

PERSON, SOCIETY AND VALUE
Towards a Personalist Concept of Health

Philosophy and Medicine

VOLUME 72

Founding Co-Editor
Stuart F. Spicker

Editor

H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., *Department of Philosophy, Rice University, and
Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas*

Associate Editor

Kevin Wm. Wildes, S.J., *Department of Philosophy and Kennedy Institute of
Ethics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.*

Editorial Board

George J. Agich, *Department of Bioethics, The Cleveland Clinic Foundation,
Cleveland, Ohio*

Nicholas Capaldi, *Department of Philosophy, University of Tulsa, Tulsa,
Oklahoma*

Edmund Erde, *University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Stratford,
New Jersey*

Eric T. Juengst, *Center for Biomedical Ethics, Case Western Reserve
University, Cleveland, Ohio*

Christopher Tollefsen, *Department of Philosophy, University of South
Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina*

Becky White, *Department of Philosophy, California State University, Chico,
California*

The titles published in this series are listed at the end of this volume.

PERSON, SOCIETY AND VALUE

Towards a Personalist Concept of Health

Edited by

PAULINA TABOADA

Assistant Professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

KATERYNA FEDORYKA CUDDEBACK

Arlington, Massachusetts, USA

PATRICIA DONOHUE-WHITE

Assistant Professor, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, Ohio, USA



SPRINGER-SCIENCE+BUSINESS MEDIA, B.V.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN 978-90-481-5971-0 ISBN 978-94-017-2570-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-017-2570-5

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved

© 2002 Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht
Originally published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 2002
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2002

No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
ROCCO BUTTIGLIONE / Preface	ix

KATERYNA FEDORYKA CUDDEBACK AND PAULINA TABOADA / Introduction	1
---	---

SECTION ONE / HEALTH AND THE HUMAN PERSON

GIOVANNI REALE / According to Plato, the Evils of the Body Cannot be Cured Without Also Curing the Evils of the Soul	19
PAULINA TABOADA / The General Systems Theory: An Adequate Framework for a Personalist Concept of Health?	33
PASCAL IDE / Health: Two Idolatries	55
ARMANDO ROA / The Concept of Mental Health	87
JOSEF SEIFERT / What is Human Health? Towards Understanding its Personalist Dimensions	109

SECTION TWO / HEALTH AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

H. TRISTRAM ENGELHARDT, JR. / Health, Disease and Persons: Well-being in a Post-Modern World	147
PATRICIA DONOHUE-WHITE AND KATERYNA FEDORYKA CUDDEBACK / The Good of Health: An Argument for an Objectivist Understanding	165
MANUEL LAVADOS / Empirical and Philosophical Aspects of a Definition of Health and Disease	187

SECTION THREE / HEALTH AND SOCIETY

PIET VAN SPIJK / Positive and Negative Aspects of the WHO Definition of Health, and their Implications for a New Concept of Health in the Future	209
ROCCO BUTTIGLIONE AND MANUELA PASQUINI / The Challenge of Government in the Constructing of Health Care Policy	229
JOSEF SEIFERT AND PAULINA TABOADA / Epilogue	241
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	253
INDEX	255

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this volume acknowledge their gratitude to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), which granted the interdisciplinary and international research project that lead to the collection of papers presented in this volume.

Our gratitude goes also to all those who collaborated with us in many different ways during this two-year project, and especially to Dr. H.T. Engelhardt, Jr., and his assistants Mark Cherry, Lisa Rasmussen, and Ana Smith Iltis, who, by their valuable comments and careful review work, made the publication of this volume possible.

We would also like to communicate to our readers that during the period of preparation of this work, one of its authors, Professor Armando Roa, died. We wish to express our sorrow over this great loss and extend to his family and collaborators our heart-felt condolences.

Paulina Taboada, M.D., M.phil.
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Santiago, Chile

ROCCO BUTTIGLIONE

PREFACE

From its foundation, the International Academy of Philosophy has considered a part of its task to be the inquiry into the practical relevance of philosophical truth, and participation in interdisciplinary investigations aimed at the solution of practical problems. This is perhaps in large part rooted in the phenomenological tradition that is such an important part of the philosophy that is taught at our Academy. Phenomenology is not only a specific philosophical methodology, it is also a way of thinking which can be characterized, among other things, by a general interest in formulating the problems of different disciplines in a clear and concrete way. This in turn is rooted in the general phenomenological conviction that the foundation of all reasoning, all deductions and all theories must be grounded in a foundation of clearly apprehended essential insights.

The attempt to come to grips with the problems of practical life can be divided into two different kinds of approaches. One starts with empirical data and tries to classify or organize them according to categories that are not grounded in the essence of things, but rather in a certain way of thinking. The other, not at all infrequently adopted, consists in predefining a framework – an abstract theory – and then trying to deduce from this abstract theory what should be done in a concrete case or the way in which the empirical data should be adjusted. If this “adjustment” proves to be difficult or even impossible, all the worse for reality, since this way of thinking leads the scientist to consider his first aim to be preserving the purity of his theoretical approach.

Phenomenology, instead, would like to give us a third way. It is convinced that in the empirical material itself there are elements of rationality, and recurring forms in the presentation of empirical data, which allow us to see what the fundamental essence of the phenomena is, and what the essential laws governing the phenomena of this kind are. This makes it possible, then, to investigate the essence of health in a way that allows us to find essential laws, essential insights that can guide the concrete action in this field. As a politician, I must add that such an approach can give us guidelines for concrete health care and welfare policies, which are badly needed today throughout the world, especially in the most advanced industrial countries.

It was with the background of such a conviction that we developed and submitted a research proposal to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). The goal of our proposal was to take the WHO definition of health as our starting point, and through a cooperative effort of doctors and philosophers, work through the challenges which this (and indeed any) definition of health faces if it is to be both truly personalist and operational.

The collection of papers presented here is the product of a symposium that marked the mid-point of our two-year research. Written to cover topics we had found to be central in the course of the previous year, and re-written in light of the symposium discussions, the papers reflect not only the efforts of the interdisciplinary cooperation between medicine and philosophy, but also an international discussion of the problems central to the current debate about health. We are grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) for its support of our research, and to the symposium participants for their contribution to this research. And we are confident that this volume will indeed stand as a contribution to the important theoretical and practical problem of defining the nature and the value of health.

*International Academy of Philosophy
Principality of Liechtenstein*