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Lived Time in Moments of Unease: Responsibility and Genuine Time in Professional Practice

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Il tempo vissuto nei momenti di inquietudine: Tempo autentico e reponsabilità nella pratica professionale

Moments of moral disquiet encounter clock time as well as lived time, and thus professional human practices are existential and take place in time and space. Professional practices as existential involve human bodies and relationships, and are based on trust, responsibility, and vulnerability. The paper explores the relation between lived time and moments of disquiet. We borrow lived experience descriptions from students in professional practices and analyse them phenomenologically. Our informants are students in profession studies of nursing, social work and education interviewed individually in or after external institutional practice during their education. In the interviews they share their experiences of personal responsibility in situations orienting to others in professional practices. As a life existential, time shapes and organises our bodies and activities from birth to grave and is lived and experienced in a variety of ways in daily life and life as such. Time is thus a precondition of human life and life itself. Our interest in this paper is to show and argue phenomenological-pedagogically why and how it is of professional significance to teach students to take the required time to care, and to encourage them to be attentively present in situations when other persons' lives take place.

I momenti di inquietudine morale riguardano il tempo dell'orologio ma anche il tempo vissuto, di conseguenza le pratiche professionali sono esistenziali e hanno luogo nello spazio e nel tempo. Le pratiche professionali in quanto esistenziali coinvolgono i corpi e le relazioni e si basano sulla fiducia, sulla responsabilità e sulla vulnerabilità. L'articolo esplora il rapporto tra il tempo vissuto e i momenti di inquietudine, prendendo descrizioni dell'esperienza vissuta dagli studenti coinvolti nelle pratiche professionali e analizzandole fenomenologicamente. I nostri informatori sono studenti di infermieristica, lavoro sociale e pedagogia, intervistati individualmente nel corso o a conclusione del loro tirocinio curricolare esterno. Nelle interviste essi condividono le loro esperienze di responsabilità personale nei confronti di altri in situazioni professionali. In quanto esistenziale, il tempo forma e organizza i nostri corpi e le nostre attività dalla nascita alla morte e viene sperimentato in diversi modi nella vita quotidiana e in generale. Il nostro intento è quello di dimostrare e argomentare dal punto di vista fenomenologico e pedagogico perché e come sia importante insegnare agli studenti a prendersi il tempo necessario per aver cura, incoraggiandoli ad essere attentamente presenti nelle situazioni in cui è implicata l'esistenza di altre persone.

Keywords: Professional practice; Education; Nursing; Social work; Lived time.

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1. Introduction

We experience the world and reality in the flow of time and cannot change or impact this fact. Rarely, however, do we stop to consider the experience of time in our daily life, or how the structure of time influences us. From childhood, we become intimately familiar with time through rituals, routines and practices in home and school, and later, in how we organise adult life including family, travels, leisure, and work. Time is fundamental to existence,[1] meaning that without time there would be no existence. When someone dies, the death notice sometimes says that the person 'has fallen out of time.'[2] We leave time, or truer, earthly time leaves us when we die and we are given to eternity, which is an enduring, infinite time.[3] But as time is shaping and organising our bodies and activities from birth to grave, time is also lived and experienced in rhythms of the day, week, year, the recurrence of seasons, the order of society and social systems, to mention some. Time might be sensed in the experience of endless school lessons, the exiting experience of the first job, or in a unique moment when we feel ourselves alive. Time is both a precondition of human life, and life itself, and structures education as well as work-life.

We tend to think of education and work life in terms of learning and training respectively, and although different in purpose and practice, one of the very points where education and training amalgamate is in the external institutional practice of students. While training is externally directed, repetitive and practical, education should be a deeper critical understanding more integral and inherent to existence and subjective life. Through time and experience training tends to go beyond practical skills, not least because understanding in education and external student practice become routine and part of common life and experience.

2. Time as *Chronos* and *Kairos*

The ancient Greek made a distinction between *Chronos* (measurable time) and *Kairos* (lived time). Time as *Chronos* — clock time, chronological and sequential time — and time as *Kairos* — time as sensed, lived, and experienced in events — are both *lived* time, but fundamentally different. As adults we tend to experience time as *Chronos*; a constant planned flow of time measured in past, present and future. The connection between present and future is almost always possible to perceive in adults' lives, for example as plans and intentions organized in temporal units. Children, however, live more in the moment of the now. They tend to dwell in the present in more direct ways in action and play, and children's way of immediate presence is existentially different from adults. Many adults attempt to obtain a childlike lifestyle where they intend to value the moment because it may contribute to a better physical or mental health or improve their life experience in general. In reverse, children increasingly early tend to be introduced to *Chronos* or sequential time in routines, structures, and systems of social and educational institutions, and their natural dwelling in the present may today be disturbed or weakened. Thereby, *Chronos* and *Kairos* existentially seem to belong to different periods of time in the stretch of human life. As adults our experiences of childhood dwelling in *Kairos* time may be long forgotten, as we gradually through time have learned to value time due to its usefulness and potential for the future. With regard to professional practices, one might get the impression that it increasingly orients itself in the past (e.g. attend to diagnoses, prognoses) or towards the future (e.g. outcomes, solutions, aims) — none of them being directly experienced in the present.

