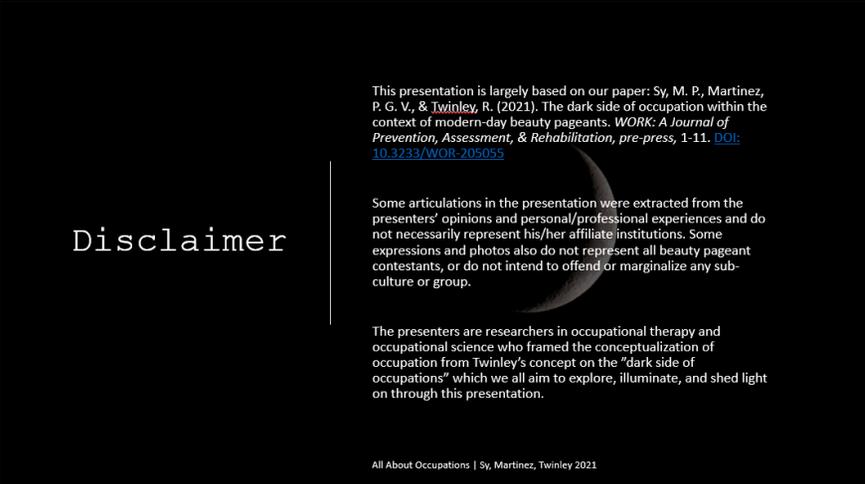


**All About Occupation Seminar Series: University of Brighton. 28th July 2021**

**The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful**

**Michael P. Sy, University of the Philippines, Manila & Pauline Gail V. Martinez, Angeles University Foundation**

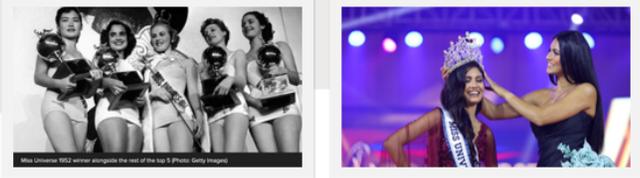
Please note: These are speaker's speaking notes and, as such, may not have the requisite citations.

Slides	Script
<p>PAULINE:</p>  <p>The doings and occupations of those who desire to be "beautiful"</p> <p>Michael P. Sy PhD Pauline Gail Martinez, OTRP</p> <p>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</p>	<p>Good day, everyone! We are thrilled to be with you here in this Seminar Series.</p> <p>Here we are in Session #3 of All About Occupation. Our presentation is entitled, "The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful".</p> <p><i>A bit of a background... This was a result of our random musings during the first few months of COVID-19 on how Filipinos put high regard on beauty pageants and how norms of beauty affect daily life by associating these with concepts of occupational science, occupational justice and occupational therapy.</i></p> <p><i>We are grateful to Bex for joining our team as she enthusiastically helped us enrich our work. We collaborated on writing a commentary...</i></p>
 <p>Disclaimer</p> <p>This presentation is largely based on our paper: Sy, M. P., Martinez, P. G. V., &amp; Twinley, R. (2021). The dark side of occupation within the context of modern-day beauty pageants. <i>WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment, &amp; Rehabilitation, pre-press</i>, 1-11. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-205055">10.3233/WOR-205055</a></p> <p>Some articulations in the presentation were extracted from the presenters' opinions and personal/professional experiences and do not necessarily represent his/her affiliate institutions. Some expressions and photos also do not represent all beauty pageant contestants, or do not intend to offend or marginalize any sub-culture or group.</p> <p>The presenters are researchers in occupational therapy and occupational science who framed the conceptualization of occupation from Twinley's concept on the "dark side of occupations" which we all aim to explore, illuminate, and shed light on through this presentation.</p> <p>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</p>	<p>(continuation) where this presentation is largely based on: Sy, M. P., Martinez, P. G. V., &amp; Twinley, R. (2021). <b>The dark side of occupation within the context of modern-day beauty pageants. WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment, &amp; Rehabilitation, pre-press</b>, 1-11. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-205055">10.3233/WOR-205055</a></p> <p>Some articulations in the presentation were extracted from the presenters' opinions and personal/professional experiences and do not necessarily represent their affiliate institutions. Some expressions and photos also do not represent all beauty pageant contestants, or do not intend to offend or marginalize any sub-culture or group.</p> <p>The presenters are researchers in occupational therapy and occupational science who framed the conceptualization of occupation from Twinley's concept on the "dark side of</p>

