

Stanley Keleman and the Forms of Existence

Peter Kralev

Abstract

This article is inspired by Stanley Keleman's attitude towards the human body, emotions and organism – a complete form of psycho-physiological existence. And this existence is a series of forms – from the protoplasmic history and the processes that build the cell's structure to the forms of human life. Forms, according to Keleman, are manifestations of a united process which encompasses emotions, thinking and life history in a structure, and they are marked by, among other things, the meeting of our inner world with the outer one. In his Formative Psychology he introduced order and forms in which we can recognize ourselves. By undertaking the “formative journey” a person can get acquainted with one's own innermost depths. With the help of the HOW methodology we can discover our own organizing process and learn how to use ourselves more successfully.

Keywords: Stanley Keleman, order, forms, structure, existence, formative journey, organizing process, the HOW methodology

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I don't know another psychologist and educator who speaks and writes so beautifully and in such an inspired manner about the human body, emotions and organism as Stanley Keleman. In an article he says that even depression is a complete form of psycho-physiological existence – as an almost creative continuum of anatomical and emotional behaviors that accompanies the feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, despair and resignation which have structured the person's organism and the posture of his or her body in a certain way.

I have always been impressed by Keleman's ability to see and present existence as a series of forms – from the protoplasmic history and the processes that build the cell's structure to the forms of human life. The citation by Gail Godwin, which is also the motto of *Emotional Anatomy*, always comes to my mind whenever I think of Keleman: “Show me the shapes and forms a man gives to his life, and I will tell you whether he is a master or victim of that life”.

Keleman was an artist whenever he introduced order and forms in which we can recognize ourselves. He participated together with Vincent Perez to illustrate his views of the human anatomy and of the ways the formative method works. And the metaphors he used to describe the process of contraction and relaxation, of organizing and disorganizing in the cell and in the different layers of the organism are really textbook examples. Forms, wrote Keleman, are manifestations of a united process which encompasses emotions, thinking and life history in a structure. They are marked by love and disappointment and by the meeting of our inner world with the outer one, from where begins the drama of existence.

In one of his other books, *Embodying Experience: Forming a Personal Life*, Stanley Keleman

presented his approach as a “formative journey”, which includes getting acquainted with one’s own innermost depths. We have organized models of acting and expression in a most sophisticated way. For example, anger has its own programmed models of heartbeating, shouting, crying or hitting, and control – of inhibiting, hiding and prohibition of certain social responses. And to understand them, to become aware how we use ourselves in different situations in life, to discover our own organizing process, we can use the HOW methodology – a fascinating for me exercise in five steps: 1) HOW am I doing what I am doing in given situation; 2) HOW do I use myself muscularly; 3) HOW do I disorganize the structure that I don’t need any more; 4) HOW do I create a new model; 5) HOW can I use the new knowledge?

BIOGRAPHY

Peter Kralev is a master in psychology and a Neo-Reichian psychotherapist who graduated from Westdeutsche Akademie in Lugano, Switzerland. He is certified as a consultant on addictions by the international Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland. He has completed a course in transpersonal psychology and holotropic breathwork at EUROTAS. He has published four books, three of which are in the field of psychotherapy – *Psychotherapy of Alcoholism, Ayahuasca* and *The Punctured Boundaries: In the Therapy of Boundedness and Borderline*.

Email: kralev@anaharsis.eu, Website: <http://anaharsis.eu/>

