

# THE CHANNELING PHENOMENON

## *A Multi-Methodological Assessment*

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**ABSTRACT** AQAL-5, the fifth iteration of Ken Wilber’s integral metatheory, consists of an Integral Operating System, Integral Post-Metaphysics, Integral Methodological Pluralism, and Integral Life Practice. Within this context, I hypothesize that channeling functions as one of multiple human intelligences (per Howard Gardener) and developmental lines (per Wilber). As such, channeling may be a universal human intelligence that develops through state-stages or structure-stages. Also, it may be more than just a “talent line,” as it deals with complex relationships in brain function (i.e., modules) between multiple intelligences, sub-personalities, dissociative states, amnesia, and gross, subtle, and causal bodies, states, and lines. This article outlines a pilot research program to study this hypothesis.

**KEY WORDS:** amnesia; channeling; developmental lines; dissociative states; multiple intelligences

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Science is not enough, religion is not enough, art is not enough, politics and economics are not enough, nor is love, nor is duty, nor is action however disinterested, nor, however sublime, is contemplation. Nothing short of everything will really do.

– Aldous Huxley<sup>1</sup>

There is a premodern tradition known by many different names that dates back to the earliest written records, as far back as the 14<sup>th</sup>-century BCE, according to transpersonal psychologist Arthur Hastings:

[The] term channeling ... is current, but the process has been called prophecy, oracle, revelation, spiritual communication, possession, and the inspiration of the muses. The Biblical tradition in Judaism and Christianity says that the prophets received and spoke the words of God. Today, there are many individuals who speak words that are said to come from disembodied teachers on other levels of reality. The process, though not necessarily the content, appears to be the same. (1991, p. xi)

This tradition is still with us today. According to anthropologist Michael Brown (1997), even though modern, “Euro-American culture is unusual in its unwillingness to grant dissociation [channeling] an honored place in the human experience” (p. 19), it has “moved from the gilded ashrams of the West Coast to the living rooms and offices of the American Heartland. On the way, it has shed some of its sensational qualities in favor of a more muted approach to personal insight. It is now a well-established form of religious exploration that is

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likely to be with us for a while” (p. 6). Transpersonal psychologist Jon Klimo (1998) concluded that, “Since 1986, channeling has reached into the grassroots. It has entered the popular vocabulary. Channeling now is part of current mainstream consensus reality” (p. xix).

We all experience dissociative states to varying degrees during each 24-hour cycle. For example, when we daydream, get lost in reverie, or forget why we went into a room to do something. We also naturally experience dissociation as we fall asleep and enter an alpha state, we lose track of body and time, and subsequently enter sleep states. Additionally, meditators train themselves to willfully enter dissociative states (i.e., subtle, causal, and nondual states). In the process, they sometimes discover new concepts and solutions to problems that prove to be of great value (Norbu, 1992; Austin, 1998; Doctor, 2005).

However, dissociative states, including secondary personalities, are often associated with pathology in the West, and as such remain stigmatized. Yet there is compelling evidence that these states also function in a variety of healthy and socially accepted ways (Hastings, 1991; Brown, 1997; Klimo, 1998; Krippner et al., 1998). These states may have “once served adaptive, survival functions in human evolution, and they continue to enhance adaptive behavior in any number of non-Western societies” (Krippner et al., 1998, p. 20). For instance, the Dalai Lama regularly consults the State Oracle of Tibet (trance channeler) for advice as spiritual leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile. As such, “It is possible that Western societies suppress this natural and valuable capacity at their peril” (Krippner et al., 1998, p. 20).

In other words, since channeling has been documented in socially accepted roles for over 3,000 years, it is possible that it was suppressed and the ability to channel became *atrophied* in the mainstream West. If channeling can be scientifically proven to be a unique developmental intelligence, one that has been successfully applied to socially accepted roles in the West over the past 40 years (e.g., in jobs like life coaching, writing, psychotherapy, music composition and performance, and painting), then it will help to further legitimize its use in the mainstream, and increase the availability of funding for research to accelerate its practical application and pedagogy to a variety of fields (e.g., human potentials, the arts, psychotherapy, commercial and scientific innovation, and the military).

For example, Jane Roberts (1929-1984) channeled Seth from 1963 to 1984 and made her living as a writer of the Seth books. Other contemporary exemplars include Ester Hicks, who channels Abraham and makes a living as a spiritual life coach and writer (Klimo, 1998), and J. Z. Knight, who channels Ramtha, and makes a living as a writer and head of the Ramtha School of Enlightenment (Klimo, 1998; Krippner et al., 1998). Roberts’s work also demarcates the modern era of channeling from the previous era of Spiritualism, a movement whose heyday ranged between the 1840s and 1930s. While Spiritualism emphasized *mediumship*, or direct contact with alleged deceased humans, modern *channeling* emphasizes direct contact with alleged discarnate transpersonalities dedicated to spiritual teaching and therapy (Hastings, 1991; Klimo, 1998).