But "if we are rarely present in the now", Goble (2021) writes, "and have no ability to experience the time with which we are occupied, might time then come to seem external to us? Might time then appear to be a separate entity?" (p. 187). If we do not at times experience and live in time, we might think of time in objective terms and as something that simply passes us, as chronological time without a meaning or significance other than that it passes, is occupied, or wasted. Present moments may go unattended and disregarded by professionals and also by students in professional practice. If there is something in Goble's concern, what then happens to human practices that demand presence in the face

1. To exist means to 'have being' and existence means 'being' (Onions, 1966, p. 336).
2. In Norwegian: «gått eller trådt ut av tiden».
3. Onions, 1966, p. 329.

of care, concern, and attention to someone else's needs by professional practitioners? How do we truly become aware of others' pain and suffering if we in professional practices orient ourselves towards the patient's (or our own) past and future, and might be compelled to spend less and less time with them in the present? And with regard to this paper, is it of professional significance to communicate to students to take the required time to care, to encourage them to be attentively present in situations when other persons' lives unfold? Is it a professional matter to help students to be sensitive to the other's needs in practice and education? Do significant moments and relational events count in practice? Should students actually be encouraged to feel responsibility for others, and to be personally and professionally devoted to and aware of others' inability or helplessness?

3. Moral disquiet

Moral disquiet is what we have called that which might happen to or occur in us when someone or something intrudes our state of being by silently and undemandingly craving our responsibility because they are in a situation of existential vulnerability or exposed to conditions that threaten their dignity (Torsteinson & Saevi, 2022). There exist a number of publications representing studies on moral unease, disquiet, or distress. These publications in large orient to aspects of moral disquiet that support our study and emphasise the relevance of the topic. Significant publications turn to moral disquiet or moral distress as experienced in professional practices and general human life (Austin *et al.*, 2005; Canto-Sperber, 2008), sources of moral disquiet (Mounce, 1990), educational disquiet (Madrussan, 2016), professional disquiet caused by political decisions and interventions (Pettersvold & Østrem, 2018), or moral distress among students in the healthcare sector (Sasso *et al.*, 2016; Rennó *et al.*, 2018; Mæland *et al.*, 2021). The present paper is a phenomenological study that takes as its starting-point the lived experience of students describing professional practice situations where they sense some kind of responsibility for another person as his or her life and life-situation unfolds. The sense of moral disquiet is understood as a continuum that could "be slight, like a silent murmur or a transient breeze, or our entire being could be disturbed and upset to such a degree that we are not able to get back to our prior state of being" (Torsteinson & Saevi, 2022, p. 78). The sensed responsibility thus could be oriented to a variety of situations although all involving another person exposed condition in life and life-situations to whom the students' sense of responsibility is oriented and has its source.

Thus, our focus is the student who is the one who gets a sense of responsibility for the other person's present condition. We ask with a phenomenological-pedagogical concern, what might be the temporal aspects of moral disquiet in students' encounters with another person in morally challenging situations in professional human practices? Or more precise: What does time mean to experience when young students in professional human practices live through moments of unease on behalf of another? To feel responsible in this context does not mean that I use my energy or ability in a situation of unease to put things right. Responsibility is not a controlling act to secure a 'correct' outcome of a situation. Nor does responsibility mean that I am solely answerable for the outcome of a situation where someone else is involved. The point is not a critical decision making of who is responsible for what. Neither does responsibility mean that I simply take over the responsibility from someone else, like in the case of a paternalistic act. In contrast, responsibility as a moral act in disquieting situations, means a willingness to stay by another "without knowing how to be or act and without saving [one's] own appearances" (Torsteinson & Saevi, 2022, p. 87). This kind of responsibility implicates that the student faces the event with the guards down, often unprepared for what the situation involves or how it turns out. She takes the risk, often intuitively, of losing face with regard to her superior or the person she attempts to support. She might be left with the sense of being helpless or unable to support or help out, and even of being the one to blame if the situation fails.

The unplanability of relational situations and the spontaneous and indistinct nature of relationality (Løgstrup, 1971), open possibilities for moral moments of significance, little or much, to the persons involved. Besides, the absence of self-satisfaction and pride on the side of the actor leaves us with acts that seem to hang on personally intuitive rather than professionally suitable qualities, especially if the two are in conflict. The experience of moral disquiet, more often than not, occurs in situations where the responsible person rarely is proud or may decorate herself with having done a great job. The phe-

nomenon of moral disquiet, which is a phenomenon that needs moments of time to take place, to be sensed and consequently noticed, is more likely to be passed over in silence by those affected or become momentarily embarrassing for the actor. The experiential material supporting this paper show that as students express a feeling of unease on behalf of others, their experiences include a sense of how time varies; flows or stops, interweaves, or separates, is intensely sensed, or feels missing, as they live through moments of life that seem to hang on to their memory and sense of self.

4. The threefold methodological science of examples

'Phenomenology of practice', which is the methodological approach this paper draws upon, is called "the science of examples" (van Manen, 2016a), and is chosen as it allows us to explore experiential material by help of three qualities that together distinguishes it from other phenomenological methodological approaches (e.g. Amedeo Giorgi's descriptive psychological phenomenology and the heuristic psychotherapeutic oriented phenomenology after Clark Moustakas) (see van Manen 2014, pp. 210–212). The first quality is the philosophical methods of *reduction* and *epoché* as the basis of writing and thinking. The second is to collect empirical material from qualitative methodology in form of interviews, observations, and written accounts. The third and most easily recognisable is the characteristic way of writing or the evocative voice, by van Manen called the philological qualities of the method (van Manen, 2014, p. 240). The philological qualities rest on a strong orientation to language, the sensitivity of words and formulations, and the ability to write cogently while at the same time evocatively. The threefold approach is decisive for the text to include the required cognitive, sensitive, and evocative voice and constitutes the practice of 'phenomenology of practice' as played in a concert with complex voices, instruments, and methodical interplay.

