ABSTRACT

Nurminen, Monica. 2009. Time and the timeless within time. An emerging foundation for theory in caring science

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(166 pages, 6 appendices, 5 tables, 6 figures)

The aim of this thesis, which falls within basic research in caring science, is to deepen the understanding of time and of how time is shaped in the world of caring from a patient’s perspective. The study has a caring science perspective and its approach is hermeneutic. The abductive purpose of the study is to try to find evidence for how time is shaped from a caring science perspective. The research task is to develop knowledge of the substance and ontology of time in the world of caring, in the light of health and suffering. The search aimed at the truthful and at revealing meaning is carried out through conceptual definitions, the interpretation of various philosophers’ texts, and interpretations of patients’ texts. A hermeneutical archaeology of knowledge has been attempted in the course of revealing fragments of theory.

The fusion of horizons emerges through a caring science sounding board that is multidimensional, and from this fusion a picture is created. This picture shows an emerging foundation for theory in caring science, with time and the timeless within time coming together to create a dialogical movement. The multidimensional nature of time provides us with interpretations of dimensions, layers and levels. The ontological level can be presented in terms of “a flow of time”, “the time of existence”, “incarnated time” and “the preceding time of the other”. The dimensions of the essence of time are articulated as “possession time”, “the flow of now” and “the genuine shape of time”. The “space” of time, which could be seen as a transcendental level, has been divided into “relieving time” “timeless time” and “the illusion of infinity”. The existential level emerges in a dialogical movement between health and suffering, and it elucidates the double nature of time through the shaped movement of outer time and the hidden movement of inner time. Evidence from patients related to the experiences of time which emerge in the world of caring has been brought into a dialogue between “health” and “suffering” through an interpretational movement. In this way a pattern is formed, one that shows how the shape of time alters through suffering. Such a pattern forms the basis of the thought pattern of the time of caring. This thought pattern is presented in terms of “the arch of the spectra of time”, “the accessibility of now” and “becoming in time to suffer”.

Key words: time, caring science, hermeneutics, conceptual definition, text interpretation, archaeology of knowledge