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CHAPTER ONE

**The Philosophy of Science**

*Starting Point/Inverting the Paradigm\**



STARTING POINT: *the starting point will dictate where you end up.*

INVERTING THE PARADIGM

Behind everything physical in the world lies the unseen substance of Spirit . . . God is the unseen source and substance of everything that exists.

DAILY WORD, JANUARY 8, 2017, 21

A more complete study of the movements of the world will oblige us, little by little, to turn it upside down.

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN 1955, 43

INVERTING THE PARADIGM

- From physical to non-physical—metaphysical; to spiritual—open to infinity

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\* This chapter is heavily adapted from J. Watson, M. Smith, and R. Cowling, “Unitary Caring Science: Disciplinary Evolution of Nursing,” in W. Rosa, S. Horton-Deutsch, and J. Watson, eds., *Handbook of Caring Science* (New York: Springer, 2018 [in press]).

- From treatment and curing to caring-healing
- From caring as a means to an end to an end in and of itself—a highest ethical ideal for society, for a moral community
- From dense, medicalized language to evocative Caritas-Veritas language
- From separatist ontology to unitary-relational ontology
- From particulate to interactive to unitary transformative paradigm thinking
- From ‘consciousness’—‘residing-in-the-body physical’—to ‘non-local consciousness’ to body residing in infinite field of universal consciousness—Cosmic Love
- From ‘Epistemology as Ethic’ to ‘Ethic of Belonging’
- From low-vibration human consciousness actions to higher vibration of an evolved global human heart/ consciousness connection
- From fear-based Ego living to Trust—Truth-Love—Beauty living Caritas-Veritas
- From medical-clinical views of humanity to reverential respect for one humanity—one world, one heart, one planet earth
- From institutional technical medical cure practices to Unitary Caring Science Praxis.

Science is all a tall story we tell ourselves.

W. H. AUDEN

Thomas Berry (1988) wrote about how we are searching for a New Story within which we find a sense of life purpose, a guide to education, an understanding of our suffering, and impetus for energized action—what Andrew Harvey (2009) refers to as “sacred activism.” It is becoming increasingly obvious that the Old Story of science and medical science, as our starting point for society and life, has become fragmented and nonfunctional. Unitary caring science offers a New Story for science and our existence, if not our survival.

In a conventional medical science mind-set, caring has been seen as a means to an end, a curing end—an end, often at all costs, emo-

tionally, psychologically, medically, spiritually. When we invert the paradigm and reexamine human caring as a serious endeavor, we can acknowledge that, yes, caring contributes to curing. However, by turning the paradigm upside down, we position human caring as an end in and of itself, not just a means to a medical-cure end. Indeed, by inverting the paradigm, we place human caring as the highest ethical ideal we can offer society and humanity.\*

In the world of science, Willis Harman (1999) proposed another way for us to turn the scientific paradigm upside down. For example, he noted that in the conventional world of Western science we have what he called “the downward causation” model of science, whereby if we invert it we can consider an upward causation model of science. That is, rather than focus on smaller and smaller separate parts, we can consider moving upward to more complex explanatory models that accommodate more information and higher-level abstraction, including spirit and spiritual science, the science of consciousness.

Praxis of unitary caring science makes explicit the underlying values, ethics, as part of the entire single unitary field of human-earth-universe. It moves the Caritas Processes of Praxis to embrace Veritas, the Latin word for truth, beauty, love, goodness, restoring the moral component within the full meaning of Praxis. Caritas and Veritas combine in unitary caring science, returning nursing to its underlying purity and purpose of basic goodness. These underlying values are needed today to offer a New Story of science and actions that can help sustain our humanity and planet earth.

As part of the New Story of unity and human-universe caring, Thomas Berry’s (1988) “New Story” is a call to honor and embrace the universe itself as the basic value, the most profound primary sacred community on the planet. Indeed, he proclaimed that “all human activities, all professions, all programs and institutions must henceforth be judged primarily by the extent [to which] they

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\* This ethical ideal was influenced by philosopher Sally Gawow.

inhabit, ignore or foster a mutually enhancing human-earth relation as one” (Melange 2009).

