meal. The planning and cooking of the meal is a two sided affair, the flat mates come together in the lead up to and in the cooking of the meal. There is a bond between the two that shows itself in the way that they are together and the sense

of enjoyment they get from each other's company and from working together. Buber's notion of an I-Thou relationship begins to show itself here as a two sided mutual presence between Pearl and her flat mate comes into play.

In contrast, Pearl's experience of cooking a meal alone gives a sense of the occupation being empty and flat and something that needed to be done. In cooking alone Pearl is aware of being lonely. This is in comparison to cooking with her flat mate where there is a sense of fun, there is lots of banter and it is lively. What is also apparent is that through the occupation of preparing a meal the friends come together and share the task of cooking. They work together as a team. It is through the occupation that they know things about each other, such as their knowledge and ability about cooking, how they communicate with each other and who takes a leadership role.

The flat mates working together create a synergy. Being together to cook a meal is what gives the occupation its meaning. This story shows how the meaning of occupation changes depending on the presence of the other. To cook with a friend is lively and fun. To cook alone merely a task. Thus one cannot say "I like to cook" because it depends on who one cooks with, and subsequently who one eats with. When Pearl cooks with her flat mate she experiences an I-Thou relationship that takes its focus in preparing food, but no doubt embraces wide ranging conversation.

Being With as Sharing an Interest

Similarly, going for a walk is something that Lucy enjoys but it is something she would rather do with a friend than alone. She describes going for a walk:

I'm not very good at walking on my own, so I go with a friend, Alison. The two of us just get away. We have established a little ritual where I drive over to her place and she makes coffee and scones with cream, so it's fun. It was quite an interesting walk in the sense that we were so busy talking to one another, I wasn't paying much attention to the park... with this friend we tend to get into semi-political conversations about groups of people that are struggling. With the other friend, Gill, I go walking with we are usually more interested in where we are and saying to each other 'oh look at that' and 'listen to the birds'.

There is a sense that going for walk allows Lucy and her friend, Alison, to get away. It is in the getting away that they are escaping together to be without interruption in order to be together as friends to shape their relationship. The being together through the occupation allows them to establish a much closer bond. The occupation involves a series of activities that allows for a period of reconnection with each other through the scones and coffee, a kind of warm up to the main event. The walk is the occupation that brings the friends together in the walking and they both enjoy getting lost in the conversation. It would seem that the walk has allowed them to turn toward each other and enter into genuine dialogue. Lucy highlights that it was in the conversation with each other that she loses track of time and place. There is a sense that Lucy and her friend have a close bond and are together with each other while they walk.

The same occupation is experienced differently depending on who she is walking with. In the second instance, when Lucy is walking with Gill, she is more aware of the world around her rather than being lost in the relationship as she previously described. Gill shares her interest in birds. They are each drawn to point out things they notice to each other, for they know they share an interest. The occupation of walking has different meanings depending on which friend Lucy is with, as the experience of going walking is different. Relationship can dramatically change the experience of 'being there' as the 'other' draws out a different 'self' and opens particular interests.

Being With as A Special Bond

Likewise, Frank describes how following a recent accident, his ability to walk has been restricted. This has meant that he has not been able to continue with his regular commitment of going for a weekly walk on a Saturday with one of his granddaughters. As a result of this disruption he has been having regular contact with another of his granddaughters, who he does not usually see very often. Together they have been playing games of dominoes, snakes and ladders and last card. Frank describes playing board games with his granddaughter:

We had not been that close because she is usually pretty active, but she loved it and I realised that by actually sitting down and playing these games we formed a very special bond. She would ring up and say 'I beat you granddad, when are we playing again?'

As a result of the injury Frank has had to change his usual occupational pattern. Restricted in his ability to walk, he now engages in occupations that mean he has contact with a different member of his extended family. It is through playing board games that he was able to connect with this granddaughter in a manner that had not been present before. The connection strikes Frank as being important and that in the moment of engaging in the occupation there is a coming together as granddaughter-and-grandfather. The engagement in a genuine dialogue comes to light as grandfather and granddaughter turn toward each other through the occupation. The Being-with and the nature of the relationship is what gives the occupation meaning for Frank. Playing board games is also an avenue for Frank to maintain contact with his granddaughter and at the same time the granddaughter is seeking this by asking when they will play again. There is a sense that as much as Frank has felt the connection, so has his granddaughter, and she seeks continued contact with him. It has been through the occupation that a mutual connection has occurred. One imagines that playing board games per se is not Frank's favourite occupation, but playing them with the granddaughter he loves, makes the experience meaningful and precious.

Being With as Going Back

As a result of her recent retirement Sally-Anne describes what she misses most about going to work:

The thing I miss most about work is being with the people, who I call my friends. I enjoyed catching up on day-to-day events in their lives. I don't want to lose touch with them because they are really neat people. I reckon it is a good thing to leave when everything is going good and you can still go back and people don't mind.

For Sally-Anne what appears to be significant for her while she was at work is the people that she worked alongside. This is shown in her describing them as friends rather than workmates. It gives a sense of connection and of a bond that has developed over time. Meeting up with the people that she was close to and the

relationship she has with them is what made the occupation of going to work significant to her. It is through going to work that she was able to see them on a regular basis and get to know them. There is a sense of intimacy in that she knows a great deal about their lives and they know a lot about her. For Sally-Anne it was important to her that she left work on a good note. It seems important to her to have the option of going back to see the people that she has left behind and to maintain a connection. Her work occupation allowed her an opportunity to create a sense of belonging via the relationships that she had with the people that she worked with. Leaving when everything is “going good” was important to her because it meant she left with relationships intact. The meaning of occupation lies in the comfort of knowing the option of returning is open to her and in knowing that maintaining the friendships in the future is a possibility. The reality of ‘going back’ might not be a possibility and the others may not feel the same as she does, but the meaning lies in the expectation that the connection will remain even though the occupational circumstances have changed.

Being With as Contact

The importance Frank places on relationship is shown in the way that he carries out his day-to-day tasks at work. Frank describes how he lets his staff know what needs to be done:

I hate using the phone to let them [production staff] know about orders because I know it is frustrating for them. They laugh because they know that I will get up and will use the crutches to get across the room, and then they will say ‘why didn’t you just ring!’ The other thing that has surprised me is that I have been going into work at 4:30am and the staff always make sure there is someone there, even though they don’t start until 5:30am.

For Frank the importance of Being-with is based on an open and honest relationship and face-to-face communication. Following his accident Frank’s ability to carry out some of his usual work tasks has been made more difficult and frustrating for him. Rather than use technology he would rather maintain his way of doing things. In Frank’s eyes using the telephone is not the way to have a relationship with a person, it is not personal. For Frank his business is based on

good personal communication. The face-to-face communication allows him to connect with his workers and to be involved and to have a presence which shows that despite being hindered by his injury, he is still able to do his job. For Frank this occupation is a way of showing him as capable and able to do things in the same way he has always done. Perhaps, it is the people contact that makes his job satisfying. To use the telephone is just not the same. The meaning of occupation lies in the choices that one makes to have contact with the 'other'. The routine task that Frank describes could easily be done by telephone but instead he chooses to have personal contact with his staff.

There is a sense that because of the relationship Frank has with his staff, this means that they are willing to go that extra mile and support him. In this time of not being able to do things as he had previously, Frank and his staff have turned toward each other. This shows itself in the actions of the staff by the way that they support him and this has in turn fuelled his desire to keep going into work. For Frank it seems that his job is much more than just going to work. It is a place where he has built good relationships with the people that work for him. His commitment to good personal communication has created a strong bond with the people in the work place and there is a sense of them coming together to support him in his time of need. The meaning of occupation shows itself in the team coming together to achieve a common task. The 'we' of the team appear to be intent on giving as well as taking, there is a genuine turning toward each other. They listen to each other and work together and so the meaning of the occupation lies in the relationship of the 'we' of the community.

Summary

It is in the Being-with that occupation comes to have meaning. The stories from the participants show that where occupation is done with others there is a sense of connection and willingness to engage in the occupation and to be together. The meaning of occupation may change depending on the nature of the relationship with the other. When there is a strong connection, in Buber's terms a genuine relationship, the occupation appears to have more meaning, but that is dependent on there being a turning toward by those involved. There can be attempts to set up

a genuine relationship through occupation, such as Roger's experience of trying to connect with his son. By the same token when the connection is diminished or not present, the occupation becomes a task that needs to be done and there is emptiness in the experience of the occupation, which is evident in Pearl's experience of cooking alone. While those occupations are not without meaning, they are in a sense lifeless and empty. In the participants' stories where there is a genuine turning toward one another, the occupation provides an avenue for the bond to be created and maintained and in doing so meaning is connected to the occupation. The occupation gives the relationship a focal point in time, both the relationship and the occupation has a past, present and a future. The nature of the occupation impacts on the Being-with and is forever changing. It may be that one occupation impinges on another, or that the same occupation is done with a different person or people which in turn changes the experience. Each time we engage in an occupation the nature of the Being-with will be different.

It is the occupation that creates the opportunities for the Being-with to occur, without the occupation the Being-with would be different or may not exist at all. The meaning of occupation reveals itself in the coming together with the other and may show itself as *creating a special bond* or as *contact* where there is an opportunity for those engaging in the occupation to spend time together and develop their relationship. The Being-with may also reveal itself as *timing*, *spending time together*, or *finding the time*, it would seem that time is important in the Being-with. If it is difficult to find the time to take part in an occupation and to Be-with others or if the Being-with happens at a time that is not convenient then the meaning of occupation changes. This along with the ways in which we are with others, which may be revealed as *intimacy*, *working together*, or *sharing an interest*, appears to change the experience of Being-with. The occupation acts as the vehicle for the coming together and in the coming together the meaning of the occupation is created.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Possibilities

In the previous two chapters, the notions of the call and Being-with have been uncovered in relation to the meaning of occupation. In this, the last of the findings chapters, Heidegger's notions of possibility and projection will be explored. This will bring together Being-with and Dasein, and show how engaging in occupation reveals to others things about ourselves. I will uncover how Being-in-the-world and Being-with allows an understanding of our potentiality for Being-towards possibility. In exploring the link between Being-with, Dasein and projection, I will show how these three notions, along with the notion of mood, are inter-related and contribute to the complexity of the meaning of occupation. Using the stories from the participants I will demonstrate how occupation allows something about a person to be revealed and in turn, how this reveals something of what it is they are becoming.

