

A7. Nurses and the Nursing Profession

A7:1 Alisa Haushalter, *The Role of Nursing Theory Think Tanks in Advancing Nursing Knowledge and Theory: A historical qualitative study utilizing the Margaret Newman Archive, 1978-1988*

Abstract

Purpose and Background

According to the American Academy of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), nursing is a discipline fundamentally rooted in theory. [1] This study explores the co-creation of nursing knowledge and theory development during the Grand Theory Movement through the work led by Dr. Margaret Newman and pursued in Nursing Theory Think Tanks (NTTT) from 1978-1988.[2] NTTT flourished alongside the societal backdrop of the second wave Feminist Movement that championed women's entry into public arenas and professional spaces.

In 1978, Newman, a pioneer in nursing theory, envisioned the first NTTT as a platform for critical discussions on nursing knowledge and theory development. Her theoretical contributions were heavily influenced by philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, and physicists. Newman's work inspired decades of robust dialogue among nurse theorists and scholars, shaping the profession's theoretical foundations.

While significant literature exists regarding nursing theory, there is a paucity of literature on the historic role of NTTT. Key actors who participated in the NTTT are represented throughout the literature. However, there is no literature on how these theorists convened within the context of NTTT to advance nursing knowledge and theory. Exploring NTTT and Newman's contributions has revealed themes relevant to nursing today, including the manner in which history helps us understand contemporary pedagogy, education, practice, leadership, and research.

Methods

Primary source documents from the Newman Archive were studied to conduct a content analysis using inductive coding. Analyses were guided by a historical-interpretive framework and feminist theory. Focus groups with original NTTT members provided insights regarding processes, content, and future application to nursing.

Results

This study has surfaced a number of key findings, including a description of Newman's role in envisioning, convening, and continuing the NTTT. Other key findings include the selection and invitation of members, logistics, agendas, and proceedings, serving as the architectural framework for the NTTT. Additionally, 85 burning questions (BQ) categorized as philosophical, ontological, epistemological, and pedagogical emerged from the primary documents. Over time,

BQs pivoted from nursing's distinct knowledge to nursing's duty to address complex health and societal issues.

Conclusions/Policy Implications

Understanding and engaging with history offers insight into the preparation of nurses for contemporary practice. Nurses must be prepared to examine health and societal challenges, engage in transformative dialogue, and lead efforts to promote meaningful change. NTTTT offer an approach that centers the co-creation of knowledge through questioning and dialogue. Development of education policy supporting the integration of nursing theory and history into curricula is paramount. Shared dialogues in NTTTT, similar to consciousness-raising groups of second-wave feminism, offer a legitimate blueprint for how nurses can continue to define and shape our own destiny.[3] Using a feminist lens and our own reflexivity, interpretation of documented proceedings from these NTTTTs helps us confront ways in which the discipline has historically lacked representation. Moving forward, we must strive to include many perspectives of and within nursing to foster a discipline replete with co-created knowledge and theory informed education, practice, leadership, and research so that we may promote health and well-being for all.

References

[1] American Association of Colleges of Nursing. *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*. Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2021. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Publications/Essentials-2021.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2025).

[2] Callista Roy, "Nursing Knowledge in the 21st Century: Domain-Derived and Basic Science Practice-Shaped," *ANS. Advances in Nursing Science* 42, no. 1 (January–March 2019): 28–42, <https://doi.org/10.1097/ANS.0000000000000240>.

[3] Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry, *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 58.

A7:2 Andrej Toth, *Building a Modern Nurse: State Policy, Philanthropy, and the Professionalization of Nursing in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918–1938)*

Abstract

The proposed lecture will examine the professionalization of nursing in the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) as a process shaped by the interaction of state health administration, philanthropic organizations, and international reform networks. Drawing on archival materials mainly from the Ministry of Public Health and Physical Education, including early legislative drafts, budgetary files, and statistical surveys of nursing personnel, the lecture will demonstrate how the then Czechoslovak state approached nursing not as a charitable auxiliary function, but as a modern public service requiring regulation, training, and stable institutional support.