If we encourage [them] to enter the profession without making any conditions as to the way in which the professions are to be practiced . . . shall we be encouraging the very qualities we wish to prevent?

War, non-caring, violence . . .

Shall we swear that the professions in the future shall be practiced so that they lead to a different song and a different conclusion?

VIRGINIA WOOLF 1938, 59

Unitary caring science invites us into an expanding universe and worldview that, if embraced, leads to a different song and contributes to a New Story for humanity and human caring. This New Story, coming from nursing and unitary thinking, is really an Old Story; it has been building across humanity for millions of years. In nursing, it has been building from Florence Nightingale onward but has been dwelling, often silently, behind the scenes of the dominant, outer world of material/physical/objective/hard Western science.

Unitary caring science as positioned here builds upon my original 1979 text, which began with a discussion of nursing as the Philosophy and Science of Caring; that discussion continued to evolve through other books, up to the 2nd edition in 2008 and beyond. (See appendix B for an overview of all other books, including those that are forthcoming).

This new work has evolved to a new level: *Unitary Caring Science: The Philosophy and Praxis of Nursing*. This book goes to another level of depth regarding a philosophy to inform and unify both science and practice/praxis. First is a clarification of the starting point of definitions, values, and worldview, allowing caring science to become more clearly seen as unitary caring science. This includes embracing metaphysics as well as embodied physical, empirical, concrete practice. It leads to a philosophically, ethically, and ontologically discipline-specific, informed unitary science paradigm to guide reverential sacred praxis for caring-healing and health.

If you seek to understand humans as a whole spiritual being, fully connected and evolving toward the Source with an infinite field of universal consciousness and Cosmic Love, and your starting point is the static physicality of Western metaphysics, R. D. Laing reminded us that “you cannot get there . . . it is like trying to make ice by boiling water” (Laing 1965, 24).

### **Disciplinary Definitions as Starting Point**

Many of the problems of philosophy are of such broad relevance to human concerns, and so complex in their ramifications, that they are, in one form or another, perennially present. Though in the course of time, they yield in part to philosophical inquiry, *they may need to be rethought by each age in the light of . . . deepened ethical and [spiritual] experiences [and values]* (emphasis added).

ELIZABETH BEARDSLEY AND MONROE BEARDSLEY 1974, IX

#### *Values Axiology*

Axiology, or the study of values, serves as an important starting point for Unitary Caring Science, in that axiology is the philosophical study of value. By asking value questions of a human unitary science, which differs from conventional views of Western science, unitary caring science invites new questions about value as a starting point.

What is of worth? Examples include truth, beauty, aesthetics, dignity, honesty, integrity, love, caring, belonging, and humanity-planet-universe. Axiology is associated with the ethics of science and moral imperatives, those ultimate intrinsic values essential for preserving humanity and human caring. By introducing axiology as the starting point for science, we get to ask new questions of science as to where the moral values of caring, compassion, love, truth, beauty, unity of wholeness, and so on fit into a philosophy of science and, specifically, nursing as unitary caring science. We get to make explicit the issue of worth and address issues of what values are of

worth. Without a moral foundation to guide praxis of the discipline and to guide science, human caring can be threatened and humanity can be totalized and objectified, in danger of cruelty and non-caring scientific and clinical practices. This work introduces *Veritas* to convey nursing's morality and value commitment to timeless, enduring values that intersect with *Caritas*, which unites caring and love.

Exploration of axiology as the philosophical study of moral ideals, worth, commitment, ethics, and timeless values is a necessary foundation for unitary caring science. Any philosophy of science for nursing praxis depends upon notions of moral values, worth, and moral imperatives to sustain human caring, wholeness, dignity, and integrity of the human-universe–health-healing process.

### *Philosophy*

A general orientation to philosophy is that it is an intense, reflective study of phenomena of interest regarding knowledge, systems of thought, and notions of being. In general, both philosophy and science are engaged in a search for truth. For example, *Veritas*, the Latin word for truth, is consistent with a search for knowing as part of philosophy's search for truth. The broad concept of *Veritas Aequitas* conveys a search for truth and justice. It is a motto that stands for personal honor and truth in actions and justice, regardless of the circumstance. At least three major branches of philosophy are relevant to unitary caring science and caring-healing practices/praxis: metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology. These in turn, consciously or unconsciously, guide our worldview of the human-cosmos existence of "being/belonging" with respect to unitary caring science praxis and transformative principles for guided policy actions/sacred activism.

