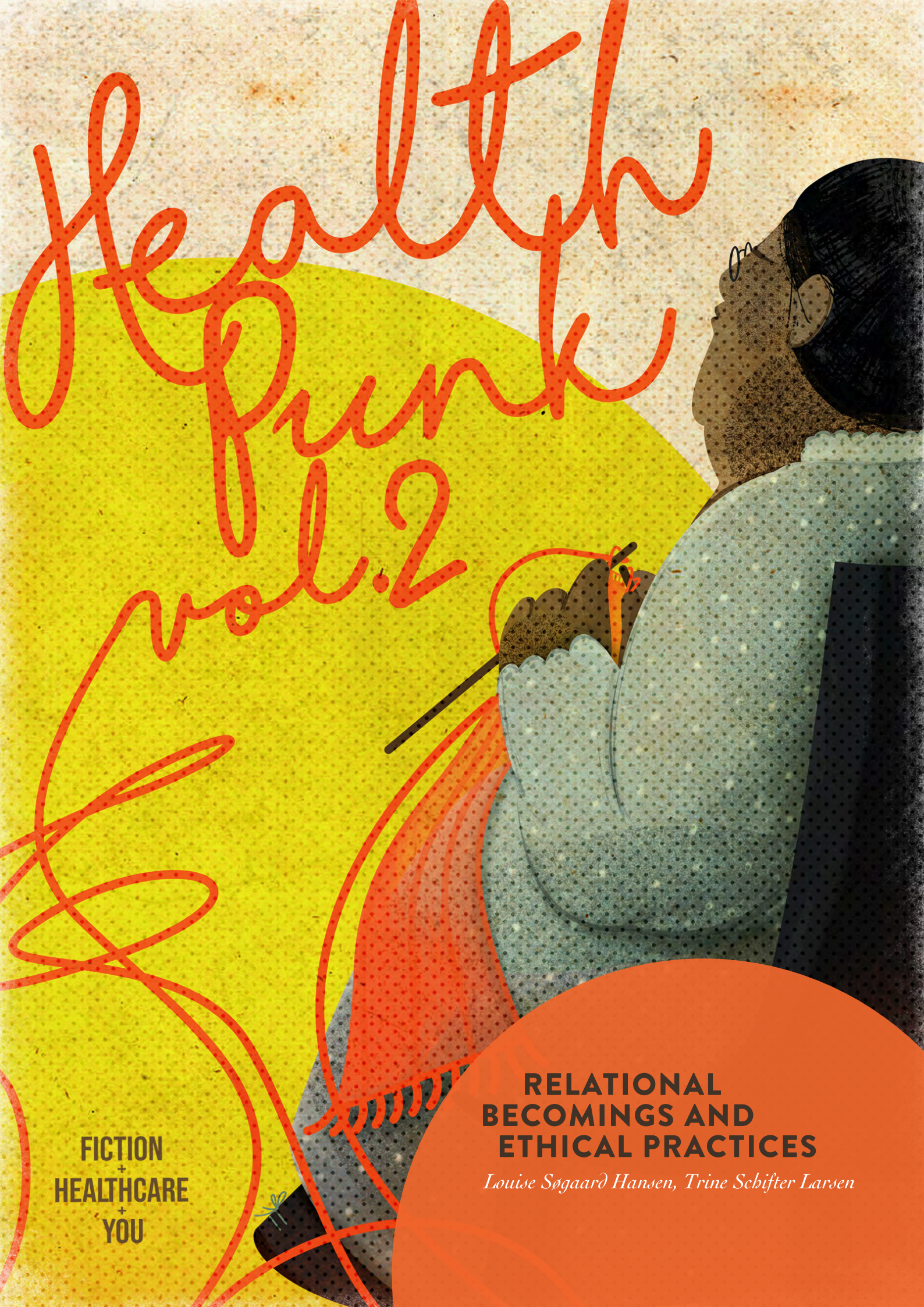
Health Punk vol.2



FICTION + HEALTHCARE + YOU

RELATIONAL BECOMINGS AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

Louise Søgaard Hansen, Trine Schifter Larsen

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It has indeed been an intriguing and fascinating adventure to read these essays on futures filled with hope, love, and relational entanglements with all matters on this planet. Reading the stories raised new visions of what such futures might entail. Alas, before we eventually reach these very different and promising future worlds, most stories predict almost apocalyptical times of disruptions to the worlds as we know them.

In the stories, understandings of health tend to be invisible or implicit. Health is associated with the particular, individual, and bodily, and with larger cycles and connectedness to the planet itself and all living beings. And in many of the futures described, individualism, understood as a neoliberal concept, is dead. Moving away from a liberal tradition in Western philosophy that "centers on a world view in which the rational, autonomous man [sic] accomplishes his [sic] life plan in the public realm. This tradition assumes a theory of self in which people are isolated, in which the self is prior to its activities and to its connections with others" (Fisher & Tronto,1990 (with reference to Sandel, 1982)). This notion of existence is replaced by connectivity and relational and interspecies becoming and reconfiguration of non-gendered bodies. The 'I' is so to speak given to the 'us.'