Underpinnings from Heidegger

Central to Heidegger's philosophy is that Dasein must project a world and have an understanding of being. This projection enables Dasein to go beyond itself, to understand itself in terms of the possibilities that are open to it. From Heidegger's perspective:

Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out, and in accordance with which Dasein arranges its Being. On the contrary any Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself... As long as it is, Dasein always has understood itself and, will always understand itself in terms of possibilities. (1927/1962, p. 185)

We come to understand things by projecting them onto being and we understand being by projecting it onto time. The past and future shows itself in the present as we continually think about the past and future. In our projection, a person is constantly aware of how he or she is in comparison to others. In so much as we

are involved in something to get it done, we are also heading towards a new understanding of ourselves by virtue of things we are involved in doing. We are always already becoming. From Heidegger's perspective 'Possibility' is the possibility open to Dasein. Dasein is always what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility. What is possible depends on the wider whole, the world and the others in the world, but the range of possibilities that Dasein conceives as open and in terms of which it understands itself, is not fixed (Inwood, 1999). It is through Being-with and in our everyday doing that we are able to see ourselves through the eyes of another and as a result catch sight of ourselves. According to King (1964), a person:

...measures his own self by what others are and have, by what they have achieved and failed to achieve in the world. He thus understands himself in his difference from others by the distance which separates his own possibility from theirs. (p. 112)

For some participants in this study, the occupations that they engage in have significance because they allow them to let others see something about themselves. In doing so, the showing of what they are able to do or not do is projected back to them and helps them to understand themselves. The occupation may be something that a person has not done before or that they rarely do. For other participants, not being able to engage in their usual occupations highlights what it is they would like to be or do but are not able to show others.

Showing Self as Personal Space

The occupation of arranging his bedroom and presenting it to his friends allows Stephen to show something about himself to them. Having recently come out as a gay man and as a consequence moved out of the family home into a flat, Stephen describes how he has arranged his room:

Now that I have moved into a flat, I have got my own bedroom. When I lived with my wife we used to share a bedroom. My bedroom is now entirely my own space. I have the bed that I want, the linen that I want, and I have things up on the wall that I want. I spent ages deciding how the room should look and where everything should go. All the nick-knacks I have in the room are me, they define who I am. I have got toys from McDonalds, little

toys that people have given me, pebbles from the beach. I have even got bark off a tree from when I was a student. The tapa cloth⁴ on the wall was given to me by a client's family. All the things in my room have significance to me. They tell people who I am and sometimes I ask my friends what they think my bedroom tells them about me as a person.

For Stephen the occupation of arranging his room allows him to showcase his life, and make public only those aspects of his past that he wants to. At the same time his personal space reveals to others that he is no longer with his wife and that he is single. There is a sense that his bedroom has become something of a haven, somewhere that holds his past as he enters into the next phase of his life. Showing who he is, is done in a private place where only those he wants have access. Thus aspects of his life are able to be shown by invitation. Having his own space seems to be important to him. It is something that is his and not shared with another, perhaps making a distinction between his past life of Being-with his wife and sharing a room and being single and having a place for himself. In doing so he comes to understand more about himself as someone living in a different place. He displays the things that connect him with his past. The objects in his room are not there just as decorations but as a link to people and places. The choice of bed and linen also tell us something about him. These choices of acquiring and arranging his objects are revealed through occupation. There is a sense that he needs to show his past to know where his future is going during a time of upheaval and uncertainty as his future unfolds. There is an element of him looking for a way forward, secure in the knowledge that he is surrounded by artefacts from his past. The objects in his room have a strong connection to Being-with others as he highlights the toys that have been given to him and the tapa cloth on the wall that was a gift from a client's family.

Displaying things in his room exposes his 'real self' to others where he can check out what others think of him and thus how he compares with others. Through asking his friends what his room tells them about him he is able to catch sight of himself. It is in the 'notness' of no longer living in the family home that the

⁴ Tapa cloth is a bark cloth made in the Pacific Islands, primarily Tonga and Samoa, and is used for both functional and ceremonial purposes.

possibilities of decorating his room have opened up and as a consequence things about himself are revealed as he travels the journey of who he is becoming. It is the future that we are constantly moving toward. It is where our possibilities lie, yet at the same time we are not able to grasp on to, or work out, what our possibilities are in advance. Our possibilities remain elusive. We are constantly projecting our possibilities, and it is a constant movement. “Heidegger maintains that the central ekstasis of state-of-mind is not the future, but the past. In light of the fact that fear always seems to be a fear of something in the future” (Gelvin, 1989, p. 188). As we move toward the future and into the unknown we worry about what the future may hold for us. In terms of understanding ourselves, Heidegger’s threefold notion of past, present, and future suggests that a person’s possibilities remain with them in the form of the past. As a person moves into the future this is in the context of knowing the past, which shows itself in the present. For Stephen the occupation of displaying his heirlooms connects him with his past as he moves toward the future. The artefacts remind him of the past and the possibilities that remain with him in the form of his heritage. The meaning of occupation in this instance is one of connecting the past with the future. Displaying the objects shows that the past is never entirely gone, that it is there to be drawn on as new possibilities open up for him, while others close themselves down. In everything we do, all three aspects, past, present, and future, are contained within that instant.

Showing Self as Open to Possibilities

Jane, a transgender person, describes the occupation of going for a walk around her local neighbourhood:

I live in a small rural community where everybody knows who I am. I have been very discrete until recently. I would never go out the front door with a skirt on just in case one of the neighbours saw me. Recently I have been out walking and the last few times I have seen an elderly couple out walking their dog and we got chatting one day. They asked me where I lived and I pointed out my house to them. It was then that they realised who I was... they didn’t actually recognise me. They thought I was someone else that they had never met before. I found it quite amazing because to them I was just another lady walking down the street.

For Jane the occupation of going for a walk allows her to understand herself further, as it is in the occupation of going for a walk that Jane is able to show herself Being-as female. In Jane's projection of herself as female, she is able to take this step of going out into the local community. The possibility of going for a walk as-female is open for Jane, but until this time she has not taken up this possibility. It is in going for a walk that she is able to blend in and to not be different. In a way she has met the expectations of what the 'they' suppose a female to be. Jane speaks of her amazement at not being seen as different but as just another person. Her sense is that the elderly couple saw her as "just another lady" as no-one special or different but as one of the crowd. As mentioned previously, life is always a threefold structure of past, present, and future. Our current life is always there before us, and no matter how terrible or optimistic we find it, each moment has its possibilities. As Harman (2007) stated:

We find ourselves delivered to a situation that must be dealt with somehow (past). Yet we are not mere slaves to this situation, since we go to work on our current situation by glimpsing possibilities in it that we can try to actualize (future). Finally every moment of factual life is a profound tension between what is given to us and how we confront it (present). Life is a kind of unrest, forever torn between two poles of reality. (p. 29)

We are constantly moving back and forth between the old self and the new self, responding to the possibilities as they arise. In Jane's experience, going for a walk reveals the possibility of Being seen as-female. Equally the possibility of the elderly couple recognising her as male also shows itself in the couple making the connection with who lives at the house she points out.

This story reveals that the meaning of occupation exists in relation to how the other responds to the possibilities that exist. The occupation shows the other who we are and they see us for what we are. It is the response from the other to what we do that opens up or closes down possibilities and thus the meaning of occupation is determined by how the other views a person. The 'they' has an idea of how we should be and when we meet these expectations we are able to get on and do the things that we want to do unhindered. Revealing herself to the other

created a tension for Jane, between how she would like to be in the future and how she was in the past. The positive response from the other in the present creates the potential to open up new possibilities for Jane.

Showing Self as Standing Back

For Stephen, his new role in the organisation he works at means that the occupation of going to the staff meeting has significance to him because it reveals him as Manager. He describes what it is like now in the staff meeting:

My role has been changing over time and was made more formal when the organisation increased my level of responsibility and introduced a new level of management below my position. Up until now at the staff meeting I was always the chairperson, which meant I was the predominant person at the meeting. Now I have decided to let the new Team Leader chair the meeting. Now when I come to the meetings I can sit there and be part of the team rather than being the boss. It means I can support the Team Leader and coach them and I can also stand back and make sure that the work of the organisation is being done.

For Stephen there is a sense that the occupation of the staff meeting has significance to him because it allows him to show himself differently. He is now the Manager rather than the Team Leader and as such he has an idea of how the Manager and the Team Leader should be. His projection of how to be as Manager opens up different possibilities for him. Now he can sit back and let the Team Leader run the meeting, while he concerns himself with the bigger picture of the organisation. He is able to withdraw and have an overview and to not be the person that is foremost in the eyes of the team. He is being present in a different way by withdrawing his input, however his presence is powerful in that he is there as-Manager and this will impact on how others relate to him. In his role, he shows his solicitude for others in the team, in particular the Team Leader, who he wants to support and develop as they settle into their new role.

Projection is Dasein's anticipation about the future. Dasein may not reach the project but it is in the looking forward that Dasein understands what the possibilities are. King (2001) expanded on the notion of projection: "Dasein as long as he factually exists, is essentially 'beyond' himself as he already is.

Existing for the sake of himself, he constantly relates himself to his possibilities, to what he is not yet but can become” (p. 145). It is in the looking forward to the future, the goals that Dasein has if you will, that Dasein is able to see what is possible. Possibility may not yet be actual or what is necessary but what is conceived as being open. Stephen in his looking forward to what it will be like as a Manager has an idea of how he would like it to be. He has started to interact differently with the team. He is going to the meeting as someone different. This is demonstrated in his actions of taking a backseat and thinking about the bigger picture of the organisation. In relation to the meaning of occupation the notion of projection means that a person has a sense of looking forward and having an idea of how an occupation should be done and how they see themselves engaging in that occupation.

Showing Self as Being Seen

For Sally-Anne being retired and spending more of her day at home draws her attention to how she has revealed herself as a neighbour:

It is taking a bit of getting used to, being retired. I don't like it much and I'm not sure what I am going to do. It means that I am home during the day and I have realised how much I miss the people at work and there are not many other people around the neighbourhood. We have lived in this house for years and years and when you are working every day you just don't see people during the week and then at the weekend everyone is busy doing their own thing. A couple that have just moved in have asked my husband and I and probably five other families over for a BBQ tomorrow. I just think it is really cool. I like the idea because I haven't plucked up the courage to go and meet them yet. I'm going to find out if anyone is home during the day. That would be good because I can go and talk to them and find out if they are home and I can tell them I will be as well, then I might have something to do.

For Sally-Anne there is sense of wanting to find a place to belong and to find others to connect with. She is coming to terms with being retired and no longer going to work. This has called her to think about how and where she can connect with others. She feels a sense of anxiety and anticipation about what being retired will mean for her. At the moment she feels disconnected from her neighbourhood, but sees it as a prospect for creating new connections. The anticipation of

engaging in the occupation of going to the BBQ is considerable as it may mean the potential for other things that have not been open to her. As she comes to understand what it means to be retired the BBQ will be an opportunity for her to let others know that she is home during the day and available. In doing so she will be able to reveal herself as a retired person and as a neighbour open for more contact, perhaps to replace the connections she had with the people she worked with. The possibilities are many and varied but it is in the notness of no longer engaging in the occupation of work that she is able to see what these possibilities are. This shows Heidegger's notion of possibilities.

It is in Dasein's Being-in-the-world that Dasein has various possibilities open to it. These possibilities are broad ranging and are by no means fixed. Being retired means for Sally-Anne that some possibilities have closed down such as going to work, however other possibilities are opened up. Being at home means that she has been invited to the BBQ, she is open to do this where as in the past this did not seem a possibility. The invitation to the BBQ creates a sense of anticipation for Sally-Anne about developing connections and opening a whole new range of possibilities that did not exist for her previously. It is in the moment of being at home and invited to the BBQ that the possibilities become different. The notion of being open to possibilities is related to the meaning of occupation in that it shows what has meaning can change. This depends on circumstances and the environment we are in. What was previously not important to a person becomes important because of the possibilities it opens up.