### *Cosmology*

Cosmology is the branch of metaphysics that addresses the nature of the universe (Watson, Smith, and Cowley 2018 in press). It addresses questions about the universe that are beyond the scope of science, yet it is subsumed under the branch of metaphysics that is beyond

physics. Cosmology per se is beyond the focus of the philosophy of science addressed here, although cosmology is increasingly becoming a focus of concern regarding the universe itself and how it serves as the larger sacred context. Our collective story of the universe is allowing for either the infinite evolution of humanity or a totalizing of a human-planet universe.

Unitary caring science embraces a cosmology that honors the universe as context, consistent with Berry (1988). That is, the universe is the primary revelation of the Divine, the primary sacred source of existence, allowing the universe to be seen and experienced as joyous, filled with beauty, mysterious, wondrous, celebratory—a basic goodness of being and belonging together. The emerging cosmology is a response to the growing crisis of society and civilization in which the Old Story is no longer adequate for addressing the survival of the planet and humanity.

*Metaphysics (summarized from various sources)*

- **1a** is considered the first branch of philosophy, a division concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and being that includes ontology, cosmology, and often epistemology.
- **1b** ontology defines what it means “to be”; what is an existence worldview—for example, separatist versus unity.
- **1c** constitutes abstract philosophical studies, a study of what is outside objective experience, beyond the physical plane.
- **2** metaphysics describes what is beyond physics—the nature and origin of reality itself, the immortal soul, and the existence of a supreme being. Opinions about these metaphysical topics vary widely, since what is being discussed cannot be observed or measured or even truly known to exist. So, most metaphysical questions are still far from having a final answer.

In summary for our purposes here, metaphysics has two basic meanings (Watson, Smith, and Cowley 2018): (1) a branch of philosophy about one’s worldview—for example, ontology of being; and (2) a branch of philosophy beyond the physical, inviting non-

physical reality into our worldview and notions of being human. Metaphysics is especially relevant for exploring new explanatory unitary energy models of non-physical healing, beyond the body physical, and incorporating concepts such as non-local consciousness and new meta-paradigm concepts for spiritual healing, prayer, distant healing, and so on, for example.

### *Ontology*

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality as well as constituting the basic categories of being and categories related to being, according to Merriam-Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphysics>, accessed December 15, 2016). Traditionally listed as a part of the major branch of philosophy known as metaphysics, ontology often deals with questions concerning what entities exist or can be said to exist. Ontology as a philosophical enterprise is theoretical; it also has practical applications. Indeed, ontology and the nature of our unitary being inform and guide moral caring-healing practices, that is, praxis, whereby Caritas becomes a manifestation of discipline-specific unitary caring science praxis.

### *Ethics*

What is the right thing to do when one is faced with two equally conflicting, untenable choices? The study of ethics and exploration of ethics in unitary caring science takes us back to axiology. The ethical dilemmas in nursing and medical care are tied to values and morality.

This rhetorical dilemma and quest for values and living values to which one ascribes becomes the basis for ethics and ethical decision-making. The notion of morality and values precedes ethics in that morality calls us to make the most morally correct value decision, for example, “the human should always be honored as an end in and of itself and not as a means to an end.” This core value and moral imperative is in contrast to a clinical, professionally detached approach, which reduces the human to the moral status of an object

whereby professionals can justify doing something to another person as object that they would not do to a whole person such as themselves. Therein, doing harm is theoretically justified because the decision was guided by a worldview and moral-ethical principles, which justify separation and distancing—a rule-driven, decision-making model. This approach is in contrast to a relational worldview of unity and complexity and connections, which transcend rules and principles, on behalf of human principles and a relational worldview that considers the whole versus the parts.

