



Seth/Jane Roberts: A Conscious Creation Overview

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Acknowledgments

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The Seth Material: An Introduction

“The medium is the message.” – Marshall McLuhan

Jane Roberts (1929-1984) was born in Saratoga Springs, NY and spent most of her adult life in Elmira, NY with husband Robert Butts. She was a gifted writer, poet, and psychic whose life’s work spanned over forty published books, including short stories, fiction, and additional poetry. Roberts is best remembered today for a series of books that are most often referred to as *the Seth material* – a body of perennial wisdom that resulted from a little known psychic ability called *channeling*. We will explore the nature of the channeling phenomenon in a bit, but let’s begin with the message first, and delve into the medium second.

A central, unifying theme of the Seth material is termed *conscious creation* – a term originally coined to capture the essential idea that “you create your own reality” via a complex of nested cognitive factors that include our worldviews, the multidimensional psyche, and multiverse.

Taken together, entire body of Jane’s work forms a contemporary translation of the perennial philosophy into the language and value systems of late twentieth century Western thought. They are not offered as dogmatic absolutes, but as a flexible framework in which to jointly move forward as we cope with the pace of twenty-first century life. The horizons that now approach us make the Century of Change – the twentieth century – look like the calm before the storm.

One of the main tenets of conscious creation is that *consciousness is primary*, which is to say that all matter – our brains, bodies, and ALL physical reality – is created and maintained by our consciousness; individually and collectively. In other words, we live in a conscious universe that by definition contains multiple, nested orders of sentience, perception, and memory that are not limited to human beings. All matter and energy contain their own distinct nested orders of conscious awareness, from subatomic particles, to planets, to galaxies, to All That Is.

According to Jane, human consciousness is fueled by a source self or soul that simultaneously exists “outside” of physical reality. So our ego-self – our primary waking sense of self and center of gravity for our identity as it unfolds during a lifetime – not only survives physical death but continues to grow and develop in other *frameworks of consciousness* “afterward.” Since our familiar physical universe is but one of an infinite array of conscious frameworks, our souls are multidimensional by nature, existing in multiple places and times, constantly seeking new and creative experiences.

The work of Jane Roberts has a learning curve, like any body of subtle and complex knowledge. It is not intended to be embraced by 100% of the population or solve all of the world’s problems. It offers a decentralized and democratic perspective on our individual right to decide what is fulfilling for ourselves. It does not claim to be Universal Truth, but to offer a view on *understanding Universal Truths filtered through our current, cultural belief systems and direct experience*.

One part of our own direct experience falls under the category of altered or nonordinary states of consciousness that connect us with our own inner knowing. They have been consistently experienced by humans in many, if not all, cultures throughout recorded history. So they’re nothing new to the species, as a whole, though they are new to mainstream Western scientific thinking. The words that describe an individual’s nonordinary experience, in themselves, hold incomplete and symbolic meanings. But the concepts hinted at, like all classical perennial literature from the past three thousand years *serve as a trigger for our own inner knowing*. These triggers open the door to further self-discovery and self-realization. Thus conscious creation, like all perennial teachings, focuses on *the importance of our own direct experience*, in concert with the spoken or mathematical languages that describe those experiences.

Conscious creation, if nothing else, is extremely useful in the process of identifying who and what we really are. In this way, the work of Jane Roberts can be considered a legitimate reminder from our inner selves that we are ALL aspiring conscious co-creators. Therefore, we

each hold the responsibility to pursue an open-minded inquiry – integrating the rational (skeptical) and the intuitive (imaginative) – in the search for personal truth. And ultimately, it is each one of us, individually, who decides what the truth is.

The Seth Material provides an important conceptual foundation, replete with a set of tools – a type of *yoga* – that anyone can use to explore the nature of reality in the context of their own personal experiences. To get an overview of the extent and richness of this work, the published books are listed below:

“The Seth material” in the form of thirty Seth-dictated books:

- *Seth Speaks: The Eternal Validity of the Soul*
- *The Nature of Personal Reality*
- *The “Unknown” Reality, Vol. 1*
- *The “Unknown” Reality, Vol. 2*
- *The Nature of the Psyche: Its Human Expression*
- *The Individual and the Nature of Mass Events*
- *Dreams, “Evolution,” and Value Fulfillment, Vol. 1*
- *Dreams, “Evolution,” and Value Fulfillment, Vol. 2*
- *The Magical Approach: Seth Speaks About the Art of Creative Living*
- *The Way Toward Health*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 1 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 2 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 3 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 4 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 5 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 6 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 7 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 8 of the Seth Material*
- *The Early Sessions: Book 9 of the Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 1 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 2 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 3 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 4 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 5 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 6 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Personal Sessions: Book 7 of the Deleted Seth Material*
- *The Early Class Sessions: Book 1*
- *The Early Class Sessions: Book 2*
- *The Early Class Sessions: Book 3*
- *The Early Class Sessions: Book 4*

The Seth Audio Collection (ESP Class Sessions)

- *Your Unlimited Power*
- *Tuning into Probable Realities*

- *Love and Hate - Understanding Your Emotions*
- *Abandoning Yourself to Your Spontaneous Being*
- *Dream Reality and Out of Body Experiences*
- *Reincarnation, Simultaneous Time and the Multidimensional Self*
- *The Safe Universe*
- *Seth Audio 8-39 ~ Various Topics*

Introductory books to “the Seth material”:

- *How to Develop Your ESP Power*
- *The Seth Material*
- *Seth, Dreams, and Projections of Consciousness*
- *A Seth Reader* (Abridged by Richard Roberts)

Three Aspect Psychology books:

- *Adventures in Consciousness: An Introduction to Aspect Psychology*
- *Psychic Politics*
- *The God of Jane: A Psychic Manifesto*

Worldview books:

- *The Afterdeath Journal of an American Philosopher: The World View of William James*
- *The World View of Paul Cézanne: A Psychic Interpretation*
- *The World View of Rembrandt*

Fictional Oversoul Seven books, combined into:

- *The Oversoul Seven Trilogy* (*The Education of Oversoul Seven, The Further Education of Oversoul Seven, Oversoul Seven and the Museum of Time*)

Books of poetry:

- *Dialogues of the Soul and Mortal Self in Time*
- *If We Live Again, or, Public Magic and Private Love*

A children’s book:

- *Emir’s Education in the Proper Use of Magical Powers*

Books by Susan Watkins (Jane’s student):

- *Conversations with Seth: The Story of Jane Roberts’s ESP Class*
- *Speaking of Jane Roberts: Remembering the Author of the Seth Material*

The detailed records and notes of Rob Butts.

What is Channeling, Really?

Now that we've been introduced to the message, let's take a look at the medium. Jane Roberts channeled a source named Seth – a clearly articulated and distinct personality complete with unique facial and vocal patterns – from 1963-1984. She and her husband, Robert Butts, held twice weekly sessions in which Jane would go into a trance state and Seth would come through and dictate information that Rob initially transcribed by hand. After several years of laying a foundation, Seth announced one day that he was going to dictate his own books. One of the amazing features of Seth's ability was that he dictated every one of his books from start to finish without changing a word. And with the dictation sessions occurring twice a week, when the hours of trance time were totaled up, if we define a week as a forty hour period, then most of the books were delivered in a period of only 3-4 weeks!

So just what is channeling and how can we best explain it in terms of science, metaphysics, and theology? Channeling is a kind of exceptional human ability that still has no standard definition. I will define it for now as a highly creative and inspired state of consciousness that occurs when the usual ego-self “steps aside” in varying degrees and allows another aspect of the psyche “come through,” either by speaking, automatic writing, automatic painting, automatic playing of a musical instrument, etc. There are distinctions made in the depth of this mental state, often called a trance state, such as light trance, deep trance, full trance channeling, and the like.

Whatever it is, it is not a black and white state – you channel or you don't channel. It is a rich psychological spectrum of how far one “steps aside” and how deep one goes into the trance state. In very simple terms, we're defining a trance state as an altered neurological focus that is measurable by the tools of contemporary science including EEGs, PET, and CAT scans. We're using the word “altered” because the brain and mind process information in significantly different ways during these trance states and often times the ego-self has little or no recollection of the experience. It returns to a “normal” focus as if waking up from a dream state. And brain activity reflects this.

The average person on the street knows little about this phenomenon. When you bring up the topic of channeling the stereotypical frameworks that come to mind are demonic possession, a religious frenzy or “speaking in tongues” called *glossolalia*, or dissociative personality disorders like schizophrenia. All of the preceding conditions immediately trigger a fear reaction in most of us because our officially accepted reality, in terms of mainstream science and organized religion, don't yet have adequate explanations for this phenomenon. The following story provides a typical example of the attitudes many folks still have regarding channeling.

