

DASEIN: A Celebration of Caring Science Scholars in Communion

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Abstract: I am proposing Communion, as the 7th C, vital for the development, nurturance, and expression of a holistic expression or being of Roach's (2002) caring attributes. I am defining communion as humbly entering each other's world—a shared journey of being in the world. As humans, our primary focus is on our potential—the possibility of authentic human expression, being in and concerning the world (Heidegger, 1962). I will explore the particular of Caring Sciences through my own professional "Dasein" as I attach meaning of my own reflective process to higher philosophical beliefs.

Keywords: caring sciences; narrative; nursing theory; ontology

Intimate scholarship, as an interpretive process, creates opportunity to examine a particular, allowing the inquirer, "... to be caught off guard and disrupted in the act of the study ... opportunity to shift the focus, revisit the goals, create new probes, ... reinterpret" (Pinnegar, 2015, p. 112). Exploring a particular, through personal and professional narratives, illuminates ontological and epistemological knowing—which forms the basis for our experiences and understanding of our journey. Narratives are the means for creating meaningful reality as stories connect us to what we truly value. A distinction can be made about what is believed and what is valued.

Communion evokes belonging to a group or belief, sharing collective concerns for humanity beyond one's self (Frimer, Walker, Dunlop, Lee, & Riches, 2011; Harmon & Kyle, 2016). I am defining communion as humbly entering each other's world—a shared journey of being in the world. This intentional process is to celebrate the past, present, and future of my particular which is Caring Sciences. However, to entertain the notion of communion, awareness and development of "self"

is paramount, supported by like-minded others who are open and honest (Larsen, King, Stege, & Egeli, 2015) while fostering a sense of belonging (Lewicka, 2013). Heidegger (1962) explored the idea of *Being*, our aptitude to ascertain meaning in the particular. As humans, our primary focus is on our potential—the possibility of authentic human expression, being in and concerning the world (Heidegger, 1962). Lewicka (2013) suggests that our attachment to place provides self-identity; I suggest that this attachment can be formed metaphysically thus providing meaning and purpose in our professional lives.

Therefore, as humans, our journey "*Dasein*" is about grounding ourselves in and of the world through self-exploration to understand our place in the world always in relation to others. I will explore the particular of *Caring Sciences* through my own professional *Dasein* and the Caring Science scholars who have shared their authentic expression and wisdom and thus influenced by my own awareness and development. I have chosen to ground my intimate scholarship in *Dasein* as I attach meaning of my

own reflective process to higher philosophical beliefs. Ultimately proposing *Communion*, as the 7th C which is vital for the development, nurturance, and expression of a holistic expression or being of Roach's (2002) caring attributes. These initial thoughts were shared as part of a paper presentation at the 38th Annual International Association for Human Caring Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, acknowledging my companions in communion. This journey is about what is valued and integral to my personal and professional journey.

Sister Simone Roach as Knitter

Knowledge is always contextualized and validated through our relationships. Indigenous ways of knowing stress the importance of community (Elders) as the birthplace of our being. Who we are reflects where we came from and those who came before us. Therefore, the individual and what I do is *not* as important as belonging and recognizing the value of community (McGuire & Kishebakabaykwe, 2010). Our Western society often finds meaning in individualism: the "I." I am a nurse. I teach in a university. I have my doctorate. The journey of *becoming*, however, is never a singular one—who we come to be is influenced and shaped by those around us, our Elders. A Plains Cree Elder once told me that for her, understanding the other person is grounded in the community they live in and who their ancestors were. So, the question she asks is not "Who are you?" but "*Who knit you?*"

My introduction to the world of *Caring Sciences* was through Sister Simone Roach, initially a mentor, evolving to colleague, and eventually blessed with her friendship. This is our journey in relationship within an honored space that was created by her for me as a fledgling Caring Science nurse to come to understand how to live the 6Cs of Caring (Roach & Maykut, 2010). However, her gift of communion, within our mentored relationship, fostered my own caring journey—discovery of *Dasein*. It is within relationship, as caring practice, that reflexive communion of the 6Cs occurs through encouragement, acceptance, and discourse. This is a homage to a woman who inspired me, nurtured me, and loved me—she began knitting me with humility and grace. This is also a tribute to the beauty and wisdom of Caring Sciences' Scholars who have taken up her knitting who represent my world of communion, the 7th holistic C.