Ethics, which rely on objective rational decisions alone, often result in suffering and inhumane decisions that affect the lives of everyone involved. Parker Palmer has framed these objective ethical ways of knowing and what counts as evidence as a form of violence—thus, even our ways of knowing and what counts as knowledge have epistemological consequences and conditions. Epistemology, how we know what we know, becomes an ethic that affects our worldview, our human existence, our relationship with self/other/Mother Earth/, our universe (Palmer 2004).

Various theories and rule-driven principle-based models for ethical decision-making are prevalent in fields of biomedical ethics; examples include deontological ethics and utilitarian ethics, or rights-based models. However, these ethical positions are rule-driven and principle-guided, in contrast to unitary caring ethics of connection, relations, context, complexity, personal meaning. For example, instead of asking a simple question such as “in this situation, under these circumstances, do we follow principles, distancing, and rules,” perhaps we may need to ask instead, *what is the kindest thing we can do* (inspired by Sarah Eagger, MD, United Kingdom).

### **Ethics of Unitary Caring Science**

The counterpoint to conventional science and conventional approaches to bioethics is the worldwide work of Emmanuel Levinas (1969), who positioned the Ethics of Belonging as the starting point

for all science, informing the Ontology of Being as one of belonging to Universal Cosmic Love. This Levinian ethic positions belonging against the separatist view, which disconnects humans from the life force energy of Universal Love. This ethic is tied back to axiology and values; what is truly valued and necessary to sustain moral imperatives?

Levinas (1969) noted that while he has been recognized for his ethical, moral, philosophical worldview, what was of most interest to him was the search for the holy. He acknowledged that all humans “belong” to the infinite field of Cosmic Universal Energy as the starting point, before the Ontology of Being.

#### —Sidebar—

Whereas Martin Heidegger (1927) focused on the Ontology of *Dasein*—being human and care as a way of being—Levinas declared that an Ethics of Belonging comes before the Ontology of Being. This introduces a higher level of unitary abstractions (in spite of Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein* positing being human as special ways of being). Likewise, while Heidegger’s view of being human and care is an ontological way of being in the world, Levinas posed belonging as a higher order, the ethical-philosophical starting point for science.

Levinas’s ethical-moral foundation served as a foundation of caring science as Sacred Science (Watson 2005). Likewise, it serves as an ethical foundation for unitary caring science and metaphysics. I, too, am drawn to that which is holy, mysterious, mystical, and unknowable but fully known and experienced by all of humanity across time. Likewise, this perspective now intersects with unitary science and views of a quantum universe, uncovering and revealing the connectedness and oneness of all. We all reside in the universal cosmic field of energy.

Such a stance creates a clearing and open space to enter another horizon of being-belonging as one. That is, human-universe being-belonging moves beyond principles and objectives, the rationality of strict ego, the physical plane, and invites concepts such as energy, spirit, and universal consciousness into the discourse of science—indeed, invites the sacred into our science (Watson 2005). An evolved Ethics of Belonging allows for both the embodiment of unity of the whole person and the reality of immanence and transcendence as one whole.

*Epistemology*

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, the nature and process of knowledge. It also guides our ontological view of our relation to knowing, developing/creating/co-creating knowledge. Epistemology informs our consciousness about what counts as knowledge, how we know, and sources of knowing/knowledge.

An expanded epistemological perspective, a relational unitary caring science ontological worldview, is incorporated in critiquing knowledge and how we know what we know. We acknowledge multiple sources of knowledge and ways of knowing; for example, knowledge may come from rational, technical, empirical means. In Unitary Caring Science, however, we also embrace and honor intuitive, aesthetic, personal, spiritual, ethical sacred knowledge and “non-conventional knowing,” non-scientific, metaphysical ways of knowing that do not conform to conventional medical science separatist worldviews.

*Theories.* Subsumed under epistemology are theories with various criteria in search of truth and knowledge. Unconsciously, our views of knowledge and ways of knowing affect what is credible, that is, our views of truth. Theories and philosophies of science are what frame disciplinary knowledge (Watson 2005, 12). Unitary caring science theories transcend but inform specific events; they seek explanations that reflect unitary ethical philosophical values for a field of study. Underlying any theory is a metaphysical-ontological context that can guide science and unitary caring science praxis.

Several dominant theories of truth are embedded in our culture.

