What is Moral Disquiet and How Does the Experience of Moral Disquiet Appear in Professional Human Practices? Facing Responsibility in Nursing, Teaching, and Caring

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Abstract

What does moral disquiet mean to professional human practices? The phenomenon of moral disquiet comes to awareness in concrete lived human experiences and might be described with the help of examples from practice. The article explores lived moral disquiet in nursing, teaching and caring practices. It highlights moral disquiet from direct descriptions in which the phenomenon arises as an event in students' lifeworlds including professional human relationships in societal institutions like a hospital, nursing home and kindergarten. We suggest that moral disquiet, expressed as the human sensitivity toward others, does not depend on success or failure of outcome, but is a quality of belief and hope in the lives of others that offers possible moments of humanness.

Keywords: Moral disquiet, phenomenology of practice, professional practice, responsibility, accountability, event.

Introduction

We sometimes come across someone or something that is caught in a situation – a dilemma, a conflict, or a helpless condition - an event that by its very quality calls for our awareness and response. We are unexpectedly halted in our current activities by that which calls upon us. The call may come from a person, another living creature, an artefact or a situation that somehow immediately appeals to us, craving our attention in such a way that we feel an urge to act. This someone or something, which comes from the outside, gives itself to us by the very situation they are in. An example from fiction, Linn Ullmann's novel *A blessed Child* (2008), might give an entry to such an experience:

> Laura closed the veranda door behind her. She was going to take the shortcut
> down to the beach to go swimming. She had packed everything she needed in a

big blue bag that was hanging from her shoulder. Bikini, towel, tape recorder, magazines, potato chips, soda, chocolate and sweets: everything she had bought with her own money, […]. Right outside the house, under a tree, a bird lay on the ground, quivering. It flapped its wings but couldn't take off and fly, it just lay there struggling. It wasn't cheeping or twittering or singing or crying: Laura didn't know what sounds birds were supposed to make when they were lying on the ground and couldn't fly. The bird was silent, at any rate, not a sound from its beak. The only thing she could hear was the noise of its wings beating against the ground. The bird didn't give up. It tensed, and braced itself, and flapped its wings as hard as it could, and when nothing happened it folded in on itself and waited a while before trying once more. This happened over and over again. Laura wished she hadn't seen the bird. She was on her way down to the beach to go swimming and the day stretched before her, long and bright, and then the bird was lying there struggling; it was in a terrible way and would die soon and it was her responsibility to help it. She could not just walk on, of course, leave it lying here, flapping its wings, convince herself that she would be able to forget it as the day wore on. And maybe she would forget for a little while, but something was bound to remind her. It could be absolutely anything: the swans on the sea, a stone at the water's edge, a song on her tape recorder.

Laura looked at the bird that had become her responsibility now. Stupid bird! Stupid bird! Everything had been so nice, and now this stupid bird was demanding that she do something, anything, to put an end to the pain. (Ullmann, 2008, p. 138-139)

Situations where someone or something outward gives itself to us, simply because we are present and aware, are often situations that make us uneasy. Like Laura above, we might not know exactly what to do or say, to repair, to set right, or how to meet this that is given to us. We are handed over a responsibility that we do not foresee, are not prepared for, or do not even want to be involved in. Like Laura, however, we feel urged to respond; to do or say something. It is hard or even impossible not to comply with the situation and feel that *I* am the one responsible. What is it about this incident that hit Laura, that urged her to disrupt her action and, as it was, made her become hostage to an injured bird? What is this inclination that makes us put away our drives, desires, and plans, and succumb to someone or something we incidentally come upon? Laura wished she had not seen the bird. She knew, however, that she would not be able to push the incident aside, walk away and forget it. And if she did, if she did walk away, it would haunt her through constant reminders.

Some of us might have had an experience similar to that of Laura. Words for the sense we get when someone or something intrudes on our peaceful state might be that we feel interrupted, disturbed, or disquieted. The sense of it 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. We might be intensely longing to return to the previous undisturbed state but are unable to. Etymologically, the term disquiet[i] indicates a deprivation of peace, rest, or tranquillity. This withdrawal of harmony is not a neutral or disengaged stance. It is related to the world outside of us, directly or indirectly. In fact, it is always connected, interactive, even relational to

something or someone external to ourselves. Thus, it is existential; it appears, stands forth, comes to light for us, and forms a relation between me (or you) and someone or something else. It is a moral relationship.