A good friend of mine and his wife came over for dinner one Winter's evening in 1997. My wife, Joanne, cooked us all a delicious dinner and afterward our conversation led into our interest in the channeling phenomenon. I put on a videotape of Jane Roberts channeling Seth. While my friend was interested in science and science fiction, the paranormal was something that really

stretched his sensibilities. His wife was actually afraid of what she was witnessing. Her reaction was polite, she didn't run screaming or anything, but she was clearly being confronted by something that made her very uncomfortable.

We only watched the tape for about five minutes as the point was to introduce the channeling phenomenon. At the end my friend was silent, obviously mulling things over though not quite sure about what to say. His wife managed a question about the source itself. She asked, "How do you know this is not the Devil?" I was dumbstruck for a moment, surprised that her first response would come through her religious belief filters.

As we talked about the possibilities of who or what this source could be, I said to her, "Well, if you're granting that another personality is expressing itself that's a good place to start." This also raised the important issue of learning to discern the validity of this, and really any, source of knowledge and truth. How can you tell if it is a valid source? Does the information have any practical application to my everyday life? Could the information have some utility for society at large?

Gradually our discussion turned back to the question of who the source was. Could the source really be a demon or Satan? I asked her, "If you grant that possibility, how do you know that it's not an angel or archangel?" This beautiful smile suddenly beamed back at me from across the living room table. She hadn't even considered that. Her knee jerk response, having been presented with something unknown, was the fear response as taught to her in church and reinforced in horror movies. The thought of angels just melted away that fear, for the moment anyway.

I ended our conversation that night by showing that the person we had just seen on the videotape, Jane Roberts and her source named Seth, had produced over thirty-five published books (at the time) on the perennial philosophy, metaphysics, fiction, poetry, and even a children's book! All of these books were displayed on the top shelf of our bookcase. Quite a creative endeavor we all agreed. However, there was still a feeling of inadequacy and irresolution on my part. The framework that my friends had, both scientific and religious, was not able to provide anything deeper than the conclusion that this channeler was either schizoid or speaking for an angel or a demon. If I really wanted to talk credibly with my friends and family about the channeling phenomenon, then there surely must be more information available and a reasonable framework in which to better understand it.

This after-dinner episode made me realize that culturally we are taught to fear what we don't understand; both in terms of scientific skepticism and religious dogma. The old fight or flight response kicks in almost automatically when confronting ourselves with conditions that we don't have an adequate framework in which to understand. Science and religion are really attempting to come from similar places in their attempts to explain the how, what, and why of our universe and our species. Science reaps the best that the intellect has to offer and religion the best that the

intuitions have to offer. But when science tries to use intuition and religion the intellect, the results are still incomplete theories and calcified dogmas, particularly when it comes to the channeling phenomenon.

So this experience was a catalyst that led me to investigate further. My search led me into the area of parapsychology, an emerging area of science that has been investigating the paranormal since J. B. Rhine's ESP experiments in the 1920's. Further research turned up some serious speculation by scholars and scientists alike, with pioneers such as Charles Tart, Ken Wilber, Jon Klimo, Arthur Hastings, Deepak Chopra, among many others leading the way. The particular fields are called Transpersonal and Integral Psychology. In a nutshell, the transpersonal/integral model of human personality believes that the psyche resides in a virtual, immaterial domain that is free of space and time and thus exists co-dependently with the physical world. This virtual domain is conscious and aware, though it exists in a different type of psychological focus that is not based upon linear time or physical senses. According to this model of the psyche, consciousness creates matter, not the other way around, and thus human personality survives physical death.

It also turned out that the channeling phenomenon that resulted in the Seth material was not new at all. It has been found in every culture throughout recorded history. Arthur Hastings, former president of the California Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California, traces the channeling phenomena as far back as the Babylonian oracle of the goddess Astarte in the eleventh century BCE. He notes that ancient channels who:

“...spoke in trances and ecstasy were considered prophets or oracles for the gods. Even now, in various mainstream and minority religions, within many cultures, possession by the holy spirit, speaking in ecstasy, or possession by spirits is considered a sign of spiritual development, and is often encouraged and facilitated by ceremony and ritual. Channeling may be the current equivalent of ancient prophecy, bringing spiritual guidance and teachings for this time.”(1)

It should also be noted that Hastings' definition of prophecy isn't limited to predicting the future, but includes “speaking under the inspiration of the god or interpreting the will of god.”(2)

Now by bringing the still very unscientific concept of god into the discussion, we need to be clear that the definition we're using is not of a humanized, anthropomorphic god who lives in the sky who gets angry when we break his laws. God, in this sense holds no gender, but is the nondual, formless source of everything. There is no space or time involved. We're using a definition derived from what is called the perennial philosophy, but more on that in a bit.