Showing Self as Stamina

Following a head injury Mary describes cooking a meal:

When I first started cooking again the stamina of just standing up in the kitchen was a huge thing, it was just very tiring for me to be up at all. At first I had to totally adjust my cooking. Before I would do meals that were more on the spot, which required a lot of concentration, you know preparing vegetables and have them cooking while also cooking the meat. With the head injury I just didn't have the stamina to do that. I started doing meals that weren't complex, like an oven casserole where I could peel the potatoes early in the afternoon and then do something a bit later and then put it all in the oven and leave it. Physically I felt like a

robot a lot of the time and I was really, really slow. I would have to think, 'My arm needs to move to the saucepan' and then I would do it. The other thing was I had to get the dinner ready before my husband and kids got home. If they came home and put the television on, which is by the kitchen, then my concentration was completely gone. I really had to adjust my thinking when it came to cooking. I remember being quite resistant to a lot of that and thinking I am NOT going to change what I am doing, I can't do that, that is NOT what we do and this isn't how we work in this house.

Cooking is a way for Mary to show what she is able to do and creates a sense of her resuming the tasks and functions she had within the household prior to the head injury. There is a tension for Mary between what she is able to do and how she did things in the past. She is aware of how the 'they' of the family say how things should be done and whose role it is to do a particular task. Cooking the meal seems to highlight for her the way that she previously did things; that she had particular ways of doing things that can not be compromised. At the same time it brings to light how, as a result of her head injury, her capacity to do things has changed. Previously cooking was an embodied experience with little thought given to what happened automatically such as planning, concentrating, moving and timing. The tension for Mary is between how she did things in the past, how she does them now and how she would like to do them in the future. At the same time, cooking the meal although now taking most of the day, is a way of showing to her family what she is able to do, of what she is becoming. The significance of the occupation is that it allows her to show what she is able to do now compared with more recent times following her head injury. There is a sense that Mary is determined to show that she is improving and that she wants to be engulfed by the occupation rather than by the head injury.

Mary's story brings to the fore Heidegger's notion of the closing down of possibilities. The not being able to do is significant as it shows Dasein what it is not able to be. Possibilities depend on the wider whole but may be narrowed depending on a person's capabilities – strength, endurance, height and so on. It is in the notness that Dasein is able to measure the self against others and what they are able to do or not do. The comparison with others allows Dasein to gain

understanding. “Dasein is such that in every case it has understood (or alternatively, not understood) that it is to be thus or thus. As such understanding it ‘knows’ *what* it is capable of” (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 184). As Dasein throws itself into the future it not only understands the itself it is, but in the possibility of what it may be, and as such moves forward knowing its possibilities. Some possibilities are opened up while others close down. This story reveals the meaning of occupation in terms of the things we are no longer able to do making us dwell on what it is we could once do. Even though it is the same person doing the occupation, it is in the not being able to do the occupation in the same way that shows us what we have lost. The not being able to do shows a person a way forward through reflecting on what it is they can still do or hope to do again.

Showing Self as New Self: New Mood

For Stephen the disruption to his usual occupations was as a result of coming out as a gay man. He describes what it is like now when he goes out:

When I first came out, I went out on the town as much as I could. I just wanted to be with other gay men and find a place where I belonged. When I first started going to gay venues I would go by myself, stand by myself at the edge of the room and dance by myself. Now I go with a friend. The friendship is still developing but going out is what we tend to do together. Before I came out I would go home from work and watch television and then fall asleep in front of the television. As a 46 year old gay man I am living it up. I love the music in the clubs, I love to dance and I like being in a happy environment. I feel like I have found myself. I don’t know where I find the energy from. I am having a blast and it feels like I’m making up for lost time.

There is a sense that the occupation of going out clubbing is significant to Stephen because he reveals himself as gay. There is a sense of him feeling tentative and anxious and teetering on the edge trying to find a place to belong. As time goes by he comes to enjoy the energy and the buzz of going out and becoming accepted as he develops a connection with others. In contrast Stephen describes going clubbing with what he would do before he came out. It would seem that through his occupations he shows the world who he is. Prior to coming out he would be sitting at home, quietly watching television. As a gay man he has lots of energy and is out all the time. There seems to be a real contrast between these

occupations and how they reveal different aspects of his Being. Stephen also portrays a sense of regret and making up for lost time, that how he is now is how he wanted to be a long time ago. He carries on with many of his other occupations in the same way as he had done prior to disclosing his sexual orientation. It is only some of his occupations that reveal him as a gay man. His other occupations reveal different aspects of him. The process of him coming out impacted on his experience of the occupations that he chose to engage in where he did not disclose about himself, where he tried to keep things as they were. The Being-with his friend allows the possibility of going out to a gay night club to show itself. It is in his solicitude towards his friend that they are able to go out together. It is both in the Being-with and showing himself as becoming someone different that gives the occupation meaning.

Stephens's story shows how mood influences occupation and vice versa. As a gay man he is happy, has lots of energy and enjoys going out and in contrast describes feeling tired and flat sitting at home watching television. Mood is important as it provides the basis for what matters to us and in doing so, draws us to the possibilities that are open to us. Mood, while influencing how a person may perceive and act, also grounds a person in time. Heidegger explained this idea by saying that "one's state-of-mind, is grounded primarily in having 'been' means that the existentially basic character of moods lies in *bringing one back* to something" (1927/1962, p. 390). This suggests that it is mood that draws us back to and allows us to recollect what has been, to recall what has happened in the past as the backdrop for what might happen in the future. Heidegger makes it clear that although the past is unique to moods, that "moods also have futuristic and present directed characteristics" (Gelvin, 1989, p.188). Stephen's story reveals that occupation and mood are connected. The mood is already there and as Stephen comes to understand himself he tells of how the things he does create a mood and in doing so the mood determines the self. In terms of the meaning of occupation, this story shows that the person and the occupation are strongly connected, that one influences the other and in doing so a person comes to understand the self.

Showing Self as Pushing Boundaries

Jane describes the occupation of going to a party on a Saturday night:

Last Saturday I went to a party. To go out on a Saturday night with the girls you tend to get dressed up a bit more, you put on make up, wear stockings; you really try and look your best. I knew most of the people at the party and once you have done all the pleasantries you sit down and talk to each other. All the time you are very conscious of the feminine side that needs to be portrayed or shown. It was actually a very safe environment because it was a closed party to transgender and their partners or friends, so it was very controlled. Because of that you can push your feminine boundaries more than you would do in public, you can practice your feminine voice and no one is going to stare at you. If I am staying home it is a bit more relaxed, but as soon as I'm going out into public then the make-up goes on and you are always conscious of your facial hair. When you are in male mode you just don't worry about how you look. In female mode you are always thinking about your appearance.

For Jane there is a sense of her being able to present herself in a way that she wants to be seen by others. While at the party she is practicing how she thinks others expect her to be, such as practicing her feminine voice. The they of the party say that it is okay for Jane to be dressed how she is and to practice her feminine voice. This is in contrast to the they of the wider world, who Jane indicates may have an issue with how she is because it is not seen as a proper way of being in their eyes. It seems that Jane is measuring herself against others all the time. She compares herself against those in the wider world where there is a marked difference, and to those at the party who are further along their transgender journey. The occupation is significant to Jane in that it is through the occupation that she can expose who she really is to others in what she perceives to be a safe place. She is also able to compare where she is on the transgender journey, how her voice is, how she looks, how she shows herself to the world as a transgender person. It is through the occupation of being at the party and the Being-with that Jane is able to show who she is. There is a sense that for Jane, being who she really is or wants to be requires some practice, that she is on her way to becoming who she will be.

In attending the party she is able to choose one of the possibilities open to her. During the party she has the opportunity to show who she is through her clothes, her actions and her voice, in a place where she feels safe and comfortable. Other occupations Jane engages in are significant to her because they are about her showing herself in public in a way that she thinks she should be seen. Jane describes a real sense of a 'before and after', where there is a change in her physical appearance. It is through the occupation that she transforms herself, her sense of becoming a woman is her project for herself. This shows Heidegger's notion of the they. In Being-with others Dasein becomes aware of how its own capacities influence what Dasein is able or not able to do. The Being-with restricts the possibilities open to Dasein in another way, through the they. The they influence the things that are open to Dasein because of what the 'they' consider are right and proper things to do. Dasein's projection of itself is always in a world that has been discovered and it is:

...from this world it takes its possibilities and it does so in accordance with the way things have been interpreted by the 'they'. This interpretation has already restricted the possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable, the respectable – that which is fitting and proper. (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 239)

The choice of occupations are restricted by what the they decrees to be acceptable to do. So it is the Being-with others and the power of the they that determine, in part, what for Dasein is possible. The they gives a person the rules for what is acceptable or not and then a person can compare himself or herself with what the 'they' dictates and how compliant a person is with those rules. In Jane's story the they are present in two places which creates a tension for her. There is the they of the wider community and the they of the party. It seems from Jane's story that she has sought out others who have the same values and beliefs as her, and where the they of the group at the party dictate that it is okay to be there as-female. The they in this sense opens up the possibility to be who she is and supports her in doing so. This shows that the meaning of occupation is determined by how closely it is supported or not by the they; that occupation has meaning when the occupation is

accepted by the majority, and in doing so being-with others is what gives the occupation meaning.

Summary

From Heidegger's perspective, the nature of Dasein is one of becoming. To be human means that a person is not static but is always in the process of becoming oneself, living into the possibilities and into the future. Dasein is never isolated, instead it always inhabits a specific world made up of other things and people. By being in the world Dasein comes to understand itself by the possibilities that are open to it. Without things and other people possibilities would not exist. Being-with enables a person to become aware of how he or she is in relation to others – what it is a person can or can not do, what they are good at and what their capacities are in relation to an-other. In addition they dictate and shape what is acceptable to do or not do thus opening up or closing down possibilities. All the while we are imagining a future and heading towards it. The becoming exists within the threefold structure of past, present, and future. We are glimpsing at what the future may hold while being grounded in the past. Mood also plays a part in the possibilities open to us, it draws us to possibilities. How we feel when we wake in the morning or after engaging in an occupation may determine if and how we engage in that occupation in the future.