Could there be a natural, dissociative “intelligence” that has been forced underground for hundreds of years in the premodern and modern West, but like the proverbial genie, has been let out of the bottle by a modern grassroots spiritual and social movement (Hastings, 1991; Brown, 1997; Klimo, 1998)? Given the postmodern advances in research methodology now available in Ken Wilber’s AQAL-5 metatheory (Helfrich, 2007), a more comprehensive study of channeling, one that refutes the myth of the given that limits contemporary

transpersonal research, may offer startling new ways to enhance human potentials, innovation, problem solving, and therapy.

In this light, what research models and methods will enable us to determine if there are structure-stages or state-stages (Wilber, 2006) involved in channeling? In other words, is channeling a distinct developmental intelligence that unfolds in structure-stages (Gardner, 1983, 1999) or an ability that unfolds in state-stages like meditation? There are four aspects of AQAL-5 metatheory that we can apply to answer these questions. The first three provide new ways to model human intelligence to form new hypotheses and theories, and the fourth provides a comprehensive methodological approach to test their efficacy:

1. **Stratified definitions of channeling.** Used to model different *levels* of channeling based on the Wilber-Combs Lattice's levels of development and altered states (Wilber, 2006), Spiral Dynamics Integral's (SDi) vMememes (values attracting meta-memes) that situate core belief systems involved with channeling (Beck & Cowan, 2001), and Quantum Idealism's (QI) channeling taxonomy to outline a broad array of dissociative *types* of channelers, channeled sources, and content within each *level* and *state* (Klimo, 1988).
2. **Integral Psychology (IP).** Used to model the proximate self's ontology and development in relation to various secondary- and sub-personalities, gross, subtle, and causal bodies (Upper Right [UR]), *states* (Upper Left [UL]), and *lines* (UL), and healthy forms of amnesia and dissociation (Wilber, 2000d; see Appendix I).
3. **Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory.** Used to model *lines* (streams or modules) to test the hypothesis that channeling is a unique developmental intelligence (Gardner, 1983, 1999).
4. **Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP).** Use the eight zones to situate and select from dozens of complementary research protocols (Wilber, 2006) based on Klimo's research agenda (1988) to serve as the foundation for a coherent, feasible, and cost-effective pilot study proposal.

This article, then, outlines a radical new way to study the channeling phenomenon and explores the best available research models and methods to determine if there are structure-stages or state-stages involved. It is written for those with a background in integral theory and practice, and is thus based upon the AQAL-5 heuristic principles of *nonexclusion*, *enactment*, and *enfoldment* (Wilber, 2003c, pp. 16-32). As such, we will explore channeling through the stratified lens of second-tier perspectives. However, any final research proposal based on this article will use appropriate language targeted to specific funding sources, which is to say that the majority of current funders still promote narrower first-tier agendas. Hence, the language and style used throughout the article will not necessarily be used in those proposals, but will instead serve as an integrally informed foundation.

## Using Stratified Definitions to Model Channeling

A stratified overview of channeling reveals significantly different memes (beliefs, values) within various AQAL-5 altitudes, or vertical stages of development.<sup>2</sup> The following serve as orienting generalizations for a

research outline and are derived, in part, from the Wilber-Combs Lattice and SDi:

- **Amber.** vMememes of *good* and *evil*; personified as causal agents who are legitimate transpersonal sources (e.g., angels/demons, or dakinis/hell-beings). Phenomenological examples include speaking in tongues (e.g., glossolalia, xenoglossy; Klimo, 1998), demonic and spirit possession (e.g., Christian traditions; Klimo, 1998), and mind treasure (e.g., Buddhist terdon tradition; Norbu, 1992; Doctor, 2005). This altitude interprets the contents of altered states in literal, absolute terms.
- **Orange.** vMememes of *health* and *pathology*; physical (e.g., injury, viruses, cancers) or psychological dysfunction (e.g., neurosis, psychosis, dissociation) as causal agents. Most if not all transpersonal sources are reduced to infantile dissociation, as in Freudian pre/trans and level/line fallacies (see Wilber, 2006). Dissociative conditions that produce secondary personalities are considered pathological. Phenomenological examples include dissociative disorders (e.g., dissociative identity disorder, dissociative amnesia, dissociative fugue; DSM-IV, 2000). This altitude interprets the contents of altered states as fantasy, neurosis, psychosis, or other forms of dissociative pathology.
- **Green.** vMememes of *health* and *pathology*; the result of causal agents via physical or psychological dysfunction. However, transpersonal sources are legitimized, although they are sometimes misidentified as authentic sources, as in Jungian pre/trans fallacies (Wilber, 2006). Phenomenological examples include gross/subtle realm “entity” interaction (e.g., Jane Roberts channeled Seth, published twenty-eight books of *The Seth Material*, and three books on *Aspect Psychology* [1997, 2000a, 2000b] that outlined a theoretical framework for channeling). This altitude interprets the contents of altered states in symbolic terms, as metaphors for deeper aspects of the psyche.
- **Teal.** vMememes of stratified definitions *health (good)* and *pathology (evil)* (e.g., the previous three altitudes understood as authentic *varieties* of states-stages in the Wilber-Combs Lattice and SDi vMememes) that transcend yet include each previous altitude. Transpersonal sources are legitimized and phenomenological examples are defined through a stratified lens based on developmental altitudes.
- **Turquoise.** vMememes of enhanced stratified definitions based upon *tetra-meshed holonic health* and *pathology* (e.g., includes an AQAL-5 conceptualization of human intelligence in terms of gross/subtle/causal body/state/line/stage interactions within the quadrants. Transpersonal sources are legitimized and phenomenological examples are defined through this enhanced stratified lens.

In this light, and given the range of differing memes and interpretations of the channeling phenomenon, it is important to simul-track *all* of them in the context of AQAL-5 IMP research. That is, we cannot rule out the validity of narrower amber (traditional) and orange (modern) definitions of channeling, and must include them (*nonexclusion*). However, we also wish to include the views provided by green (postmodern) and other multidisciplinary researchers (e.g., Jon Klimo, Arthur Hastings, Stanley Krippner, Howard Gardner, Jane

Roberts, Andrew Newberg, James Austin, and Michael Brown, among others). Together, they all have important perspectives on altered states and the channeling phenomenon (*enactment* and *enfoldment*).

For instance, Brown (1997) defined channeling as “...the use of altered states of consciousness to contact spirits—or, as many of its practitioners say, to experience spiritual energy captured from other times and dimensions” (p. viii). Hastings (1991) defined channeling as “...a process in which a person transmits information or artistic expression that he or she receives mentally or physically and which appears to come from a personality source outside the conscious mind. The message is directed toward an audience and is purposeful” (p. 4). Klimo (1988) defined channeling as “...a process whereby someone appears to serve as a conduit for information, messages, and guidance, or for energy of a healing capacity or a spiritual quality, which appears to come from a non-ordinary source” (p. 899). Krippner and colleagues (1998) defined channeling as “the process of receiving information from alleged anomalous agencies, that is, purported entities and/or realities other than those acknowledged by mainstream Western culture” (p. 5).

Klimo also outlined a rich taxonomy of channeling (1988, pp. 894-904) that we can apply to the previous developmental altitudes. In other words, we will find each of the following *types* expressed within each of the vertical altitudes of the AQAL matrix in unique fashion:

#### *General Classifications*

- Spontaneous and intentional volition
- Mental (guidance, growth) and physical (communication, painting, music)
- Entity (strong dissociation, secondary proximate self) and open (mild dissociation, enhanced creativity)

#### *Types of Channeling*

- Conscious (intuitive, telepathy, clairaudience, clairvoyance, clairsentience)
- Unconscious full-trance, possession
- Sleep and dream
- Automism (a variant of conscious, but includes kinesthetic expressions of automatic writing, Ouija board movement, pendulum movement)

#### *Types of Channelers*

- Gertrude Schmeidler’s personality criteria for psychic ability

#### *Types of Sources (Secondary Persona)*

- Discarnate spirits of “deceased” human beings (the largest category)
- Past lifetimes
- Advanced human beings (e.g., highly evolved spiritual teachers)
- Non-humans (e.g., “aliens,” spirit beings, angels, gods, archetypal energies, akashic, higher self)

#### *Types of Channeled Content*

- General intuitive feelings of loving presence and support

- Personal messages and guidance
- Detailed descriptions of an “afterlife”
- Information about the past and future
- Artistic material (e.g., literature, painting, music, and composition)
- Healing and medical material (e.g., Edgar Cayce)
- Scientific or technical

As seen above, channeling covers a broad spectrum of *dissociative* phenomena ranging from the proximate self being consciously aware of a “secondary” creative source (e.g., bodily, linguistic, musical, artistic, etc.) all the way to the manifestation of an autonomous, secondary proximate self replete with unique cognitive, affective, moral, and interpersonal traits *and* memories.<sup>3</sup> At this end of the spectrum, the primary proximate self has little or no memory of what occurs (i.e., amnesia is an important consideration).