The important idea at this point is to realize that there is a documented three thousand year old tradition in which people speak in an “inspired” state and deliver useful information geared toward the cultural needs and times of the locals. Sometimes the information pushes and pulls at the officially accepted, consensus reality of the times and helps to facilitate change from

calcified dogmas that the collective consciousness has outgrown. In this light, the channeling phenomenon is clearly seen as a grass roots or populist movement.

Jon Klimo, a psychologist on the senior faculty at the Rosebridge Graduate School of Integrative Psychology in Concord, California, states that “since 1986, channeling has reached into the grassroots. It has entered the popular vocabulary. Channeling now is part of current mainstream consensus reality.”(3) A good example is the imagery that graced the cover of the March 26, 2000 Los Angeles Times Calendar Magazine, the one that reports on the local entertainment scene. It pictured comedian Billy Crystal, sitting barefoot and cross-legged, eyes closed in deep concentration, surrounded by icons of the year’s best movies nominated for the upcoming Academy Awards T.V. show. The headline simply reads, “Channeling Oscar.”

Klimo offers a useful working definition for the phenomenon of channeling as “the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as we know it, and that is not from the normal mind (or self) of the channel.”(4) Like all definitions, it is open to continued research, debate, and refinement.

Any definition of channeling, in terms of spoken language, also has inherent limitations. Once you use a word to label something you limit its potential to be anything else. It’s like an actor who gets type-cast into a single role; Leonard Nimoy will always be Mr. Spock, yes? Can you even imagine him as *The Terminator* or in a musical like *Singing in the Rain*? But seriously, this is also why poets, writers, and composers create art forms to break out of the molds of language, using words and music to paint mental images and stir our emotions. Still, we are trying to understand something that is primarily subjective and psychological in nature that can’t be fully quantified in purely scientific and mathematical terms. Though channeling resists being easily poured into the containers of scientific and religious beliefs, we can glean some further understanding from the names used in various cultures to describe it:

“Throughout history and among various peoples, channels have been named according to what they do. Besides the term ‘medium’ and the more recent ‘channel,’ other names have included shaman, witch doctor, healer, and medicine man in native cultures. They have also been called fortune-tellers, oracles, seers, soothsayers, savants, and visionaries. In religious contexts, they have been known as priests, gurus, prophets, saints, mystics, and holy ones. And in the esoteric schools they are called light workers, initiates, teachers, adepts, or masters. The majority of mainstream psychologists and psychiatrists would probably regard the channels as hallucinating, delusional, suffering from dissociative identity disorder (once called multiple personality disorder), schizophrenic, or simply as persons with runaway imaginations, or even as downright frauds.”(5)

The latter thoughts reflect rather poorly on the narrow, incomplete view of human personality and the psyche found in contemporary cognitive sciences more than anything else. While acknowledging that people make fraudulent claims in every discipline, again, each individual must learn to discern the utility of the information delivered by any source, be it a channeler, scientist, minister, philosopher, economist, politician, or whomever.

Until organized science and religion expand and ultimately integrate their limited models of the human psyche, the Seth phenomenon may be best understood in light of what is called the *perennial philosophy* (or *wisdom*). A German philosopher and mathematician, Godfrey Leibniz (1646-1716), coined the term “Philosophia Perennis” and writer Aldous Huxley made it well known in his book *The Perennial Philosophy*, first published in 1944.

Perennial wisdom is reflected in the established mystical traditions of the East and West in works such as the *Tao Te Ching*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the poetry of Rumi, *The Kabbalah*, parts of *The Old and New Testaments*, and the *Gnostic Gospels*. Perennial wisdom is not based upon dogma or orthodoxy, but reflects the common denominator of universal truths that lie behind all religious dogma and method. This is what is meant, for example, by the Taoist saying, “the Tao which is written or spoken is not the true Tao.” In other words, the Tao represents the ineffable Source of all things: God. And despite our best attempts, our Source can never be fully expressed or captured by the limiting molds of human belief systems, languages, or dogma. But the Tao, our Source, *can be directly experienced by anyone*.