Our occupations show others and ourselves who it is we are becoming and is a showing at a point in time. The showing of possibilities may be as *standing back*, allowing us to take stock and to be open to the possibilities as we come to understand how the occupation could be performed. Possibilities may also reveal themselves as *stamina*, of being able to engage in similar occupations to the ones that we once did, as we move toward a new future. As we move forward, we may show our self as *Being seen in a different light* or *pushing boundaries*, engaging in an occupation that reveals something of our self to others and thus opening up new possibilities. The experiences of the participants show the complex interplay between time, mood and Being-with. The meaning of occupation reveals itself in relation to the possibilities that open up or close down to us and which we show to others through occupations.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discussion

Introduction

This study has explored the meaning of occupation by focusing on the participants' descriptions of everyday experience. In this chapter I will bring together what the literature revealed and the interpretation of the participants' stories. While the hermeneutic circle is a never ending to-ing and fro-ing between knowing and unknowing, the understandings I have reached now need to be crystallised and shared in order to challenge and inform understandings about the meaning of occupation. The meaning of occupation is open to many possibilities, all within the horizon of past, present, and future. Meaning is not stagnant, it is for-ever changing. It is both independent and interconnected and is part of the whole. As well as bringing together the findings from the literature and interpretation from the participants' stories, I will point to the limitations of this study and make recommendations for practice, occupational science, education, and future research. Finally I will offer my reflections on engaging in the occupation of writing this thesis to add to the hermeneutic circle.

Overview of the Findings

I have uncovered a number of meanings of occupation; while not a complete picture, the findings highlight the complexity of occupation. The findings chapters are presented in a linear format, but as previously discussed, each of the facets of the meaning of occupation works in unison. I likened this unison to three cogs in a wheel, each interconnected with each other. The purpose of this section is to summarise the key ideas from each of the findings chapters and then to illustrate how meaning interconnects by drawing on an experience from one of my own occupations.

In the first of the findings chapters the complex interconnectedness between person, the world and others in the world is highlighted. I show that in our

existence, it is the care and concern that we have for others or the things in the world that call us to action. The call itself is complex, and comes from both within us and external to us. From the experience of the participants, it is what they care about and what concerns them that give their occupations meaning. The care and concern often puts occupations in conflict with one another. Somehow the call is untangled and we respond to the call which is most pressing. The meaning of occupation is connected to how the mood of a person is revealed, this could be, for example, as responsibility, angst or living with loss. As the participants' stories show, the call to each occupation is connected to their care and concern.

In the second findings chapter, the notion of Being-with as a fundamental part of being human comes to light. From the participants' stories, occupation done with others gives a sense of connection and it is through the connection that occupation comes to have meaning. Occupation performed alone that would preferably be done with others becomes a task to be completed: it is lifeless and empty. It is through occupation that an avenue to be-with others is created and meaning is revealed that is more than the occupation itself. The multitude of combinations of occupations and who we engage with in those occupations is immense. This in turn influences the meaning of each and every occupation. Being-with from the participants' experience shows itself as: intimacy, obligation or being wanted, along with other notions.

In the final findings chapter the participants' stories point to the meaning of occupation being connected to the notion of 'possibilities'. As we continue on the journey of who it is we are becoming, our occupations show others what is we are capable of and how we conform or not to what the 'they' dictate is acceptable. It is through our occupations that we become aware of the possibilities that open up to us and those that close down. Occupation allows us to show ourselves as: being open to different things, having stamina or pushing boundaries. The meaning of occupation also shows itself in the way that occupation connects the past and present with the future. What we have done in the past influences what we do now, which in turn will influence what we do in the future. Each of these

experiences will have meaning connected to it as we traverse the continuum of time.

Dasein comes to know its capabilities, what it is that it cares for and what aspirations it has for the future, all within the world of others. This complex interconnection is not necessarily obvious, yet it surrounds us and for the most part we are unaware of the meaning of our occupations. It seems that it is not until there is a disruption to our usual occupations that the meaning of these occupations comes to the fore.

To further show the meaning of occupation, I will now turn to an experience of my own using the notion of the three cogs working in unison. I will draw out the meaning of the occupation of driving home from work one evening. The occupation of driving home happens regularly, it is given very little consideration as it happens in the flow of a day and in the flow of other occupations. It was not until there was a disruption to the occupation that the meaning became apparent. Just as in the stories from the participants, it was the occupation that had been disrupted that came to the forefront. In creating an opportunity to reflect on my experience I will show the complexity of the meaning of an ordinary, everyday occupation which would usually remain hidden.

The experience relates to a particular evening, a Monday, when I got into my car after work and it would not start. Eventually the car had to be towed to a garage to be repaired. The occupation of driving home from work tends to happen at the same time every day and is a relatively brief occupation that is part of the multitude of other everyday occupations. My immediate response to not being able to engage in the occupation was one of frustration, annoyance and anger. Reflecting on the meaning of this occupation a few days later and after a discussion with my thesis supervisors, the following came to light. After a busy day at work I simply wanted to get home and 'escape' the numerous issues I had been dealing with at work. Not being able to do so felt like I was in some way trapped and unable to take some time out to refresh myself for the following day. My thoughts turned to my dog, Geordie, who had been home alone for the day.

Not knowing how long it would be until I got home raised my anxiety as the usual routine is to take him for a walk. The occupation of driving home has meaning for me because of the care I have for Geordie; he is an important and significant part of my life, and something for which I am responsible and need to tend to. Being a responsible dog owner is something I take seriously and I felt I could not fulfil my obligations. My sense of responsibility and obligation led me to worry about the dog. I was also aware that I had plans for that evening to go out to dinner with some friends. I place a great deal of value on my friendships which includes keeping in touch with them and seeing them when I can. Not being able to engage in the occupation of driving home meant that the next occupation was put in jeopardy. It meant that I would not be able to be-with them in the way I would have liked to. Being-with others is important to me, it allows me to share aspects of myself that are different to how I am at work. I also place value on being reliable, spending time with others, and sharing both what I have been doing and finding out what they have been doing. Being-with friends is a time to relax and have some fun. As the possibility of seeing my friends appeared to be closing down, I wondered how they would perceive this non-attendance and when we would be able to co-ordinate seeing each other again. I worried about how this might affect our relationship. In a sense my Being-with them was still present but not in a physical way. As the occupation of seeing my friends closed down other possibilities opened up. When I eventually got home I spent some of the evening on the telephone to other friends and family, telling them of my predicament. I searched out others to be-with, seeking their sympathy and support. As a result of these telephone calls connections were made and future dates set to meet up with people, which was an unanticipated consequence of the evening's events.

Coming back to the occupation of driving home, another way in which the occupation has meaning is through Being-with my family. I had purchased the car some three weeks prior from my sister who had left to live in another country. In some small way, each time I engage in the occupation of driving my car the connection with my sister is realised. It is through the occupation that the call to remember family is made. Indeed because of this family connection I telephoned my sister, who I have had limited contact with since she left the country, to ask

her advice on getting the car started. Although she was not able to offer any tangible solution, the concern in her voice regarding the situation was apparent. Not being able to engage in the occupation of driving brought the family connection to the fore. Coming from a small, close knit family I realised that the connection between family and car would be a point of discussion which in turn would mean emotions related to my sister leaving the country would be raised. In some way my situation could be perceived as arising from her decision to leave the country, which meant I purchased the car. It is interesting to note how the occupation of driving has a strong connection to family and how the disruption to the occupation turned my thoughts to how this could impact on family relations.

The other dimension of meaning in relation to this occupation is how it connects me to my work occupation. Getting to and from work delineates the different aspects of my life and in this particular instance my identity as an occupational therapist and occupational therapy educator. My thoughts had turned to what I had in my diary the next day and that I would need to cancel some of those things in order to arrange getting the car fixed. This meant I would have to forgo attending the staff meeting scheduled for 8:30 the next morning. I had a feeling of trepidation about this as it is important to me to be-with the team of people I manage. I see the staff meetings as one of the few opportunities for us all to connect, the connecting and talking about common issues creates a bond that in my mind leads to a sense of belonging. Choosing not to attend the meeting turned my attention to how I would be perceived by the team in my absence, how the meeting would be run and what decisions would be made without my input. I am passionate about my profession and my job: they are things that give me a sense of purpose, direction and identity. My work occupation allows me to develop my skills and knowledge and it is a place where I connect with others, staff and students alike. The connection with others allows me to share ideas and I enjoy the challenge and the variety of what I do. My job allows me to show something of who I am and what I am interested in. This includes the image I portray to others in how I conduct myself while at work, things such as being punctual, reliable, supportive, able to get things done and the things I am interested in and passionate about. These values and beliefs are some of the messages I got from

my parents when I was growing up and so the connection with my past comes to the fore. My work occupation shows others what it is I care about and provides some of the opportunities for me to develop.

Having reflected on the occupation of driving, a seemingly mundane occupation at the best of times, I realise that multiple meanings exist which I had not previously considered. The meanings I have identified are by no means exhaustive. I am aware that there are many more, however the meaning of this occupation had barely been given a thought until I was no longer able to engage in it. The meaning of the occupation is linked to Being-with – to family, friends, and colleagues and the connections that exist with these people. Meaning is linked to what calls us – my dog, friends, family, and colleagues, and highlights my values such as punctuality, reliability and how I am perceived as a friend, manager and family member. Meaning is also linked to Possibility – how my thoughts turned to what I care about, my dog and friends and to the possibilities that may be closed down or opened up as a result of this occupation. In addition the occupation of driving has meaning to me because it allows me to engage in the other occupations that are future focused and that allow me to continue on the journey of who it is I am becoming.

Having summarised the key findings and given an example from my own experience of how meaning comes to the fore, I will now consider how these findings relate to; the literature, practice, occupational science, and education.

Back to the Literature

I will now compare and contrast the themes that have emerged from this study with the literature. This will allow similarities and differences to be highlighted in order to articulate what is new from the findings and how such insights can contribute to understandings of the meaning of occupation. In Chapter Two the links between meaning and occupation and the history of occupation in relation to health were explored. In coming back to the literature I will show how insights from this study, in part, already existed in early times.

In the “Ode to the capable wife”, the meaning of occupation shows in a number of ways. For the purpose of this discussion I do not seek to comment on the criteria themselves, but to show how occupation reveals itself as lived experience. The ode to the capable wife shows that the call to occupation is to be busy and not idle and to care for her husband and her household. There is a sense that looking after those around her and ensuring that they are clothed and have employment is important. There is also a sense of there being a call to do good and not harm by helping others such as the poor and needy. The occupations that a capable wife engages in allow her to be-with, not only her husband and household, but with the wider community, those she buys land from and to whom she sells her merchandise. There is a sense of relationship with those around her, of caring and looking after others, where she is in some ways the central point of connection between her family and those external to the household. The notion of possibilities is shown in the way she uses her capacities to make and sell things, and to improve the life of herself and the others around her. She is aspiring to be the best wife that she can be. There is a sense that the occupations she engages in expand her horizons by being more than just a capable wife, but a manager of and provider for her household, a land owner and a business person.

The three themes identified in this study are seen as ‘already there’ since ancient times. Going back to the ode of the capable wife with these three themes in mind shows that it is possible to tease out the meaning of occupation. This points to the meaning of occupation being as old as time; as existing from the beginning, of being familiar, natural and so close to us that we do not actually recognise it. As such we struggle to show what that meaning is. It seems that trying to find meaning in anything other than lived experience will distort it. The meaning of occupation is inextricably bound in the flow of everyday life.