In this light, we can use the above stratified definitions (levels, states, types) and their concomitant vertical altitudes to more accurately situate and simul-track their influences within the context of AQAL-5 IMP research.

## Using Integral Psychology to Model Channeling

While channeling often manifests initially as a *temporary* or altered state, it can develop into a more permanent trait that is willfully engaged by the primary proximate self. But do the primary proximate and secondary proximate selves, called *bridge personalities* (Roberts, 1996, p. 338) or *personagrams* (Roberts, 1997, p. 113), develop within a similar stage sequence? Put another way, does the *temporary* develop into a *permanent* structure in distinct stages? Also, does channeling fit the criteria used by Gardner (1983, 1999) and Wilber (2000d) to qualify as its own developmental intelligence? Further, what are the key Integral Psychology relationships between the primary proximate self and fully formed secondary proximate self (i.e., relationships in the self-system between subpersonalities, lines, stages, and states)? Additionally, what are the main brain modules involved in the onset, duration, and completion of distinct channeling state-stages or structure-stages? With these central questions in mind, I used Wilber’s Integral Psychology to formulate the following definition: *channeling* is a spectrum of dissociative states that develop over time in discrete stages, similar to the multiple intelligences (MI) defined by Gardner and developmental lines defined by Wilber. In its mild form, the dissociative state is more like an enhanced creativity which can be applied to any field (e.g., writing, music, art, engineering, healing). In its more extreme form, the dissociative state includes fully formed secondary proximate selves that offer knowledge well beyond the current capacity of the primary proximate self. Accessing and maintaining this state at will is characteristic of a later, mature *stage*.

The following briefly outlines the Integral Psychology model of the overall self-system I will use to explore channeling. Wilber (1997b, p. 246, p. 256; 2000a, p. 273; 2000d, pp. 197-217) lists at least 30 developmental lines (see Appendix I). By definition, lines must show an asymmetrical structure-stage sequence of “transcend yet include” development that has a “necessary but not sufficient” relationship to all other valid lines. These lines are navigated by the proximate self. Wilber (2000a, 2000d) also introduced three self-related lines called *gross/frontal*, *subtle/deeper psychic*, and *causal/Witness* (also ego, soul, and self) in relation to various states and stages (see Fig. 1). These are not to be confused with gross, subtle, and causal bodies (UR), states (UL), or transpersonal stage altitudes. They can be considered lines because they function “relatively

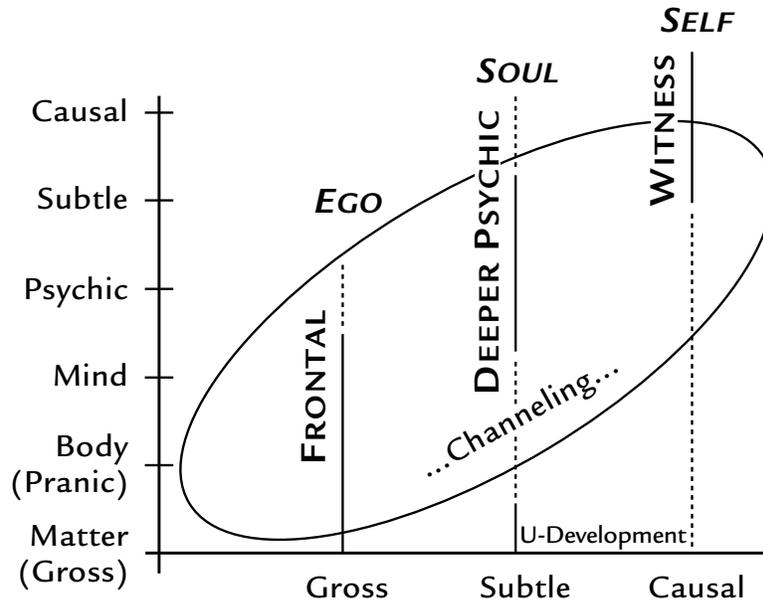


Figure 1. Development of the three major self-system lines. Adapted from Reynolds (2004, p. 346).

independently,” as all lines are “necessary but not sufficient” for each other’s developmental unfolding. According to Wilber (2000d):

Just as we did with cognition, we can treat these three modes of self as relatively independent developmental lines, so that they do not develop one after the other, but alongside each other. (p. 125)