Why Moral Disquiet?

Bell (1980) suggests that people in our time can be "characterized as existing in fear and trembling" (cited in Bauman, 1993, p. 16). His idea stems from the fact that people of today live more and more apart from nature, and that our reality the last centuries, our way of living our lives, has become both more instrumental and technical. Bell's observation is even more accurate today than in the 1980s, when his essay was published. Bauman, in his analysis of modernity (1993, 2007, 2012, 2013), brings novel aspects of experience into light, and suggests that we are facing a crisis in today`s society related to what he refers to as a transition from a "solid" to a "liquid" modernity. The transition indicates a shift from a world where human beings were striving for stability and order, to a world of unpredictability and liquidity, where "change is *the only* permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty" (Bauman, 2012, p. viii).

Bauman (2012) sees signs that today`s society is floating and travels easily – not only roles and responsibility, but also relationships. The descriptions of fluidity are unstable and temporary, like "drip", "spill", "splash" and "flow over", and need, according to Bauman (2012), "a date at the bottom of the picture" (p. 2). The "liquid" society thus seems related to neoliberal ideals, where change is the permanent, and loyalty to systems, rules and pre-planned regulations often are in conflict, even incompatible, and where human beings, more-than-human-beings (Asdal et al., 2016; Smith, 2018), nature and existence, might be at risk or suffer. Somehow the basis of the human, the irreplaceable individual responsibility and gentleness, are increasingly being replaced by imitable players of roles that "would promptly fill the gap I left" […] in a society where "responsibility has been floated" […] and "rests with the *role*, not with the *person* who performs it" (Bauman, 1993, p. 19) (Italics in original). Individual responsibility tends to be floating, while an overarching system of rules, regulations, and recommendations control and master uncertainty and ambiguity. Human moral thus increasingly seems to be blanketed out by a kind of alienation of human existence that blends the real with the formal, deletes substance to form, and plurality to uniformity. How could we still be attentive to the experience of responsibility for the other in unplanned and ad hoc situations, and try to bring out this sense in pedagogical contexts?

Our concern in this text is to explore the lived meaning of moral disquiet in nursing, teaching and caring practices that include professional human relationships in cultural and societal institutions like hospital, nursing home, kindergarten, and shared housing. These are human practices where the professionals are working closely with people who, for various reasons and in different degrees, are in vulnerable life situations (as we all are from time to time) – whether they are children, patients or have a disability. Commonly, relationships in those settings, like all human relationships, are incarnated with power and control, and thus they are authoritative and asymmetric, sometimes even authoritarian, and hierarchical. Within institutional responsibility and care, loyalty to the common discourse, rules and regulations may be conflicting in concern of human beings (Bauman,

1993). We are interested in the lived experience of moral disquiet of young professionals: nursing students, pre-service kindergarten teachers, and social worker students[ii] in training in their third and last year of study in those kinds of relationships, situations, and institutions.

Moral Disquiet in Students' Lives

Exploring students' lived experience of moral disquiet phenomenologically entails bringing forth experiential material of students' subjective experiences as lived through, an endeavour different from asking for their personal views, socio-cultural opinions, or cultural narratives (van Manen, 2014). Rather, phenomenological studies focus on the lifeworld as we "ordinarily *experience* it or become conscious of it – before we think, conceptualize, abstract, or theorize it" (van Manen, 2014, p. 65). This means that we, by exploring the phenomenon of moral disquiet, aim at giving a direct description of the phenomenon as it arises as an event in the students` lifeworlds. As any phenomenon presents itself in a multitude of ways, including a manifoldness of various aspects (van Manen, 2014), in this article we intend to get a grasp on what the phenomenon of moral disquiet means in students' lives and practices, or said more precisely, what moral disquiet is phenomenologically, and how it constitutes itself as phenomenon in the flow of relational experiences in some students' professional practices.