Keeping the themes that emerged from this study at the forefront I went back to the literature from the Ancient Greeks, Romans and from the period of the Middle Ages, Reformation, Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. What came to light was there were few descriptions of lived experience, none-the-less the literature still showed the meaning of occupation, but perhaps not as clearly as

would have been gained from stories of engaging in occupation. In the writings from the Ancient Greeks, the call to occupation appears to be related to reflecting on and attending to spiritual and physical excellence. The meaning of occupation resided in self development and achieving happiness. The Being-with of these occupations was connected to spending time with peers who shared mutual interests and supervising household staff and other workers to ensure that there was time to spend in occupations that allowed a person to seek a healthier and more fulfilled life. During the time of the Ancient Romans the meaning of occupation appeared to reside in becoming a better person through achievement in sports, war, wealth, and land ownership. For the Romans the call to occupation was related to individual success and the concern for creating a strong and dominant Empire. Occupation provided an opportunity to Be-with others in order to achieve goals related to military, political and the administrative success of the Empire.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and Reformation the meaning of occupation appeared to be related to being seen as a good person in the eyes of God. The call to occupation could be seen as coming from God. The period of the Reformation saw the call to particular occupations change from something that would please God, to something that was influenced by society and that created an inner sense of purpose. This led to occupations that included gaining knowledge and skills for self improvement. The Industrial Revolution appeared to have had a significant impact on the meaning of occupation. The period of the revolution saw the introduction of new technologies and a shift in the way that work occupations were carried out. The call to occupation appeared to be strongly influenced by these new technologies, the clock in particular determined where and when a person had to engage in an occupation. Family centered occupations, including the production of goods, were replaced by work in factories where there was little control over what was done or who you worked alongside. The restrictions placed on occupations were challenged by the Arts and Crafts Movement. This Movement encouraged occupations that developed and maximised an individuals' skills to produce objects that were well made and beautiful.

I will now turn to the occupational therapy and occupational science literature. I would argue that in the development of occupational therapy and occupational science the lived experience of occupation has been forgotten. People lead complex, dynamic and emotion filled lives, they are busy doing their everyday occupations and as such do not take the time to reflect on the meaning of occupation. It would seem that occupational therapy and occupational science has put the opportunity to uncover meaning from lived experience to one side in favour of considering occupation as a 'thing', something to be examined in isolation from everything else. As Harman (2007) pointed out:

...the true reality of things is not visible, but hides from conscious view. In order to gain knowledge of things, any science has to objectify things to "de-live" them. In other words, knowledge always cut things down to size or turns them into caricatures through some sort of oversimplification... To treat [things] scientifically means to "cut them off at the knees", converting them from mysterious and multifaceted things into concepts whose basic features can be clearly listed in a glossary. While this distortion is inevitable, it is a distortion nonetheless. (p. 23)

Occupation has had the emotion and mood taken out of it by trying to theorise and conceptualise it. This is perhaps in a desire to move toward more rigorous understandings of occupation as is demanded by the world of science. This has seen the development of models of occupation and intervention approaches to guide practice. It would seem that in doing so, the question of the essence of being has been obscured. What matters most has been covered up. The ontological understanding has for the most part been replaced with ontic knowledge.

I would argue that both occupational therapy and occupational science have extracted occupation from the lived experience. Rather than gaining understanding of the thing itself this has been overlooked in favour of objectifying occupation. The being of occupation in its own world has become silent. This study aims to break that silence.

A key impetus for the study, as previously mentioned, is that to a great extent the meaning of occupation is surprisingly absent in the occupational therapy

literature. This is perhaps due to professional viewpoints obscuring the meaning of occupation. Insights from this study bring into view how the meaning of occupation in relation to occupational therapy is gaining some interest. Returning to the occupational therapy literature and viewing it with a different lens has revealed that the focus of occupational therapy literature is on describing, evaluating and providing evidence for practice as well as providing the profession with overarching theoretical models and intervention approaches. There continues to be frequent mention of the terms “meaningful” and “purposeful” occupation but little literature that explores the nature of what makes occupation either meaningful or purposeful.

With the themes of this study in mind I went in search of the occupational therapy literature which resonated with these themes. I sought literature that was limited to occupation and keywords such as: relationship, meaning, connection, spirituality, future and concern. While there are some authors that have explored these notions, they are scarce.

The meaning of occupation connected to the notion of Being-with is alluded to in relation to work. Work as an important source of meaning is identified by Guevara and Ord (1996) who hypothesised that in relation to work individuals attempt to organise meaning around presence, belonging, and relationship. The authors did not explore this in any detail, but did indicate that work is important for “deriving meaning through relationships with others. It is our capacity for connectedness and relatedness to others which enables us to construct shared meanings” (p. 716). Brown, Kitchell, O’Neil, Locklear, Vosler, Kubeck, et al. (2001) built on Guevara and Ord’s work and recognised that individuals identify meanings in work that are unique to their personal experiences and that factors such as social support and family interaction can contribute to how an individual identifies meaning and satisfaction in the workplace. Social networks were identified by Brown et al. as having an impact on the level of satisfaction in the workplace. Those who made reference to social networks beyond the workplace reported a higher level of work satisfaction. While the connection between Being-with and meaning is identified by these authors, it is not expanded on in any way.

The notion of Being-with in relation to the meaning of occupation is highlighted in a single case study methodology to explore how meaningful occupation is used in adapting to widowhood. McIntyre and Howie (2002) found that the women adapted to being on their own by doing things that were personally meaningful and the women emphasised the need to keep doing things with others. While the authors did not explore what made occupations personally meaningful they did highlight that “active engagement in familiar meaningful occupations, in conjunction with social relationships, facilitated the process of occupational adaptation to the experience of widowhood” (p. 60). From a different perspective the importance of Being-with was identified by Paddy, Wright-St. Clair and Smythe (2002) in a phenomenological study exploring the therapeutic relationship between clients and occupational therapists. The study pointed to the “meaning in the action taken by therapists, particularly for clients who may understand it as a reflection of the relating and a signifying of their own worth” (p. 16). There is a sense that the nature of the relationship between therapist and client determines the meaning of the occupation for the client. In the relationship between client and therapist, the Being-with impacts on the meaning of the occupation of therapy.

The meaning of occupation connected to possibilities also comes to light in the occupational therapy literature. In exploring the meaning of occupational engagement in life threatening illness particularly for women diagnosed with cancer, Vrkljan and Miller-Polgar (2001) found that in a period of personal crisis individuals may have difficulty engaging in those occupations they find meaningful. A pervasive theme that emerged from this pilot project was that continuing to participate in those activities that were meaningful established daily occupational routines and served to reinforce the notion that the women felt they were still ‘alive’. While the authors identified the connection between meaningful occupation for the three women participants in the project, they did not explore what in particular made the occupations meaningful. I would argue that what gave these occupations meaning was that they showed the woman that in being able to do things in the present this opened up possibilities for the future. These possibilities had likely not been considered given that they were coming to terms

with their diagnosis. The notion of possibilities is also alluded to by Persson et al. (2001) who acknowledged that the meaning of occupation is related to self reward, joy, values and development of capacities. They do not go on to explore this in relation to being-with others, but stated that “occupations are meaningful if they are integrated parts of a person’s occupational continuity, and it is the interaction between the macro, meso, and micro perspectives that determines their meaningfulness” (p. 16). The notion of occupational continuity gives a sense of occupation occurring in a context and within a framework of past, present, and future.

The notion of possibilities was also alluded to by Goldstein, Kielhofner and Paul-Ward (2004) who explored and recognised the importance of occupational narratives as part of the therapeutic process. The “narrative reveals the overall meaning of a person’s life because it synthesises where life has been and is going” (p. 119). Goldstein et al. suggested that an occupational narrative is important because it allows an occupational therapist to gain from the client how that person derives meaning from various life events. They suggested that “the ongoing events of life are given meaning by the underlying plot that subsequently can be used to predict the direction, for better or worse, that life has taken or will take” (p. 119). Again this shows the importance of the connection between past, present and future and links very closely to my findings.

In my practice as an occupational therapist I could see the value of occupation in action. It made a difference to the clients I worked with in the cooking group and in the game of scrabble. What I did not grasp then was what I needed to hear, and that was the clients’ stories of the experience of engaging in occupation, so as to come to understand the meaning of occupation for them. While it seems there is recognition of the meaning of occupation as being important in the practice context, there is not adequate occupational therapy research that explores this notion in any great detail. This is somewhat surprising given that the meaning of occupation is considered to be a fundamental part of occupational therapy practice. It does, however, fit with Heidegger’s argument that so often meaning is taken for granted and supports the phenomenological quest of this research.

The occupational science literature is focused on gaining understandings of occupation in its broadest sense rather than the use of occupation as therapy. There have been a growing number of articles in the occupational science literature that have made reference to the meaning of occupation. The literature has also identified the need to explore the meaning of occupation in more detail and the ways in which this could be done. Florence Clark, one of the founding members of occupational science, highlighted in 1997 that occupations are imbued with meaning in relation to one's sense of past, present, and future and that "in humans, the value of particular occupations is primarily appropriated by culturally driven discourses and practices" (p. 90). This view of occupation is in line with this study in that the meaning of occupation is connected with past, present, and future and that meaning is influenced by others in our world. Clark went on to identify that "occupational science research has been more concerned with what and how much people do, but has not attended enough to the pace with which they do it and its personal meaning" (p. 89). While challenging occupational science to research the meaning of occupation, Clark did not offer any pointers in this direction, however, it would seem that occupational scientists have begun to explore the meaning of occupation in response to Clark's challenge. As previously noted studies by Hannan (1997), Hocking, Wright-St Clair and Bunrayong (2002), Howell and Peirce (2000), Hull Garci and Mandich (2005), Leufstadis, Erlandsson, Bjorkman and Ekland (2008), Scheerer, Cahill, Kirkby and Lane (2004), and Wright-St Clair, Bunrayong, Vittayakorn, Rattakorn and Hocking (2004) have taken place within the context of occupational science and explore the meaning of occupation. The findings of these studies show aspects of meaning which resonate with the findings from this study.

In a qualitative study by Hull Garci and Mandich (2005) the meaning given to elite wheelchair basketball by 16 athletes with lower extremity physical disabilities was explored. The authors found that for this occupation and for these participants, the meaning of occupation was revealed in three themes; 'the love of the game', 'Esprit de Corps' and 'raising the bar'. These three themes resonate with my study, in that the love of the game could be related to the call and

possibilities, in that the love of the game is what calls the athletes to play basketball and what they care about is “maintaining independence through physical fitness and the honour of representing their country in elite level sport” (Hull Garci & Mandich, 2005, p. 172). The theme of ‘Esprit de Corps’ identified by Hull Garci and Mandich is similar to the notion of Being-with, but it is not explored in any depth. The athletes that were part of the study identified “the social connection that developed while participating in elite wheelchair basketball; the athletes developed a group spirit” (p. 172) and talked of how the team became a second family.