*Correspondence Theory of Truth.* For example, one dominant view of truth is the correspondence theory of truth—that is, truth as objective, concrete, and physical. To be considered truthful, something has to correspond with reality data.

*Coherence Theory of Truth.* The coherence theory of truth has to show internal consistency within its context. It does not necessarily have to correspond to reality, but it must be coherent within its own paradigm.

*Pragmatic Theory of Truth.* Another view is the pragmatic theory of truth, which indicates that something is true if it is useful and workable for the purpose intended.

### **Unitary Caring Science Theory of Truth—*Aletheia* (Greek origin)**

The theory of truth that both corresponds to and is coherent with unitary caring science views of truth is the Greek view of truth—the *Aletheia* Theory of Truth. This view is related to beauty, harmony, essence; it is tied to the subjective, inner life of being-belonging. The ontology of Unitary Being is tied to criteria as a source for truth. *In other words, truth is not knowledge per se; rather, it is an ontological question.* However, in Western science, truth has been interpreted as an epistemological issue. The notion of truth and what counts as truth and knowledge informs and imprints our methods as well as what is legitimate as methods, what counts as knowledge, and what is credible in terms of truth statements.

However, in positing that unitary caring science is consistent with *Aletheia* views, we are acknowledging that truth is not an epistemological question; rather, it is an ontological question. Heidegger brought renewed attention to this view of truth. It is tied to the essence of meaning and is related to being, whereby the subject determines truth. This is especially relevant because unitary caring science works from the inner subjective life world of the other in a dynamic flow. Unitary caring science seeks to work in a pattern of synchronicity within the other's energetic frame of reference. For example, if someone has experienced something, that is a truth for them; it is related to the meaning the phenomenon holds for them and their ways of being-belonging in the world. In an evolved unitary caring science worldview, which embraces the fullness of humanity for unitary caring science praxis, we acknowledge that there are many truths and no one truth.

My definition of theory is from the Greek word *Theoria*, which means “to see” and “to seek” in an intellectual, philosophical, ethi-

cal way. It does not consider theory to be just a body of substantiated facts.

#### SCIENCE (WESTERN MEDICAL)

Science is not the same in all paradigms in terms of [ethics,] ontology, epistemology, methodology [and praxis]. (Lather 2007, 164)

Gary Rolfe (2011) posited that “social and medical science paradigms adopted by the academic discipline of nursing are no longer fit for purposes in the 21st century” (Rolfe 2011, 60). Western medical science is defined by objective knowledge or a system of knowledge that covers general truths and laws predictably based on general laws. Knowledge is known through testing questions using the scientific method and through concern with the physical-outer world. In this form of knowledge and view of science, the emphasis is on objectivism, analytic and experimental knowledge, in which we distance ourselves from both the process and the knowledge itself, as well as from our ways of knowing and, indeed, what counts as knowledge and knowing.

As noted earlier (Hills and Watson 2011, 39–42), Parker Palmer also critiqued this view of science and knowledge as harmful to our experience and inner knowing. Perpetuating the myth of objectivism, experimentalism, and analytic criteria for their own sake alone can be a form of violence and an act of cruelty.

This epistemological awareness of the philosophy of science and meaningful knowledge is important to current nursing discourse related to science itself. For example, Rosemarie Parse (2015) raised the question, is it Nursing Science or is it the Science of Nursing? Within the context of a philosophy of science, this is an important question.

Within a Western epistemological worldview, the Science of Nursing can be viewed as funded research focused on disease-related conditions and diagnosis-focused care models, with knowledge of parts as a phenomenon of interest. This contrasts with Parse, who acknowledges that Nursing Science is “the unique body of knowl-

edge embedded in the extant nursing frameworks and theories that continue to be developed through research and creative conceptualization” (2015, 101).

Barrett (2017) raised the continuing question, again, what is Nursing Science? Who knows and who cares? She highlighted the current funding priorities of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), which focus on knowledge development in areas such as “omics, e-science, translation science, biobehavioral science, symptom science and team science” (Barrett 2017, 129). She argued that this focus on knowledge development “might obliterate nursing’s discipline-specific phenomenon of concern: the human-universe-healing process” (Barrett 2017, 129).