The consequence of this approach is that instead of writing *about* phenomenology, we intend to *do* phenomenology when encountering the things and events of the world (van Manen & van Manen, 2021). This includes an orientation to the lived experience — *life as we live it* — the moments of pre-reflective sensual presence, rather than orienting to theoretical explanations and step-by-step methodological explanations. This means that to the 'science of examples', methodological qualities are *implicitly present* in a well-written phenomenological text, recognisable as experiential meaningfulness and recognition rather than as theoretical or conceptual explanations. In this project, first author in order to gain insight in the phenomenon of moral disquiet interviewed thirteen students in three professional human practice educations in Norway in the period of Mars to June 2021. The students described episodes from external professional practice included in their education where they had felt responsible for the situation and for the person(s) involved, but without necessarily being able to care for the process or carry out a desirable resolution. For the purpose of this paper, we searched for accounts that displayed moments where sensed time was part of the students' descriptions. Potential relations or tensions between time and moral disquiet were explored while simultaneously working reflectively with the student descriptions, relevant philosophical and pedagogical literature, and with the philological qualities of the text.

The students interviewed were in their third and last year of study in nursing education, social work education and kindergarten teacher education. Most of them had been through their final external institutional practice. Prior to the interviews, the study was reported to and given permission to start by NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data). The students were given both oral and written information about the study and signed a consent declaration. Identifiable information about third parties were avoided during the interviews. The interviews were completed, transcribed, and shaped into experiential narratives as described and practiced in phenomenology of practice (van Manen, 1997, 2016a). To ensure confidentiality the students names are fictitious. According to van Manen (2014), phenomenological methodology (*reduction* and *epoché*, philological awareness and writing, and cultivation of reflection) is an ongoing existential exploration where each process is associated with the next and played as in concert. A phenomenological study, he says, is "the study of the lifeworld — the world as we immediate experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or reflect on it" (van Manen, 2016a, p. 9). This means that the analysis of the experiential material required for this paper turned to

an existential exploration of moral disquiet and lived time as the two phenomena interweave in human experience.

5. What a phenomenon *is*

To explore existential phenomena's 'isness' or 'whatness' (what something *is*) — the meaning structures in an experience as lived through pre-reflectively — requires a complex and patient nonlinear and enduring research effort. The researcher must stick with the phenomenon over time, as the meaning structures are not necessarily uttered in clear-cut concepts either in the data material, in the philosophical literature nor in language itself. Every phenomenon in the world, including moral unease and time, exists before we as human beings encounter it, and the phenomenon therefore must be explored from the very complexity of existence (Saevi, 2013; van Manen, 2016a). As every researcher is heavily emerged in theory, concepts and conventional attitudes and the chance is huge that we miss the very existence of the phenomenon and its independent inherent meaning, a phenomenological exploration proves out to be complex. The complexity of a phenomenological exploration of a phenomenon presupposes the insight that the human experience and the phenomenon might encounter each other, but should not be mistaken or confused as the same (Henry, 2008). This insight implies that any phenomenon exists independently of human experience and can only be explored imperfectly and on its own premises.

'Phenomenology of practice' is interested in cognitive, as well as non-cognitive, qualities of the human experience, and depends on the researcher's sensation, intuition, as well as bodily and imaginative awareness in the research process. A strict focus on cognition and rational knowledge might miss the close connection between the human being and the world, and thus become unaware of the very complexity of each and every phenomenon available to human experience. Thus, 'phenomenology of practice' does not offer conceptual explanations or theoretical taxonomies. Rather, it might offer the possibility of plausible insights and a more direct contact with the world, and as van Manen says (2016a, p. 9), may strike a researcher as a breakthrough and a liberation. Phenomenology, over the ages, has offered human beings artistic, philosophic, communal, mimetic, and poetic language that have sought to (re)unite them with the ground of their lived experiences. Merleau-Ponty (2002) for his part, asserts that "[a]ll my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless" (p. ix). Merleau-Ponty aims for a return to the lived experience of the lifeworld, the world that precedes all reflection, science, or philosophy. This is also what 'phenomenology of practice' intends.

Phenomenology as a methodology holds the retrospective ambition to turn to the quality of the lived moment, because the moment of lived time "belong[s] to our existence as human beings and cannot be distinguished from or removed from the lives we live" (Saevi, 2020, p. 2). Moreover, the moment we reflectively address a phenomenon, time always already has made present into past (van Manen, 2016a), and present immediately is replaced by a new moment. Trying to put an experience into words thus will be a "breath of meaning" (Dilthey, 1971), rather than something we get a firm grip on. As phenomenologists, we in this text attempt to speak of the 'breath of meaning' with regard to moral disquiet and time, and to analyse our taken-for-granted attitude to the phenomenon by looking closer, looking again, and by staying with the phenomenon long enough to let it *show itself from itself* in its inevitable complexity (Heidegger, 1962, p. 29).

6. Our intimate relationship to time

Van Manen & van Manen (2021) refer to a passage from van den Berg (1972) where the philosopher describes his disappointment after a good friend's last-minute cancellation of their evening meeting over a glass of wine and a conversation. Van den Berg writes:

> But it becomes obvious to me that, writing down these facts, I don't get any nearer that which I was observing when looking up, I saw the bottle. What I was seeing then was not a green bottle, with a white label, with a led capsule, and things like that. What I was really

> seeing was something like the disappointment about the fact that my friend would not come or about the loneliness of the evening (van den Berg, 1972, p. 34).