In a study of 102 randomly selected individual who had at least two years contact with psychiatric services and were aged 20-55, Leufstadis et al (2008) found five themes in relation to the meaning of occupation. The participants engaged in: competitive work or study, activities at a community centre, or did not have regular or structured activities. The five themes identified by Leufstadis et al were: connection with others in the world around them; enjoyment and fun in life; being productive and having a sense of achievement; being occupied and having routines and projects in the stream of time; and taking care of oneself to maintain health. Making a link to the findings of my study requires looking beyond these themes and understanding the themes in more depth. Being with is exemplified in the theme of ‘connection with others and the world around them’ in that the participants found meaning in the occupations that created meaningful contacts which took the form of “meetings or discussions, participating in an occupation together, [or] talking on the telephone” (p. 30) and in feeling needed and helping others. The notion of the call is loosely connected to the theme of ‘taking care of oneself to maintain health’, the call appears to be in relation to concern for the self, in meeting “basic biological needs, such as eating, drinking and sleeping” (p. 31). The occupations that appear to have meaning for the participants were those that provided an opportunity to “take care of themselves and cope with their mental illness” (p. 31). The theme from this study which can be most aligned to the notion from my study of possibilities is ‘Being occupied and having routines and projects in the steam of time’, however this link is tenuous. Within this theme

participants' experienced meaning when their occupations were "linked with or led to future goals, and occupations that could be viewed as life projects" (p. 31).

Having reflected on the findings of these two studies it appears that the notions from my study, namely the call, Being-with and possibilities can be used as a framework which would shed new light, make explicit, and draw out a deeper and richer understandings of the meaning of occupation.

Interestingly a discussion in the occupational science literature by Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry (2006) and Barber (2006) argued for and against different views on individualism and occupation. While neither of the proponents is particularly focused on the meaning of occupation, their views none-the-less has implications for how occupation is understood and how the meaning of occupation is explored in the future. Dickie et al. began by challenging the commonly held assumption in occupational science that occupation is individualistic, and they drew on the work of Dewey to propose that occupation is transactional. They were particularly focused on the relational aspect of transactionalism which means that:

...occupation is no longer seen as a thing or as a type of self-action or inter-action arising from within individuals. In this view, occupation is an important mode through which human beings, as organisms-in-environment-as-a-whole, function in their complex totality. (p. 83)

This perspective calls attention to the continuity of the person and their world and that these can not be separated. Dickie et al. suggested that occupational science has not understood how occupations "are functionally integrated with social relationships, cultural contexts and community actions. These aspects of the transactional whole - the situations that we live - are the root of occupation and meaning to an extent underappreciated by occupational scientists" (p. 87). They went on to propose that understandings of occupation and the meaning of occupation come from the broader relational aspect of people and their world rather than meaning being an individual notion.

Barber (2006), in response, acknowledged that occupational science has until now relied on the interpretive tradition and suggested that it is possible, using phenomenology, to take into account a person and his or her inter-relationship with their context. He did, however, stress that this has been from the first-person perspective and considered that any other approach would risk losing this important perspective. He suggested that Dickie et al. (2006) have not fully understood the interpretive tradition and that the interpretive tradition does exactly as they suggest by considering the person in context.

Cutchin, Dickie and Humphry (2006) responded to Barber, highlighting the similarities between phenomenology and transactionalism particularly the lifeworld view where there is a relationship between world and person. However they also pointed out that Barber placed a distinct emphasis on the individual subject and re-iterated that “the transactional view calls for a focus on the relation of person and world (situation)” (p. 98). Cutchin et al. suggested that the transactional view could broaden understandings of occupation and that the interpretivist tradition from their perspective in some way narrows how occupation can be understood.

Having followed this debate in the literature, it is interesting to note the similarities between the philosophy of Dewey and in relation to this study the philosophy of Heidegger. Dewey and Heidegger were writing at about the same time. Their philosophy has similar notions. Heidegger’s notion of Being-in-the-world is similar to Dewey’s organisms-in-the-environment-as-a-whole. Rather than compare the work of Dewey and Heidegger, it is interesting to highlight the discussion between Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry and Barber, because as in this study, the findings have pointed to how the meaning of occupation can not be separated from the person and their world. It seems to me that there is a growing awareness that meaning matters.

Implications of this Study

Having brought together the findings from the literature and the interpretation from the participants’ stories I will now turn to the implications of this study.

Consideration will be given to the implications of this study in relation to; practice, occupational science, future understandings of occupation, and education.

Implications for Practice

This study has shown that the meaning of occupation is complex and exists within the context in which a person is engaging in occupation. The findings have a range of implications for practice, not only for the relationship between client and healthcare practitioner, but also for the way in which health services are delivered. This section will consider the challenges for practice, particularly in relation to ensuring that occupation is made visible.

The participants' stories point to the existence of multiple layers of meaning, even in the most mundane of occupations. The findings of this study have shown that the layers of meaning are not obvious and tend to remain hidden, both to the individual and to those in the world of that person. The meaning of occupation is not just an individualistic understanding; rather there are multiple layers that are related to the context, the person and the people in the person's world, even when the occupation is done in isolation. This means that in the delivery of occupational therapy, therapists need to appreciate the context of the people who influence the experience of occupation. In practice it is important for occupational therapists to enable a person to tell their story, allowing the meaning of occupation to be revealed. Narrative that focuses on a person telling their story from an occupational perspective is one that requires a change in focus and requires time, which could be constrained by service related pressures such as managing caseloads and meeting service expectations. Indeed the narrative may need to include the others in the person's world. This may call for a change in the way that occupational therapists work in some settings and require that health service administrators are educated on how occupational therapy services are delivered. Gaining an occupationally focused narrative will provide an opportunity for individuals to explore their possibilities and reflect on their capacity as they continue on the journey of who it is they are becoming, hopefully leading to longer term gains with regards to health and well-being.

In my practice as an occupational therapist, the assessment and intervention plans I carried out were focused on the individual, as is the heritage of occupational therapy. What this study highlights in terms of the meaning of occupation is that the person, the world and the others in the world are interconnected and can not be separated. The meaning of occupation is multifaceted and it is in the context of the world and Being-with others that the meaning of occupation is connected. This insight calls occupational therapists in practice to consider the types of and ways they gather information about the clients they work with, and to consider how the world and others contribute to the meaning of occupation. In addition, considering the notions of Being-with, the call, and possibilities are useful notions to take into account in the context of the therapeutic process. Taking the meaning of occupation into consideration may mean that occupational therapists can become more effective in the way that they understand people, their occupations and how occupation can be used effectively as an intervention tool.

To show how the findings of this study could be applied in practice, I will reflect on an example from practice. As an occupational therapist I worked for a mental health provider that provided support and rehabilitation for people with mental ill health. The client group were enrolled in the local community mental health team and were thus deemed to have a severe and enduring mental illness. The practice situation I will reflect on involved working with a young Maori man who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia by the Psychiatrist at the community mental health team. I worked with this client for approximately one year. During the first few months I spent time building a relationship with him, finding out about his past, his family and the occupations he wanted to do. He identified that he would like to get his own flat and to start a bone carving course. I worked with him on both of these goals. For the purpose of this reflection I will focus on the bone carving course he wanted to start. On reflection I took his wish to engage in a bone carving at face value, I simply assumed that because he had identified this as something he wanted to do, it had meaning to him. I do not recall spending any time on exploring the meaning of the occupation of bone carving for him.

With hindsight and taking into consideration the findings from this study, I am able to gain a greater understanding of why this occupation may have had meaning for him. These are obviously my understandings of the potential meaning and I recognise that the meaning of occupation is personal and individual; however this reflection serves as means to show how the findings from this study can be used to gain greater insights and contribute to more effective occupational therapy practice. In terms of the call – the occupation of bone carving is situated in the history and tradition of Maori, the symbols that are carved tell a story, and they draw on myths and legends and make connections to the past. Carving is a traditional craft for Maori, where skills and techniques are handed down through generations. My knowledge of the bone carving course was that it called on these traditions and as well as teaching the skills of bone carving, it also connected the course participants with Maori traditions, customs, language and a way of being. Perhaps for my client the call to the bone carving was a way for him to connect with his heritage, to learn more about the customs and techniques of carving and to enable him to identify with his culture and who he was as Maori. The course also allowed him to be-with others who were of a similar age and heritage. The bone carving course was run in his local community where he knew some of the other students and the teachers. There was a connection between them and his extended family. It allowed him to be with others in a familiar place and to show himself as a young Maori man with an interest in bone carving rather than as a person with a mental illness. If I look to the terms of possibilities, I can see that the bone carving course gave him a sense of direction for the future, as I recall he had not achieved well at school. This was an opportunity to show himself and others that he could achieve and gain new skills. Attending the course showed something of himself, that he had dreams and aspirations and that he wanted to develop as a person. It was as if the call to the course would allow him to get in touch with his past in order to allow him to move forward.

This reflection has called me to consider my ways of working as an occupational therapist. With this client if I were to go back and begin over, I would have spent more time getting to know about his interest in bone carving and the meanings this occupation had for him. The questions I would now ask would include: tell

me about your interest in this occupation, why is it important to you? What would you hope to gain from engaging in this occupation? What are your dreams/aspirations for the future and how will the bone carving course allow you to reach those aspirations? How do the things you do allow you to build on or maintain connections with others? Are there occupations that you would like to do that would allow you to be with other people? Can you think about the occupations you do now where you have a connection to other people? What is it about that connection that is important to you?

I believe that coming to understand more about the meaning of occupation would have created clearer reasons for him to engage in that occupation, but this went unexplored. By asking questions about the occupation I may have got to the heart of the occupation and uncovered the specific benefits for him of engaging in the course. I can only speculate that uncovering these things would have potentially enabled me to support him more authentically. In addition exploring the meaning of this occupation, would have given him some insights into himself as a person, his Being. Perhaps from these discussions we could have been able to identify a range of other areas to explore and work on as well as building and developing connections with his extended family and local community. At the time it seemed so simple. This reflection has opened a whole raft of possibilities that I had not considered at the time and this would have added depth to my occupational therapy practice.

Implications for Occupational Science

The findings of this study have a range of implications for occupational science. While the occupational science literature has identified the need to gain further understandings of the meaning of occupation, studies building on this knowledge are very sparse. This study indicates that even what could be considered mundane occupations have complex layers of meaning and that these everyday occupations should not be overlooked when exploring understandings of occupation. In addition, this study highlights the complex nature of the meaning of occupation. Meaning is circumstantial and is shaped by the dynamics of the interaction between people, competing demands and possibilities. This suggests that, as

Dickie et al. (2006) and Barber (2006) have argued, occupational science may need to move beyond the individualistic understandings of occupation and consider occupation from a wider context. As this study has shown, and as Barber highlighted, phenomenology is a fruitful methodology with which to explore occupation and this may provide occupational science with a useful tool to continue to explore the varying aspects of occupation.