Unitary caring science lifts conventional Western medical science and its view of epistemology, with its distancing objective being particulate disease phenomena and criteria, to another level. The Caring Ethic of Belonging combined with the disciplinary phenomena of nursing, unitary views of the human being, and a unitary worldview becomes the new standard and starting point for unitary caring science, beyond the myth of Western medical science as the be-all and end-all for how we view knowledge and the truth of our world.

Thus, a New Story of science and knowledge emerges under an epistemology of the unitary ethic of being-belonging, not just as data and information and knowledge per se. This unitary view of science is one of connecting knowledge, not separating it. This evolved Unitary Caring view of science allows for knowing and knowledge that leads to a unity of science and spirit, physical and non-physical, and metaphysical phenomena, inviting knowledge of creativity, immanence-transcendence, and human flourishing. This philosophy of unitary science unites us with knowing, discovering, and developing knowledge rather than distancing us from detached knowledge “out there.” In unitary caring science, knowing and knowledge are constantly evolving—connecting the ethic and starting point of belonging to the universal field of Cosmic Love, which connects

and unites everything in the universe. Finally, unitary caring science integrates the axiology of core values and the Ethic of Belonging as the source for its ontological-epistemological orientation to the phenomena of caring, consciousness, wholeness within a unitary field of human-universe—health and human well-being/becoming (Barrett 2017; Phillips 2017).

### **Native Science**

In developing a New Story of science, perhaps we are seeing the need to consider the Old Story and enduring “science” of indigenous peoples. There is a uniting and common worldview across each tribe and nation, although each has specific ways of honoring the oneness of all. Consistent with a unitary view, the indigenous world is based on an assumption of oneness or wholeness in contrast to Western science, which is based on the ontological assumption of separation. The other distinction of so-called Native Science is that it is tied to values of learning to live in “harmony, non-exploitative, non-polluting ways of honoring their relationship with Mother Earth. Native Science has a sacred basis and its teachings are tied to love and sacred respect for nature; it is non-invasive, communally based” (Harmon 1991, 83–85).

This worldview and indigenous story of knowledge is related to circles and cycles in the search for truth about balance, harmony, and peace with all living relations. Further, all relationships have a moral content. This moral aspect of relationship is similar to the original meaning of praxis and the Ethic of Belonging within unitary caring science. The Greek meaning of praxis conveys a moral, committed disposition to all actions. Finally, Native Science views non-physical phenomenon to be as fully real as physical reality; dreams, myths, “talk story,” visions, spirit are all alive, and both worlds exist as a place to live.

An example:

In the early 1980s I spent time with an aboriginal tribe in Western Australia. One of the elders of the tribe said to me: “The

white man always follows the road that is ahead. In our world we have Dreamtime. We do not follow the road that is ahead, already paved—we throw the road out ahead and dream it up.” This experience and example is a reminder that in a unitary world, everything in the physical world comes from the non-physical. So we indeed can visualize and dream up our reality; if you can dream it, so you can create it. In unitary caring science we get to embrace the full range of knowing and honoring our unitary being and belonging in harmony and right relations with nature and the universe. This Native Science cosmology blends with unitary caring science, inviting us to re-inspire and re-enchant our relationship with nature, the known and unknown, and all living things.

### **Praxis**

There are numerous definitions and interpretations of praxis. A Google search of praxis yielded 34.5 million definitions and meanings (accessed August 8, 2017). They begin with the Greek origin of Aristotle’s use of the word—implying a theory, lesson, or skill that is enacted, embodied, or realized, personally experienced, including his varied meanings such as “good” praxis and “bad” praxis. They extend to Marxist political calls for praxis in social political action. Praxis definitions apply more commonly to educational systems and educational activism. For example, the Brazilian educator and activist Paolo Freire (1970) called for “conscientization,” translated as “consciousness raising” and “critical consciousness” for emancipation. These definitions and meanings extend to spiritual praxis in fields such as Buddhism, Christian mysticism, and esoteric practices; these practices include meditation and transcendence. This spiritual meaning of praxis implies an opening up to the full depth of experience of divine, infinite love, transcendence. In the spiritual realm of praxis, one has to “fully taste life” free from dogma of the mind.

