

Steps towards a general theory of health as a tool in developing Safe Communities

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark

Safe Com Conference, Reykjavik, May
2010

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark
May 2010

WHY TRY TO START DEVELOPING A GENERAL THEORY OF HEALTH?

- TODAY THERE IS NONE AT ALL, EVEN IF MEDICAL ACTIVITIES HAVE EXISTED AS LONG AS HUMANKIND.
- THE MEDICAL FIELD HAS BEEN LAGGING BEHIND OTHER SCIENCES FOR DECADES
- THE CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PROLIFERATING BRANCHES IN ACADEMIA ARE ALMOST DISAPPEARING
- THE REDUCTIONIST (POSITIVIST, EMPIRIST) PARADIGME HAS REACHED ITS LIMITS – A DIALECTIC PLATFORM IS NEEDED.
- THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD IS DOMINATED BY AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION OF CAPITAL IN RESEARCH AND PROFITMAKING BUSINESS IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY.
- THE INEQUITY IS RAPIDLY INCREASING INSIDE NATIONS AND WORLDWIDE
- ALL GROUPS OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ARE POORLY TRAINED IN POLITICAL THINKING AND ACTION AND THE PATIENTS TOO WEAK.

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark
May 2010
(ref. Bertell Ollman, "Dance of the Dialectic"
University of Illinois Press, 2003)

BERTELL OLLMAN: MARX' DIALECTICAL METHOD

BASED ON TWO FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS:

- THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTERNAL RELATIONS
- THE PROCESS OF ABSTRACTION.

AD 1: **THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTERNAL RELATIONS:**

- DEVELOPED BY PARMENIDES, SPINOZA, LEIBNIZ, HEGEL AND MARX
- TAKES PROCESSES AND RELATIONS AS STARTING POINT – EVEN THINGS ARE RELATIONS
- CHANGE BECOMES A MATTER OF MAN TRANSFORMING HIS EXISTENCE. FROM BEING A PASSIVE OBSERVER OF DEVELOPMENT, AS IN HEGEL, THE INDIVIDUAL HAS BECOME THE ACTOR WHOSE DAILY LIFE BRINGS IT ABOUT.

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark
May 2010

THE DIALECTICAL METHOD (1)

- **IN ITS ESSENCE DIALECTICS IS ABOUT CHANGE AND INTERACTION**
- **THE MAIN TECHNIQUE IS ABSTRACTION, STARTING WITH THE REAL CONCRETE, I.E. THE WORLD AS IT PRESENTS ITSELF TO US. ABSTRACTION IS THE INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY OF BREAKING THE REALITY DOWN INTO MENTAL UNITS WITH WHICH WE THINK AND COMMUNICATE ABOUT IT.**
- **ONE STARTS WITH THE WHOLE (DEFINED BY THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS) AND IDENTIFY ITS RELEVANT PARTS.**
- **MARX' ABSTRACTIONS ARE NOT THINGS BUT PROCESSES.**
- **THREE MODES OF ABSTRACTION:**
 - **EXTENSION** – Abstracting boundaries in space and time
- **LEVEL OF GENERALITY**
 - **LEVEL 1:** THE UNIQUE PERSON AND SITUATION
 - **LEVEL 2:** WHAT IS GENERAL TO PEOPLE, THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS UNDER MODERN CAPITALISM (ENGINEER OR SOME OTHER OCCUPATION)
 - **LEVEL 3:** CAPITALISM AS SUCH – WHAT IS PECULIAR TO PEOPLE, THEIR ACTIVITY AND PRODUCTS IN A CAPITALIST SOCIETY
 - **LEVEL 4:** THE CLASS SOCIETY – SOCIETIES DIVIDED IN CLASSES BASED ON THE DIVISION OF LABOR (SLAVERY, FEUDALISM, CAPITALISM. MENTAL/MANUAL WORK, NATIONALITY, RACE, GENDER, RELIGION)
 - **LEVEL 5:** HUMAN SOCIETY – PEOPLE, THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS AS PART OF HUMAN CONDITION INCLUDING ALL HUMAN BEINGS AND THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE SPECIES
 - **LEVEL 6:** THE ANIMAL WORLD, INCLUDING HUMAN BEINGS
 - **LEVEL 7:** OUR QUALITIES AS A MATERIAL PART OF NATURE

THE DIALECTICAL METHOD (2)

•VANTAGE POINT

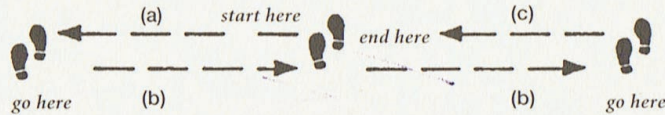
•ABSTRACTION ESTABLISHES AN EXTENSION AND A LEVEL OF GENERALITY AND AT THE SAME TIME ALSO SETS UP A VANTAGE POINT OR PLACE WITHIN THE RELATIONSHIP FROM WHICH TO VIEW, THINK ABOUT, AND PIECE TOGETHER THE OTHER COMPONENTS IN THE RELATIOSHIP.