Implications for Future Understandings of Occupation

A further implication from this study is for occupational therapy and occupational science in relation to how future knowledge and understandings regarding occupation are developed. In considering the future of occupational science Clark (2006) contended that to keep occupational science alive will require “nurturing the symbiotic relationship between the discipline and the occupational therapy profession. To the extent that occupational therapy thrives, occupational science must be better positioned, with the resource base and links to practice it needs to flourish” (p. 167). The relationship between knowledge development and the application of that knowledge, as Clark pointed out, is important to consider for the future. The development of professional knowledge, while not the focus of this study, has come to light during the process of discussion with colleagues. Freidson (1970) studied professional knowledge in relation to medicine and some of his ideas are relevant to this discussion. He noted that “the knowledge of the profession is distinct from the circumstances and the conditions in which it is applied” (p. 357). I believe that the development of occupational science creates an unnecessary divide between the knowledge of the profession and the application of that knowledge. Both occupational therapists and occupational scientists engage in research, although the nature of occupational therapy research appears to be more focused on providing evidence for the practice of occupational therapy, while occupational science research appears to be more focused on understandings of occupation. The original intent of occupational science was to “support the practice of occupational therapy” (Yerxa, Clark, Frank, Jackson, Parham, Pierce et al., 1990, p. 2). Yet occupational science appears to have moved away from this original intent towards the study of occupation in its broadest sense, not necessarily to support the practice of occupational therapy.

This, according to Freidson, is how professional knowledge tends to develop as those involved in the profession, in this instance occupational science, gain status “which protects him more than other experts from outside scrutiny and criticism and which grants him extraordinary autonomy in controlling both the definition of the problems he works on and the way he performs his work” (1970, p. 337). Has this become the case for occupational science?

I would argue that it may be timely to bring occupational science and occupational therapy back together to recreate a profession that has as its focus ‘occupation’. Medicine for example does not delineate the part of the profession that is involved in generating knowledge and the part of the profession that applies that knowledge, yet there are two professions concerned with occupation: occupational therapy and occupational science. I would argue that the use of the word “science” in the title occupational science does not convey the intent of what was envisaged. Science after all is defined as “the systematic study of the nature and behaviour of the material and physical universe, based on observation, experiment and measurement and formulation of laws to describe these facts in general terms” (Hanks, 1979, p. 1306). In contrast to this definition, the specifications of occupational science proposed by Yerxa et al. (1990) were to “study individuals in interaction with their environment, not as decontextualized beings...[and to] study the persons experience of engagement in occupation recognizing that observing behaviour is not sufficient to understand occupation” (p. 11). It appears to me that the objectives of occupational science and the defined nature of science are not congruent. As Harman (2007) suggested “any science has to objectify things to ‘de-live’ them” (p. 23). This does not appear to be the intent of occupational science, rather it is to uncover the true reality of occupation based on lived experience. This raises the question, is occupational science really science? Perhaps as previously mentioned it is time to reconsider the way forward in terms of the name of the profession that has as its focus occupation. This would remove the confusion of who is an occupational therapist, who may conduct research on the application of occupation, and who is an occupational scientist.

Implications for Education

In my role as an educator of occupational therapists and other health professionals, I believe that this study has important implications for the education of health professionals. I have a much clearer vision of the importance of the meaning of occupation and the importance of 'relationship' when working with others. For occupational therapy students, teaching strategies are needed that allow students to more fully understand the complexity of the meaning of occupation. In terms of curriculum development this study has raised questions such as: how do students get to understand the heart of occupation? How do students develop skills in letting a person tell their story and letting the subtlety of the interconnection between the world, other people and their occupations show through? It would be useful to consider how curricula create opportunities to explore the interconnection between a person, the world and others. Developing skills in gaining an understanding of a person's narrative is one way of achieving this. Narrative attends to sharing and interpreting experience and seeks to uncover that which may be hidden or unspoken. Recognising the significance of occupation is most likely to be revealed through a person's narrative, and this may need to be made more explicit in teaching sessions. Developing skills in encouraging another person to share their narrative is not always possible within busy practice environments; students and practitioners must be given opportunities to practice these skills and receive feedback within pre-registration programmes, professional development programmes and conferences. This way of working will need to be promoted as it may be unfamiliar to other professionals working within the interdisciplinary team environment.

Understanding the nature of people as reflective beings, who are able to imagine their own possibilities, is a skill that needs to be developed by students. If a person appears unmotivated or unrealistic in their expectations for the future then an emerging practitioner needs to have the skills to prompt clients to consider other possibilities. As an educator, it is important to teach an emerging practitioner to attempt to make sense of a person's world. Practitioners need to help open up the possibilities that may be available to a person as part of their journey of who it is they are becoming. This is a difficult skill, as the journey may

not be clear and take many twists and turns. Emerging practitioners need to develop the ability and be provided with opportunities to allow a person to tell their story and to enable the possibilities to emerge.

Building relationships is another attribute that needs to be developed by emerging practitioners. Buber (2003) talked of being in relationship with others and the continuum of the I-It – I-Thou relationship. He acknowledged that being in relationship is complex and requires an openness and concernfulness for the other. However Buber pointed to the difficulty of being-in relationship with the likes of a health professional. This is because a person is in contact with a health professional because of their personal situation, they are seeking help. This may mean that there may never be a genuine relationship between therapist and client or in Buber's words a full turning toward. Emerging health professionals need to recognise that there will be limitations on the relationship that will exist between them as a health professional and the client and that in terms of Buber's continuum, the relationship with clients is more likely to be towards the I-It end of the continuum. Nonetheless, the relationship between client and health professional should not become a thing-in-itself. It is a relationship for-the-sake-of opening up conversations with clients to strengthen their relationships with those in their world. This study has shown that Being-with is strongly connected to the meaning of occupation, allowing clients to explore their relationships in connection to occupation is an important skill for emerging occupational therapists to develop, as this in turn may influence the meaning of occupation.

Limitations and Future Research

Coming to the end of this study, there is a sense that there is much more to be done. There is tension that all the voices have not been heard and not all meanings uncovered. If I were to engage in the hermeneutic circle once more, new understandings would emerge. This section will attend to the limitations of this study and potential areas for future research. The meanings uncovered in this study relate to a specific group of participants and do not, by any means, represent all the voices that could have been heard. The selection criteria for the study meant that many who could have participated were excluded. The inclusion

criteria required participants to be able to communicate effectively in English, be within a specific age range, be accessible to the researcher and have experienced an occupational disruption. This excluded children and older adults, who would have brought a different perspective to the findings. In addition those living in remote rural areas were not included and neither were those who have English as an additional language, thus excluding those with a different cultural heritage from the participants that were included. The inclusion criteria also specified that participants needed to have experienced an occupational disruption. This may have influenced the stories that participants told me about the kind of occupations they engaged in. Even though participants told stories of their everyday occupational experiences, particular occupations could have been at the forefront because they had in some way been disrupted.

In coming to choose a methodology for this study, I selected one which I considered could best uncover the meaning of occupation. Phenomenology does not seek to generate findings that directly translate to other situations. Rather it is hoped that the findings in a study such as this give an in-depth understanding of the experience of the study participants in a way that opens thinking about how it might be for others.

Within these limitations, lies the potential for further study. Of particular importance is continuing to explore the meaning of occupation. I believe that it is particularly important that future research includes perspectives from young people and older adults and those from a range of cultural backgrounds. Maori and Pasifika⁵, for example, may bring different and unique understandings. There are also opportunities to extend and expand knowledge about how the notions identified in this study could be incorporated into practice and how they could in turn influence practice and understandings of recovery from illness, injury or disability to enable people to participate more fully in the occupations in which they choose to engage. This study is not only an endpoint but a beginning for new and challenging understandings which can inform both occupational therapy practice and understandings of occupation in the wider context.

⁵ A person or group of people originating from the Pacific Islands (Samoa, Tonga etc).

Reflection

As I come to the end of this thesis and reflect on the journey that I have undertaken, I realise how far I have come. I naively thought that the writing of this study would come together easily. I recall the conversations I had with the participants and how openly they shared their stories with me and how powerful talking about occupation was to them. Often they were moved to tears as they shared how the change in being able (or not able) to do their occupations impacted on the others around them. What surprised me was their willingness to share aspects about their lives with a stranger who turned up on their doorstep with little introduction and a tape recorder. While I may not ever see the participants again, their stories will be testimony to the connections that were created. The conversations made me aware of how much people told me when the focus was on occupation and as I contrast this to the types of interview I conducted as an occupational therapy practitioner, I realise how much understanding I did not gain about a person and their occupations. One of the most significant differences in engaging in these conversations was that I was not there to be an occupational therapist, I did not have to solve a problem or report back to my multidisciplinary colleagues. Instead I was there as a researcher, there to listen and let people tell their stories. Yet, I now see that listening to peoples stories is the keystone of effective practice.

As the study progressed and I came to gain an understanding of the work of Heidegger and other philosophers, I realised how much my thinking had been influenced by other paradigms such as psychology, sociology and the world of medicine. This change in world view was a considerable challenge, almost turning on its head the previous way I had viewed the world and the people in it. I realised while exploring the literature how much occupation has featured throughout time but that very few people have viewed history from an occupational perspective. Perhaps this is something to consider for the future, for it seems that there is much wisdom in ancient ways.

This study has confirmed for me how complex occupation is, much more so than I ever realised. I have uncovered that the meaning of occupation is firmly situated in the context of living and believe that the meaning of occupation needs to be resituated in this context. I feel that I have just touched the surface of uncovering the meaning of occupation and trust that this study will contribute to future understandings. Occupation matters, for each one of us are always within a mode of being-occupied. It is the very essence of being human.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

MEMORANDUM



Student Services Group – Academic Services

To: Liz Smythe
From: **Madeline Banda**
Date: 22 April 2004
Subject: 04/66 The meaning of occupation: A phenomenological hermeneutic analysis

Dear Liz

Your application for ethics approval was considered by AUTEK at their meeting on 19/04/04.

Your application was approved for a period of two years until 19/04/06.

You are required to submit the following to AUTEK:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given.
- A brief statement on the status of the project at the end of the period of approval or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner.
- A request for renewal of approval if the project has not been completed by the end of the period of approval.

Please note that the Committee grants ethical approval only. If management approval from an institution/organisation is required, it is your responsibility to obtain this.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.

Please include the application number and study title in all correspondence and telephone queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madeline Banda', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
AUTEK
Cc: 9306780 Kirk Reed

Appendix 2: Letter of Support



"Innovative Therapy Solutions For Aotearoa"

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
AUTEC
Auckland University of Technology
Private Bag 92006
Auckland

29th March 2004

Karen Below
Mahi Kotahi: Work One
35 River Road
Dargaville
Kaipara
Northland

Dear Madeline

Re: Ethics Application
Project Title: The meaning of occupation: A hermeneutic phenomenological analysis
Researcher: Kirk Reed

Tena Koe Madeline,

By way of introduction my name is Karen Below, I am a joint owner and operator of a Kaupapa Maori Private Practice focused on the delivery of multidisciplinary therapy services to Maori communities (Tamaki Makaurau to Te Tai Tokerau). As a Maori Practitioner, I am passionately committed to the advancement of our communities, particularly in the area of Te Hau Ora.