Jane Roberts referred to the Seth Material as “The New Way” in *The Way Toward Health*. This is her own version of the perennial wisdom concept. Here’s what Seth had this to say this:

“In [her] own mind, [Jane] calls these ideas, taken together, ‘The New Way.’

“The ideas themselves are quite ancient, of course. They are expressed by many cultures and religions, esoteric groups and cults from the past, and continuing into the present. Their strength, vitality, and worth has been greatly undermined, however, by distortions, negative ideas, and some sheer nonsense.

“In other words, these concepts, so natural to all of creation, have not been practiced by humanity in anything like their pure form. To that extent they do indeed represent a new way. They run directly counter to much of your official knowledge and contemporary thought as far as the mainstream of world culture is concerned. Where such ideas are are practiced, they are frequently contaminated by fanaticism, superstition, and expediency.

“The main point I want to make is that this ‘new way’ is the ideal and easiest complement to nature’s own innate integrity...”(6)

The main difference between older perennial translations and Seth's, then, is that Seth's ideas are presented in their original form, in the context of Western culture and belief systems, and have been "translated" only once into the calcified mold of language. In this sense, they presently exist in a state of very low distortion.

Most of us have played the children's game called "whisper down the lane" or "telephone." One person whispers a phrase to the person next to them and this cycle repeats until the originator has the phrase whispered back to them. At this point, the original phrase is revealed and a good laugh centers around the differences between that and the final distorted version. The same thing happens with translations of mystical experiences – they get distorted and calcified through the filter of the individual's perception into language. Thus the concepts experienced in mystical or subjective states that form the basis of the world's religions can never be fully translated into words. As Norman Friedman, author of *Bridging Science and Spirit* said, "It is literally impossible to really understand these concepts because the mystics do not have a mystical calculus. In short, when the mystic has an experience, merely by the act of converting it into words or even possibly mathematics, it will fall short."(7)

Patanjali, the Hindu sage who lived a couple of centuries before the time of Christ, offered similar thoughts regarding those who become fanatical adherents of the written words of the Hindu scriptures. His thoughts also are appropriate to the readers of all religious scriptures and channeled information.

"Patanjali taught that the authority of the scriptures was not proof of their truth, because no matter who propounds them, the scriptures have to be received through the sight, hearing, limited imagination, and reasoning power of the reader. According to Patanjali, the real inner teaching of a Christ cannot be understood through the testimony of others, nor by listening to their interpretations, but can be grasped only by the power of direct intuitive perception."(8)

Proponents of the world's mystical traditions have always understood that mystical experience is a translation of the experience of temporarily merging with aspects of our Primary Source: God. These experiences are not limited to and thus can not be solely defined in terms of our five physical senses. We are each endowed with our own inalienable, direct connection to this Source, for it is our Source. All of the writings about those individuals who have repeatedly experienced this state of being are likewise translations of their experiences, but not the experiences themselves.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) began the Protestant Reformation based upon the radical idea, at the time, that lay folk be allowed to interpret religious scriptures for themselves based upon their own faith, shifting power away from the strict mediation and fallacies of an entrenched bureaucracy of professional clergy. After all, religious scriptures are only the "vessels" that convey the mystical experiences of people who, often times, lived and died many hundreds of years earlier. These scriptures were often put into written form many decades after the fact, since

the indigenous cultures were based upon oral traditions. So once again, the issue of individual discernment and interpretation is paramount.

Channeling, as mentioned earlier, is part of an even *larger spectrum of altered neurological focus* that results in exceptional human abilities. Channeling, in its many forms, flavors, and creative outcomes, connects us with our own subjective, inner knowing. Here's an analogy to shed some light on this idea. Imagine that your mind is a radio receiver. A receiver works by tuning into specific frequencies that bring in other stations. Think of your everyday waking state as a narrow spectrum of consciousness that has only four or five main stations including thinking, feeling, intuiting, imagining, making music, and the like. All of these stations use neurological pathways in your brain to process and relay information from the outside world to the inside world of your mind. As you change your neurological focus you change stations.