•A VANTAGE POINT SETS UP A PERSPECTIVE THAT COLORS EVERYTHING THAT FALLS INTO IT, ESTABLISHING ORDER, HIERARCHY, AND PRIORITIES, DISTRIBUTING VALUES, MEANINGS, AND DEGREES OF RELEVANCE, AND ASSERTING A DISTINCTIVE COHERENCE BETWEEN THE PARTS

Ref. Bertell Ollman, "Dance of the dialectic". 2003. Illinois University Press

Step 1: Analyze

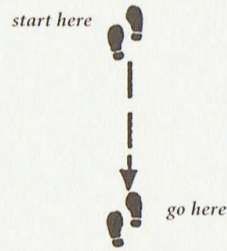
- (a) One step to the left,
- (b) Followed by two steps to the right,
- (c) Then one to the left.



*Look for connections
in the capitalist present!*

Step 2: Historicize

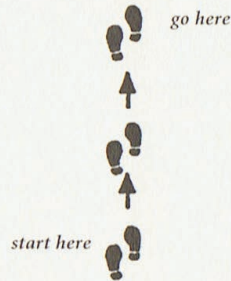
One step backward



*Look for the preconditions
of the most important
of these connections in
the past!*

Step 3: Visionize

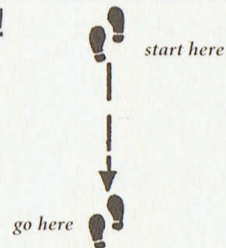
Two steps forward



*Project major social
contradictions forward
from the past, through
the present, to their resolution
and beyond in the future!*

Step 4: And Organize!

One step backward
Finish with a jump
(we're now on a "higher level")
and repeat steps to "deepen"
analysis.



*Look for preconditions
of such a future in the present
and use them to develop your
political strategy!*

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Danmark
May 2010

DISADVANTAGES OF CAPITALISM IN RELATION TO HEALTH

**CAPITALISM IS DEDICATED TO GENERATING EVER INCREASING PRIVATE PROFIT BY EXPLOITATION OF OTHER HUMANS:
THIS HAPPENS BY:**

- INCREASING THE LENGTH OF THE WORKDAY
- INCREASING THE NUMBER OF DAYS WORKED PER YEAR
- INCREASING THE SPEED (EFFICIENCY, INTENSITY) OF PRODUCTION
- INCREASING THE DIVISION OF LABOUR – DEGRADATION OF WORK
- REPLACING WORKERS WITH TECHNOLOGY
- REDUCING JOB SAFETY
- REDUCING WAGES, BENEFITS AND JOB SECURITY
- USING FEMALE AND CHILDREN AND PROMOTING RACIST POLITICS
- DESTRUCTION OF THE NATURE, ECOLOGY AND ALL LIFE

ALL THIS PRODUCES INCREASING INEQUITY AND ALIENATION, ANOTHER WORD FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ILLNESS/DISEASE, INJURIES AND EARLY DEATH, COMBINED WITH PERSISTENT UNCERTAINTY, COMBINED WITH HARMFUL EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE (ESPECIALLY IN CHILDREN), POOR LIVING CONDITIONS, POVERTY, MALNUTRITION, LACK OF CONTROL OVER OWN CIRCUMSTANCES AND DESTINY AT WORK AND OUTSIDE.

THE PERSISTENT CAPITALIST WARFARE, VIOLENCE AND TERROR CREATES STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSIONS WORLD WIDE AND PROMOTES DESTRUCTIVE AND INHUMANE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR. FREE MARKET AND COMPETITION ARE FICTIONS NOWADAY.

Add to my reference list:

Naomi Klein: The Shock Doctrine.
The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,
2008

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark
May 2010

CONSEQUENCES OF CAPITALISM FOR HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1. CAPITALISM IS DEDICATED TO GENERATE PROFIT, NOT HEALTH.
2. THE ASSAULT OF HEALTH BEGINS AT WORK.
3. THE LUST OF PROFIT KILLS IN MANY WAYS
4. MEDICAL BUSINESS MODELS
5. WHAT IS HEALTH?
6. GENUINE HEALTH CARE
7. HEALTHY PROFIT OR HEALTHY PEOPLE?

