

## Stanley Keleman: Memory, Love and Honor Leila Cohn

### Abstract

In this article the author talks about her history with Stanley Keleman and how their growing cooperative partnership led to the realization of the project "Interviews with Stanley Keleman". This article contains an excerpt of their last interview "Quantum Dynamics in the Human Experience"

*Keywords:* Formative Psychology®, Quantum dynamics, Stanley Keleman, Formative process, Human experience, Incompleteness, Evolution

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*Stanley Keleman with Leila Cohn  
October 8 2018*

I will briefly share some of my history with Stanley Keleman as an introduction to the publication of an excerpt of our last interview "Quantum Dynamics in the Human Experience", a DVD we have just launched in July 2018.

When I first read *Emotional Anatomy* I was deeply impacted by the Formative Paradigm, by the vision of the human being as a subjective embodied process, continually reorganizing itself. Formative Psychology viewed the body as an encompassing process – emotional, cognitive, imaginative, sensorial, motoric, subjective – a unified ongoing evolutionary process, inseparable into its parts. This concept spoke to my heart and I moved to the Bay Area in order to learn this work. I stayed in California for six years during which I attended every workshop, class, seminar, group, course led by Stanley Keleman, while also having individual meetings with him. Being in contact with Stanley was a powerful formative process in itself, which would grow and deepen for the next 30 years until his death. I was impacted by his presence, his humanness, his enormous generosity and ability to reorganize himself. He truly walked his talk, and that, for me, was a value in itself.

During those years I definitely embraced Formative Psychology as a way of living and working. When I started preparing my return to Brazil, Stanley and I began to plan his visit here. We also discussed how we would keep in contact and how I would organize the teaching of

Formative Psychology in Brazil. I moved back and founded the *Centro de Psicologia Formativa*® do Brasil, (Brazilian Center for Formative Psychology), where I have formed a professional team and have been teaching Formative Psychology in classes, seminars and workshops for the last 24 years. Eventually, Stanley Keleman became the *Honorary President and the Director of Education and Research* at *Centro de Psicologia Formativa*® do Brasil. This has been a most fruitful cooperative achievement.

Stanley came to Brazil for the first time in 1995 and kept coming back in the next several years, sometimes twice a year, when he gave talks and led workshops. We also enjoyed going to good restaurants, Art and Crafts markets and taking walks on the streets. Stanley liked looking at people and learning about the culture.

I have continued going back to Berkeley twice a year to meet with Stanley and attend his workshops and groups and we have also kept constant contact through phone and on line conversations.

A few years ago I had the urge to keep a record of the evolution of his thinking, and to make it available to the general public. He was developing innovative concepts and ways of thinking about the human process, such as the quantum process in the body, the relationship between the formative practice and epigenetic evolution, the development of extended time, to mention a few. I thought we had to have a record of these developments and also of the way he talked, gesticulated, the intonation and the sound of his voice, I wanted to capture his presence live.

Stanley was a true original thinker, and I thought these new conceptual frameworks constituted an important contribution to the way we think about the human process, and possibly an important influence on the way we approach and work with people in the future. Therefore, it should be recorded. We talked about filming some interviews and initiated the project “Interviews with Stanley Keleman” in 2012, which we kept going throughout the years. So far, two DVDs have come out of the Interview Project *Living Your Older Age* in 2017 and *Quantum Dynamics in the Human Experience* in 2018. Hopefully the next one will be *Dreams and the Body* in 2019.

While doing the interviews Stanley mentioned he would like to have direct contact with my groups in Brazil, and then for the last four years we have carried on on-line conversations on a regular basis with professional groups both in Rio and Sao Paulo. People were able to talk to him directly, we had very good discussions, and those were incredibly rich experiences to all of us. Carrying out these projects strengthened our friendship, as well as the experience of mutual trust and cooperation, which I value wholeheartedly. Our constant conversations stirred my imagination and intellectual curiosity and at the same time filled me with the joy of an affective and fruitful partnership. We developed both a professional and a personal relationship, and Stanley became also part of the family.