...What researchers have been measuring as sequential self development is still accurate, but what they are measuring is the *frontal self* (bodyself to ego to centaur), and not the soul or spirit, which can develop, to some degree, alongside all of that, following their own holarchies and nests within nests, none of which is obvious in frontal terms. (p. 126)

Figure 1 (Wilber, 2000d, p. 125) hints at how a channeling line or intelligence may serve as a “bridge” between Wilber’s gross, subtle, and causal self lines within the primary proximate self. Moreover, each (UL) self line has a corresponding (UR) gross, subtle, and causal body/realm. Wilber (2002a) postulated these (UR) correlates are the result of increasing evolutionary complexity in the physical human form (noosphere) in relation to other biological (biosphere) and physical (physiosphere) forms:

...It is not that these energy fields are radically meta-physical, because if they were, then all of these fields (because they would not in any way be bound to physical objects), could and would be surrounding all physical objects, whereas in fact, these fields only emerge with (and surround) material objects of a *corresponding degree of complexity*. A rock does not have an emotional field; a worm does not have a

mental field, and so on. Taking advantage of the modern (or naturalistic) turn allows us to anchor these fields in nature without reducing them to nature. A natural history of these energy fields shows that they emerge in correlation with the degree of complexity of gross form, and both of them together (the form and its corresponding energy) are the UR correlates (or the observable exteriors) of the UL increase in degrees of consciousness. (pp. 16-17)

Another hypothesis is that channeling, in its various Wilber-Combs' expressions, is an intelligence that manages to bridge or integrate these self lines *and* energy bodies to varying degrees:

Channeling is an (UL) intelligence, which may include a fully formed secondary proximate self that allows soul and self lines to merge and be expressed through the frontal proximate self line via state-structures and, to some extent, stage-structures. As such, there are (UR) brain modules, (LL) cultural values systems, and (LR) social systems that facilitate and support this.

In addition, we need to consider the healthy and pathological extremes of the previous two hypotheses. The healthy end of the spectrum presents minimal ill effects to the primary proximate self and body, while the pathological side presents a dysfunctional splintering of the primary proximate self that incapacitates basic survival (e.g., hygiene, nutrition), emotional (e.g., relationships), and mental and social (e.g., job/role) needs. By necessity, then, we must factor in the role of various dissociative identity disorders in relation to channeling. For example, The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2000) defines four categories of dissociative pathology: dissociative amnesia, dissociative fugue, dissociative identity disorder, and depersonalization disorder. The International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD, 2007) defines five kinds: depersonalization, derealization, amnesia, identity confusion, and identity alteration. In terms of AQAL-5, then, there is a wide spectrum of developmental altitudes to factor in. We can situate these dissociative pathologies within the developmental spectrum that ranges from the preverbal, *archaic subpersonalities* of fulcrum-0 up to the subtle *soul subpersonalities* of fulcrum-7 and fulcrum-8 (Wilber et al., 1986; Wilber, 2000d). Therefore, we also need to create a baseline definition of health and pathology:

An individual, the primary proximate self, who willfully engages dissociative states and even fully formed secondary proximate selves, may be considered healthy as long as they access and end the state at will, and show no signs of prolonged physical, emotional, mental, social, or spiritual dysfunction in culturally appropriate ways. Additionally, the use of dissociative states for personal (body, mental, and spiritual) healing is considered a sign of returning health and equilibrium.

Since channeling emerges as a stable state within adulthood, for instance, during Kegan's (2002) third-order of consciousness, where cases I am familiar with range from an onset at age 24 to 49, the relationship between dissociative disorders to AQAL-5 developmental fulcrums remains unclear. A further review of the dissociative pathology literature is required to flesh this out. Still, we can use Integral Psychology to more thoroughly model channeling with an initial emphasis on studying state-stages, structure-stages, and multiple intelli-

gences. Additionally, I hope to show that if channeling functions as a *capacity* or *talent line*, it is dependent on the subtle and causal *self-related lines*. And while anchored in the *cognitive line* (Rentschler, 2006), it may tap into higher forms of cognition *through* the subtle and causal lines. For instance, there is strong evidence of healthy secondary proximate selves (Hastings, 1991; Roberts, 1997, 2000a, 2000b; Klimo, 1998; Krippner et al., 1998) that provide a wide range of helpful information and therapy beyond the capacity of the primary proximate self.

