

Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources



by Jon Klimo. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1998. 474 pp., \$19.95

The first reaction of any reasonably-educated person to the prospect of channeling is often incredulity, even ridicule. (It was mine.) The person channeling is making it all up (or so I've thought), either consciously or unconsciously, or else they're crazy. And this, of course, invalidates what they say. Since we can't prove that a channel is channeling Seth or Ra or Zoosh or some other ET or disembodied being (their names are so ridiculous anyway, it's an embarrassment to be seen carrying their books), it's dangerous to legitimize their pronouncements. It's akin to legitimizing religion, its prophets and its priests, and in a scientific age, this is anathema. Just because Joseph Smith said he received his message from an angel of God, we don't have to believe him. He could be lying. Just because Jesus said that God was his father and spoke through him, we don't have to lend his delusions any credence. He could be crazy. And in a lesser vein, just because Jane Roberts said that a spirit named Seth was responsible for dictating *The Nature of Personal Reality* and many other of Roberts' books, we don't have to give them the time of day. She could be deluded. People claim all kinds of things, even alien abduction. But the more invisible and indeterminate the source, the more immense the faith required to believe it. And as any scientist knows, faith is the traffic of fools.

Would that it were so simple. It is not. Anyone who gets past this knee-jerk reaction and actually reads what channeled sources say is often surprised by what they find. Throughout the ages,

"inspired" people, as "messengers" of the beyond, often speak in a startling voice, with an unnerving insight that commands our attention. What's the source of their inspiration? Just madness and lies? It often sounds more like a revelation of Being, a poetry of the higher Self. And it's all about us. Who we are. Where we're going.

Jon Klimo knows this, and hence, his superb book *Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources* takes channels seriously and genuinely engages with what they say.

And like any rational man or woman who's willing to suspend judgment long enough to actually read them, he's alternately baffled, critical, and inspired by what he's found.

Often it's nothing short of the perennial philosophy in poetic clothing, something like: "It's a full-spectrum-frequency multiverse, folks, contained by the All, which is nothing short of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss. And That's What You Are. However, the current reality you find yourself in is of your own making, a product of a sub-personality of your larger Self. In fact, the world you currently see is the world you can see, determined by the frequency of your vibrations. Change your frequency and what's invisible will become visible. Change your mind and you can change your world. Change your heart and you can reconnect through love with the

All. You're a spiritual being playing in the realms of physical matter. You're God playing hide-and-seek with yourself. But it's time to wake up. It's time to come home."

This perennial vision becomes complicated, however, when ETs named Sasha or Bashar or Harone espouse their own version of it, or launch into "mythical" narratives of their species history, their planet of origin, and their place in the Great Chain of Being. They say they're Pleiadians, Essassani, and Zeta Reticuli, but who's to say *who* they are? Since Zoosh from Orion has some pretty fantastic histories to relate, we *have* to be skeptical since there's no way to verify anything he says. But then, there's that perennial philosophy stuff. What about that? So much of it resembles, in a poetic way, the

full-spectrum reality revealed by spiritual methods of inquiry, such as Vedanta, which share with scientific method the practice of following exemplars, gathering data, and confirming or falsifying what's supposed to be revealed by the exemplars in the first place.

Klimo's book doesn't focus primarily on channeled ETs, though he enumerates a number of these purported sources in Chapter 1, "Channeling as a Modern Phenomenon." (He's reserving an in-depth exploration of these ET types of channeling to one of two sequels he's writing, the other being scien-

tific information received from channeled sources.) Rather, *Channeling* is the book where he asks the core questions, devoting at least a chapter to each: What is channeling? Who is it that channels? How do they do it? Who are they channeling? What do these sources say? And how does channeling relate to mediumship, telepathy, and inspiration—what the author describes as "open channeling"—or to pathology and the scientific worldview, given what we know (or think we know) about psychology, biology, and physics? Channeling is examined from every

conceivable angle.

One legitimate question might be to ask how any human being can be "inspired" by a larger insight (from the Latin *inspirare*, to breathe in) if a purely reductive materialist worldview is true. Or how creative geniuses, such as Mozart or Hildegard of Bingen, might claim that his or her inspirations came from beyond and that they were merely the "amanuensis" for their creations. Or why some artists, like William Blake, attribute their works to the workings of angels.