The establishment of the State School of Nursing in Prague in the early 1920s marked a turning point in the transition from a predominantly religious and municipal nursing tradition toward a secular and state-supervised model of professional education. Government involvement went beyond financial subsidies: the ministry appointed representatives to the school's governing board, drafted curricula, and initiated efforts to standardize qualifications across regions. These measures reflected a broader vision of public health as an expression of democratic citizenship and social responsibility.

At the same time, the development of nursing in then Czechoslovakia was deeply connected to transnational influences. The collaboration with the Czechoslovak Red Cross and the advisory presence of the Rockefeller Foundation introduced new pedagogical methods, hygienic standards, and community-based nursing models. These external impulses did not simply replace local traditions; rather, they intersected with the state's efforts to unify and elevate nursing practice across the multilingual and socially diverse territories of the new republic.

A crucial element of this modernization was the creation of a comprehensive statistical data base on hospitals and nursing personnel in 1922, which enabled the ministry to identify regional disparities, especially between the Czech lands, Slovakia, and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. These findings informed targeted policies in nursing education, staffing norms, and midwifery services, especially in rural and underserved areas.

By examining this interplay of state authority, philanthropic initiative, and international expertise, the paper situates interwar Czechoslovakia as a laboratory of nursing modernization – one in which professional identity emerged at the intersection of public health reform, gendered labor structures, and nation-building.

References

Various archival sources, mainly from the National Archive in Prague (Czech Republic)

A7: 3 Elizabeth Ahern and Emily Barr, *Light, Order, and Authority: Visualizing Nursing and Sanitary Science at Scutari*

Abstract

Purpose and Background

This study examines how a mid-nineteenth-century lithograph of Florence Nightingale at the Scutari shaped nursing identity during the Crimean War. 1 Although Nightingale's contributions to sanitary reform are extensively documented, scholarship has tended to focus on her written texts and statistical innovations, leaving visual culture underexplored. Crimean War lithographs circulated widely and shaped public interpretation of wartime nursing, yet their role in constructing professional authority has received limited attention. Nightingale's framing of cleanliness, ventilation, and environmental order as both scientific and moral imperatives provides a basis for assessing how sanitary ideology could be encoded visually. Produced at a moment when miasma theory, sanitary science, and contagionism vied for legitimacy, this lithograph offers a valuable site for examining how symbolic and compositional choices shaped emerging understandings of nursing authority amid competing theories of disease. This study asks how visual representation functioned as a tool for professional legitimization.

Methods

The analysis draws on semiotic reading, art-historical comparison, and documentary interpretation. The lithograph was examined for its compositional structure, symbolic elements, spatial arrangements, and visual patterns related to environment and caregiving. These features were then compared with contemporary Crimean War engravings by Edmund Walker, William Simpson, and Thomas Packer to situate the image within the conventions of mid-nineteenth-century illustrated reportage. These approaches illuminate how visual codes conveyed sanitary ideology. Primary texts, including Notes on Hospitals, 2 Notes on Nursing, 3 and sanitary reform documents, were used to identify the conceptual frameworks informing visual and narrative representations of nursing. Relevant historiography in the history of science, gender, and print culture shaped the interpretive approach and contextualized the analysis within broader debates.

Results / Outcomes

This analysis situates the lithograph within a broader culture, which circulated sanitary ideology through motifs of light, stillness, and moral order. Findings show that the image operates as subtle propaganda, transforming the hospital ward into a visual argument for sanitary reform. Bright illumination, polished surfaces, and orderly arrangements translate miasmatic principles into aesthetic form, presenting "pure air," cleanliness, and ventilation as scientific and moral imperatives. Its composed serenity replaces the documented overcrowding and chaos of Scutari with an aspirational vision of benevolence and control.

The visual logic aligns with Nightingale's environmental explanations for disease and her resistance to contagionism, embedding anti-contagionist assumptions in a scene that appears observational and authoritative. Together, these materials demonstrate how visual media consolidated Nightingale's authority, framing nursing as a stabilizing and morally elevated presence and shaping enduring narratives about the profession's values and scientific credibility.