In his words, I hereby present what the Quantum Dynamics interview talks about,

*Formative Psychology, the life of the body and quantum mechanics are linked experientially, so we can learn about how we think, feel, act and make sense of the world we are living in. I am interested in quantum mechanics for what it has to say about the rules of nature on the micro level, and how do these principles apply to human experience. Applying quantum dynamics to human experience shows us how small events are part of larger organismic events, even when a direct connection seems unknown. The principles of waves and particles, as well as the non-linearity of entanglement support human experience in its micro and macro realities and expressions. Once human bodily existence is understood as localized events in a generalized wave we have a better view of our own responses to*

*life situations internally and externally. Quantum dynamics allows us to better understand the field of human experiencing, and that is my interest'.*

**Excerpt from the fifth interview with Stanley Keleman:**

### **Quantum Dynamic in the Human Experience**

**L:** *We are here again for our fifth interview with Stanley Keleman, which is part of our Interview Project and today we are going to talk about the quantum dynamic of the re-bodilying human experience. Hello Stanley.*

*I would like to start by quoting you from a paper you wrote: "The quantum principle states that the parts of a system can only be considered as functions of the whole, not as separate parts forming a whole"*

**How does this statement apply to the somatic process considering the body as an integrated entangled system? What is the quantum process in the body?**

**S:** *The first part of that statement tells you that the organism is a whole and cannot be divided into its parts except as it manifests itself, meaning as an expression, as a way of talking about the process. For example, if you ask people about their experience, they tell it to you in a linear form: this happened, that happened, this happened. But actually, they are coming from a background of experiencing and they are selecting out something to say. The whole is always operating even though it is not manifested in any local expression.*

*When you are working with people in a formative, somatic way you start with a local organ -- "Show me your smile. Show me your tension pattern. Show me how you grab somebody." And they will do something with their hands or their mouths or some part of themselves. And they will have a local expression that is a muscular event that begins a process. They don't say generally, "I am squeezing my hands", they say, "Oh, I feel that in my feet". Or "That reminds me of something..." And as you keep exploring that with them formatively-- make your hands tighter, make your hands less tight, make your mouth tighter -- you see they begin to add different parts of themselves. "Oh my back is stiff. Oh I feel my mouth as biting." And you see that they are assembling their experience into the languaging process. What is happening is that local events are generating parts of a whole to come forward and that is nonlinear. The organism is trying to create a way of expressing itself that is communicated to the other person. However, what they don't see is that the whole body is involved in it in its own way. Mostly hidden by clothes. So we may not see them tapping their foot or squeezing their shoulders, but it is there even though local events don't necessarily convey the whole program.*

*They tell you that the whole body is involved. Even though it may not be manifested on its surface. Once you understand that, you understand that the pattern is being assembled in pieces even though it is already activated.*

**L:** *In the Quantum Dynamic paper you have said that the cortex, as a structure grown by the body, articulates the body's quantum process. I would like you to say more about this as well as about the cortex as a function grown by the body as a whole system.*

**S:** *There is a relationship between the whole body, the brainstem, the thalamus and the cortex. Basically, the brainstem is the instinctual system, the thalamus is the categorization of behavioral patterns, and the cortex is interpreting a command. There are two kinds of signals reaching the cortex. One kind of signal is, "This is it. Do this. Fight. Run." And the other signal is, "Is this dangerous? Is this pleasant? Is this surprising? Or, how should we react to this?" The cortex is being informed about a decision to be made that alters the behavior -- "Yes or no." That means that the*

*cortex is being informed by the body in general and then making maps of the behavior which it can alter by giving suggestions, "Do this. Don't squeeze so hard. Don't push so hard." And it is forming a differentiation of a function. That dialogue is, in fact, the nature of experience and the nature of the human beings' ability to influence their own behavior. In that sense, the cortex over time acquires a very powerful suggesting force to the inherited brain and the whole body system.*

*What you get from quantum mechanics is a formula of how they are observing particle processes traveling as a wave or as a particle. We don't know how a particle gets to a place., What we see is activation of particles at a distance in simultaneous times. As you look at quantum mechanics as a law of nature, it doesn't really talk about the pattern of experience.*

*I am seeing Quantum mechanics as an underlying ordering system in experience. It is telling you that the organism is entangled always with those parts of itself that have had previous experience. That is what the genetic code is all about. It is the encoding of former relationships, even though you have an immediate reaction, you have invested yourself in the history of your organism. It is the same about learned behavior. You always involve what has been learned in a situation experientially.*

*Every act that we do is never a complete act. We can only know partially what we have done because we are in a bigger pattern of organizing than its local event.*

*Some things don't appear to make sense. And yet they do make sense. They are not logical. There is a different ordering process. There is a kind of coherence in an act. For example, we see a person acting, doing something and we see that it looks like a smooth walk, but if you observe, you see that the walk is really not so smooth. It is a series of segments aligning themselves, making the best possible act. How an organism operates is always assembling itself in an immediate situation even though it has a sort of accepted program.*