# ALL ABOUT OCCUPATION SESSION 3: The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful

	<p>occupation” which we all aimed to explore, illuminate, and shed light on through this presentation.</p>
 <p>Seminar aims</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe the group culture of people who desire to be “beautiful” through the world of beauty pageants</li><li>2. Discuss the different perspective on pageantry work</li><li>3. Discuss essential and hidden occupations performed within the context of beauty pageants</li></ol> <p>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</p>	<p>The aims of this seminar are:</p> <p>First: To describe the group culture of people who desire to be “beautiful” through the world of beauty pageants Second: To discuss the different perspective on pageantry work Lastly: To discuss essential and hidden occupations performed within the context of beauty pageants</p> <p><i>After our discussion, we are also looking forward to answering your questions and hearing your insights about the concepts introduced.</i></p>
 <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Doings</li><li>Occupations</li><li>Beauty</li><li>Desire to be beautiful</li></ul> <p>THE PHILIPPINE OR WITH BEAUTY QUE</p> <p>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</p>	<p>To put us all in one page, let us define the following terms “doings”, “occupations”, “beauty”, and “desire to be beautiful”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doing: As defined by Wilcock (1999), “...is often synonymous to occupation. Doing is so important that it is impossible to envisage humans without it. What people do creates and shapes societies in which we live, for good or bad”</li><li>• Occupations: “occupations refer to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include things people need to, want to and are expected to do” (WFOT, 2012)</li><li>• Beauty: “beauty is not just a visual experience; it is a characteristic that provides a perceptual experience to the eye, the ear, the intellect, the aesthetic faculty, or the moral sense. It is the qualities that give pleasure, meaning or satisfaction to the senses” (Corbett, 2008). <i>For the</i></li></ul>

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		<p><i>purposes of this presentation, we will focus on the overt, the physical aspect of beauty.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to be beautiful: <i>This pertains to the drive to achieve the standards of beauty.</i></li> </ul>
<p>In the past...</p>		<p>Describe some historical excerpts about beauty, beauty standards and beauty pageants</p> <p>The first known beauty pageant was held in Scotland in the year 1839. It was organized by Archibald Montgomerie, 13th Earl of Eglinton, to re-enact a medieval joust, and in the pageant, Georgina Seymour, Duchess of Somerset, was proclaimed the “Queen of Beauty”—she was the first known beauty queen in history (Pentland, 2014)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first known beauty pageant was held in Scotland in the year 1839.</li> <li>• Georgina Seymour, Duchess of Somerset, was proclaimed the “Queen of Beauty”—she was the first known beauty queen in history</li> </ul> <p>(Pentland, 2014)</p> <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>	
<p>Modern day beauty pageant</p>		<p><i>In the paper, we framed it in the context of modern-day beauty pageants as performative work and people specifically females, who engage in this type of occupation are beauty pageant hopefuls/contestants who aim to bag the coveted crown as a beauty title holder or more popularly known as the “Beauty Queen”. We acknowledge that children, men, and members of the LGBT may also engage in this occupation.</i></p> <p>The prize given to a Beauty Queen is usually a one year contract with perks given then she performs her role as a public figure and representative of an organization.</p> <p>Aside from signing a one-year contract to live the purpose of the organization, winners are also granted the voice to speak publicly to advocate for a specific cause, material rewards that go along with winning, and powers for social and political purposes.</p> <p>These beauty queens win for various purposes including</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beauty pageant: Performing arts where diverse occupations are at play</li> <li>• Purposes may differ but they have one thing in common—the winner is almost always called the “Beauty Queen”</li> <li>• Prize: a one-year contract with perks is given to act as a public figure and representative of an organization</li> </ul> <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>		