Now, if you tune your mind, inward, away from your five-senses information streams, you'll discover that there are other channels present. But they are so soft in intensity that your five-senses inputs usually drown them out. In other words, neurologically and culturally speaking, you've learned to ignore them. But once you learn how to change your attention and neurological focus to tune in these inner channels, *you discover an infinite band of new stations*. Some are easier to tune into than others, some contain more static and seem to come from further away. By learning to tune into these stations clearly, with low distortion, you'll maximize the signal to noise ratio of any new station you tune into. This is what the Eastern mystics, yogis, and seers claim to have been doing for over three thousand years! Even though the proof is largely based upon subjective experiences, some adepts learn to clearly tune in these other channels. And these other channels are conscious aspects of our psyches.

Earlier we mentioned the importance in learning to discern the utility of any channeled source. Let's move on now to explore the levels of distortion present and practical applications channeling has to the individual and collective. First, there will always be some distortion for sure. An important question we have to ask is, "How strongly are the channeler's belief systems coloring what's coming through? What is their motivation for claiming to channel? Does the information make sense?" The situation is compounded by the growing number of sources of channeled information available in this new millennium. A simple Internet search will turn up dozens of websites with channeled sources. How can anyone make sense of all the seemingly contradictory information?

In the simplest sense, all you can do is read it and see if it appeals to your value system. Apply a healthy dose of common sense. If it floats your boat, great! You will get something out of it. If not, That's fine too. There is no single source that can provide all of the answers; not now, not ever. Trust that you will find something that resonates deeply, and when you do, give it your best shot. If you have the opportunity, attend a live session and see how you react to the people and the energy present. You may be pleasantly surprised or disappointed, but that's entirely up to you.

In my view, the Seth material contains a very low degree of distortion as mentioned earlier. *Seth never claimed to be an infallible source or hold the Truth or The Way*. In fact he made this point very clear early in the sessions that he is not to be considered an infallible source. And that puts the responsibility of discerning the truth where it really belongs, on each one of us.

“Truth contains no distortions, and this material with all my best efforts, and with yours, of necessity must contain distortions merely in order to make itself exist at all on your plane. I will never condone an attitude in which either you [Rob] or [Jane] maintain that you hold undiluted truth through these sessions.

“Inner data, even this, must make its entry through some distortion. We must always work together, but you must never consider me as an infallible source. This material is more valid than any material possible on your plane, but it is nevertheless to some degree conditioned by the camouflage attributes of the plane.”(9)

The above excerpt is in no way intended to diminish to depth, subtlety, and richness of the material nor its many practical applications to everyday life. It is intended to frame it in a contemporary, postmodern manner that reveals its “true but partial” nature *by claiming, up front, that it is fallible and incomplete*. It is a postmodern notion that no source, whether scientific, artistic, or religious can ever claim to have be an absolutely infallible or complete source of knowledge and wisdom.

Moving on, then, what about each one of us? Is it possible that we all hold the ability to channel? Is channeling a latent potential in every human being, just like certain types of development mapped by the great developmental psychologists, like Piaget and Maslow? I believe so, but in the same sense that we all have the potential ability to be a mystic, physicist, or concert pianist. Some of us will be better at it than others. Jon Klimo feels that we actually channel when we are in any state of inspiration or creativity. He terms this “open channeling,” something that we all do to varying degrees, though most of us don’t “step aside” very far as we wish to maintain conscious control or presence of our waking identity. Other popular terms are “being in the zone” or “in the flow,” an altered state when everything seems to happen effortlessly, whether in it’s a spiritual epiphany, a breakthrough scientific concept, or performance of a piano concerto.

However, a small number of those who learn to change their focus and accurately tune in new stations are capable of masterful, even virtuoso performances with potential impacts on a global scale. Perhaps these virtuosos stand out because their spiritual masterpieces, scientific inventions, and artistic creations manage to tap directly into, and even beyond, that deep archetypal area of the collective consciousness described by the work of Carl Jung. This may well be the psychological process behind the spiritual philosophies, scientific theories, and bodies of art that literally change the course of entire civilizations – like the work of Christ

changed the religious direction, Einstein the scientific direction, and Beethoven the musical direction of the Western world.

In metaphysical terms, then, the channeling phenomenon often provides useful information about the nature of reality, the origins and nature of the universe, and strong clues about the purpose and meaning of life itself. In that sense, channeling has always served a larger sociological and community function. And to be fair, channeling abilities take time to develop similar to the skills of any mystic, scientist, or musician. As the developmental psychologists have mapped, we all go through adult stages of development that Psychologist Jean Piaget called conventional operational, formal operational, and then postformal operational. It is in the postformal stage where the adult skill levels of a Buddha, Hawking, or Mozart usually emerge. (Mozart was a child prodigy, and these stages can emerge at precocious ages. There are no hard and fast rules on how slowly or quickly anyone passes through them.)