Conclusions / Implications

By foregrounding visual analysis, this study demonstrates that images actively shaped nursing identity and public health discourse. The lithograph both reflected and softened tensions between sanitary ideology and early contagionist theory, offering an aspirational image that obscured material suffering and scientific controversy. Treating visual artifacts as active agents in the construction of professional mythologies deepens understanding of how narratives of care, science, and gender were crafted and preserved. This perspective also invites continued attention to how professional identities, both past and present, are shaped through representation, policy, and text.

References

1. Florence Nightingale Assessing a Ward at the Military Hospital in Scutari, coloured lithograph by E. Walker after W. Simpson, ca. 1856, Wellcome Library. The National Archives (UK), accessed October 17, 2025, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/florence-nightingale/source-1/>.
2. Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Hospitals* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863).
3. Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not* (London: Harrison, 1859).

Abstract

From Harriet Tubman to Lavinia Dock and Emma Goldman and Lillian Wald to Marie Branch and Wilma Scott Heide and Carolyn Innes, nurses have been linked to progressive and even radical social movements in the United States since at least the middle of the 19th century. From abolition to labor organizing to radical politics to Black Liberation, Gay Liberation, and the Second Wave Feminist movement, nurses were central actors in social change. However, in spite of a professed commitment to care of the ill, advancement of social justice, and facilitation of human flourishing, the discipline of nursing has been slow to join these causes and respond to social change. With this paper, I am to situate nursing and its professional developmental arc in the context of the broader social movements of the 19th and 20th century while discussing the contributions of individual nurses to both broader social movements and to the profession of nursing. My overarching aim is to understand the tensions that emerged as nurses engaged in movements for social change push the professional organizations and institutions as a way to make sense of the politics of neutrality exercised by American Nurses Association and American Academy of Nursing in a present that is fraught with threats to healthcare, justice, education, and wellbeing of all people. This historical analysis draws on Foucault's history of the present using the past to make sense of our current moment as an entry point to first imagining and then building more just, equitable futures of nursing and all people. To accomplish this, I will draw on sources including the writings of (and about) nurses including folks like Tubman, Dock, Goldman, Wald, Branch, Heide, and Innes as well as organizational archival material about the American Nurses Association.

References

- 1 Marie Branch, "A Black American Nurse Visits the Peoples - Republic of China," *Nursing Forum* 12, no. 4 (1973): 402–11, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6198.1973.tb00552.x>; Wilma Heide, *Feminism for the Health of It* (Margaretdaughters, Inc, 1985); Sarah Hopkins Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (W.J. Moses, printer, 1869); E Fowler, "Nursing Pays Tribute to Harriet Tubman," *The American Nurse* 10, no. 5 (1978): 1–3; Lavinia Dock, "The Suffrage Question," *The American Journal of Nursing* 8, no. 11 (1908): 925–27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3403488>; Gay Nurses Alliance, "Gay Nurses Alliance Historical Highlights and Milestones," June 1982, SCC MS 00732, Accession 2018-S-0075, box 2, (David Waldron), Gay Nurses Alliances collection, David Waldron papers, Sophia Smith Special Collections, Smith College.
- 2 David Garland, "What Is a 'History of the Present'? On Foucault's Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions," *Punishment & Society* 16, no. 4 (2014): 365–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474514541711>; D. Gastaldo and D. Holmes, "Foucault and Nursing: A History of the Present.," *Nursing Inquiry* 6, no. 4 (1999): 231–40; Ethan

Kleinberg et al., “Theses on Theory and History,” *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 10, no. 1 (2020): 157–65, <https://doi.org/10.1215/21599785-8221515>; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Reissue edition (Vintage, 1994); Jessica Dillard-Wright, “Telling a Different Story: Historiography, Ethics, and Possibility for Nursing,” *Nursing Philosophy* n/a, no. n/a (2023): e12444, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12444>.