Kirk approached me some time ago to inform me of his ideas in relation to this study and has kept me up to date with the nature and purpose of his proposed study. At this point he has asked me to write a letter in support for his ethics application, particularly in relation to how he will meet the obligations of Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

He has been clear that he wishes to approach potential participants who are Maori to be part of the study in order to reflect the New Zealand/Aotearoa context as he explores the meaning of occupation. Kirk has stated that he is committed to engage in a process that ensures good working relationships are developed and maintained and will seek guidance where necessary. To this end, I have encouraged Kirk to consider approaching possible research

candidates via our existing manawhenua links of Kuia, Kaumatua, Rangatahi, whom reside within Tamaki Makaurau me Te Tai Tokerau.

By considering this as an option I believe Kirk would be honouring aspects of Te Tiriti O Waitangi:

Partnership, Participation, Protection

- Ensuring appropriate consultation with Maori at all levels of the community (Iwi, Hapu, Whanau)
- Ensuring access is gained with respect to Tikanga Maori beliefs, this may mean there is an expectation of Kirk to conduct his research interviews in a forum governed by his Maori research candidates (Hau Ora Clinic and / or Marae)
- Ensuring he researches and incorporates aspects of Maori into his questioning and enquiring. This may mean the considering of learning Te Reo nga Kupu, being Maori words and descriptive concepts pertaining to occupation

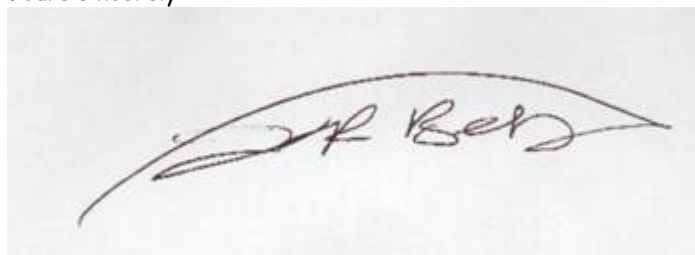
Most importantly, I believe this would ensure Kirk and his proposed research candidates have an interaction and ongoing relationship focused on mutual respect and understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi as a living document.

I perceive Kirk's study to be of great significance to Maori, given the current political and social climate of Aotearoa 2004. With current misunderstandings amongst Maori, Non Maori and Tau Iwi communities alike.

Further more these misunderstandings are being further perpetuated by ongoing myths and / or ignorance. Therefore, it is important to have studies and researchers, such as Kirk, whom are prepared to listen, interact and interpret knowledge specific to his study from Maori perspective/s. Such an approach assists Maori in contributing to their own advancement, while allowing a legitimate forum for educating others in aspects 'Maori'. On a larger scale I am optimistic Kirk's research will provide a valuable insight to the Occupational Science community regarding the uniqueness of the Aotearoa context.

Kirk has advised he will continue to work with me as his study progresses and he will seek support and direction, as appropriate. Kirk has committed to keeping me informed of the progress and outcome of his study. In closing, I am most honoured to be involved with a positive project and am looking forward to our ongoing consultations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Karen Below', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

IT version signature

Karen Below (BHSc.OT) NZROT NZAOT
Managing Director
Mahi Kotahi - Work One Limited

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Project Title

The meaning of occupation: A phenomenological hermeneutic analysis

Date Information Sheet Produced

30th March 2004

Invitation

You are invited to participate in this study by Kirk Reed, Lecturer at the School of Occupational Therapy, Auckland University of Technology. The study will contribute to the completion of a Doctor in Health Science degree. This letter outlines what the study is about and what it involves.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to better understand how people experience the meaning connected to the everyday things they do. For the purpose of this study these everyday things are known as occupations.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of the study?

You and other people who have experienced some kind of disruption to their usual occupations, such as a change in job, retirement or the way occupations are usually carried out, have been invited to take part in this study. I am interested in people who are comfortable with talking about the everyday things that they do, who are able to do this clearly in English and are aged twenty or older.

What happens in the study?

The study involves me meeting with you at least once, during which time I will ask you about the everyday things that you do, how you have come to be involved in them and what they mean to you. These interviews will last approximately ninety minutes and will be audio-taped.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Talking about the things we do and why we have come to do them may bring back memories of difficult times in your life. You only need to share what you are comfortable with sharing and you can ask to stop the interview at any time. If you wish you can have someone present during the interview as a support person. If you decide not to join the study, or wish to withdraw after consenting to be part of the study there will be no negative consequences.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you experience any psychological discomfort during or after the interview professional support will be available through the AUT Health and Counselling service.

What are the benefits?

Talking about your occupations and what they mean to you can be a positive process and can help you make sense of life experiences. Additionally, the information collected will be analysed to assist our understanding of the meaning of occupation.

What compensation is available for injury or negligence?

In the unlikely event of a physical injury as a result of your participation in this study, you will be covered by the accident compensation legislation with its limitations. ACC provides no cover for mental injury unless it is a result of a physical injury. However professional support will be available for any mental discomfort that occurs through participation in the study. If you have any questions about ACC please feel free to ask me for more information before you agree to take part in the study.

How will my privacy be protected?

The information from the interviews will be transcribed from the audio-tapes, and then the audio-tapes will be offered back to you, I will not keep copies of these. Your name or personal details will not appear on any written material. All information will be kept confidential and in a locked drawer at Auckland University of Technology and only myself and the research supervisor will have access to this information.

How do I join the study?

If you are interested in participating in the study, please contact me on (9) 917 9999 extn 7217, I will meet with you to talk more about what is involved and will give you some time to make a decision.

What are the costs of participating in the project? (including time)

There is no cost to participating in the study. The interviews will take approximately ninety minutes to complete and will occur in a quiet, safe place of your choice. Transport to the interviews will be provided if you require it.

Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research

When the study is complete there will be an opportunity for you to receive a copy of the summary of the results and an opportunity to meet with me to discuss these results.

Participant Concerns

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, (9) 917 9999 ext 8044.

Researcher Contact Details

Kirk Reed, School of Occupational Therapy, Division of Rehabilitation and Occupation Studies, Auckland University of Technology.

Email: kirk.reed@aut.ac.nz

Telephone: (9) 917 9999 extn 7217

Project Supervisor Contact Details

Dr Liz Smythe, Division of Health Care Practice, Auckland University of Technology

Email: liz.smythe@aut.ac.nz

Telephone: (9) 917 9999 extn 7196

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19th April 2004. AUTEK Reference number 04/66.

Appendix 4: Participant Informed Consent Form

Consent to Participation in Research



Title of Project: The meaning of occupation: A phenomenological hermeneutic analysis

Project Supervisor: Dr Liz Smythe

Researcher: Kirk Reed

-
- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 30th March 2004.)
 - I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
 - I understand that the interview will be audio-taped and transcribed.
 - I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
 - If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
 - I agree to take part in this research.
 - I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research.

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19th April 2004. AUTEK Reference number 04/66.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 5: Typist Confidentiality Agreement



Typist Confidentiality Agreement

Title of Project: The meaning of occupation: A phenomenological hermeneutic analysis

Project Supervisor: Dr Liz Smythe

Researcher: Kirk Reed

I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential. I understand that the contents of the tapes can only be discussed with the researchers. I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them while the work is in progress.

Typist's signature:

Typist's name:

Typist's Contact Details:

.....

.....

Date:

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Liz Smythe, Division of Health Care Practice, Auckland University of Technology

Email: liz.smythe@aut.ac.nz

Telephone: (9) 917 9999 extn 7196

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 19th April 2004.

AUTEC Reference number 04/66.

Appendix 6: Participant Letter

Kirk Reed
School of Occupational Therapy
Auckland University of Technology
Private Bag 92006
Auckland

Dear

Re: The meaning of occupation: A phenomenological hermeneutic analysis

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this study. You will find enclosed the transcript from the interview I did with you along with the stories I have created from your transcript.

As you will see you have been referred to as the pseudonym you chose for yourself, this will now be used in the remainder of the study.

You will notice that the stories enclosed attempt to reflect the main occupations you talked about and are not necessarily repeated word for word from the transcript. The nature of the study means that I need to refine these stories for the reader. In some cases I have added details to help make the story clearer.

I would now ask you to read through the stories to make sure that they accurately reflect your occupations. You can use the transcript from the interview to help you recall the details of what you talked about. You do not need to make any corrections to the transcript, although there are some gaps where I was unable to hear properly.

Please feel free to make any changes to the stories by writing directly on the stories, you may wish to add or reword information to make the story clearer. If you are unhappy with any information contained in a story and feel it needs to be removed please put a line through it and make a note that you would like it removed. You may also like to change the title of the story to better reflect what it is about.

I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope for you to return the stories to me when you have made the changes. Ideally I would like these back by the **13th of June**.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me at work on 917 9999 extn 7217 or via email kirk.reed@aut.ac.nz

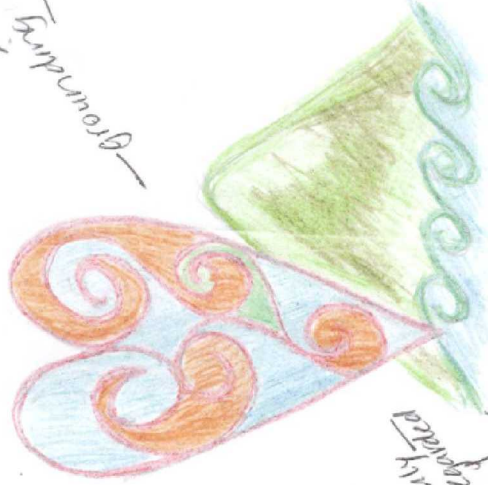
Many thanks

Kirk Reed
Doctoral Student

Appendix 7: Mind Map – The Call

THE CALL
3/12/06

has to emerge over time / sometimes goes into hiding



a state in the ground
to come back to
 — grounding —
 — a state in the ground
to come back to
 — security —
 — stability —
 — security —
 — a state in the ground
to come back to
 — re-connection
 — consistency / back-ground
 — identity —
 — shows others
 — who we are
 — and what is
 — central to us
 — marks as
 — in different
 — ways as
 — a part from
 — others

— based on how
 others think (proper)
 — we should be (wide)
 — look at self (narrow)
 — what's important to
 — us
 — do the right thing
 — trying to change
 — or make better
 — purpose
 — drive
 — focus
 — trying to change
 — or make better
 — purpose
 — drive
 — focus

need to be
 exposed to
 what really
 matters

some times
 — unknown focus
 — making a
 — priority

— significant
 — easy to lose
 — focus
 — important
 — what's
 — important
 — to what's
 — important

— inner most
 — core
 — comes out
 — easy to lose
 — focus
 — important
 — what's
 — important
 — to what's
 — important

— making a contribution
 — making things better
 — accepted
 — feeling wanted / needed /
 — connected
 — feeling wanted with others
 — accepted
 — making a contribution
 — making things better
 — accepted
 — feeling wanted / needed /
 — connected
 — feeling wanted with others
 — accepted

— values — we are — beliefs
 — inner most
 — core
 — comes out
 — easy to lose
 — focus
 — important
 — what's
 — important
 — to what's
 — important

Appendix 8: Mind Map – Being-with

Appendix 9: Mind Map – Possibilities