So it's likely that the majority of channeled sources will appear quite immature, even ridiculous in their beginning stages. Given that many people never learn the critical thinking, feeling, and intuiting skills necessary for discerning the utility of spiritual information, we often find conclusions drawn from channeled information biased by fanaticism, overinflated ego, religious dogma, and superstitious nonsense. Still, the words that describe any individual's mystical experience, in themselves, hold incomplete and symbolic meanings as they are subjective in nature. The concepts hinted at, like all classical perennial literature, as well as the more recent channeled bodies of information like the Seth Material, *serve as a trigger for our own inner knowing*.

In other words, since the source of this knowledge is subjective, it is actually lying latent within each of us and doesn't exist "out there" in the ether somewhere. As such, the most useful sources of channeled information will open new doors toward a greater understanding and realization of self. And, as the saying goes, "Teachers open the door, but you must enter yourself."

Discerning the Source: Who and What is Seth?

So just who is Seth? In his own words, Seth describes himself as an "energy personality essence" that is no longer focused in physical reality. This implies that, from Seth's perspective, there is a nonphysical source reality in which some form of human consciousness exists. Seth spoke through Jane Roberts for close to twenty-one years; try to imagine her own struggle in understanding just what Seth was. The Seth phenomenon didn't fit into any psychological or religious frameworks in any satisfactory way in the late 1960's. This led Jane and Rob to search for new answers that ultimately led her to develop a new mental discipline that integrated science and spirit, intellect and intuition, objective and subjective states, which she termed Aspect Psychology to help explain her own experiences. Coincidentally, Jane's Aspect Psychology paralleled the development Transpersonal Psychology that came out of the same period.

In a nutshell, in Aspect Psychology the psyche is seen as a multidimensional source self of vast proportions. A lifetime is an aspect of that source self. A source like Seth is also seen as a broader aspect self, with access to information that seems to transcend our notions of space and time. Within the context of Aspects, Seth exists as an aspect self as does Jane, but they each have their own unique qualities while still being a part of a larger psychological entity, the multidimensional psyche. Since the psyche has aspects that exist in both physical and nonphysical reality, Aspect Psychology, of necessity must leave the science of measuring instruments, quantification, and mathematics behind at some point and move into a purely intersubjective, qualitative realm. But the key is the integration of these two types of knowing and discernment. You can't have one without the other!

Jane struggled for years in her understanding. She didn't come to her conclusions lightly or without determined introspection and speculation. She was writing books, Seth was writing books, Rob was painting and adding copious notes to supplement the books. So the creative aspects of the phenomenon were absolutely undeniable. Seth/Jane's audience grew to millions of readers by the late 1970's, so the material and ideas were finding fertile ground upon which to grow. To find her own answers, Jane had to look deep inside and reconcile an array of psychic occurrences in the context of who and what she was. Here are some of Seth's comments on Jane's search for understanding:

"I am writing this book through a personality known as Jane Roberts. That is the name given her at her birth. She shares with you the triumphs and travails of physical existence. Like you she is presented with a life that seems to begin at her birth and that is suspended from that point of emergence until the moment of death's departure. She has asked the same questions that you ask in your quiet moments.

"Her questions were asked with such a vehemence however that she broke through the barriers that most of you erect and so began a journey that is undertaken for herself and for you also for each of your experiences however minute or seemingly insignificant, becomes part of the knowledge of your species. Where did you come from and where are you going? What are you? What is the nature of the psyche?

"... 'The Psyche' is meaningless except as it relates to the individual psyche. I speak to you from levels of your self that you have forgotten, and yet not forgotten. I speak to you through that printed page, and yet my words will rearouse within you the voices that spoke to you in your childhood, and before your birth."(10)

Jane offers some insights into her perspective circa 1971, after eight years of engaging the Seth phenomenon full time:

“Rob and I don’t refer to Seth as a spirit; we dislike the connotations of the term. Actually, what we object to is the conventional idea of a spirit, which is an extension of quite limited ideas of human personality, only projected more or less intact into an afterlife. You can say that Seth is a dramatization of the unconscious or an independent personality. Personally I don’t see why the statements have to be contradictory. Seth may be a dramatization playing a very real role – explaining his greater reality in the only terms we can understand.”(11)

“So we give them names who are nameless, as basically we are nameless. And we listen, but usually we try to squeeze their messages into concepts that we can understand, cloaking them in worn stereotyped images. Yet they are all about us, in the wind and trees, formed and unformed, more alive in many ways perhaps than we are – the speakers [of inner truths].