Van den Berg sees his disappointment in a bottle of wine that he had looked forward to sharing with his good friend. This is an example of the phenomenological attitude that Sokolowski (2000) differentiates from the natural attitude, in which we already know the world, and readily objectify it as a means to our disposition. The phenomenological attitude is already a suspension of possessing the world as things or objects, and a rejection to put ourselves above the world's appearances. Van den Berg is aware of the interconnection between human senses and the things of the world and is able in the episode above to describe the concrete experience of the connection between the human experience of the world and the bottle of wine in a recognizable way. The methodological device we have in phenomenology to explore our intimate relationship with the world is called the phenomenological *epoché*, a suspension of the objectification of the world and of our possession of its properties, and is by Merleau-Ponty (2000) called a way to realize our lived interconnectedness with the flesh of the world.

What van den Berg describes in the example above is his lived sense of a concrete moment, and what he draws from the insight is the realization "that it is in the immediate sense of looking that we see ourselves in the things of the world" (van Manen & van Manen, 2021, p. 13). The apparent paradox that we see ourselves in events of the world, is visible also in the quotidian episode of playing yatzy, described by Judith, a student social worker:

> It is afternoon, and I am playing yatzy with Peter in his apartment. I do my best to make room for this kind of activity, as I know he loves to play and the sense of togetherness that playing evokes. But today, I am also guarding the intern phone, and it is constantly beeping and ringing. It disturbs me, and I can see that it distracts Peter. His gaze flickers, and he is rubbing his hands on his tights. It is another resident, Elizabeth, who is calling. She feels lonely and asks me to come over. I have already visited her several times and try once again to tell her that I will come by her place later. Now I am with Peter. Or am I? I am not sure. The dices move between us, roll, and stop at the table. The phone continues to ring.

Judith gets a glimpse of her sensual self in the circumstances she is in. She is present with Peter but must admit that her mind is dispersed between playing yatzy and waiting for the phone to ring. She is not only disturbed by the phone when it rings, but also the fact that the phone might ring and has rung several times already, disturbs her. There is a close connection between Judith and the event she experiences, and what is more, the connection is seamless and impossible for her to identify as either self or surrounding. The two interconnect in her experience and leave her unable to put boundaries around herself.

Judith and Peter roll the yatzy dices, and the intern phone beeps as it has done many times this evening. Judith is not absorbed in the play, and as a professional she probably cannot let herself forget time and place, like she might do in a game at another place and time. The relational dimension of yatzy entails a fellowship among competitors, good-natured, but dead earnest, and one must be part of the game to count. In fact, in a game one is either in or out. Paradoxically, this seems to be where Judith is; neither in nor out. From the start she might well be playing because Peter likes yatzy, and in order to make him happy she plays some rounds with him when she is at work, like professionals often do. But being partly present, and being disturbed continually by the phone, the game and perhaps also the players are influenced. Judith senses the condition of being only partly present in the moment of play and asks herself where exactly she is. Physically, she is in Peter's place playing yatzy with him. Her *self*, however, is partly with Peter and partly with Elizabeth, or whoever is in the other end of the beeping intern phone. In the moment, Judith finds herself to be in two spaces simultaneously. She is with Peter now and will visit Elizabeth later, but the inability to rest in the moment of the now gives her a sense of time confusion. Time usually goes unnoticed by us, but time in this situation is noticeable to Judith. Somehow, time puts a burden on her, perhaps even haunts her, and she cannot relax in the moment. In fact, she (or her *self*) is neither in the present moment, nor in another moment. Somehow, the horizon of what *is* and what comes after is confused and invisible to her, and her sense of time is disconnected with the present as well as the future.

7. Genuine time

Our awareness of time, or rather our intuitive sense of lived time, might in concrete moments let us see ourselves in the things of the world, as was the case with van den Berg and Judith. We somehow awaken, listen to the moment, and find ourselves stirred and moved by something in our surroundings. The other, whether the other is a person, another living creature, an artefact (as a bottle of wine or a phone), or an act, affects us and performs some kind of force on us. Lingis (2007) says that the influence of others somehow commands us to respond. This is not a theoretical statement, but an experience we encounter in the relationship with others. The response we provide might be verbal and bodily, but it can just as well be silent and pending. Sometimes, we might feel captive to a situation, like the protagonist teenager Laura, described by Linn Ullmann in the novel *A blessed child* (Ullmann, 2008, pp. 138–139).[4] Laura finds an injured bird on her way to meet friends on the beach. She kneels down, feeling immediate responsible for the bird's life-situation. The description of the young girl and the injured bird is an example of how "[w]e are unexpectedly halted in our obvious activities by that which calls upon us [...] that somehow immediately appeals to us, craving our attention in such a way that we feel an urge to act" (Torsteinson & Saevi, 2022, p. 77). Laura feels responsible for the bird and cannot simply walk to the beach, as she initially planned. She meets an impasse or an aporia that is impossible for her to pass.