I as Yarn

When I reflect on Caring Sciences, and my 13-year journey of coming to understand, many questions still arise. I recognize common themes found in many of the Caring Science theories, models, and instruments (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 1996; Halldórsdóttir, 2008; Ray, 1989; Roach, 2002; Sumner, 2001; Turkel, 2001; Watson, 2009; Wolf, Giardino, Osborne, & Ambrose, 1994), which address the role, behavior, actions, knowledge, and attributes a registered nurse (RN) should have to foster a caring connection with another. These themes are predominantly focused on the relationship between nurse and client; but what about the nurse's journey? As an RN, I am in the world when I embody Caring Sciences in my practice but how do I come to know and grow in this knowledge?

I recognize that first and foremost, understanding of "self," my own state of mind and my being (knowledge and experiences), is crucial to being present and to fostering meaningfulness in my practice and thus fulfilling my own potential. Heidegger (1962) suggests that being in the world is as much about authentic expression as it is about discourse. This discourse on caring is the understanding of not only my own authentic awareness but also my responsibility as an RN to be open to recognizing the importance of the other's authentic awareness as our shared humanity. My moral code has in part dictated my journey. My values and connections as a nurse have been enhanced by travelers and mentors and companions like Sister Simone who have reaffirmed the values and provided the apparel for the journey.

How do I move toward *Dasein* as a professional to ultimately embody—I *am* Caring? What strengthens the notion of *Dasein*? Is it when I am in relationship grounded in the essence of caring? What knowledge is necessary to acquire understanding of who I am in and of the world? Can I live out caring practices without recognizing that I am a caring vessel "immersed in caring" in it of itself?

I have come to realize that it is vital to surround myself with scholars who are able to nurture, educate, and support my professional growth to ensure my journey of becoming. Although I have been privileged to know many Caring Science Scholars through my membership in the International Association for Human Caring (IAHC), the following individuals have been instrumental in my becoming. They demonstrate dedication to the field of Caring Sciences and re-

flect every one of the 6Cs of Caring (Roach, 2002) in their professional lives. When I reflect on my current reality and the directions of my journey, it is only through understanding the value of being in communion with Caring Science Scholars that I come to understand my own humanity as a professional. However, I will highlight the individual's gift to me through one of the caring attributes as described by Roach.

Caring, the Human Mode of Being

Roach (2002) seminal work on caring began with a simple question, "*What is a nurse doing when they are caring?*" This initial question led to her theory, made implicit through the development of the six Cs of caring: compassion, competence, confidence, conscience, commitment, and comportment (Roach, 2002). She believed that caring, as a way of being, is epitomized in our nursing practice when our aptitudes and actions are congruent with values concerning our professional role, recognizing that caring is unique in nursing, not unique to nursing.

Commitment

This attribute is depicted as a complex affective response characterized by a convergence between one's desires and one's obligations, and by the deliberate choice to act in accordance with them (Roach, 2002). Dr. Zane Wolf is one of the hardest working caring scholars I know. She was the *first* person to talk to me at a conference, back in 2005 in Lake Tahoe, asking what brought me to the conference. She probably doesn't remember this encounter, although this memory is still vivid for me; this question was a welcoming inclusive gesture which clearly demonstrates her professional desire and obligation to live out caring in her actions. She is wholeheartedly committed to ensuring the dissemination of Caring Sciences through her role as Editor of this journal and mentoring novice researchers in their writing careers. She clearly demonstrates her commitment to her caring practice by recognizing the need of the other as equally important to her own journey. Her ability to balance desire and obligation has enabled me to utilize this gift in my own practice, fostering scholarship in undergraduate nursing students by introducing them to the annual conference and journal. This reflects my own desire to share the world of Caring Sciences and my obligation to leave nursing practice in a better place that I found it, as she has.