## ALL ABOUT OCCUPATION SESSION 3: The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful

	<p>empowering women, embodying national pride, promoting certain products, charities, or organizations, and espousing inclusivity, diversity, and cultural identity.</p>
<p>Different lenses about beauty and pageants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminism</li> <li>• Post-colonialism</li> <li>• Dominance of white beauty standards</li> <li>• Capitalism and consumerism</li> <li>• Classism and class politics</li> <li>• Morality and religion</li> </ul>  <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>	<p>To have a deeper understanding of how beauty pageants have evolved from historical re-enactment with performative educational function [19] to a global spectacle of socially constructed physical beauty with performative political and commercial functions [3, 6, 25], it is important to have an overview on the different perspectives surrounding the origins, culture, and work-related underpinnings of modern-day beauty pageants.</p>
<p><b>Feminism</b></p> <p>Beauty pageants are platforms to empower women; it is a place where women can speak up, show their skills and talents and public recognition</p> <p>Alternatively, staunch critics of beauty pageants claim that these platforms degrade and objectify women</p> <p>Post-feminism: women having the power and control over their bodies in the forms of achieving certain beauty standards</p>  <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>	<p>In the lens of feminism... beauty pageants are seen in three different lights:</p> <p>First, beauty pageants are a platform to empower women. Women are given the opportunity to speak up, show their skills and talents and gain public recognition.</p> <p>Second, some feminists see beauty pageants as degrading toward women, sexist and racist. Pageants can also serve as sites for the objectified feminine body. They challenge the concept of “flawless” femininity which means having firm breasts and buttocks, no cellulite, white sparkling teeth and beautiful hair.</p> <p>Third, this may be a combination of the previous two perspectives, achieving some sort of balance. Women have control over their body and therefore can decide the methods of how they will achieve certain beauty standards.</p>

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This Western influence bred a 'cultural hegemony' where the ruling class from the colonising countries constructed cultural values and norms, including the standards of beauty, to maintain their powers, privileges, and dominant status.

One example is the Santacruzan, an annual feast celebrated all over the PH in the month of May. It is a Roman Catholic tradition in honour of Saint Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, which was introduced in 1854 to the Filipinos during the Spanish colonisation in 1865 as a means to further cement the Catholic religion into the Filipinos' way and image of life.

In Hong Kong, Filipina domestic workers enjoy the idea of being a 'Sunday Beauty Queen' which signifies how even for one day (of the week), they can be free from their oppressed roles as a domestic helper and have the control on how they want to express themselves

In Indonesia, transgendered women, called "Waria" hold beauty pageants across large cities to promote glamor and transnationality. These pageants are not reflective of Southeast Asian culture as these are widely affected by the European model commodifying beauty.

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**Dominance of white beauty standards**

Winning beauty pageants because of skin color

Miss America 1984, Vanessa Williams—first African-American woman to win



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Which leads us to the next perspective, Dominance of white beauty standards. For over fifty years in America, black women were excluded from the Miss America Pageant

In this photo is Miss America 1984, Vanessa Williams, the first African-American woman to win. She emphasized that her winning is “to prove, despite racist history, that the pageant was raceless in its representations of all American women”.

**Capitalism and consumerism**

Commercialization of beauty

Choosing beauty queens from Eastern societies to model and promote beauty products made from the West



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*In today's world, capitalism and consumerism has more power in commercializing beauty more than ever through social media ads.*

There has been an assumption that most titleholders are chosen from countries belonging to the Global South. Beauty queens from these become ambassadors of the products promoting Western standards of beauty through marketing the sponsored cosmetic products.

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### Classism and class politics

Contestants usually come from middle class backgrounds

- appetite for consumerism
- desire to gain social capital and mobility
- Have high level of education

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To become a beauty queen entails acquiring a symbolic capital. Contestants are usually sponsored by capitalists, social entities or local communities. These sponsors are investing in the hopes of the Beauty Queen returning all the favors when she wins through representation, thus being called a symbolic capital.

Beauty pageant contestants usually come from middle class backgrounds as they have the appetite for consumerism and they also have the resources to pay for personal pageant training, gym memberships, social media managers and high fashion clothing.

Also, pageant organizers typically select women who have received formal education, can speak the English language eloquently, and generally strive to achieve an elite social class or something close to that.

### Morality and religion

Opposition and support of beauty pageants because of religious beliefs

Beauty standards based on spiritual, religious, and cultural standards

- Islam
- Hinduism
- Christianity



Lastly, the perspective of morality and religion. Physical beauty comes with the expectation of upholding wholesomeness and good moral values.