As phenomenology borrows qualitative empirical methods from the social science, we have gathered experiential material by asking students in professional human practices of concrete situations or events from their period of practical training where they somehow felt disquieted or disturbed for some reason. In this study, which is part of a larger study[iii], altogether 13 students participated and a total of 16 interviews were conducted – 13 individual interviews and 3 focus group interviews. The interviews were transcribed and descriptions from the interview material, related to the phenomenon we explore, were honed into "anecdotes" (van Manen, 1989). Anecdotes are short examples where the phenomenon is displayed in its multitude of ways and manners. They describe the mood or the sense of how we find ourselves in situations with others, rather than presenting mere content and factuality of concepts. Although, anecdotes intend to describe a situation and persons in ways that allow us as readers or listeners be present in the situation. They serve as experiential examples of life itself, as once lived, retold (by the informants), and rewritten on basis of the interviews and the transcribed interview material. One might say that they "present and represent "real" and percentile human life, where every pedagogical question has its source and purpose" (Sævi, 2014, p. 39). Within phenomenology of practice, the aim is thus not empirical generalization or verification of a study, but to explore a phenomenon *as lived through*. By depicting unique examples rather than patterns, we attempt to address and show some of the phenomenon´s significant and invariant aspects as they arise in the lives of the students participating in the study.

The Moral Moment

Bauman (1993) distinguishes between morality as responsibility, a personal and moral call, and morality as accountability, understood as loyalty and obedience to common or

universal rules and practices. Whether we attain to the one or the other is revealed in the very moment of action. Bauman (1993) suggests that the moral moment is the very moment when we realize that we have a choice; we choose whether to respond to what the world is offering us or refuse the offering. This implies that *the moment itself* is what morality is about. It is moral precisely because it "is the instant when a decision […] is made", Sævi and Eikeland say (2012, p. 91). Any decision is, direct or indirect, aware or not, good or less good, oriented to self or other, always a response in one way or another. To a pre-service kindergarten teacher, the decision whether she should act or not lingers long. Anne recounts an episode that happened during one of her periods of practical training:

> *We are in the kindergarten wardrobe, getting dressed for some outdoor hours. One of the boys, Lars, has spilled milk on his pants, and asks the kindergarten teacher if he might change clothes. The teacher looks at his pants, finds that he is not that wet, and says it would not be a problem when the outdoor overall comes on. Immediately, I become aware. Why is not the child allowed to change if he is wet? Lars pleads, but the teacher will not budge. He sits down passively at the bench while the teacher helps the other children and leaves the wardrobe to go out to the playground. I am alone with Lars in the wardrobe, and unsure of what to do, but approach him and says: "Are you wet? Do you want to change your pants?" He nods and stands up. Together we find a pair of dry pants in his basket. He redresses in an instant, and I help him put on the overall. The wet clothes still lay on the bench. In that moment, the kindergarten teacher comes in, stops, and sees the wet clothes. "Why did you change, Lars"? she asks. "I told you it was not necessary". "It was not him. It was me", I say.*

Unintentionally, while reading, we somehow become involved in the situation above by seeing, sensing, judging and perhaps siding with someone. According to Mollenhauer (2014), we can talk "coherently and relevantly" about our lives with children only if the episodes that give rise to our lives with them are translated into narratives and "empirical realities" (p. 74). Thus, only "reality", or life as we live it, can assist our serious pedagogical effort to help nurture children's lives and formation. What he also asserts, which is of significance in this case, is that the self-reflexive nature of a relationship always appears when an adult describes a situation with a child (Mollenhauer, 2014). When describing something or someone, the describer involuntarily is included in the description. As the interpreter of the moment above, Anne, discloses herself; her understanding *in* and *of* the situation, but also her values and beliefs. The question is how we might understand Anne and her effort? What strikes us is perhaps that she disagrees with how the kindergarten teacher solved the situation, but also that she might not be quite sure whether or not she should act or how to respond to the situation. From the very start she feels uncomfortable on the behalf of the boy, but she does not know exactly what to do. After all, she decides to act, and seems to find a proper moment to comfort the boy who sits there, likely discouraged.

