



Morons from Inner Space?

a critical look at
channeled
communications

by Phil Hine



The new gurus of the eighties are *so* relaxed. They smell of big money but it's okay you know? Californian perfection. Healthy suntans and capped-teeth smiles. So sincere it hurts your eyes to look at them. The channelers. Well-fed children of the New Age, hip to pop psychology and spinning out the message *you* want to hear most. Cosmic love, health and happiness. Forget Red Indian Shamans, EST and designer drugs. Channeling gets *you* a direct line to the Gods. No fuss, no mess, no danger. It's the perfect plug-in religion. Squeaky-clean Voodoo for yuppies.

Make no mistake, the New Age is great when you can *cash in on crystals*. It's been estimated that profits from channeling-related activity in the U.S.A is as much as \$400 million a year. (Wow! I want in, babies!) Seems things have moved well on from the Sixties version of the New era. Instead of "drop out and tune in" it's a case of "pay up and blank out", as an endless stream of easy-access therapies and cosmic technologies stream onto the market. There used to be a joke about some fast-living young stockbroker who never had time to see his shrink, so he hires someone to do his therapy *for* him. Don't laugh, it's already happening...

At first I thought channeling was just an updated, up-market replay of the Spiritualist Medium boom of the nineteenth century. D.D.Home remixed as a CD, perhaps? The Spiritualist movement also started in the States (where else?) in the first stirrings of that era's *new age*, which also spawned the Theosophical Society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and everybody's favourite naughty darling, Aleister Crowley. Spiritualism gave people a direct line to the beyond. Any group of people who knew a medium could put out the cat, turn down the lights and receive messages *from the other side* that would be the saving of humanity.

At first glance, channeling looks very much the same scam. The stars are a variety of *higher* entities sporting impressive names such as Ramtha, Mafu and Lazaris, and who number amidst their ranks a sprinkling of discarnate

spirits, a couple of displaced Gods and at least one dolphin. But whilst the Spiritualist mediums did the table-rapping bit to try and contact whoever happened to be passing on the astral, the channelers say that they are contacted *by* the entities. The higher beings pop into the channelers body, delivers its message, and blips back to from whence it came, leaving the channeler with an air of "now-what-did-I-miss-folks" serenity.

The old saying "it doesn't matter what you say, it's the way you say it" is certainly true of the channeling phenomenon. The message from these cuddly cosmic beings is overwhelmingly one of love and harmony. Love yourself, be yourself. We are all immortal and we can all be healed by using the power of the New Age cliches - rays, chakras, auras, colours, and pseudoscientific jargon. A welter of impressive terms and meaningless catchphrases. Platitudinous pap fed to an uncritical audience eager to believe in a cartoon universe where no one *really* dies, no one *really* gets hurt, no one *really* thinks for themselves and I suppose, Napalm doesn't *really* stick to kids. Rapping with Ramtha will heal you of your mental troubles, and everything will become *ginger-peachy*. Lazaris may be a higher being, but he comes on like a cross between a corporate executive and everyone's favourite uncle. He's wise, he's loving, he's talking to *you*.

A funny thing about those higher beings, their message stays the same whenever they appear, but each new wave of popularity gives them a new mailing address. The Spiritualists had their Red Indian guides, the Theosophists tuned in to vibes beamed out by Tibetan "Masters". Aleister Crowley claimed to have been in contact with extra-terrestrials, and by the nineteen-fifties the Gods were using flying saucers to get about. Jesus is alive and well and living on Venus! Now it's the day of the dolphin. Our fun-loving flippery friends have the latest in planetary wisdom. Lynn Andrews's latest book *Crystal Woman* has a dolphin beaming in dream-visions via a Eucalyptus tree. Pretty cosmic, huh? Here's a channeling message *lovingly given by cetaceans*:

"The brain has two hemispheres, with different, inter-connected functions. The brain of the planet also has two hemispheres. The neurons of one are composed of human beings. The neurons of the other are composed of cetacean beings, dolphins and whales. It is time for the two hemispheres to work together, in our individual lives and in the life of the planet"

(Tools for Peace - channeled by Andrew Ramer).

