The aim of this Thesis is, in a Caring Science perspective, to lift forth the ethical discussion and its development in a central journal for professionals in the field of Nursing, during a period of rapidly increasing prosperity in our society.

The question that the Thesis states is: How is the ethical thinking made visible in the Finnish Yearbooks of Nursing during the years 1970–2000? The period I am researching is interesting for two specific reasons. Firstly because we have in Finland lived in very high prosperity during the period that has been researched and secondly because the Thesis is reaching over a period where Caring Science steps into picture during the late part of the period. The approach of the Thesis is in the line of the History of Ideas. We can better understand the modern Caring and create prerequisites for the Caring of the future, by increasing our historical knowledge. The main material for this Thesis consist of the Finnish yearbooks in nursing. The material includes a total of 27 yearbooks. The analysis was made by content analysis, where the purpose was to bring forth the content and meaning of the material.

The whole decade of the 1970s shows itself as an era when nursing stood in front of a massive technologization. This led to an identity crisis and a blurred professional image in the profession. It was only at the end of the 1970s that a proper ethical discourse showed itself in the form of discussions regarding the professional image of a nurse, ethics and ethical foundations of nursing. The following decade can be described as the Decade of Caring Science, when the scientific status was generally accepted and professorships were established. The ethical discussion focused on research ethics and ethical comities. The Finnish society changed in a rapid pace in the1990s and brought up a broader discussion regarding ethics and the foundations of values that are related to Caring in a more structured form. The discourse regarding ethical growth and development, the operation philosophy of caring, ethical leadership and a new caring ethics is starting to form. This Thesis clearly shows that ethics in Caring and Nursing is mainly developed by taking a scientifically based discourse further both in research and in education and among the caring and nursing community.