The episode is hard to come to ease with without taking moral stands, as moral stands somehow are parts of our natural attitude and come easily. Nevertheless, taking stands is not our aim for the exploration, as our point is not to judge the pedagogical practice (although we might have preferences), but to explore the phenomenon of moral disquiet.

Situations are always more complex and multi-layered than we immediately comprehend. Our point is to show that we understand and act differently in situations where children and adults meet, and that there are always alternative ways of thinking and acting depending on what we find valuable, good or right, and how we see ourselves, our relation to the child and the child as such. Pedagogically insufficient actions more often are expressions of lack of sensitivity and reflection than of disregard or neglect. In this situation there is also the child, Lars, who appeals in different ways to the two adults. We know only the experience of one of the parties, a situation that calls for watching our steps.

A phenomenological exploration of a phenomenon aims at orienting "to the region of lived experience where the phenomenon dwells in recognizable form" (van Manen, 2002, p. 238). This is also the case in the situation above. How, if not in the least, might we recognize qualities of moral disquiet in the description of the situation with the student, the kindergarten teacher and Lars, the boy with the wet pants? We suggest that despite our common inclination to judge any situation we see; the impression is that Anne's understanding of what is right or good in the situation permeates her description. Her act is in fact judgmental in that she decides what is good for the boy and acts according to this, against the decision of the kindergarten teacher. But her vacillation also speaks. She is not necessarily sure if she did the right thing. When the revealing moment appears however, she stands up for Lars and what she did.

By her response to the situation, by supporting Lars, Anne is not only distancing herself from the kindergarten teacher´s practice or the common discourse; what Lingis (1994) calls the rational community. She is also, by acting and speaking *against*, risking herself, as she can never know how her reaching out will be meet by others, like the kindergarten teacher. The Greek word *parrhesia*, or "free speech", could be of significance here. According to Foucault (2001), "the function of parrhesia is not to demonstrate the truth to someone else, but has the function of *criticism* […], […] either towards another or towards oneself" (p. 17). The one who speaks *parrhesia* comes from "below", from a position lower in the hierarchy than to whom s/he speaks, and s/he sees it like a duty (Foucault, 2001). In this sense, *parrhesia* is closely connected to courage, as "it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger" (Foucault, 2001, p. 16). In the situation above, Anne risks being ignored, reprimanded, or disliked. But she can also receive praise. The point is that she cannot really know. In this sense, every encounter with the world and speaking *parrhesia* is a chance where we risk ourselves in the relation.

Lived Disquiet as Opportunity

As human beings we are always in relation to someone or something. Relationality is inextricably linked to our human existence and is not something we can opt out or escape from. According to Løgstrup (1974), like with Mollenhauer (2014) above, every human relation is incarnated with self-disclosure, power, and control. The self-disclosure, which displays another aspect of the phenomenon, that in Mollenhauer's terms is called self-reflexivity, carries a demand upon the other person, without us even thinking about it or being able to prevent it. In the human encounter, either it is a silent or a pronounced

utterance, we become vulnerable to the other person by simply encountering him or her. This mutual extradition of vulnerability and power is, by Løgstrup (1971), called interdependence:

> A person never has something to do with another person without also having some degree of control over him. It may be a very small matter, involving only a passing mood, a dampening or quickening of spirit, a deepening or removal of some dislike. But it may also be a matter of tremendous scope, such as can determine the very course of his life. (Løgstrup, 1971, p. 16)

In the exposure of vulnerability and power, as with Laura and the bird as well as with Lars, the kindergarten teacher and the student, morality appears. By being with each other, we "constitute one another`s world and destiny" (Løgstrup, 1971, p. 17). Power, as distinct from authority, puts a person in control of the other and represents a realization of this person's will independently of the will of the other. The will of one person oppresses the will of the other. Judith, a social worker student, describes an experience infused with self-disclosure and control. The experience derives from one of her practical training periods in a nursing home.