Interestingly, the word *aporia*,[5] from Greek, means something that is "impassable, impracticable, very difficult; hard to deal with; at loss". Romano (2014) understands an "*a-poria*, [as] a problem — literally [a pro-blem is] that which lies across the road, that which stands in the way and prevents access — [is] that which throws off all our causal explanations" (p. 172). *Aporia* is thus a paradox, a contradiction that is hard or even impossible to understand or get around. Sometimes we experience to be stuck in an act or an incomprehensible situation that we cognitively cannot make sense of. Laura, in the situation with the injured bird, is sensationally kept back by the bird's loss of ability to fly. The description is an example of an aporetic experience that is recognizable to us as human beings. Nanna, a student nurse, describes a situation from her practice education that we think adds a temporal dimension to moral disquiet, different from that of Laura and from Judith's account above. Nanna tells:

> I stand in the examination room. A doctor and a nurse are about to perform gastroscopy on an elderly woman. The woman has dementia, and I worry that she might not be well enough informed about the procedure or that she might not remember the information she got in advance. She has got pain killers and sedatives and lies on a leather bench. I stand by her headboard and caress her cheek to sooth her, while the doctor prepares the procedure and starts to manoeuvre the tube down her throat. When watching the procedure, I realize how thick the tube is. I see pain wrinkles in the patient's face and her body tenses in discomfort. The professionals fail to get the tube down at first try and try once more. And once more... And again. The woman does not utter a word. I feel a gnawing unease, and a sudden desire to leave the room. At the sixth attempt they eventually give up. At that time, I am sweaty and exhausted.

The professionals make several attempts to intubate the patient but must give up at last, and Nanna is feeling trapped in a situation of unease and discomfort. Like a movie on repeat, the event will not let her go. Even if she cognitively wants to escape, her body is stuck in an unendurable situation controlled by others, and by conventional therapeutic norms. Nanna, unlike the elderly woman, is not undergoing a medical examination. Neither is she the one performing the examination. Like Laura above, Nanna is simply witnessing another's pain and helplessness. Nanna describes the situation, and although we might think that to her the situation is not painful or frightening, as she does not experience the tube inspection herself. Still, her unease is strong, even physical. She feels exhausted when the medical personnel finally gives up. Nanna stands by the patient during her pain and angst, although the woman might not be aware of or appreciate her concern. We do not know the patient's feelings, but we know

4. See Torsteinson & Saevi 2022, p. 77–78.

5. Etymonline.com /aporia

that Nanna is longing for the treatment to stop. She strongly senses time as lengthy, long-lasting, never-ending. She wants to get away, to step out of the situation, but she stays with the woman in her strain — somehow stuck within time and space.

8. Space, place, and time

Like Nanna we might experience to be in a place we both do and do not want to be. We might initially decide to be there, but suddenly something unexpectedly happens, and we urge to leave. Or the opposite might happen: we are stuck in a bad situation that changes to something valuable or good. Casey (2009) asserts that "[t]o be is to be bound by place, limited by it" (pp. 15–16). The terms *place* and *space* in some languages are used more or less synonymously in everyday speech, but in phenomenology significant differences occur. Bollnow (2011, p. 31) indicates that place (gr. *topos*) refers to a concrete place that we can point out with our finger, like a landscape or a city square. Place depends on my position and differs according to my moves. "Places are in a sense neutral" (Sommer & Saevi, 2018, p. 43), and exist side by side in a landscape. Space (gr. *chora*) on the other hand, is more abstract and means "to give room, to make space, then more generally, to give way, and in particular with reference to vessels: to hold something, to have room to receive something" (Bollnow, 2011, p. 30). Space (as a vessel) is not a "system of relationships between things, but the boundary, completed from the outside, of the volume taken up by a thing" and thus "filled in itself" (pp. 30–31). Space as a mug or container, or as experienced room, is defined by "narrowness and width" and can be "tight and one feels hemmed in by it, or there is abundant space so that one can be lavish with it" (p. 31). Space is "created by human activity" and is what is "needed to allow movement" and thus always is "space for something" (p. 34). Being in a place, a concrete room, or a spot is thus not the same as feeling that there is space for one, openness to breath, and an atmosphere of freedom or generosity.

Like time, space belongs profoundly to human existence. We are as human beings stuck in space and time and might move away from a particular situation, but not escape from being in space and time. Space and time are closely connected and belong "to the existential ground by way of which all human beings experience the world" (van Manen, 2016a, p. 102). The existentials (as lived time, lived space, lived body, lived relation, and lived materiality) can be differentiated, van Manen (2014 and 2016a) reminds us, but not separated. Our life is subject to existential conditions. We do not master these conditions, but they sustain and constitute our life. When Nanna stands by the elderly patient, she is *in* a place but also in space, *in* a relation and *in* time. She *is* a body, and she *has* a body, and she and her body (as one) respond to what happens in the room. She is disquieted, exhausted and sweaty, and feels stuck and unable to leave the uncomfortable situation. She could have walked away, of course, or closed her eyes and covered her ears, or escaped to a mental room where she disconnected herself to the here and now. From experience, for instance from child welfare and children's descriptions of how they try to escape from situations of abuse or distress by disconnecting themselves, we interpret this as a strategy of mental survival. Disconnecting from difficult moments might be positive as well as negative, thrilling but also horrifying. Nanna, however, loses track of time and time wears her out. She is stuck in time and place and stands with the patient although she feels the urge to leave. Like Nanna's description indicates, being captive to someone or something might mean a lot of things, of which the human being has little influence.