Confidence

The quality that fosters trusting relationships is the basis for the caring attribute of confidence (Roach, 2002). Dr. Patrick Dean... where does one begin to describe this gentle spiritual man who embodies the presence of caring? He exemplifies authenticity, respect, genuine interest in others, kindness, and many more qualities. His embodiment of caring enables him to connect and support others in their growth and development which enable those who are fortunate to develop a relationship with him a belief that he will be supportive of their growth and development. He is dedicated to ensuring the IAHC is inclusive, welcoming, and thriving. This ability to foster trust enables me to appreciate the importance of emotionally engaging with others to have a shared understanding of what it means to be a nurse whose practice is grounded in Caring Sciences. This way of being, as exemplified by Patrick, enables me to see the value of connecting authentically with my nursing students.

Conscience

The state of moral awareness guiding the health-care professional's attentiveness to ethical issues is the basis for the attribute of conscience (Roach, 2002). My first impression of Dr. Jane Sumner was that she exuded poise—who else wears a string of pearls when exercising? Over the years following that first meeting in a muggy exercise room, I have come to realize that her actions are guided by her ethical beliefs and values grounded in Caring Sciences. She untiringly is attentive to the importance of the moral imperative as a foundational principle to guide our everyday actions as caring. Jane has provided me with an ethical nursing lens which upholds the elements of integrity and dignity in which to build a trusting respectful relationship between student and educator. To develop a conscience sensitive to moral issues, we must act from a place of informed knowledge—and her theoretical framework influences my actions.

Compassion

The ability to enter into the experience of the other, to engage in activities with another individual in a way that is supportive demonstrates compassion (Roach, 2002). Dr. Jean Watson excludes qualities like peacefulness, purity, charm, and grace. Her theory of Human Caring recog-

nizes that “The moment of coming together presents them with the opportunity to decide how to be in the moment and in the relationship as where as what to do with and during the moment” (para. 15). To enable us to acknowledge both the unity and sanctity of life we must first embrace compassion—for ourselves and for others. Jean has taught me the importance of sharing, grounded in compassion, a way of being which creates an opportunity to engage with awareness in a relationship that includes both the cognitive and the affective response of the nurse. When we engage in a purposeful and genuine connection with others, this connection brings awareness and thus harmonious energy. As a nurse educator, I bring the gift of compassion to foster an intentional harmonious connection between the nursing student and myself.

Competence

Our aptitude to acquire and comprehend knowledge, applying the expertise required to provide for specific needs and to view another with dignity in a holistic manner, allows us to demonstrate this caring attribute (Roach, 2002). Dr. Marilyn Ray or “Dee,” as a theorist, provides nurses with a framework to guide not only their thinking but also their actions—a beautiful blend of both ontology and epistemology—answering what Roach asked “*What is a nurse doing when he or she is caring?*” With the current trend of adopting “evidence-based medicine”—nursing theorists are disappearing. Although I have incorporated many Caring Science Scholars in my own teachings, Ray’s (1989) *Theory of Bureaucratic Caring* grounds my fourth-year class. Students have stated the value of the theory’s framework for dissecting, analyzing, and responding to complex trends and issues in our nursing profession and healthcare system. My relationship with Marilyn has taught me *not* to give up the fight to include disciplinary knowledge as *foundational* in the development of our future nurses.

Comportment

The conduct of the nurse in congruence with the profession’s norms, both dress and address, represents the final attribute of caring according to Roach (2002). The following two women have taught me about the necessity of not only dressing for the occasion but the importance that my language always reflects humility, authenticity, and grace. Comportment is the essence of what

it means to be caring—a visible reminder to others—recognizing the importance of the “being” in the caring moment. It is the essence of the indivisible whole that values the caring moments and practices in our being.