> *My supervisor tells the elderly man that he needs a shower, as he has not changed his pads today. The man lies huddled up on the couch. "No", he says. "Come on", my supervisor responds, and continues; "You have to. You cannot remain like this". She helps him up in a sitting position, keeps pushing him and insists that he should go to the shower. Eventually, he gives in, and slowly gets to his feet. The supervisor turns toward me; "Will you give me a hand over here? We have to hold him in each arm". Reluctantly, I obey and place his arm over my shoulder. But he resists to go. We are so close that I can feel him leaning backwards. In a quick glance I notice that my supervisor puts her foot behind his feet, and he has no choice but moving forwards. «No», he repeats. «Come on», my supervisor answers, firmly leading him towards the bathroom. At this moment he resigns, and I can feel the weight of his body. He is letting go of himself. She continues to push him towards the shower, undresses him, places him in a chair, and sprinkles his body with a hand shower. He just sits there – leans forward with his arms hanging down.*

The elderly man has, in the hands of his helpers, become an object – a dirty item that should be cleaned. He seems to have given up his agency and lets his body be handled without will. To Judith, the situation unfolds unexpectedly. She stands by her supervisor's side and is told how to act. Yet, something in her hesitates. She does not want to be a part of the situation as it develops, but at the same time she does not resist her supervisor's expertise or find ways to modify or put an end to the process. One step leads to the next and she finds herself hostage in the situation without withstanding or being able to initiate an alternative.

The elderly man at the core of the situation is exposed and we as readers might feel pity for him, probably combined with a rightful blame of the professional's insensitive exploitation. The situation is recognizable though, in that an institutionalized person in need of care and nursing, refuses the professionals' arguments or demands, actions that

often represent the institutions predetermined rhythm and routines. Professionals are often tolerant of patient opposition, but as time passes and the situation still does not progress, they might start manipulating, using mild force, trying to make things work in situations in which they feel pressed for time. It is not hard to think of the complexity of such situations and the possible multifaceted manifestations of moral unease and distress in the supervisor and regular staff as well. Perhaps the care givers have several other patients who have urgent needs. Delaying getting to those patients could cause even more harm to them. When witnessing the situation for the first time however, it might disclose itself for what it initially *was* and still *is*. Judith, the student, gradually apprehends the real and complex nature of the situation. She is not prepared for what happens, and we might ask if she at all could have expected it. Moment for moment unveils and she acts in one way but during the event she feels an urge to have acted differently.

We, as humans, are living *in* and *with* the world, involved in acts with others. We might be taken aback by what others do or how a situation develops, as we can never fully know or control other person's actions and responses, and we rarely know the full picture. To Judith, the moment of realization comes abruptly, although she is present during the time when the situation unfolds. Her response is hesitant and lacks vigour. She seems to be held in a deadlock of indecision. But despite her inability to foresee the outcome and her experience of unresistingly reflecting the situation as it expands, she is being transformed by the event. She cannot take care of situations like this on a permanent basis or see that this man, or other elderly in his situation, will always be taken care of respectfully. She might realize the unsettled reality of professional human practices. Experiences, like the examples above, show that it is easy to do harm, as unintended consequences to our actions are frequent, especially as the "stakes are exceedingly high because we have other people's lives in our care" (Fendler, 2012, p. 41). We cannot know the reality of the other's experience of what we do, neither in the short nor the long run of the person's life. Judith's description of the event, however, offers her, as well as us, new chances, and the possibility of questioning or discussing the situation in the aftermath and doing things differently next time.

Relationality Denied

In the situation above, Judith feels responsibility for what happens, and is trapped between different wills; the elderly man´s will, her supervisor´s that is stronger and her own that is weak, and in the end, even absent. A response is required; but to whose call should she respond? Van Manen (2016) refers to Heidegger on relationality as one of the existentials that "…we all experience our world and our reality through" (p. 303). We relate to the world, to other human beings and to the more-than-human, things and situations of the world. Thus, relationality always, although we do not always take notice of it, situates us in relation to otherness - to what is other or different from us. We do not fully know the other's intent or motive and must rely on the relation as it evolves. And more significant, we do not fully know who the other person is. The otherness of the other prevents us from knowing him or her in the complexity of their presences. Instead, what I encounter is my image of the other, my interpretation, the way I see him or her in the situation, upon which I am forced to act (Lippitz, 1986). Etymologically, the word relation[iv] refers to "connection and correspondence" and derives from the Latin

relationem, which means 'bringing back or restoring'**.** To restore[v] means to "bring back to a former and better state". The etymological meaning of relationality throws into relief how "self and other are experienced with respect to the phenomenon that is being studied" (van Manen, 2016, p. 303). What options did Anne and Judith have? Were they in a position to bring the relation back to a former or better state?