To Nanna, and also to Laura, the sense of being caught in a situation is not related to someone's power over them in a physical or mental manner. Nanna is a student nurse in professional practice and should expect to be exposed to situations that might teach her the future profession she is being trained for. Moments when we sense a sudden and unexpected experience can be conceived as *kairos*-moments (van Manen, 2018), or moments when time is sensationally lived, like Nanna describes. In Greek mythology, *Kairos* is the god of playful time, and is described as "a rather strange and complex figure of temporality", which "always shows himself in the fleeting instant of the moment" (van Manen, 2018, p. 7). However, the sense *Kairos* provides to us is not necessarily joyful and amusing, but might just as well be gloomy and disquieting, even horrifying, for the person experiencing it.

9. The pain of the other

The sense of *being* where she initially wanted (or were expected) to be, but as the situation evolved, the experience changed, was for Nanna not related to the concrete examination room in a hospital (the place). Instead, it was related to the human activity in the room, and to the increasing narrowness and inescapability from what went on there; what she felt stuck in (the space). The sense of being hostage to the situation, to the human activity in the room, the experience of shrinking space, makes her want to flee but she cannot. The patient's pain disturbs her, yet a sense of responsibility keeps her present. A particular place sometimes might leave no room for dwelling, quiet or ease, but like Nanna, we still might feel unable to escape the lived responsibility to stay. The pain Nanna felt, was related to the helplessness of the elderly patient that somehow made a claim on her. Van Manen (2016b) calls this the experience of "ethical pain" and entitles it a "worrying condition engendered in the encounter with the other" (p. 73).

Nanna, like Laura, is unsure of how to handle the situation — what to say or do — but still she feels responsible and answers her sense of responsibility by standing by the other the required time. Disregarding the particular difference, as who the other is; one concerning a bird and the other a human being — what we are after here is the sense of responsibility awakened in the person while encountering another's helplessness or dependence, and what time might mean to this experience. In Laura's situation time is not really an issue to the author (although time is always the precondition for any situation), but our attention is drawn to the time-interruption that the injured bird causes to Laura. Nanna's sense of responsibility seems to be outdone by her embodied sense of the other's long-lasting, almost unbearable suffering. Lévinas (1987) sees our responsibility as conceived directly in the face of the other. Nanna felt singled out, put demands on, and in some sense taken hostage by the long-lasting agony of the patient. Time was no longer her own but belonged to the patient, or perhaps not even to the patient but to life as such. Lévinas calls this 'other-oriented' time *diachronical* or *veritable* time. He says: "the time of the Other [...] disrupts or interrupts my temporality. It is the upset, this insertion of the Other's time into mine, that establishes the alterity of veritable time, which is neither the Other's time nor mine" (Translator's Introduction in Lévinas, 1987, p. 12).

The term *diachronical* literally means *across time* or *lasting through time*,[6] and in linguistics indicates studies taken over the course of time. *Veritable* time is real or genuine time that is existential and belongs to nobody (Lévinas, 1987). In Nanna's situation both types of time occur: diachronic time, as the student's felt pain on behalf of the patient continued beyond real time, and veritable time, as time to Nanna was experienced as lived through and not any longer belonging to herself. Her sense of ethical pain on behalf of the patient is a kind of responsibility that, according to Lévinas (1987), is existentially prior to any concrete situation. Ethical pain has its own time, which goes beyond past, present, or future concerns, because in itself "time is the very relationship with the Other" (1987, p. 39). To spend time with, be involved in, and feel the pain of the other, is a subjective act where the I and the other are both subjects. To Nanna, the patient was an absolute other, singled out as her personal concern, and not reduced to the same; an elderly patients among other patients or another task on the work plan. Time, to Nanna, was for a moment not in her own possession. The time of the patient became her concern or more true, their two 'times' were intertwined in Nanna's experience. Nanna experienced 'the alterity of veritable time', like Lévinas (1987) indicates — the sense of absolute time outside of human control and comprehension.

10. Responsibility and time

Some experiences from our past touch us more than others. They are somehow lifted from the flow of time and mark our living through constant reminders, memories, and scars. An experience might keep coming back to us, and we remember the event clearly long afterwards, perhaps all life. Kathrine, a student social worker, talks about an event that took place some time ago in her professional practice as a student:

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> Helga is old, lives in a nursing home, and has dementia. She needs help to her daily activities, including the meals. This afternoon, I help her eating by serving a soup with generous pieces of vegetables and meat. The back of her bed is lifted to make her comfortable and to ease her swallowing. I sense a good atmosphere in the room. We smile at each other, and chat about this and that. Suddenly, Helga starts gesturing, and points toward something across the room. I look and try to understand what she wants to show me, but I am not able to understand. Helga continues waving and after a while I decide to find my supervisor to possibly help us out. My supervisor is in the middle of preparing evening medication and does not seem to want to be disturbed. Anyway, she comes with me to Helga´s room. I describe to her how Helga tried to tell me something I just could not understand. She throws a short glance at the old woman and quickly lowers the back of her bed. She carefully wraps the duvet around her and puts the soup bowl aside. "She is tired", she says, "she needs a rest". On our way out, I turn towards Helga. I will not forget the confused look in her eyes.

What is at stake in this event? The student carefully gives food to the elderly woman, and they enjoy each other's company. Then, Helga wants to show the student something, and as she has no clear words, and as the student eagers to understand, the latter runs to get proper assistance. What comes after seems to break through chronological time, as well as lived time, of the event. When Kathrine leaves the room, she also leaves the relation, and what Lévinas (1987) calls *real* or *veritable* time is broken. Their relationship drops and the situation ends abruptly. In situations where something positive or harmonic ends unexpectedly, we tend to feel disturbed or disquieted, like Kathrine did. We might long back to what *was* a moment ago without being able to return. The time that *was is* no longer and cannot be taken back or repeated.