In Miss World 1996 in India, Hindu-right wing organizations fled the streets to rally against the beauty pageant. Women are believed to bring honor, embrace femininity, purity, submissiveness and mothering...

For these protesters, beauty pageants are corrupted by the influence of the West, bringing nudity, dubious morals and AIDS in their wake.

In Indonesia, Miss World 2013 was afflicted with many protests from a dominant Muslim group stating that the beauty pageant is an immoral event. In Islam marriages, the criteria a man looks for a woman, aside from her faith, are her wealth and beauty. Beautiful women are bound to get married and take care of the family and home which therefore brings peace and contentment.

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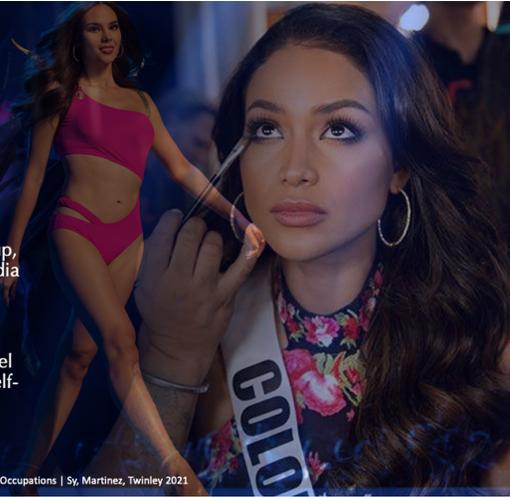
	<p>In Christianity, beautiful women are seen as noble but do not use charm and vanity for their own advantage. Typical eligibility rules in pageants may have been greatly influenced by Christianity. The rules being: between 18 to 26, unmarried, have not had children, have not posted in a men’s magazine which have been implemented in Miss America from the USA, which is predominantly Christian.</p>
<p>MIKE</p>	
 <p><b>Essential occupations</b></p> <p>These occupations, to some extent, adhere to the many definitions of “occupations” as illustrated by Law and Baum’s wherein they restore, maintain or enhance good health and promote a state of wellbeing towards occupational participation</p> <p>These are commonly done before, during, and after participating in a beauty pageant.</p> <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>	<p>MPS: “People who desire to be beautiful are bound to engage in doings that make them “beautiful”. These doings can be participative or performative in nature. At this juncture, let us further explore what “occupations” make people beautiful. In our paper, we describe these occupations as “essential occupations” and “the dark side of these occupations”.</p> <p>Essential occupations adhere to the many traditional definitions of “occupations”—that is, they are tasks and activities that have form, function, and meaning to restore, maintain, or enhance good health and well-being. Within modern-day beauty pageants, various occupations are performed before, during, and after the pageant.</p>

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### Essential occupations

- Examples: Going to the gym, exercising, eating nutritious food, formal and/or informal schooling, grooming, dressing up, and communicating through various media outlets.
- Advantage: being able to walk in high-heels, speak eloquently in English and in other languages, wear fashionable apparel on-point all the time, autodidacticism (self-education)

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MPS: Examples of these “essential occupations” include going to the gym, exercising, eating nutritious food, formal or informal schooling, grooming, dressing up, and communicating through various media outlets. While participating in these occupations are required to get into the pageant, these occupations must be performed well if you want to clinch the coveted title of a “Beauty Queen”. For instance, being able to walk and twirl in high-heels with confidence, speak eloquently in English and other languages, wear fashionable apparel all the time, and autodidacticism are some of the occupations that are expected to be performed by these women if they want to win the competition.

### Essential occupations

12-step ritual (Finol, 1999):

- introducing of the contestants, singing and dancing, presenting of judges, parading, singing and dancing, parading, singing and dancing, parading, singing and dancing, presenting of the past winner, selecting the finalists, and announcing of the winner

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During the beauty pageant itself, the contestants also need to perform ritualistic activities that will involve what Finol (1999) calls as the “12 step ritual”...

introducing of the contestants, singing and dancing, presenting of judges, parading, singing and dancing, parading, singing and dancing, parading, singing and dancing, presenting of the past winner, selecting the finalists, and announcing of the winner...