Both Anne and Judith feel the disquiet of their respective situations and are caught in a limbo between being responsible and being accountable. Etymologically, the word accountable[vi] means "answerable, liable to be called to account". The term account[vii] from Old French means "answering for one`s conduct, estimation and consideration - especially in the eye of others". In contrast, the word responsibility[viii] etymologically stems from the Latin *respondere*, which means to "respond, answer to or promise in return". Thus, while accountability refers to measurable and rational aspects relating to the role as professional, responsibility is the response to someone's call to us personally. Responsibility is an answer to a request, uttered or silent, from someone or something outside of ourselves. Bauman (1996) suggests that we are responsible for those weaker than us and accountable to those stronger. The weaker cannot expect, even less demand our support, but merely hope for it. The stronger than us can force us by threat of sanctions, or by taking control of our will and ability to resist.

To Lingis (2007), responsibility is experienced when "we find ourselves before someone who singles us out and puts demands on us, someone whose needs are important, urgent, and immediate" (p. 2). When standing in front of the bird, the boy or the elderly man Laura, Anne and Judith feel responsible. The vulnerability of the other singles them out and appeals to their bodily and immediate presence. They sense the other´s suffering without them necessarily uttering a word. The bird, the boy or the elderly man have become their responsibility from which they cannot get away. But unlike with Laura and the bird, Anne and Judith manoeuvre in a community of hierarchy, power and control, a condition that might make relational situations even more complex. Judith´s supervisor and perhaps also the kindergarten teacher urge the students to support them to meet professional intentions. Both cases enact as relational tasks and situate the parties in relation to what we might call the others' otherness. But what exactly is this relationality and how is otherness to be understood relationally? The otherness of others might so easily be overlooked, made into the same or to universality by professionals, despite obvious differences in roles, tasks, and conditions. Doing good is only one alternative possible in any event, although good can have many faces and be done in many ways. The professional in Judith´s story does not seem to see the elderly man as an-other. To her, he seems to be a patient among patients in need of a shower. Judith sees a subject in need of personal care and concern. While the professional acts in a daily routine situation, the student witnesses an event that addresses the possibility of subjective acts of care and dignity rather than securing someone's cleanliness without care.

Events, like time and relations are provisional, and cannot be posed in manners where the fragility of temporality is not considered. Romano (2014) sees events as something that "cannot be repeated and will lose their quality of events if we make them into routines and best practices" (p. 128). On the contrary, events are "openings to the present" (p. 128) and could always *be* different and *care* differently for the other. As relationality does not let itself be used to secure certain outcomes (Løgstrup, 1971), it appears in the

events above that we encounter a restriction of how the professional relations are utilized by the professionals. It appears that Judith is subjected to a will that is not her own and factually, although hesitantly, she supports the professional's aim to reach a particular result. Even though the student sides with the elderly man, she follows her supervisor's will, at least this time. A consequence of Judith's waveringness is that she is denied a relation with either of the two. In fact, all three of them are left without relationality and stuck in a condition of disconnectedness. None are being able to restore the situation to a dignified event to each of them. Somehow the sense of moral disquiet seems to occur in situations where relationality is endangered or in some way at stake. Paradoxically, the sense of connectedness, contact and relationality does not seem to be open to the one being disquieted in those situations. S/he is caught in between response and no response. It is a lonely position, where one can neither expect support from the person oppressed nor from the oppressive professional. The person is thus not just hostage to an-other, but also to moral disquiet itself, and seems to be subject to detachment and non-relationality.