“Through these voices, these intuitions, these flashes of insights and messages, the universe speaks to us, to each of us personally. You are being addressed, and so am I. Learn to hear your own messages, not to distort what you hear or translate it into old alphabets.”(12)

In terms of the psyche and multidimensional personality, just what, then, is a Seth? Seth hints at his own greater reality, a nonphysically-based reality in which he exists. According to modern psychology, this is explained away as the delusion of an ego-self afraid of its inevitable death. In other words, nothing exists beyond the world of the five senses. But do you buy that in the context of your own personal experiences? In essence, this point of view denies twenty-one years of Jane’s own subjective experiences if nothing else, and I for one, don’t buy it either.

If Seth has a greater reality elsewhere, then what happens when Jane goes into trance? Seth used the term ‘bridge personality’ to describe how he exists when speaking through Jane:

“In regular sessions, as now, [she] and I again both make adjustments, and so in session I am what I call a bridge personality, composed of a composite self – [Jane] and I meeting and merging to form a personality that is not truly either of us, but a new one that exists between dimensions. Beyond that is my real identity.”(13)

Jane formulated her Aspect Psychology theories over a period of years. Aspects are temporary “subpersonalities” that form a kind of psychological “worm hole” to bridge systems of nonphysical and physical reality. This allows a nonphysical entity like Seth to merge with the subconscious mind of Jane Roberts and communicate within her physical system. In this light, Seth functions as what Jane called a *personagram*:

“The personagram, then, *is* an electromagnetic and psychological structure that exists potentially under certain conditions. It is a bridge personality, a unique

psychological being equipped to operate between systems of reality, but its source may well be entirely outside of the three-dimensional systems. It is a psychological rapport, but dependent for its physical expression upon the receiving personality with which it merges to some extent.”(14)

So Seth per se, the Seth we would encounter during a channeling session, is really a composite of psychological elements from Jane’s psyche, a temporary, hybrid construction that is neither fully Jane or Seth in terms of his native system. This bridge personality takes the form of various characteristics that we will recognize. These include emotions, facial expressions, gestures, a sense of humor, even an accent; all to create a familiar framework in which the messages delivered can be comfortably received within culturally acceptable terms.

We should also mention the Seth 2 phenomenon at this point, another subpersonality but one devoid of emotion and facial expressions that spoke in a soft, almost eerie monotone. Jane’s ESP class students found this personagram to be more alien than the familiar Seth. But Seth said that Seth 2 was yet another type of psychological focus that was further removed from physical reality that played an important role in supporting its creation and maintenance. From Seth 2:

“Our entity is composed of multitudinous selves with their own identities, many of whom have worked in this behalf [delivering channeled material]. Their messages will always be basically the same, though the times and circumstances of their communications may differ and be colored accordingly.

“We taught man to speak before the tongue knew syllables. We adopt whatever personality characteristics seem pertinent, for in our own reality we have a bank of complete inner selves, and we are all Seth. We attempt to translate realities into terms that you can comprehend. We change our face and form, but we are always the one. Many of us have not been born in flesh, as I have not been. In one way we have seeded ourselves through endless universes.

“Physically you would find me a mass smaller than a brown nut, for my energy is so highly concentrated. It exists in intensified mass... perhaps like one infinite cell existing in endless dimensions at once and reaching out from its own reality to all others.”(15)

Finally, consciousness is like an ever-opening flower, the deeper we dig into the human psyche, the more “layers” we find. Perhaps, as the perennial wisdom suggests, there really is no separation from our Primary Source, just endless layers of psychological focus that widen and narrow, depending on what part of the mental spectrum we learn to *concentrate fully* upon. At the very least, the Seth phenomenon provides rich evidence that the psyche is more complex than previously understood, survives beyond physical death, and exists within web of consciousness that has physical and nonphysical attributes. In this light, Jane Roberts, Robert Butts, and The Seth Material provided a “map of consciousness” and set of practices – a spiritual science – in

which to use your own direct experience to verify or falsify the truth for yourself. Ultimately, it's really as simple as that!

Endnotes:

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- (5) Klimo, p. 103.
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- (12) Roberts, p. xviii.
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