*Medical Praxis*

The medical, more scientific use of the meaning of praxis often refers to the simple, literal transfer of cognitive and psychomotor skills into practice, as well as a transfer of knowledge into action. Praxis often indicates action beyond theory or the opposite of theory. It is something practical—that is, practical praxis.

*From Nursing Praxis to Unitary Caring Science Praxis*

A Google search of “nursing praxis” yielded 559,000 results (accessed August 8, 2017). The results included praxis explored in terms of values, art, reflection, and synchrony of knowing/doing/being, to committed action, to knowledge and action, to practice distinguished from theory, to praxis as closing the theory-practice gap, to caring praxis as framework, to feminist praxis. Indeed, a New Zealand journal called *Nursing Praxis* publishes practice-oriented articles; this journal was influenced by New Zealand’s Maori indigenous culture. Praxis includes various uses in nursing literature, books, and articles that highlight the importance of value-guided actions, art and artistry, and the act of care in the moment, integrating knowing/being/doing as one artful act. Still other meanings indicate that praxis is the discipline’s worldview/meta-paradigm, combining knowledge, theory, science, education, and practice as a holistic entity. Praxis is seen as a seamless coming together of theory, moral foundation, research-inquiry, and practice.

Closer to my view is the notion of praxis not simply as reflective, knowledge-guided action but as embodying certain qualities. These unitary qualities are moral and ethical commitments to human caring, healing, health, and the universe. My orientation to praxis also implies a philosophical quest to search for truth, beauty, aesthetics, creativity, evolution of human consciousness, and movement toward a moral community of caring-healing and peace, which nursing has always represented.

In Aristotelian terms, nursing praxis, in particular from Florence Nightingale onward, has been guided by a moral disposition to act rightly, to serve the whole person, to honor and preserve the

dignity and integrity of the whole person in his or her life-world field. In the Aristotelian praxis language there is “good praxis” (*eupraxis*) and “bad praxis” (*dyspraxis*). This line of Aristotelian thinking relates to the concept of caring literacy, beyond skill and knowledge for competent action, which alone can be devoid of the ethical moral worldview of belonging (Watson 2017). The praxis of unitary caring science has the potential to awaken nurses and other practitioners to a lack or an unconscious awareness of moral praxis disposition, which is dependent upon one’s worldview and ethical starting point.

Unitary caring science (UCS) praxis, therefore, is informed moral practice, practice that is guided by one’s unitary worldview, values, ethics, theory, and disciplinary knowledge. It can be considered *eupraxis*—good, morally informed, committed, authentic acts of caring literacy. UCS praxis becomes a human ontological artistry of being-becoming—transcending in the moment—through knowledgeable caring-healing values based on actions of goodness, truth, connectedness, opening to the infinity of Cosmic Love, expanded consciousness, intentionality; this moral praxis is held together by a commitment to sustain human-planet oneness—all guided by an underpinning of the Unity of Human Beings and an Ethic of Belonging as foundational.

If UCS and the Ethic of Belonging are informed consciousness as the first principle of science and UCS nursing praxis calls forth informed moral action in the world, then nursing praxis is situated and grounded in *eupraxis*, or good praxis. *Eupraxis* in Greek ethics means to act rightly. Here, this is translated to act rightly, informed by moral ideals and the theoretical unitary knowledge of human caring, healing, and health-universe. Exploring a unitary caring science praxis as *eupraxis* takes Caritas to Veritas, which uncovers more fully and clearly the values disposition of the discipline and practice of nursing—that is, to embody and embrace Veritas; to act with and honor goodness, truth, beauty, commitment, dignity, and nobility in service to humankind. Caritas and Veritas represent what

nursing has stood for, which is what nursing represents across time. By exploring unitary caring science praxis, we bring light to a New Story that nursing has to offer to the world.

Indeed, unitary caring science *eupraxis* (moral component of praxis for goodness and truth) is revealed through both Caritas and Veritas—morally informed disciplinary actions in the world. Some of the so-called good praxis actions have been referred to as Caritas Literacy—*eupraxis*—implying a practitioner’s moral disposition and consciousness to exhibit caring, love, and compassion for all of humanity. The counterpoint of *eupraxis* is Caritas Illiteracy—*dyspraxis* (Watson 2017). *Dyspraxis* practices are devoid of a caring consciousness or an informed intentionality to act in the practitioner’s best judgment “to put patients in the best condition for healing,” to draw upon a praxis blueprint from Florence Nightingale.