## Using MI Theory to Model Channeling as a Developmental Line

Howard Gardner (1999) is a multidisciplinary psychologist interested in neurology, biology, sociology, anthropology, the arts, and humanities. His current definition of *intelligence* is “a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (pp. 33-34). He feels that standard psychometric instruments for intelligence such as the Stanford-Binet or Wechsler IQ tests are too narrow in scope:

...Intelligence, as a construct to be defined and a capacity to be measured, is no longer the property of a specific group of scholars who view it from a narrowly psychometric perspective. In the future, many disciplines will help define intelligence, and many more interest groups will participate in the measurement and uses of it. (Gardner, 1999, pp. 24-25)

Gardner’s approach to the human brain is called *modularity*. It studies a series of related subsystems that defy singular definitions of intelligence. Most brain research in humans to date is the result of studying deficits, pathology, or injury. Through birth anomalies, disease, and accidents, neurologists have learned that many functions like vision, smell, speech, morality, planning, music, etc., are distributed in certain areas but *not* contained in any specific set of brain cells. Other research has been done on mollusks, mice, rats, cats, and primates (Austin, 1999). However, we still know very little about how the human brain functions, and continued research is very important.

Gardner’s (1983) initial work outlined seven (UL) lines based on (UR) brain function. He (1999) recently associated each with a social function (LR). For example, *linguistic* with poets, writers, lawyers, speakers; *logical-mathematical* with mathematicians, logicians, scientists; *musical* with performers, composers, and music appreciators; *bodily-kinesthetic* with surgeons, craftspeople, bench-top scientists, dancers, actors, athletes; *spatial* with navigators, pilots, sculptors, surgeons, chess players, graphic artists, architects; *interpersonal* with salespeople, teachers, clinicians, religious leaders, political leaders, actors; and *intrapersonal* with each of us. He also postulated a *naturalist*, *spiritual*, *existential*, and *moral* intelligence. Interestingly, he does not call out the emotional or affective line, as some do, but chose to include it within the intrapersonal line.

Gardner identified eight essential criteria to help define MIs or what AQAL-5 refers to as a developmental line, stream, or module. If we apply them to channeling research, we find that seven of the eight are already met, and the remaining one is included in our pilot study proposal (see pp. 154). As such, there is a compelling baseline in which to move forward with:

1. **The potential of isolation by brain damage.** This requires additional research to determine the effects of brain injury on the function and capacities of secondary personalities and dissociative states. Given the rapid advances in brain mapping accuracy and cost reduction, brain maps that isolate areas in the cerebral cortex, limbic system, and brain stem provide crucial perspectives. We also need to consider the possibility that secondary personalities may *initiate* from brain injury as coping and healing modalities.
2. **An evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility.** This has been established by scholars such as Hastings (1991), Krippner (1997), and Klimo (1998), who have cited evidence of channeling phenomena in various social roles that date back as far as written records exist. Moreover, a plausible cause has been made by Roberts (1994, 1996) that channeling provided early human tribes with knowledge of changing food sources, weather conditions, and moral codes. There is also evidence that tertons (dream yogis and yoginis) of the Buddhist Bön tradition, which dates back 17,000 years, provided similar social functions (Norbu, 1992).
3. **An identifiable core operation or set of operations.** The ability to initiate and end dissociative states *at will* (Klimo, 1988) is the core operation that helps distinguish between *healthy* and *pathological* instances. In addition, there are documented cases of spontaneous dissociative states during the onset of the channeling phenomenon that take time to fully control (Roberts, 1970), which need to be considered.
4. **Susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system.** There are various symbol systems used by channelers (e.g., language/books, language/psychotherapy, musical performance/composition, and painting/canvas; Hastings, 1991, Klimo, 1998).
5. **A distinct developmental history, along with a definable set of “end-state” performances.** This requires further research on the structures involved with channeling. They may unfold as structure-stages or state-stages (Wilber, 2006). The work of Roberts (1997, 2000a, 2000b) detailed the unfolding of her secondary personalities (Seth, Seth II, Sumari, Helper) over a period of 24 years, and thus provided an excellent phenomenological baseline in terms of their development. The work of Luis Gaspareto (Klimo, 1998) provided another documented case that produced hundreds of paintings. Documented end-state performances include teaching classes, holding psychotherapy sessions, and creating books, paintings, and musical compositions (Klimo, 1998).
6. **The existence of idiot savants, prodigies, and other exceptional people.** Channelers are no different than writers, painters, lawyers, ministers, athletes, politicians, and so on—there are some bad ones, many good ones, and only a few virtuosos. The case of Jane Roberts remains one of the best documented exemplars of a virtuoso channeler, in terms of creative output and quality of content, in the modern era (Klimo, 1998). Her work has been archived and is now available to researchers at the Sterling Memorial Library Archives at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