Klimo confronts these issues head-on. After introducing us to channeling as a modern phenomenon, he takes us on a journey through channeling's roots in prehistory and in Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Greek, and Celtic cultures. *Mediumship* in the 19th century Spiritualist era—the practice of communicating with the dead—is compared to trance channeling, where the spirit—who may simply be some other-order being, and not necessarily a person who has died—takes over the channel. Along the way, we hear from Madame Blavatsky, Edgar Cayce, Eileen Garrett, and Arthur Ford, as well as from dozens of modern and contemporary channels, including Jane Roberts, the Findhorn Circle, Helen Cohn Schucman (of *Course in Miracles*), J. Z. Knight, Kevin Ryerson, and Jach Pursel. There are perceptive profiles and quotes of dozens of 20th century channels. Klimo creates an exhaustive analysis of what they say, who they're channeling, how they do it, and how we might interpret it. It's hard to imagine a more intelligent or multifaceted treatment of the topic, and it reminds us that spiritual inspiration is alive and well in the 20th century, despite the damnations of both religious and scientific fundamentalists. How to regard such inspiration is the important question.

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Skeptics will find much in the book to their liking (though not the suspicion that Klimo is sympathetic to channels and their sources). He examines closed models of the psyche from Sigmund Freud to David Spiegel and contrasts these with F. W. H. Myer's notion of the "subliminal self" and to other open psyche models. He also pulls out the DSM IV—the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association—and compares and contrasts channeling with delusions, hallucinations, identity disorder, psychosis, factitious and malingering behavior, and mental dissociation. CSICOP folks will find much that's handy in here to pathologize channels, though dozens of more sympathetic psychological theorists are also examined. Klimo's cognitive relativity gives them all a fair shake, in an amazing *tour de force* of objective scholarship.

Ultimately, the message of channeling is that channeled sources take a version of the quantum theory seriously: you create your personal reality. It's not just an act of "observation" that creates the collapse of the wave function. It's the creative imagination of the individual being, in any realm, who literally creates its private world out of the probability background in which it lives and moves and has its being. This is akin to the act of *will* and *idea* that the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer intuited back in the 19th century, under the influence of Vedanta, and to the findings of contemporary out-of-body research. The consensus reality we create is a literal invocation of that good ol' familiar Time and Space within the matrix of a multidimensional frequency domain. We are co-participants in a holographic dream—or so the sources say. But it's a real dream, a true hallucination, one big massive collective trance from which we can awaken—if we choose to.

The implications of this channeled worldview for the UFO/alien phenomenon are provocative. Though I remain skeptical of the mythical tales, the species histories, the interspecies wars and rivalries of ET channeled sources, it's sometimes startling how these stories touch base with so-called "objective" abduction research in their descriptions of

of them like to play holographic games. And some of these are serious. They toy with our expectations. They play back to us our own fears. And some of them like to prod and poke us and to hear the squeals we make in the dark (or in the darker parts of our own psyches).

In the end, Klimo invites the reader to the best court of adjudi-

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the grays and other ET types.

But the picture is bigger than species socio-political histories, or alien psychologies and anatomies. The transpersonal hypothesis, which channeling shares, is that some of the ET beings interacting with us are more fundamentally aware of this larger frequency domain and more capable of varying their frequency over a wider range of formed and formless states than *homo sapiens*. They dip in and out of our 3-D space like we jump in and out of a swimming pool. You don't have to be a "good guy" to know how to do this, since the next dimension up ("4th density") isn't all that spiritual. And ETs, so the story goes, are like any grab-bag of disparate species, with a wide variety of motivations and intentions. Some

cation for determining the reality of one kind of channeling (the kind that resembles inspiration): Try it. You may like it. Begin by setting your intention. Quiet your mind and sit with expectation. And see what comes through. It may be some other being, but it could just as easily be the larger You. "As we drink from the deeper waters of our own larger identity," says Klimo, "we may come to understand the true meaning of the sayings 'The Kingdom is within you' and 'Your life is in your hands.'" Skeptics, believers, and free thinkers alike should find Klimo's book a brilliant analysis of both the "inside" and "outside" of channeling. —Michael Miley

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column in Vol. 13, No. 8, I would not vote for a candidate who based decisions on astrology. Hall is correct that subjective experience does not constitute proof of anything and should not be a substitute for objective science. There are many who cannot or do not recognize the difference between speculation and fact, including members of mainstream academia. However, let's not discard all psychic phenomena as rubbish,

but rather try and understand what is going on. Hall ought to lighten up a bit with his smug remarks regarding these things.

Bill Loika
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