Tina South. A chance meeting at a vending machine in San Antonio in 2011 has developed into a supportive dyad which continually informs my development as a nurse educator. We continue to travel together on our Caring Sciences Road, recognizing the centrality of our caring relationship in our everyday practice.

Carol Wild. As a colleague and dear friend, she constantly engages me in discourse on the significance of disciplinary knowledge to guide one’s actions, thoughts, and being as a professional. We have talked into the night about nursing theory, morality and ethics, and caring—each of us growing in our own development. Carol has shown me the beauty of vulnerability; to be vulnerable is to open oneself to the possibilities of life—a gift of genuine love which may be expressed within the parameters of a professional role. Both of us recognizing that caring is the essence for our profession to survive and thrive.

All of these professional relationships have reaffirmed and strengthened my comportment; ensuring that nursing as both profession and discipline needs to be grounded and influenced by Caring Sciences to ensure we embody all 6Cs of Caring in our professional endeavors and indeed honor my proposed seventh C—Communion—Daesin.

Daesin

If, as Heidegger (1962) has suggested, we are “to be in the world,” we need to make sense of the world. As nurses, we must embrace the fundamental ontology of our humanity reflected in our journey of uncovering what it means to be caring. We must remember there is an inherent longing and an affinity to belong, as human beings and it is in communion where our humanity flourishes. Individuals are influenced, coming to know and act, in relation to the world they live in. Scholars have the knowledge, skills, and aptitude to provide content and context of what it means to be immersed in Caring Sciences. Communion must be grounded in conscious engagement to foster synergy and constant renewal of ideas, actions, and potential. Scholars in communion need to comport themselves toward understanding their

wholeness of being-in-the-world as our essence of caring. It is this process, a shared discovery of meaning, where we are in and with the world. Creating communion provides the venue for understanding the relationship of being, to be in caring.

As I have examined my particular, in intimate scholarship, I realize the importance of the gifts the above-mentioned individuals have bestowed on me as part of our shared communion. This journey of being knitted has led me to beliefs about the significance of “communion” as the 7th C of Caring—adding to Roach (2002) seminal work. I believe to develop as a professional we must acknowledge and endorse:

- Communion, which is created through the caring action of knitting;
- Communion is as much about acquiring knowledge, skills, and attributes of *Caring Sciences* as it is about understanding who you are as a professional—the journey of intimate scholarship “Daesin”;
- Communion is not about imposing structures or rules; it’s about creating space for evolving and challenging ourselves to reach our full potential;
- Communion is about honoring and celebrating our companions;
- Communion is vital for surviving and thriving in our profession; and
- Communion is about participating and living out caring practices which in turn fosters hope for humanity through the relationships we create.

Conclusion

My journey of intimate scholarship was not about reconstructing my own identity but providing structure and meaning to understand my learning and by offering love and joy to my professional life. If we focus solely on acquiring knowledge and not realize the importance of the journey—where’s the joy, the fellowship, the expression of our authentic humanity, our love? My current journey is about discovering the wisdom, the beauty, and the love of those who “knit” me—to offer gratitude for all who have nurtured and inspired me and have been my communion.

Stickley and Freshwater (2002) state, “Love is central to human existence and must have a place in the caring professions” (p. 255). These scholars have demonstrated love for me as I continue my

development as a professional and I am able to reveal the love I have for them. Love is necessary in nursing education as an action grounded in caring; not to espouse love is to not recognize our own humanity and the gifts we provide when we are in relationship with self and others.

I know I have not arrived at my destination but I see where my journey has taken me and where it can take me. I will continue to honor the work of my dear mentor, Sister Simone Roach, who began the journey of knitting me and introducing me to wise scholars who became my companions, my communion. I will take up her legacy and begin the work of knitting others: new companions on a shared journey of discovery, creating communion—the 7th C—in which to be in and of *caring*.

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