7. **Support from experimental psychological tasks.** There was a five-year study performed by Krippner and colleagues (1998) on seven subjects from the Ramtha School of Enlightenment that were administered: the Absorption Subscale of the Differential Personality Questionnaire (DPQ), Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES), and Boundary Questionnaire (BQ). The DPQ and DES measure the capacity to enter an “altered state of consciousness” at will. The BQ tested the suspected relationship of dissociation and alleged psi experiences (e.g., telepathy, telekinesis, clairaudience, clairvoyance, and precognition). They concluded that all seven subjects fell into Wickramasekara’s “high-risk” group in terms of their “thin boundaries, absorption capabilities, and dissociative capacities” (p. 18). However, they didn’t conclude that the participants should be categorized in negative or pathological terms.
8. **Support from psychometric findings.** There have been a handful of studies done that provide a baseline in this category (Klimo, 1988). For example, Walter Franklin Prince’s study of Pearl Curran and her source Patience Worth (Prince, 1964); the extended studies done by members of the British Society for Psychological Research on Mrs. L. E. Piper, W. E. Cleveland, R. Thompson, M. M. Soule, E. (Eileen) Garrett, and Mrs. George Leonard. Additional studies were done on Edwin Babbitt, by Charles Hapgood (Hapgood, 1975), and Eileen Garrett, by Jungian psychologist Ira Progoff (Progoff, 1964).

In this light, we can use MI Theory as the basis to model channeling as its own developmental intelligence. However, Gardner’s work emphasizes the Right-Hand quadrants, and leans toward what AQAL-5 defines as *subtle reductionism* that guts the interiors by reducing them to the secondary effects (epiphenomena) of Right-Hand processes. Therefore, in order to study channeling as a distinct developmental line from an AQAL-5 perspective, we need to add methodologies that shed light on channelers’ Left-Hand interiors, such as phenomenology (e.g., journaling), structuralism (e.g., integral psychograph), and ethnography (e.g., moral and cultural relationships).

## **Broadening the Scope: Applying AQAL-5 to MI and QI Theory**

Gardner’s acknowledgement of a spiritual/existential line allows us a place to situate channeling for starters, and then we can “branch out” via AQAL-5 IMP to better include the (UL/LL) interiors, states, and types. However, we will modify Gardner’s (1999) definition of any intelligence as amoral in and of itself (pp. 45-46), since AQAL-5 includes developmental stages of increasing wholeness and embrace that extend from preconventional to conventional to postconventional and wider. By definition, the vertical axis of AQAL-5 has an increasing moral embrace called *Basic Moral Intuition* (Wilber, 2000b, pp. 640-643n) that applies to all of Gardner’s intelligences. So when Gardner (1999, p. 46) distinguishes between Goebbels and Goethe’s use of the German language, one for racist propaganda, the other for inspired poetry and scientific pursuits, he omits any understanding that the former was acting from an ethnocentric amber altitude, and the other from a wider worldcentric orange altitude. This is a good example of using AQAL-5 IMP’s nonexclusion and enfoldment principles to show that MIs always operate from *within* a particular AQAL-5 address (vertical altitude + perspective) that is situated within the moral line (something that Gardner has begun to flesh out).

Gardner's (1999) work on the spiritual line acknowledged that "problem solving" or "product making" is inadequate and that the "...achievement of a certain 'state of being' is more apt" (p. 58). Our definition of channeling as its own developmental line, using Integral Psychology's ontology, includes *all three*, because it makes explicit the relationships within the quadrants between (UL) spiritual states, (LL) problem solving, and (LR) product making. By taking an AQAL-5 approach, we can see more clearly how channeling situates within the AQAL matrix in terms of lines and states, but is also strongly colored by quadrants, levels, and types in the overall self-system. Thus, in order to outline a coherent research proposal, we will need to include methods from all quadrants, and a broader map of human intelligence than the one used by Gardner. Anomalies like channeling cannot be adequately explained in his theory, because it does not emphasize states or types to show the impact on various intelligences, or acknowledge the wider transpersonal altitudes authenticated within AQAL-5.

