

Fossil Health: Causes and Consequences of Hegemonic Health Paradigms

Authors : Laila Vivas

Abstract : Fossil Health is proposed as a value-concept to describe the hegemonic health paradigms that underpin health enactment. Such representation is justified by Foucauldian and related ideas on biopower and biosocialities, calling for the politicization of health and signalling the importance of narratives. This approach, hence, enables contemplating health paradigms as reflexive or co-constitutive of health itself or, in other words, conceiving health as a verb. Fossil health is a symbolic representation, influenced by Andreas Malm's concept of fossil capitalism, that integrates environment and health as non-dichotomic areas. Fossil Health sustains that current notions of human and non-human health revolve around fossil fuel dependencies. Moreover, addressing disequilibria from established health ideals involves fossil-fixes. Fossil Health, therefore, represents causes and consequences of a health conception that has the agency to contribute to the functioning of a particular structural eco-social model. Moreover, within current capitalist relations, Fossil Health expands its meaning to cover not only fossil implications but also other dominant paradigms of the capitalist system that are (re)produced through health paradigms, such as the burgeoning of technoscience and biomedicalization, privatization of health, expertization of health, or the imposing of standards of uniformity. Overall, Fossil Health is a comprehensive approach to environment and health, where understanding hegemonic health paradigms means understanding our (human-non-human) nature paradigms and the structuring effect these narratives convey.

Keywords : fossil health, environment, paradigm, capitalism

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