Concluding Remarks

Examining moral disquiet as a phenomenon that gives itself to our awareness in relational human practices might help us toward a more thoughtful and sensitive practice. Like other phenomena of the world, moral disquiet is sensed in the flow of life, present as a reality that might nurture our caring sensibility and effort. Relationality is at stake and imperilled in some way or another in the events where the sense of unease on behalf of others is present. Nevertheless, as moral disquiet is a relational phenomenon, still the sense of belonging seems to be denied the person who has the disquiet experience. He or she lingers between uncertainty and self-blame, although the events are memorable, perhaps even in an epoch-making way. The author Linn Ullmann recreates moral disquiet for her readers, so do Anne and Judith. They remember the disquieting events as they share their experiences. To them the events are significant and might have altered their present and future relation to themselves. Perhaps disquieting events are not so rare after all? Perhaps is the awareness to what is other and outside of us, and the ability to be interrupted by something that puts our self-oriented and ego-logical life on hold, a highly recognizable, although unsettling phenomenon. We might experience not knowing what to do when we are faced with what we do not know and have not experienced previously. In these situations, we are urged to stop our flow of action on behalf of something or someone else.

This study does not provide answers or solutions to how we should understand and discuss moral disquiet as a topic in practice of education or in educational practices. We are not necessarily assured how to handle unsettling situations with others in professional practice or come to know whether moral disquiet is healthful and promotes a sound lifestyle to the student or other professionals. However, the study reveals that moral disquiet is a phenomenon that gives itself to us by occurring on its own premises before our eyes and senses. We might wish we had not seen what we see or sense; what the other is subjected to. Our disquiet draws us out of the state we are in and makes the other, be it a person, a bird or other living creatures, our responsibility. More often than not, we are unprepared for the interruption that the other's situation puts on us, and when it happens, we are deeply insecure of what to do or say. We waver, hesitate, and vacillate in

the moment. We often miss the opportunity to act, or perhaps we act and wish to have acted differently. Nevertheless, we consider moral disquiet to be significant to professional relationships. How so? To our understanding human relational practice is not something that can solve problems or take care of issues on a permanent basis. Rather, human practices are moments or events that address possibilities and offer us moments of humanity. Every moment of disquieting practice includes the possibility of a new chance and a next time.

Practice, Heidegger (1985) says, is a way of "knowing in-being" (p. 161), and moral disquiet is sensitive to everyday moments of care. Professional practice as well as practices in general, is oriented to the practice of living, and every moment of practice has its mood or sense that persons might be aware of or not. The students in this study trust their uneasiness to be of significance, although they are not sure what to do or if what they do (or do not do), is the best. What they do, however, is to put their own life on hold for shorter or longer, momentarily disregard their own needs and desires, and open their selves to being entangled in another life. They do not provide results or solutions, but they feel urged and decide to make an episode they encounter significant to their life by stopping, listening, watching and being responsive to the events in which they find themselves. They stay in relations where their being and acting is at stake and with no visible and foreseeable chance of a good outcome. The life of the other addresses them in ways that they take on. And they act upon the responsibility they face without knowing how to be or act and without saving their own appearances. These are qualities decisive to all areas of human practices, and to those in need of someone else to care for smaller or bigger events in their lives.

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[i] disquiet | Search Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)

[ii] The Norwegian professional title "vernepleier" is translated to social worker or social educator in English speaking countries. Within a Norwegian context this profession works within different fields, as with disability or drug related issues, care and nursing.

iii This study is part of a larger PhD-study. The interviews can best be described as phenomenological interviews (van Manen, 2014), or that which within qualitative research is called semi-structured interviews, where the participants based on a theme list were invited to talk about disquieting situations from their practical training period. Follow-up questions were asked to get a stronger sense of how the phenomenon displayed itself through the students´ lived experience in the moment it happened. The interviews took place from Mars to June 2021 in class-, group- or meeting rooms at campus, in a city park and on Zoom (because of the pandemic). Altogether, 13 students participated in the study. All names are fictitious to protect the participants´ anonymity.

iv relation | Search Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)

v restore | Search Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)

vi accountable | Search Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)

vii account | Origin and meaning of account by Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)

viii responsibility | Search Online Etymology Dictionary (etymonline.com)