## ALL ABOUT OCCUPATION SESSION 3: The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful

### Dark side of occupations

These occupations are, to a certain extent, silenced, hidden, or secretive and are engaged in by pageant hopefuls with the shared goal of winning the beauty pageant, regardless of how they may be socially, culturally, politically, or morally perceived, judged, or experienced (Twinley, 2013; Twinley, 2017)

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Given the diversity of occupations that these contestants participate in and perform, we have explored occupations that need to be recognized at least in the context of modern day beauty pageants. Dark side of occupations pertain to doings that are silenced, hidden, or secretive. These doings are being performed by pageant hopefuls with the shared goal of winning the pageant regardless of how they are socially, culturally, politically, or morally perceived, judged, or experienced. They can be health-compromising, risky, illicit, dishonest, or socially and personally undesirable. In the next slides, I will be showing you some examples...

### Dark side of occupations within the contexts of beauty

Use of illicit beauty products

- Bleaching
- Whitening products

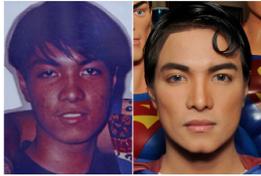
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While in some countries, whitening products are part of normal daily grooming, some products have dangerous chemicals that can destroy the skin and compromise the health of the users. Such products are perpetually used in the beauty sector, especially, in the Global South to adhere to the beauty standards of the West. Pageants are usually hosted by predominantly Western organizers and are sponsored by big corporations that manufacture beauty brands. The capitalists in world dominant core countries take advantage of this corporeal dilemma among women from the Global South so that they can blindly patronise their products no matter how expensive or dangerous they are (Kumara & Jayawardhana, 2005).

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**Dark side of occupations  
within the contexts of beauty**



Plastic and cosmetic surgery routines

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Moving forward, individuals who desire to be beautiful, across genders, are actuating post-feministic ideals where women and men are believed to have full control over their bodies through plastic and cosmetic surgeries. To differentiate, plastic surgery is a procedure done to reconstruct a body deformity for functionality, whereas cosmetic surgery is a procedure done to enhance a person's appearance for aesthetics. Common cosmetic surgeries include facial contouring, liposuction, face lift, use of Botox®, and many more. While these doings are now being normalised in some societies, in the context of modern day beauty pageants, undergoing such surgeries to participate in a pageant that forbids them will require contestants to conceal them. Although winning even with these enhancements is possible, the winners will usually showcase their "untouched beauty" to evoke the other end of the spectrum within the post-feminist rhetoric—but that is changing in recent years.



**Dark side of  
occupations  
within the  
contexts of beauty**

Weight control regimen

- Obsession with "thinness"
- Tongue meshing

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In relation to enhancement surgeries, a weight control culture has emerged in order to be beautiful. Most pageant hopefuls have to maintain a certain weight and thin body form to qualify. In a world where "thinness" is glorified, excessive weight control regimen prevails which involves overly selective nutritional diets, intensive exercises, and misuse of laxatives, diet aids, and enemas. In some cases, these practices resulted to seeing more women develop eating and mental health disorders. When weight is uncontrollable, to stay in the pageant, some engage in starving or non-eating. For instance, in South America, women use a quick weight-loss alternative called "tongue mesh". This practice involves sewing a piece of plastic mesh on the person's tongue with six stitches by a plastic surgeon. This will make eating painful for the pageant hopeful for one month in exchange of losing weight. This practice is done before a pageant begins and is hidden from the media.

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### Dark side of occupations within the contexts of beauty

- Sex work
- Escorting
- Sexual exploitation



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To clinch the coveted crown, pageant hopefuls will engage in practically all possible doings even at the cost of distorting their bodies and minds. For some women and men who may be in a situation where they have limited choices and advantages, the exchange of sexual services become an alternative to get ahead of the competition. While sex work can either be perceived as empowering or oppressive, engaging in the exchange of sexual services within a beauty pageant context is fraught with issues related to risk, danger, stigma, and exploitation (Wright, 2017). In the world of pageants, sex servicing (such as escorting, online sex, phone sex) is one way of soliciting funds and sponsorship to maintain the lifestyle of pageantry.