*It knows something about itself, and things it doesn't know about itself in the sphere of influence take place. But in the organism's functioning, what is unpredictable is still present as a direction of movement even though the organism may not know it. For example, I reach out. I find a way to reach out. I don't know everything that I am doing about it. I don't know how to manage the vascular system. But it responds to me. I don't know exactly how someone else is going to respond or how to read back my own efforts. Those things about uncertainty are really statements that enter human experiences, and how do we deal with that?*

*The march for certainty can be really not as important as managing what we don't know about something. How the organism is always managing the storms of its own excitement is really more important than trying to quiet the excitement or find an expression for it.*

*Applying quantum dynamics to human experience shows us how small events are part of larger organismic events, even when a direct connection seems unknown. The principles of waves and particles, as well as the non-linearity of entanglement support human experience in its micro and macro realities and expressions. Once human bodily existence is understood as localized events in a generalized wave, we have a better view of our own responses to life situations, internally and externally. Quantum dynamics allows us to better understand the field of human experiencing, and that is my interest.*

***L: I would like you to expand now on how the principle of uncertainty is played in the forming process?***

***S: If you go back to Heisenberg, he would say: "If you know where a particle is, you don't know how fast it is going. If you know how fast it is going, you don't know where it is.***

*Another way to look at that is to recognize that whatever you do, there is a relationship between the excitatory force that fuels an expression and the structure that has to participate in generating it and responding to it. There is always a relationship between structure and behavior. Between*

*excitement and the generation of excitement. This back and forth in which you are not quite certain of having all the information about knowing where you are or knowing the structure that you are in. And you are moving back and forth in this dynamic of operating in a region of knowing what you can know but you don't have the whole answer or you don't have the whole experience.*

*Forming a relationship to certainty and uncertainty is central to human experience. The hallmark of being human is that the soma uses its cortex to manage instinctual behavior. When we are able to manage our excitement we establish islands of certainty in a field of unpredictable outcomes. The practice of voluntary muscular cortical effort gives you the possibility to form your life with malleability and the ability to choose your responses, rather than being a victim to instinctual programs.*

*Once you understand that there is a level of incompleteness of any event that we are participating in experientially, you have a whole different way of looking at how you are in the world, how the world is responding to you. And that uncertainty becomes recognition about the nature of existence, and not that you could know everything about everything.*

**L: Right on to that, Stanley, you wrote: “The principle of entanglement and uncertainty underlies the human ability to have a choice in creating a future in reforming the present in the past. This is what rebodying is about.” How are entanglement and uncertainty present in human choices regarding the future?**

**S:** *“Be empathetic. Be forgiving. Try to understand. Put yourself in another person's place”. These are all statements of being entangled with them in the human dilemma. And that you don't stand outside the human dilemmas of trying to be alive. You may not be a murderer in some ways, but in certain ways you've had to kill something in yourself in order to get on with the job. So there is an entangled relationship, meaning a direct response to another person's act which you can understand by recognizing that you have had a similar reaction on a certain level of activity. Even though you can't imagine actually murdering somebody, the fact that you have to eat something and that you've had to kill something or pull a plant out, it is still there, at that level. So this is entanglement in a social way. That same entanglement is there in a cellular way. And that same entanglement is there in a constructed organization of cortical realities.*

*Entanglement can be being caught up with the whole recognition that parts of you are historically involved in what you have been through, holds true as part of the process in which you can understand yourself and others within a context of evolutionary, behavioral differentiation. It really is about empathy, forgiveness, trying to understand why a person did this and how you want to behave toward it. That is the uncertainty principle and that is entanglement.*

*I should add that the bodying practice, the use of voluntary muscular and cortical effort in reassembling a behavior -- an experience like reaching out or holding something -- that fact in itself is creating an entanglement with what was and is and it gives certain sensation and feeling, and the ability to edit the geometry of cellular architecture, which gives different sensations, the ability to re-categorize a behavior and change its intent. It can never be totally complete except it has more completeness with behavioral practice, putting it into effect, re-bodying it. That gives you the ability to be a human that is forming its life rather than being a victim to its instinctual programs.*

## **EVOLUTION INVOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION AND VOLUNTARY DIFFERENTIATION**

**L: In a nonlinear reality, past, present and future are an entangled event and not separate from each other. Please tell us about the concept of influencing one's past experiences with the practice of voluntary effort.**

