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Title:

How health definitions percolate through One Health.

Abstract :

The One Health High Level Expert Panel defined One Health (OH) as a balanced action between human, animal and environmental health (Adisasmito et al., 2022) with 6 principles close to agroecology. Unfortunately the failed attempt of World Health Organization (WHO) to finalize a pandemic treaty and the overall limited success in trans-sectorial approaches (Giraudoux et al., 2024) question the scalability of transdisciplinarity (Fernández González et al., 2021; Méndez et al., 2016). Although it is anticipated that difficulties may arise while using boundary objects such as OH (Cassidy, 2016; Chien, 2013; Michalon, 2019), there could also be parasites (Serres, 1980) emerging from the translation of the concept of health. These turbulences should not be guttered to the contrary, they create fluid epistemologies (Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2020) that spill over the natural sciences into the humanities and circularly.

Although there are many ways of evaluating the health of an organism (Mol, 2002), when asked, most interviewed still use the WHO definition of 1948 (Armitage, 2023). As it does not integrate ageing, or death, health here is defined as a maximum state of wellbeing to be reached and maintained independently of externalities. The same topology is found in the idea of exposome (Wild, 2005) that favoured the construction of the biological individual which keeps being invalidated (Brives, 2022; Selosse, 2022; Tang et al., 2024). These naturalistic, statistical, Boorsian definition of health (Giroux, 2009) are statues (Serres, 1987) casted "improving" environmental health (biosecurity). Analogically, the other side of this mould also served to forge healthy environments with intrinsic value (Corriveau-Dussault, 2016). The statue metaphor helps to understand why selective conservationisms focused on beauty integrity and stability for landscapes (Leopold, 1949) while zootechnical sciences used behaviourism and productivity as measures for animal health.

A few years later, Canguilhem proposed health not anymore as a norm but as the capacity to maintain homeostasis (Canguilhem, 1972). This led to the idea of dynamic stability resilient to external change (Harris, 2010; Huber et al., 2011; Svalastog et al., 2017; Zautra et al., 2010). But what should be kept stable? Evolutionary potential was the first chosen function for wild environments (Giraudoux, 2022), coping was selected for non-humans (Broom, 1995) while the intersubjective comparison of second order capacities and the dispositional theory is still proposed for human health (Nordenfelt, 2006; Werkhoven, 2019). In other places, as southern epistemologies arise (Chakrabarty, 2023), plural definitions of health also are emerging to better decipher the full bio psycho social riddle of each unique perspective (Despret, 2014)?

Therefore, following the development of care ethics (Tronto, 1993) and its emphasis on health as a relation not as a result implies that considering the subject, the flock or a population will always miss and important component of relational health (Ness, 1997; Nussbaum, 2000; Tsing, 2017).

Environmentalising health (Massart, 2013) means taking in account a wide variety of relations in a shared agonistic space (Gosselin, 2022). Consequently to transcend the above objectivity/ inter subjectivity dichotomy, it is needed to put more focus on how the footprints and wavelets of species of human and veterinary interest trilogue with the milieu's personality.

As following the global temperature mean cannot grasp local variability, a rabbits health needs different epistemologies depending on the milieu he or she lives in. A companion rabbit is not only evaluated with a thermometer but by a relational indicator like cuteness, objective measures like longevity and observing how the rabbit adds to the house. In this frame, an aggressive and emaciated but prolific wild rabbit would not be considered healthy. The health of a wild rabbit would better be assessed by observing his symbiotic capacity with parasites and the number of offsprings that allow quick adaptation to evolving conditions. This indicator would also be used for good health in a farm rabbit but very differently and with the emphasis on compliance.

We therefore conclude that searching for unified theories of health in OH or agroecology is at risk of favouring reductionist nature-based-solutions by commodifying species and individuals. Remembering that indicators are always value driven and context dependant, we advocate for plural styles and definitions that use objectivity, intersubjectivity and relational epistemologies from the natural technical and social sciences.

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