

Implications of power in Nursing Science through Discourse Analysis on Body

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Abstract. This study was attempted to introspect on the perspective of nursing science and identify implications through discourse analysis on body. Nursing science has delved deep into value-neutral and objective positivist approach for a long time, but it has reached a limit where it is difficult to explain the diverse phenomena around human body and health with only causal understanding. Accordingly, through the discourse text analysis on body and health, this study clarified that body and health are not the results of individual life but the products of social interaction process. It also verified the implications in nursing science by discussing power, which penetrates the mechanism and mastermind that create discourses on body.

Keywords: Discourse, Body, Power

1 Introduction

Since the implementation of the comprehensive programming channels in 2010, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of health-related programs combined with entertainment, as well as the number of health care providers on TV enthusiastically discoursing upon health. Perceived by the general public as experts dealing with life, these people have a strong voice about body and health, and the discourses on health created by them act as some kind of power and exert a considerable influence on individuals and society.

The problem is that these discourses are not a neutral language system that fully reflects the reality as it is; rather, they have an ideological character that affects individual life by defining certain lifestyles as desirable[1].

Who is the main agent to create discourses related to healthy body or health? Why is body objectified?

Today, body is not just an individual concept; it has transformed from the object that expresses individual identity to distinguish one from others to the battlefield of

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power in discourses that imperceptibly control the daily life. For example in the society where looks have become an individual's social competitiveness, there are constant efforts to create a body demanded by the trends, either consciously or unconsciously; and in this reality, individuals no longer live as the main agent of their own body.

Accordingly, this study will analyze the discourses related to body and health, and explore why these discourses are created and why body is objectified.

2 Research Method

This study will cover the mechanism and intentions that penetrate the discourses on body and health in articles, using Michel Foucault's discourse analysis framework. Thus, it is focused on interpreting the meaning and mechanism of text instead of technically analyzing the language itself.

3 Research Findings and Discussions

3.1 Does a pregnant woman's management of body shape prevent childhood obesity?

"...Childhood obesity is caused by various factors such as the remarkable improvement of the nutritional environment, as well as dietary habits, lifestyles and heredity. But the excessive weight increase of the mother in pregnancy and the birth weight of the newborn baby also have a significant effect. ... Recently there are specialized body shape clinics for pregnant women in order to prevent their obesity. The clinics provide xx and xx to help pregnant women manage their body shape and facilitate their childbirth, and also offer body shape diagnosis, nutritional management, body type xx and therapy for the whole body and different parts, and ultrasonic waves and high frequency procedures after childbirth. "Pregnant women can prevent their own obesity as well as their children's, by watching their weight in the clinic, says director OO. "It's good to get help from a specialized organization." – Excerpted from a daily newspaper article in January 2014 –

Since childhood obesity may lead to adult obesity, it is important to prevent excessive obesity during pregnancy. It has been long since the natural and normal processes of human life such as pregnancy and childbirth have become medical-ized. There is nothing wrong with watching weight or figure during pregnancy and after childbirth; but if these discourses are constantly reproduced, mothers with obese children are likely to suffer from guilt that they did not manage their body shape properly in pregnancy, or be criticized by family or society for leading their children into obesity by neglecting their duty. Moreover, the time and considerable amount of expenses that must be put into all kinds of surgical procedures and therapy for body shape management are also some things that cannot be overlooked. Why have the natural methods

and processes, which had been traditionally performed for body management in pregnancy and childbirth, come to be excluded? This is a good example that shows the possibility that body may be dominated by the commercial system combined with medical treatment. With regard to how power can penetrate and control body, [2] stated that power forms a relationship with individuals with various devices as the media, and as the level of the media gets higher, power tends to mobilize sophisticated discursive and non-discursive devices rather than the violence of prohibition. Furthermore, power penetrates and produces the body of individuals by dragging out the logic of positivity and self-improvement from the public, making body function as part of the network of power. Thus, power is none other than holistic bio-power that tries to control human life and existence [3].

3.2 Can humans have eternal life?

oooo (age 67), a director of a global conglomerate, is taking 100 pills of about 70-80 types of nutritional supplements every day, the amount of which is worth 1.1 billion KRW a year.

....His plan for eternal life consists of three steps. A longevity diet is Step 1 toward eternal life. This is the means to maintain health until Step 2 in which biotechnology can redesign genomes, and Step 3 in which molecular nanotechnology can regenerate human organs and tissues. He expects to reach Step 3 in 20-25 years, which is when he reaches the age of late 80s to early 90s. If biotechnology continues to develop according to his expectations, this scenario is not entirely impossible considering the recent trend in life extension. – Excerpted from a daily newspaper article in April 2015 –

He is trying out this eternal life project by his own personal choice under the belief that the knowledge of genome will achieve striking development. If the influence of genes is significantly reduced by the development of biotechnology, it does not seem impossible to have a healthy eternal life. In fact, despite his age of 67, he is maintaining the biological age of late 40s thanks to his health food diet and nutritional supplements. More time is required to see how an individual's adventurous attempt will lead to. But if human organs and tissues can be regenerated or duplicated by a revolutionary triumph of scientific technology, there will be complicated life politics around body regarding who will take control and power over human body, on top of the ethical issues.

On the other hand, even though this attempt is extremely personal, his attempt itself requires astronomical costs that ordinary people cannot even dare to try. In that sense, the power issues over body lead to the issues of social justice and health inequality.

This phenomenon is recently accelerated by various uses of big data. This is because the achievement-oriented modern society that is functionally divided tends to socially adjust, control or eliminate phenomena that are regarded as functionally unnecessary and unproductive, such as diseases, aging and death [4].

Foucault had initially viewed body not as that of an individual but as that of an individual in the social body. Individuals in the social body are outputs of microscopic relations such as rules, norms and political regulations, and an individual in the social

body is another name for body subordinate to the society [5].

Power of life is an ensemble of mechanisms that drags the fundamental biological elements of the human species into the general strategies of politics and power. Foucault's analysis of power is ultimately related to the governance of humans. The nature of ruling aims at human behavior [6].

Nursing science has long been understanding the human body according to causal and biomedical models, and believed that discourses on body are results of medical progress. However, this study examined the mechanisms and devices in which discourses on body are constantly restructured and reproduced by analyzing the discourses on body, and confirmed that discourses on body are a method with which the power of body is revealed.

4 Conclusions and Suggestions

The perspective of nursing science on human body has sustained a rational belief of linear evolution that knowledge in body is constantly developed and advanced. This study originated from skepticism toward such perspective. To this end, a critical analysis of Michel Foucault's power of discourse was used as an analytical framework for discourses on body.

As a result of the discourse analysis on body, it was found that body is faced with a crisis in which practice is difficult as the main agent, due to its association with commercial systems combined with medical treatment or power of body. Accordingly, through Foucault's perspective on social phenomena around body, this study verified that it is necessary to examine what nursing science must to as an advocate of life, and whether it can be the main agent that creates powerful discourses.

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