Praxis, with its many meanings and definitions, can be used as a backdrop to expand and improve nursing, allowing for the full range of concrete discipline-specific actions in the world: from critical evolutionary consciousness praxis to spiritual praxis. It opens nursing to the full range of experiences of touching the divine, the holy, the full expression of infinite cosmic love, the transcendent, miracles, mystery, and mysticism—all within the unitary field of life and humanity across the sacred circle of life-death-rebirth.

This range of praxis, from the concrete to the spiritual realm, parallels Marlaine Smith’s findings (Smith 1999, 22–25), which unify Martha Rogers’s science of unitary human beings (SUHB) with extant caring theories (Rogers 1994). One unitary area of caring science and SUHB is “caring is a way of experiencing the infinite”—that is, allowing for transcendence of the physical-material world, considered the highest form of knowing. Knowing includes Divine Love, ontological mystery, and spiritual union, thus expanding the limits of openness. So, just as praxis transcends multiple meanings, definitions, and levels of action in the world, so does unitary caring science praxis. Unitary caring science praxis can be considered

*eupraxis*; it spans the entire horizon of being/doing/knowing/becoming—from practical praxis to transpersonal-transcendent praxis.

Unitary caring science praxis has the potential to elevate the consciousness of individuals and all of humanity, since everyone resides within one unitary field. This perspective is noted by David Hawkins (2002), who posits and affirms that if any one person evolves in his or her consciousness, it contributes to the evolution of the consciousness of all of humanity. UCS praxis for nursing has an even greater moral imperative, going back to the Greek meaning of praxis as having a moral disposition and commitment to the betterment of humankind. *Eupraxis* of unitary caring science, with its moral-value foundation of Caritas and Veritas, is increasingly called for in our depersonalized, dehumanizing, institutional-corporate daily practices, whether these practices are experienced and witnessed in educational, political, economic, or medical systems.

### Summary

Our starting point for science—knowledge and what counts as knowledge—informs and dictates where we end up. If our starting point for science and knowledge development is objectively value-neutral, without attention to moral imperatives for the human-universe, nursing is in danger of becoming extinct as a discipline. If value-neutral approaches are combined with an ontology of separation and objective parts on a material-rationalist plane of existence—the Era I–Paradigm I mind-set (particulate-deterministic phenomena) or even Era II–Paradigm II (interactive parts model)—then education, knowledge, and research would focus on generating more and more pieces of data that conform to Western empirical views of science, without clarity of the values or the ethical, philosophical, ontological, epistemological foundation that underpinned the starting point. Thus, they would offer no guide to inform and sustain human caring moral action/praxis.

All knowledge and what counts as knowledge is ultimately based on values, an ethic, a philosophy, an ontological worldview, and an epistemology of knowledge and what counts as knowledge. Western science views of knowledge per se do not advance knowledge of UCS; neither does a particulate paradigm for disciplinary knowledge advance nursing praxis. A unitary philosophy and moral-ethical value of belonging are needed to evolve to a new view of unitary caring that informs both the discipline of nursing and its praxis-*eupraxis*. Praxis-*eupraxis* proclaims that some actions are good for their own sake.

Finally, this chapter offered an overview of core components of a philosophy of science, which is often missing in graduate and undergraduate nursing studies. However, a background and questioning of the history and philosophy of science and all of its vicissitudes, which inform praxis, are necessary.

At this time in nursing's history and maturing, theories and disciplinary knowledge and informed moral praxis are threatened, as the profession is at a crossroads (Grace et al. 2016). Without an awakening to the fullness of the nursing phenomenon and its disciplinary history-philosophy of science context for informing its moral praxis, the discipline is in danger of extinction (Barrett 2017). Nursing itself, unless it evolves toward its finest *eupraxis*, can unknowingly contribute to the totalizing of humanity and *dyspraxia* in our world.

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