Douglas Adams eat your heart out. *So long and thanks for all the fish*. It's the standard stuff about the Right Brain-Left Brain divide that fails to be convincing. Surely if the whales were really hip to what's going on they'd be into the *new* brain paradigms - holography and psychoneural monism. It's interesting however, that very often, the fonts of wisdom appear to be endangered species. Dolphins, Red Indians, & Aborigines have all suffered extensively at the hands of us well-fed White folks. We ripped off the wealth of the Asian subcontinent and then swarmed over there in droves to seek spiritual enlightenment. Maybe behind all this new age bit is the guilt of the overfed trying not to feel impotent while the world changes around them. That's what is so attractive about the channelers' entities. They don't ask us to do anything as unattractive as look at what's happening behind the scenes. No, they wrap reality up in ribbons and glitter so that life becomes a continuously-looping Walt Disney dreamworld.

What seems to be implicit here is that messages from "higher beings" (whatever their alleged source) are automatically benign and helpful. Quite a turnabout from the 'fifties, when the aliens brought to us by Hollywood came down out of the skies to ravage, rape our daughters and take over the world for no very good reason. Maybe they've just changed their act. After all, they should know by now that if they come barging in with death rays blazing we'll just nuke them into radioactive debris. So they've adopted the soft-sell approach - they're going to love us to death, 'till we're smothered under a security blanket of bliss.

They've also found a message that is attractive - one that says it's ok to have money, a Porsche, etc, and that spirituality is about loving *yourself*. Channeled entities will tell you about your wonderful past incarnations in Lemuria or Atlantis, what you did, who your partner was and so forth. There is even an element of spiritual *safe sex* involved, as some Channelers practice a form of *psychic energy-sharing* using crystals placed over the chakras of Channeler and client. Quick, somebody tell Richard Branson! The higher beings naturally have had a lot to say about AIDS, the message ranging from AIDS being the result of *negative karma* (?) to an ultimately benign attempt at social engineering. The quality that the

Channelers seem to lack is that of *discrimination*, which is very necessary whenever one approaches communications between humans and higher entities, whether they be dolphins, deities, extra-terrestrials or intelligent poodles from Sirius B. Magicians who employ the magical techniques of post-Golden Dawn systems tend, in my experience, to approach the whole area of *inner-plane contacts* with a good deal of healthy skepticism (another quality which seems to be sadly lacking in *new age* philosophy). Thelemic magicians often test the validity of a contact by pronouncing those fateful words " *Do What Thou Wilt Shall be The Whole of The Law*", to which the entity makes the suitable rejoinder, or disappears, shrieking, into the nearest astral discontinuity. A similar check involves mentally projecting the seal of the A.'.A.'. onto the entity. The cross-examination of entities using symbolism and gematria is also often resorted. Such methods, together with ritual (or other) techniques help ensure that the beings invoked *are* who they claim they are. Like most other magicians who go around invoking all manner of 'horrible things...sorry, *inner-plane adepts*.. I've received a wide variety of communications from various entities over the years. The major difference between me and a channeler is that I don't think the kind of entities I hang out with are good role models for the new age audience (maybe if I cleaned up my act a bit - who knows?). These communications are only relevant to me and I'm certainly not going to offer them up as great cosmic insights. What I do demand is that they *make sense*, if only in terms of what I've been doing recently. Any one can go on about cosmic love, harmony, beauty and heavy karma (..maan) but it's much more instructive when the message is informative, in terms of pointers on how to look at a particular issue, problem, or internally-consistent symbolic messages. There does seem to be a kind of cumulative degeneration of the quality of such communications. Having read quite a wide variety of such stuff recently, I see a kind of pattern emerging. The initial contact with an entity can produce some quite startling transmissions - in terms of synthesising information in *new* ways. Then, as the recipient becomes more and more bound up with the communications, they degenerate in terms of quality of information until one is hearing the kind of cosmic mind-mush which, though it sounds good, is rather obvious. It seems that, the more a person identifies (in terms of ego-involvement) with an entity, the less original the topics of communication become. Before long the recipient of such messages begins to hail themselves as Priest/Priestess of the "mysteries" revealed exclusively to them, and the foundation of a small cult *that is going to save the world* shortly follows. All of which begs the question of just what is going on when we contact these entities? A difficult one, this. How we try