**S:** *There is no experience without anatomical participation. Experience is a behavioral act. A memory is a behavior. It is a neural behavior located in the brain. But when you say located in the brain, we are talking about structures. We are talking about axons and dendrites and neural bodies and synaptic junctions and pathways that are laid down, that are reflections not only of the neural pattern, but of the muscular action's participation. Changing yourself means changing your anatomy. All experience, all memory is anatomical tissue architecture, and all behavior or experience is always a combination of neural and muscular acts, even when the connections seem mysterious. Changing your experience means changing your memories, and both require changing the shapes of your anatomical architecture. When you talk about a behavior or an experience it is always accompanied by micro- or macro-muscular acts.*

*Just trying to remember is a particular act. Just trying to reorganize how you want to say it, is a muscular act. You have to control the tongue and the mouth and so forth. If you have the ability to voluntarily imitate an emotional posture like being angry or being fearful or being concerned, if you could assemble that, you say to somebody, "Show me how you are concerned", you have a chance to edit an instinctual pattern that is generating feelings. And in reassembling it in a voluntary way, you are adding information that alters the anatomy and the experience. And if repeated enough times or with enough intensity, it lays down pathways that acquire duration, meaning the axons, dendrites and neural bodies in a synaptic place begin to fire in a particular new way that makes those pathways have duration. And people do not know that insights, experiences, a-haa's, really are anatomical events that are searching for more body. Even though you know something cortically, it has to be translated into action and you may not know how to act. You will do what you know. You may say, "I know how to act, but I still eat the chocolate." You haven't learned the delay mechanism.*

**L:** *You've already said something about this, but I think it's so important that I would like to expand a little bit. Quoting you: "The practice of Voluntary Muscular Cortical Effort with an involuntary pattern generates probable outcomes in a self-organizing process. We may partly expect this for certain developments. But the process may take another route and surprise us as observers". What does this say about the human process?*

**S:** *It tells you that the human process is the equation between a given pattern seeking to complete itself and a process of being able to alter it to a certain degree and accomplish either similar or adaptive outcomes. How you satisfy your hunger is a very good example. If you are very hungry, you may devour something. If you have lots of food on the table, you may not know how to eat slowly, but you recognize that if you gobble the food down, you get indigestion. If there is no food, you just gobble what you can. If there is food, you have to learn to eat slowly. Think about the old saying, "Chew your food slowly". They are implying that you have to learn it. And then the organism must do something to learn it. You just leave it up to them to do something, but they may not be able to do it.*

**L:** *They don't know how!*

**S:** *Yes, they tell you, "I am chewing it slowly!" (laughs)*

*This is the relationship between an instinctual pattern and the emergence of the cortex as a differentiating behavior for the instinctual process. It is a way the organism becomes more efficient in its own structure's use of its own resources. It's Occam's Razor<sup>1</sup> principle in perfection: to do something efficiently, to use less of your resources, not to burn yourself out. And it means longer life. It really has a very powerful evolutionary dynamic involved. We are living this! You simply cannot say that in the last 500 years, the human being is living longer because there is more food, more labor saving devices.*

<sup>1</sup> Occam's Razor is the principle of parsimony. Every concept or theory, whether it is in physics or biology, is partially judged not by the fact, but by the economy and the efficiency and the beauty of the concept to explain an event. If it is too complex, then it doesn't serve the principle of efficiency and simplicity. That is Occam's Razor.

*You have to see that the organism has found ways to relate not only to changing its environment, but to changing itself so it uses less energy, meaning its own resources to generate glucose and so forth, it uses less of that. It responds with less emergency reactions. Therefore, it adds to its ongoing longevity. And that is important. And this is left out of the whole evolutionary dynamic -- that the organism must learn to make cortical, differentiated suggestions permanent parts of the inherited transition.*

**L:** *Very good.*

**S:** *What I have tried to do is to bring quantum mechanics into the formative dynamic and bring in the bodying practice. Editing – Voluntary Muscular Effort as a differentiating function – serves the principle. It is ironic because while it creates complexity, it is creating simplicity: an efficiency of use.*

The full interview is available on the DVD, *Quantum Dynamics in the Human Experience* and will be soon published in print by Center Press, Berkeley, CA.

Stanley Keleman was at the same time a teacher, a friend and a constant inspiration. I feel grateful and lucky to have met him and to have formed all we did together. Although we can no longer have live personal conversations, I continue conversing with him within myself. I think this will be an on-going conversation for many years to come. I am now forming the next step in my formative journey, and it includes being deeply committed to carrying on the teaching and development of Formative Psychology, as well as protecting the work and keeping the legacy alive. Formative Psychology is a way of living and working, a way of being in the world. As Stanley always said, "To be continued!"

## BIOGRAPHY

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