As Merleau-Ponty (2000) realizes we and the world are always connected, interactive, and relational to what is outside, as well as inside of us. This means that we can never fully foresee or control time — neither past, present, nor future. Neither can we, not more than superficially, control other people's (re)actions or our own responses to the world. Lingis says that there is "an element of chance and risk in every relation with another human being" (2018, p. 102). In the situation above, Kathrine's supervisor acted in a way that the student (and the patient) were not prepared for. We never really know what someone else might think or do. All we can do in the moment is to trust that we might understand or get along with other persons' actions. According to Saevi and Eikeland (2012), trust as a 'sovereign expression of life' (Løgstrup 2008), belongs to "the very basics of life [and] is relationally lived, felt, and experienced as positively given, when spontaneously it appears" (p. 93). The sovereign expressions of life are fundamental and radical, as they ground and preserve our relationship with others and with life itself. We are often not aware of the sovereign expressions of life in the moment when they appear, as they as phenomena exist in the background or in the shadows of our lifeworld. Not until they are gone or taken away from us do we become aware of them (Løgstrup, 2008); in their collapse, we sense their absence. The absence of what *was* and the collapse of the past moment, or the impossibility of the foreseen possibilities, seem to be what Kathrine experiences when the time with Helga suddenly ends.

Through the responsibility for the other, in our concern to understand and care, we might easily turn the other into a familiar person by assuming that we know the person's will and needs. We tend to see others as belonging to a group or someone in general that we think we have knowledge of. Kathrine´s strive to understand the elderly woman´s pointing was meant as a kind act, but the outcome of the situation turned out to be something that she did not expect or foresee. At the point when the student tells the story, the situation connects present and past but also forms a hope of what will happen in the future. When someone or something 'third' enters the situation, whether this third is another person (like a supervisor or colleague) or institutional conventions, rules and regulations represented by a person, human responsibility seems to weaken. In the situation above, the responsibility is no longer Kathrine´s (and the elderly women's) alone, and what they consider good is no longer enough. With the supervisor comes rules, conventions and generality, and an orientation is made to what is just and right in a nursing home. However, to Kathrine (and Helga), the encounter between them was about their time of togetherness and felt relationality. To Lévinas (1987), time *is* the very relationship, and thus what is considered just and common lingers and must wait till later.

11. Infinite personal responsibility

Personal encounters by their very nature have influence, little or more, on the other person and his or her words and manners. This is the case in all relationships, also in professional relationships, when the patient has dementia, is a young person with intellectual disability, or is old and in need of help. By encountering one another in a relationship we trustfully ask (often without words, simply by being in the relationship) the other to accept us. If we do not let our senses speak and see the other person's dependency, we deny the other the space of a personal self, Løgstrup (1971) claims. Trust asks for responsibility and urges us to protect instead of ignoring the other. This is so because in every relation we are bound to "surrender something of ourselves to the other person either by trusting him or asking him for his trust," Løgstrup says (1971, p. 19).

Something of the other's life is given to us in the very encounter, like it was for Peter, the elderly woman in the intubation room, and Helga during her evening meal. As the demand for care and concern is unarticulated in most encounters and cannot be "equated to a person's expressed wish or request" (Løgstrup, 1971, p. 21), trust does not include an instruction from the one in need of care of how the care should be provided. According to Løgstrup (1971), the other is in no case supposed to tell what to do so that the professional can offer the correct action. This would make the one the other's tool, he says, and result in indulgence rather than willingness to care. Instead, Løgstrup (1971) offers a liberating possibility, especially relevant to Kathrine's and Helga's situation. He writes: "It is of the essence of the demand that with such insight, imagination and understanding as he possesses, a person must figure out for himself what the demand requires" (p. 23). Unfortunately, in this particular episode Kathrine in the moment did not see other possibilities and the situation ended unsettled.

To Lévinas (1987) responsibility is a demand we must encounter on our own. Responsibility is a personal call that singles us out. Responsibility *elects* me (or you) alone, and "bears the authority of an imperative" (Lévinas, 1987, p. 113). Responsibility thus is not a choice we take upon us, nor something we can opt out or escape from. Neither can we give our or any responsibility to someone else. We may try to overlook or pass by responsibility but being responsible does not work as a subjective selection. Responsibility is present as an order deriving from the old times (Lévinas, 1987). I am responsible because I am a human being and part of the history of humanity. Lévinas writes: "The significance for an immemorial past, starting from responsibility for the other person, comes in the heteronomy of an order" (1987, p. 112). Somehow, responsibility is of another kind than other human acts, and belongs existentially to life as such and to the fact that we are humans. Because responsibility is heteronomous, which means that it is subject to the rules of another power,[7] responsibility is beyond cause, apperception, or justification. We take responsibility, without asking for reasons, simply because it is needed in the situation.

Lévinas calls responsibility the "anterior to all the logical deliberation summoned by reasoned decision" (1987, p. 111). If responsibility were a deliberate act, it would be up to me to decide when it was required. This would mean a reduction of the other to be of my will and purpose, and thus he or she would become a representation for my logics, understandings, and means. When experiencing the call of responsibility for someone, we are

> thrown back towards what has never been my fault or my deed, towards what has never been in my power or in my freedom, towards what has never been my presence, and has never come into memory (Lévinas, 1987, p. 111).

