

My Meeting with Stanley Keleman Socrates Nolasco

Abstract

The author talks about how his meeting with Stanley Keleman helped him form his own authority as an adult man and understand culture as an embodied event.

Keywords: Stanley Keleman, masculinity, culture, subjectivity, violence, Formative Psychology®

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When I attended one of Stanley's workshops in Berkeley, I heard him talk about the steps one could take to form one's own personal life. I consider this one of the most important achievements for an adult. Before traveling to Berkeley, I had had my first contact with him in Rio de Janeiro, when I attended his lectures and workshops, organized by the Brazilian Center for Formative Psychology. The themes were Emotional Anatomy and Forming an Adult Life.

Using voluntary muscle functions to intervene with the organization of emotional life became a field of interest to me. In his books *The Body Speaks its Mind*, *Somatic Reality* and *Love: a Somatic View* I found useful content which helped me understand the motives by which certain behavioral patterns establish themselves as a roadmap for the lives of many people. The closer I came to Keleman's work, the more I confirmed I was facing innovative and consistent work.

In my Doctorate research my goal was to analyze the involvement of men in violent situations. Masculinity, paternity and violence were some of the key words present in my work. I had several conversations with Stanley about this and used several concepts of Formative Psychology in my own writing. The object of investigation of my dissertation consisted as much of my theoretical path as well as of my observations of the presence of violence among men. I am a grandson of immigrants. My grandfathers came from Lebanon and Portugal to Brazil. Some men in my family felt responsible for their families and at the same time not able to meet the expectations placed upon them. This intense pressure combined with a lack of resources to understand and deal with what was happening created a lot of tension, increasing irritability and stress.

In my book *From Tarzan to Homer Simpson: Education and the Male Violence of the West*¹ there is a section called "Individualism and Subjectivity: Foucault, Baudrillard, and Keleman, The Problem of Identity for a Subject without a Body". In this chapter I explored the problem of male identity together with Stanley Keleman's vision of culture as embodied experience.

I understood in my research that if we wish boys to grow into manhood with the experience of capability and resourcefulness, they should have good tools to take their lives in their own hands, and make life an experience of joy with themselves and others.

I have learned that nothing is achieved without effort, and that without effort we do not own our autonomy. Feeling gratitude for what I had formed in my life and also interested in

¹ Sense Publishers, New York NY 2017

growing my own authority and developing myself, I arranged a few sessions with Stanley.

He came into the waiting room, asked me to come into his office and asked me what brought me to him, and how he could help me. I told him about how my father and grandfather exercised their respective authorities, as well as how this affected me. In the face of very large men, sons may feel small and not know how to build their own way.

At one moment he asked me to stand up from the chair, walked over to my side, gave me his hand and said to me, "Let's walk together". And so we did in his office room.

The effect that this had on me was greater than I could have imagined at the time. Until today I feel his presence when I walk through life on my own legs. Neither my father nor my grandfather could do this. I understand it must have been very difficult for them, as immigrants, and orphans; they received very little. However, life brought me to someone with whom I started a change that enabled me to become the person I am.

From this meeting, I remember three things that Stanley said. 'Walk on your own legs', 'Live all the good things inside yourself', and 'Always form your own happiness'.

BIOGRAPHY

Socrates Nolasco PhD, Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Licensed Psychologist, APA Member, author of several books, including *From Tarzan from Homer Simpson: Education and Male Violence in the West*. He maintains a private practice in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Email: socratesnolasco@gmail.com