In our reading, we see care as a prominent notion on multiple levels and certainly care for/with/towards/between all living beings is pivotal in the stories, far more prominent than disease/diagnosis/treatment. We see a care concept that comes close to the classical definition as presented by Joan Tronto and Brian Fisher:

On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible (Fischer and Tronto, 1990, 40).

However, instead of being a species activity care also seems to be an interspecies activity, with a focus on creating caring worlds rather than a focus on individual bodies - as a movement from cure to care.

The focus on the individual body and specific diseases is replaced by a focus on global relatedness. The fact that health and disease are left unverbalized in most of the stories leaves us with the question of whether these imaginative futures predict or expect a return to the 'natural' and a longing for leaving matters to themselves? And then, what is 'natural,' now that a wide range of treatments and technologies already exist and are working? Are we to stop looking 'into' the body altogether?

In our reading, we sensed the presence of Haraway's thinking of meetings between species and the becoming through symbiogenesis or significant otherness (Haraway, 2007) and entanglements of technological solutions and organic nature or what we will term organic nurture. By reading all the stories one by one, but also reading them through each other, we are inspired to tell a story of our own. Thus, this is our story of health, matters, creatures, and living in the futures:

As a result of human's exploitation of all natural resources, Earth has suffered several natural disasters, but new times have dawned. Time is dissolved and thus age as a category and division of living matter does not exist. Past, present, and future times are entangled. Various technologies are available, but time doesn't matter anymore and has therefore lost significance as a form of capital (Bourdieu, 1994) as it used to be in the olden days. Technologies don't have to optimize processes and with the help of nature, sustainable technologies have been developed while the planet and all living matters have moved into new equilibriums.

CARE WORLDING(S)

Kim wakes up before the sun rises over the well-being center. Today is the day for the 'growth factor' injection into the broken hip. In about half a cycle the transformation will be completed. They look out the window where the sun slowly rises, and its light starts to glint between the vegetation of the dense forest that covers most of the area. As has been the case so many times before, the rain is heavy and has lasted almost a quarter of a cycle with massive thunderstorms and tornadoes as well, but now the sun has the upper hand, and the warmth of it is felt. Kim thinks back to the accident when they fell off Bina, the horse. They have worked in the wild-growing fruit plantations together through many cycles. The capacity of their intra-relatedness (Barad, 2007) is widespread, and their ongoing bodily transformations (becoming other) increase their ability to create and engage in new relations with their surroundings. It makes Kim confident that these new bodily changes will transform their relational engagements with the world and the new assignment and role they will perform in the community. They think about how, many cycles ago, matters were divided into delimited and binary categories such as masculine and feminine, extrovert and introvert, healthy and unhealthy, and into what

was considered productive and unproductive, and abled and disabled. They recall how communities were built mostly for those who were considered abled and with concerns about how to support their productivity and engagement in society. Today, communities engage with all kinds of bodies, increasing social participation that is not based on ideological practices supporting neoliberal notions of the individual (Wolf-Meyer, 2020) An example that comes to their mind is the shared transportation that accommodates all kinds of bodies, and which is easy to use, no matter how many cycles these bodies have gone through, like their own, for example. Their thoughts continue to revolve around what used to be called 'public transportation.' Shared transportation is the only kind of external, energy-driven transportation that exists.

Kim feels the warmth from the injection in the joint and the sense of entanglement and growth spreading through the body. They are grateful for being in the well-being center. It is both a protective and a stimulating environment to initiate the re-orientation process. When the sun rises again, they will go outside to capture the nurturing and growth-stimulating rays from the sun and begin to adjust their bodily changes to the surroundings. They are not on their own, Bina and the community will participate in this sensory reorientation process.

Kim and Bina are back on the plantation working together. Kim loves this kind of work on the plantation, but they engage more and more in supervision practices and the interspecies training for which they are increasingly responsible and for which the well-being and coherence of the community are built on. Through the coming cycles, Kim clearly feels their intermingling with other species, especially the surrounding trees. The growth factor helps their body slowly transform from its current shape into other forms of ecological matter. Kim feels the inertia gradually changing the body's movements, and they long for the quietness to settle in. They feel the body's longing to let go and the satisfaction of staying still and taking root, letting their experience and knowledge flow into the earth and engage with the environment. As one cycle replaces the other Kim's and Bina's movements slowly cease while the community keeps caring for their nurturement in collaboration with the sunlight and the little roots growing from their lower bodies. Their roots support their entanglement with Earth and the surrounding plantation which gives them a new sense of intra-relational becoming, responsiveness, and collaborative communication. Kim and Bina have always loved visiting these wise and caring, grand trees for council and support and soon the inexperienced ones will seek comfort under Kim's tree crown while sitting by their wild roots.

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