This might mean that in diachronic time — time that lasts through time — I, in every responsible act, infinitely encounter the spotlessness of the other, and even before I have acted, I am "the most guilty of all" because of my humanness (Dostoyevsky, in Lévinas, 1987, p. 108). In this sense, the encounter with the other in quotidian life (as with Judith and Peter, Nanna and the elderly patient and Kathrine and Helga), does not just signify the singular encounter (here and now), but implies every encounter with the foreignness of the other, where we every time already are responsible. In every responsible encounter, we are ethically connected to encounters that have already happened in the past and to encounters that

7. Etymonline.com/heteronomy

will take place in the future. In this sense, time is the very relationality in every relational moment, professionally or in general. The moment of veritable or genuine time in daily professional encounters is thus larger than the moment itself. Genuine time — or unaffected time, time that does not belong to anyone — happens in the moment when we experience our very being here and now. Such a moment holds past, presence, and future moments, all in one lived moment, as Lévinas (1987) sees it. Time is thus at the heart of every human act and encounter and cannot be avoided or left out whether responsibility is accomplished or not.

12. Concluding remarks

Phenomenological reflection is ontological and existential, which means that it is oriented to human life and how human beings find themselves in the events of life. Researching phenomenologically is about attentiveness to the relationship between form and content, speech and action, text and textuality, in the moments described and in the moments of writing (van Manen 1997b, p. 151). If life and professional practice pass, while rarely experientially living in time, we might end up thinking of time as objective and as something that simply passes us as chronological time. Then, we likely will ignore the significance of time other than as passed, spent, or wasted. Present moments will go unattended and disregarded, as they also may do to professionals and students in professional practice. By taking the time and effort to describe an experience, however, we so to say stretches the experience out in time, we decelerate the moment, and the moment offers us the opportunity to take a closer look. This is what we do in this paper as we slowly reflect on temporal aspects of morally disquieting moments in students' professional lives. By taking the time to look closer at some events, we see qualities of a situation, and might experientially, as authors and readers, become part of the event simply by attentively orienting to human recognition and meaning. In this process, we consciously try to slow down time in order to get a *pathic* insight into the situation. We slow down our speed of thinking and writing and try to get a glimpse into someone else's life and life-situation.

When time is decelerated, our entire sensory apparatus might begin to take in what is out there, and this 'what' might make an impression on us. Løgstrup (1971) sees feelings or impressions as 'first understandings' and urges us not to disregard this weak-and-easy-to-neglect sense of meaning. Interestingly, the word 'neglect' is connected to, and the opposite of, the word *legere*, which means to read, to collect, to choose, to gather. *Neg-legere*, means the opposite of reading or collecting, namely to disregard, to overlook, not pay attention to, not trouble oneself with or care about (Benveniste, 2016, p. 531). Descriptions of lived moments, if they are not neglected, have pragmatic value as concrete, connected insightful events that bridge our understanding of life to relevant theoretical and philosophical perspectives. Descriptions of lived moments in our lifeworld might interrupt our taken-for-granted ways of seeing things. As time is a pre-existential quality, a quality that we most of the time are unaware of, an orientation to how we sense ourselves in the moment might open temporal aspects of a phenomenon, like what we have attempted to indicate in this paper.

When in this paper, the students describe episodes where unease comes upon them and time perceptibly influences their state of being, they themselves are at the core of the experience. Additionally, to education and research on education, descriptions of real professional moments are paramount as evidence of practice and as starting points of educational consideration and judgment. But what kind of evidence are we after in education? If we see time as money and talk about time as well spent or wasted, we think in chronological time that is measured and calculated and managed as income and outcome. A consequence then, is that education and professional practices easily turn into techniques, efficiency, calculation, and measurement. Experiences of moral disquiet, like those described by Judith, Nanna, and Kathrine are not just illustrative narratives, but indicate that moral disquiet has the capacity to break through routines of practice and the rush of chronological time. While passing through situations and relations in a hasty tempo, one might disregard others and their otherness. Time that lasts long, or what Lévinas (1987) calls diachronical time, can provide insight into moments of human value, touch more deeply, and even be life-altering for the one experiencing it.

Romano (2014) sees moral moments as events that in *themselves* can open time to new opportunities. Events are ruined, he says, if they are made into routines and best practices. On the contrary, events

might be "openings to the present" (p. 128), which could always *be* different and *care* differently for the other. An event in itself is a temporal unit with a start and an end that, according to Romano (2014), opens the possibility of a new present, a new "now". An event might alter our egologic capacities by reconditioning them, or at least put them into question, as Lévinas suggests (1987, p. 16), and the temporality of the event might make a difference to *what* one sees and *how* one relates to what one sees and experiences. "The irreducible alterity of time", Lévinas writes (p. 16), indicates that time always is truly other and outside of human control. Still, time as awareness of the event, might alter my routines and interrupt my beliefs when I listen to the moment. I might not know what to do or how to meet the demand of the moment. I might, on the contrary, feel helpless and excoriated, like the young students do. This is the risk of any event. Time, however, may make one aware of situations that need to be seen and that others might neglect. To the philosopher, Iris Murdoch, moments of moral awareness are *movements* of the self toward an unself. "Unselfing", she says, "is the will to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is" (2001, p. 91). The good is not a fixed label, but a movement of the world present in moments as free and responsible human acts. In this sense, moments of moral disquiet serve the good, and are significant because they remind us of our shared human frailty and of that which needs care irrespective of reason, justification, or arguments.

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