Commoning as Healing Practice?

In a time of planetary crises accelerated by climate change and the devastations of the Anthropocene, this panel brings into focus Indigenous practices of healing as an alternative way to address these issues. We contend that “healing” can be seen as a form of commoning as it points beyond the individual and calls for participation, sharing, and resistance. It is also highly relational, as it seeks to link different scales, such as individual wellbeing, collective rights, and environmental justice. It may also link different communities who then interact with each other. Healing may also speak to intergenerational traumas due to colonial conditions and refer to the communal, socio-political dimension as well as to the individual. These practices do not merely approach local (non)human-environment-animal relationships but also involve larger contexts, without losing sight of the importance of the local. However, exploring healing as commoning may also involve utopian dimensions, as the entanglement of environmental damage, healing practices, and (de)coloniality are complex assemblages. To analyze these processes, we propose to discuss the following questions: What challenges are involved in commoning and can it “fail”? How do the heterogenous actors involved (community-state-civil society) relate to each other and what tensions may arise amongst them? What is the potential of healing practices to re-configure human-environment relations and socio-ecological transformation more broadly? What role do researchers have in this context, in particular in a (de)colonial framework?

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