Ref. Susan Rosenthal, MD: susan@susanrosenthal.com "Sick and Sicker", 2010

Mauri Johansson, MD, MHH
Denmark
May 2010

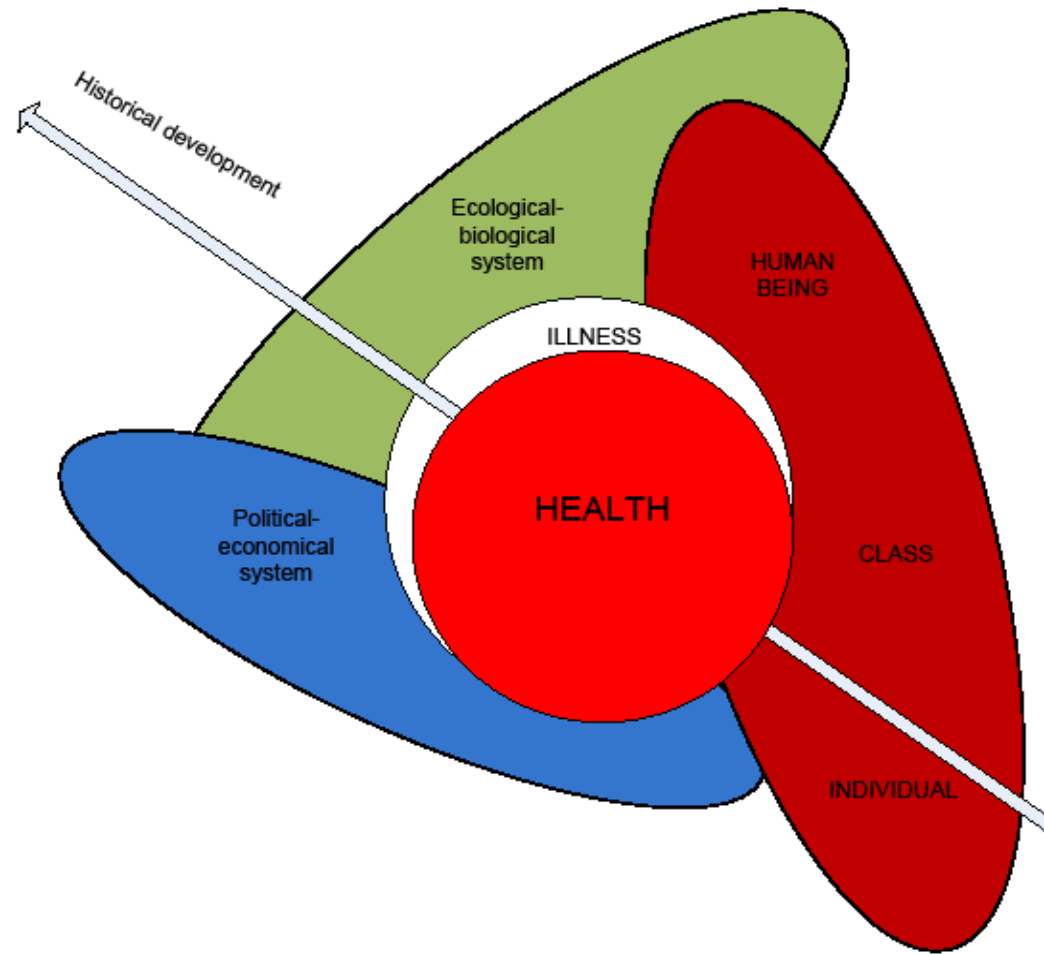
MARX' THEORY OF ALIENATION

GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC:

- MAN HIMSELF IS THE VANTAGE POINT FROM WHICH TO VIEW HIS OWN RELATIONS, ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL, TO SOCIETY AND NATURE, HIS CONDITIONS BECOME AN EXTENSION OF WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DOES
- THE THEORY DISPLAYS THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION ON HUMAN BEINGS, ON THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STATES AND THE SOCIAL PROCESSES OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART.
- ALIENATION CAN ONLY BE GRASPED AS THE ABSENCE OF UNALIENATION, EACH STATE SERVING AS A POINT OF REFERENCE FOR THE OTHER. FOR MARX UNALIENATION IS THE LIFE MAN LEADS IN COMMUNISM.
- PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY IN CAPITALISM IS ACCORDING TO MARX “ACTIVE ALIENATION, THE ALIENATION OF ACTIVITY, THE ACTIVITY OF ALIENATION”

FOUR MAIN RELATIONS PRESENTING ALIENATION

- MAN'S RELATION TO HIS PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY**
 - MAN'S RELATION TO HIS PRODUCT**
 - MAN'S RELATION TO HIS FELLOW MEN**
 - MAN'S RELATION TO HIS SPECIES**
- Ref Bertell Ollman: Alienation, 1976, Cambridge University Press**



GENERAL THEORY OF HEALTH
APRIL 2010
MAURI JOHANSSON

SCIENCES AND ARTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN A GENERAL THEORY OF HEALTH

- TRADITIONAL CORE AREAS IN MEDICINE
- PHILOSOPHY & THEORY OF SCIENCE
- PHYSICS & CHEMISTRY
- BIOLOGY - GENETICS
- PSYCHOLOGY
- GEOGRAPHY
- POLITICAL ECONOMY
- HISTORY
- OTHER

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE
MAURI**