and answer it says more about how we structure meaning than any actual organisation of inner realms. The Channeler-type answer of course is that all these entities are actual, separate beings hanging about around the astral planes (no doubt at a never-ending cocktail party) until they pop down to deliver reassurance to a group of yuppies about heart disease, second mortgages and the Dow-Jones index. An utter skeptic might answer that they are all imaginary and therefore unreal. A magician might answer that while these entities do not have a wholly objective existence, they are not fictitious either. People still tend to speak of the imagination as a source of experience that is somehow *less real* than everything else. An interesting model for examining inner-plane contacts can be found within William Gibson's novel, *Neuromancer*. One of the major characters is an Artificial Intelligence which manipulates a cast of humans to further its own ends. To successfully do this it must establish a rapport with those it wishes to manipulate. It does this by generating *constructs* - personalities which it wears like masks, creating them out of the memories of the humans it wishes to contact. It explains that it needs these masks to establish a point of access - *an interface* - between its own experience and the perceptual limits of human beings.

Reading this brought very much to mind accounts of human-entity contacts. Particularly a sentence in Dion Fortune's *The Cosmic Doctrine*, which reads:

"What we are you cannot realise and it is a waste of time to try and do so but you can *imagine* (italics mine) us on the astral plane and we can contact you through your imagination, and though your mental picture is not real or actual, the results of it are real and actual."

Dion Fortune made extensive use of inner-plane contacts to synthesise her magical ideas. Alan Richardson, in his biography of Dion Fortune, *Priestess*, discusses the various historical figures that Fortune claimed to be in contact with. The most interesting entity is one "David Carsons", whom according to Fortune, was a young British officer who was killed during the first World War. Fortune provided a good deal of biographical information concerning Carsons, and after thorough research, Alan Richardson states that Carsons did not exist! Rather, it seems, he was actually, in terms of the above model, a construct; a personality generated out of Dion Fortune's experimental magick and experiences, and hence an interface for accessing information. If you imagine the sum total of your personal memories and knowledge as a sphere in space - the unknown - then to extend your sphere of information it is as though a window must be created, through which the unknown, or raw data, can be translated into information that is meaningful in terms of

perceptual limitations. Inner-plane entities are how we tend to conceptualise these windows into chaos. They appear as independent entities so that we can make sense of the incoming data. Their personalities are usually concurrent with the recipient's belief system. Hence the many forms of the entities, depending on where you believe the seat of wisdom is, be it Egypt, Sirius B, or some draughty monastery in Tibet. Usually, it seems, these entities are automatically generated as one focuses will and imagination towards any one vector, but occasionally entities can be generated as an act of will, so that "outposts" can be established within which personal ideas and innerworlds can be explored and eventually integrated into one's psychocosm. At this point the whole issue of the "reality" of the experience breaks down, as these entities are not simply "secondary personalities" in the pathological sense, but constructs which are *emergent properties* of our information-processing capacity interacting with that which lies beyond it.

So how does this relate to the higher beings as contacted by the new age Channelers? I feel that this is a question of degree. Again, from personal experience, most magicians I have encountered who make use of *innerworld contacts* are doing so as part of going beyond the limits of normality; of finding an *edge* and pushing themselves repeatedly over it, sifting for insights in abyss after abyss. On the other hand, the new age Channelers seem to want nothing more than the spiritual equivalent of a candy-flavoured infant pacifier. It is as though they are channeling not so much information from outside the human knowledge-pool, but very much from within it - the "higher-authority" control programs of a culture in need of a mysticism which embraces materialism and a bland, "I'm Ok - so there!" view of the world. Strip away the therapol jargon and the diluted Eastern mysticism, and the new age consciousness is revealed as just another scam of the Slave-Gods. An escape route that leads nowhere, because it does not involve risking or challenging the ego. Hence its attraction for those who need to follow creeds and gurus. Let's face it, the world can be a pretty daunting place. If some wise old adept in the body of a Joan Collins lookalike told *you* that "life" on the astral plane was an endless round of Dynasty-style parties, wouldn't *you* be signing up for a course in Astral Projection?