### Final thoughts

We hope to contribute to the on-going discourse on the conceptualization and theorization of the “dark side of occupations”.

- Seeing modern-day beauty pageant as a context where diverse occupations—both those exposed and hidden in the dark—are at play initiates a new way of understanding the unique doings of human beings.
- Modern-day beauty pageant is a form of work. It is both a means and end to achieving a work role, career, or profession that can afford public recognition and occupational justice but can also involve engagement in some “hidden” and health-compromising occupations.

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At this juncture, we have already achieved two things: first, described the group culture of people who desire to be “beautiful” through the world of beauty pageants; and second, discussed the different perspectives on pageantry work and the essential and hidden occupations performed within the context of modern day beauty pageants.

Having said that, we hope to contribute to the on-going discourse on the conceptualization and theorization of the “dark side of occupations”.

Here are some final thoughts that I’d like to share with the group today:

- Modern day beauty pageant is a context where diverse occupations are at play—both those exposed and hidden in the dark. We hope that this gives us a new perspective in understanding the unique doings of human beings.
- Pageantry is a form of work. It is both a means and end to achieving a work role, career, or profession that can afford public recognition and occupational justice but can also involve some

## ALL ABOUT OCCUPATION SESSION 3: The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful

<h3>Final thoughts</h3> <p>Occupational justice lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achieving occupational justice is one of the goals of these contestants when joining pageants. Possessing OJ allows them to gain the ability to participate and choose in more and varied occupations than before (winning). HOWEVER, while the end of to achieve occupational justice, we have to be mindful that the means towards OJ may entail, to a certain extent, experiences of injustices (towards self and/or others). “Occupation is not only a means of resistance and change but also a site where inequality and social difference are constituted” (Angell, 2014).</li></ul> <p>Critique from the occupational therapy community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Too theoretical, abstract, and out-of-touch</li><li>• Minimally informs occupational therapy practice</li><li>• Why talk (or write) about “beauty” in the middle of a crisis?</li></ul>  <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twiney 2021</small></p>	<p>“hidden” and health-compromising occupations in the short- and long-term.</p> <p>Additionally, I would like to share with you some insights that we gained from writing this piece related to occupational justice:</p> <p>“Achieving occupational justice is one of the goals of these contestants when joining pageants. Possessing OJ allows them to gain the ability to participate and choose in more and varied occupations than before (winning). HOWEVER, while the end goal is to achieve occupational justice, we have to be mindful that the means towards OJ may entail, to a certain extent, experiences of injustices (towards self and/or others). “Occupation is not only a means of resistance and change but also a site where inequality and social difference are constituted” (Angell, 2014).</p> <p>For readers coming from the fields that intersect with occupational science, we hope to offer a critical understanding of people’s diverse doings to guide in reconceptualising their practice, research, and policy making, especially when involving people who engage in hidden occupations and work in the context of desiring to be ‘beautiful’, while being judged against unrealistic beauty standards.</p> <p>Since the publication of our work, we have also received critics from the OT community... (Read excerpt)</p> <p>While these can be true to their realities and current circumstances, at least in the contexts where being beautiful is meaningful, we cannot be complicit in not exploring this topic because we believe that the concept of beauty is encountered by people on a daily basis, there are people who desire to be beautiful and they can be a person waiting to receive or receiving occupational therapy services, and we can say that the “desire of being beautiful and seeing beauty” seeks to strike a balance in the middle of this global crises.</p>
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## ALL ABOUT OCCUPATION SESSION 3: The doings and occupations of those who desire to be beautiful

 <p><b>References</b></p> <hr/> <p>The list is annexed in our article.</p> <p><b>Contact</b></p> <p>Michael Sy PhD   <a href="mailto:mpsy@up.edu.ph">mpsy@up.edu.ph</a></p> <p>Pauline Martinez OTRP   <a href="mailto:martinez,paulinegail@aup.edu.ph">martinez,paulinegail@aup.edu.ph</a></p> <p><small>All About Occupations   Sy, Martinez, Twinley 2021</small></p>	<p>Thank you for listening and glad to share with you our work. If you want to continue the discourse, please feel free to email me, Pau, and Bex.</p>
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