




## Agnes Heller: you never knew how much your ideas improved critical thinking in Brazilian Collective Health Nursing

Agnes Heller: influência definitiva no pensamento crítico da Enfermagem em Saúde Coletiva brasileira

Agnes Heller: influencia definitiva en el pensamiento crítico de la enfermería de salud colectiva brasileña

 Emiko Yoshikawa Egry<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professora Emérita da Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

<sup>2</sup> Editora Chefe da Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP.

### How to cite this article:

Egry EY. Agnes Heller: you never knew how much your ideas improved critical thinking in Brazilian Collective Health Nursing [editorial]. *Rev Esc Enferm USP*. 2019;53:e03535. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1980-220X2019ed0403535>

This Editorial not intend to tour the work of the famous Hungarian philosopher of the Budapest School, Agnes Heller, who unfortunately pasted away this year. It is just a simple tribute from a disciple whose existence she never knew and from the masters and doctors in nursing trained or influenced over the past 32 years at the Department of Collective Health Nursing at the University of São Paulo School of Nursing.

Heller has always been a reference that helped build the theoretical-methodological basis on which Collective Health Nursing is based. The first Heller work we studied was *The Daily Life*<sup>(1)</sup>, which supported research on work processes<sup>(2)</sup> as well as interventions and care plans for families in the community, an expression we used before adopting a more precise denomination: families belonging to heterogeneous social groups<sup>(3)</sup>.

In postgraduate studies in Collective Health Nursing, two disciplines inaugurated in 1990, long-lived because they continue to exist, revisit part of the work of this remarkable author. The most substantive advance came from one boldness: using Marx's Theory of Needs<sup>(4)</sup>, as opposed to Maslow's Theory of Basic Human Needs, adopted by Wanda de Aguiar Horta, the first Brazilian nursing theorist.

When elaborating his theory, Wanda de Aguiar Horta had in mind the hospitalized individual at the Clinic Hospital of Faculty of Medicine of the University of São Paulo, taking care of bedridden patients and teaching undergraduate students how to care. I was one of these students, she taught me the very first step of nursing care. Thus, it made perfect sense for her to see the individual as a finite totality, without glimpsing his collective face. At the time, even, the dichotomy between prevention and cure was quite pronounced, with prevention reported to the natural history of the diseases. The nurse's object of action was patient care aimed at healing.

Today the distinction between the two theoretical bases of needs related to human beings is studied in seminars whose themes are: Health needs related to different worldviews: a theoretical-conceptual overview and Health needs assessment of social groups from the perspective of equity, in which we have debated the Hellerian perspective in Collective Health Nursing.

We may not have done it as intensely as Veroneze<sup>(5)</sup>, who in his postgraduate classes in Social Work discusses Hellerian praxis from the point of view of his profession. We fully agree with the author who says: "By appropriating this theoretical-methodological-conceptual framework in its entirety, we realized that, much more than bringing elements for the interventional analysis in and into the daily life of social subjects, it offered propositional elements for a professional and social praxis conscious of its purposes"<sup>(5)</sup>.

Our graduate students study the needs perspective advocated by Heller to discuss nursing intervention. The dialectic between basic human needs and needs in Marx addressed in graduate seminars

allowed us to understand health needs as inherent in social groups rather than individuals themselves. Most interesting was the possibility of portraying the needs of heterogeneous social groups in terms of social classes (or fractions of class) or gender, generation and ethnicity, which appeared in dual opposition in territories, ie polarities.

Revisiting our trajectory of studies on Agnes Heller, we can say that we focused mainly on the works *The Daily Life* and *Theory of Needs in Marx*, because of the imperative performance in nursing care praxis, in the singular, particular and structural dimensions. With that, we may have only tangible to the nuclear thinking of this important philosopher.

Therefore, by referring to it posthumously and publicly, we may have to make a commitment to go further in the study of her philosophical production, revisiting her early thoughts until today, and even challenging or refuting them, as she boldly did so in a journal interview given at the age of 83.

May the thought of Agnes Heller live to confront what seems given and consecrated. And that criticality is the key to tailoring the ideas of the objective reality of our daily lives by producing health care in the face of the individual and the collectivities.

#### REFERENCES

1. Heller A. *O cotidiano e a história*. Trad. de Carlos Nelson Coutinho e Leandro Konder. São Paulo: Paz e Terra; 2004.
2. Mendes-Gonçalves RB. *Práticas de saúde: processos de trabalho e necessidades*. São Paulo: CEFOR; 1992.
3. Egly EY, Oliveira MAC, Ciosak SI, Maeda ST, Barrientos DMS, Fonseca RMGS, et al. Reviewing health needs assessment approaches in the Family Health Strategy. *Rev Esc Enferm USP* [Internet]. 2009 [cited 2019 Oct 1<sup>o</sup>];43(spe2):1181-5. Available from: [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0080-62342009000600006&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=en](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0080-62342009000600006&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=en)
4. Heller A. *Teoria das Necessidades em Marx*. Barcelona: Península; 1986.
5. Veroneze RT. Agnes Heller: cotidiano e individualidade – uma experiência em sala de aula. *Textos Contextos* (Porto Alegre) [Internet]. 2013 [citado 2019 out. 1<sup>o</sup>];12(1):162-72. Disponível em: <http://revistaseletronicas.pucrs.br/fass/ojs/index.php/fass/article/view/14217>