Let us return now to Klimo's work. As we saw earlier, his taxonomy outlined a robust set of channeling types. Klimo (1988) also outlined a research agenda to show how a variety of methodologies could be used to study channeling that brilliantly foreshadowed Wilber's AQAL-5 IMP, and as such, serves as the methodological basis for my research proposal:

1. **Idiographic, or single-subject, studies** utilize detailed observations, interviews, psychometric and other testing, biographical profiles, and other case-study and phenomenological procedures. These emphasize qualitative reports of individuals (UL/LL quadrivia).
2. **Cross-subject descriptive, correlational, and nomothetic research** use the single-subject studies to create an ongoing database that seeks relationships between derivable correlations, variables, and generalizations. These emphasize quantitative reports of larger populations (UR/LR quadrivia).
3. **Cross-cultural and anthropological studies** utilize single- and multi-subject studies to create an ongoing database of channels in different cultures to discern patterns and generalizations within and across global populations. These emphasize ethnographic and field study methods (LL/LR quadrivia).
4. **Scholarly research (content, or text, analysis of channeled material; and bibliographic work)** analyzes, compares, contrasts, and catalogues the ever-growing body of channeled material to produce a searchable database of annotated bibliographies. This emphasizes hermeneutics (LL quadrivia) and requires an advisory editorial board of expert evaluators. Initial sources could draw from expertise from study groups based on *The Course in Miracles* or 28 volumes of *The Seth Material*.
5. **Try to verify the authenticity of certain channeled sources by analyzing potentially evidential communications.** That is, we need to establish criteria for identifying the channel's own subconscious material and heightened psi abilities from that of an authentic secondary proximate self (either deceased humans or transpersonalities). The former kind of research was done by F. W. H. Meyers (2001), while the later remains a frontier (all quadrivia emphasized).
6. **Study the physiological correlates accompanying channeling episodes.** Uti-

lize various imaging technologies (EEG, fMRI, CAT, PET) to map brain activity of channeling sessions (baseline, onset, duration, and completion). Additionally, include biofeedback data like galvanic skin response, muscle tensions, respiration, heart rate, and blood pressure. Include monitoring cerebrospinal fluid composition and resonance patterns, neurotransmitter and hormonal configurations (UR quadrivia emphasized).

7. **Detection and measurement of energies imputed to the presence of channeled beings and their level of reality in interaction with the channel; and making “grand unified theories” to account for it all.** Klimo outlined what he now calls *Quantum Idealism* (2007) as a theoretical basis to measure subtle energies related to dissociative states (all quadrivia emphasized).
8. **Research physical channeling.** Done extensively during the spiritualist era (1840s to 1930s), when medium-ship also featured rappings, ectoplasm, and apparitions. There are decades of research on this type of channeling in the Proceedings of the British and American Societies for Psychical Research. The goal here is to develop technology in the area of detection, measurement, and documentation on present day physical mediums still found in Spiritualist Churches to explore the type of psychic healing known as “laying of hands” (all quadrivia emphasized).
9. **Further interrogation of especially informative channeled sources.** Identify evidential information or material characterized by extraordinary utility, veridicality, or practical application of its scientific, technical, or scholarly content. The goal is to draw up the best possible set of questions in related fields of inquiry. The resulting material can be processed per approaches four and five above (LL/LR quadrivia emphasized).
10. **Research in psychology and cognitive science in general that relates to channeling.** Include research from psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and cognitive science in areas that have the most interconnection with channeling and related anomalies: altered states of consciousness; “trance” states; the nature of the unconscious in general; the nature of hypnosis and auto-hypnosis; the nature of dissociation, including multiple personalities; the notion of co- and multiple-consciousness; the nature of projection, hallucination, delusion, and imagination; related pathologies such as schizophrenia; and state-dependent information processing (UL/UR quadrivia emphasized).

To my knowledge, there is still no research of this scope that has been funded. My survey of the field revealed (UL) psychological and phenomenological research (Klimo, 1988; Hastings, 1991; Roberts, 1997, 2000a, 2000b; Krippner et al., 1998), (UR), neurological and physiological research (Hughes & Melville, 1990; Krippner et al., 1998), biological and physics research (Klimo, 1998), and (LL/LR) anthropological research (Klimo, 1988; Brown, 1997), but nothing that has been done to date to integrate them all. Therefore, we can use the AQAL-5 framework to better situate and integrate all of these findings. As such, I propose to use Integral Psychology’s ontological model (i.e., overall self-system), Gardner’s MI theory, and Klimo’s QI channeling taxonomy and research agenda’s methods (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10) as the baseline in which to explore channeling as a developmental line via AQAL-5 IMP.

The beauty of AQAL-5 is that it allows us to model and ask many more questions than we can reasonably expect to answer in a single study. Therefore, it is best to begin research with an emphasis on the empirical study of the channeling phenomenon via brain mapping, because if we show a strong (UL) and (UR) correlation, it may open the doors for additional funding. Thus, additional questions will be left for subsequent studies, where we will explore how channeling may be used to further develop human potentials, the arts, psychotherapy, commercial and scientific innovation, and military applications.

## Conclusion

### *Pilot Study*

I propose a pilot study with a minimum of 50 English-speaking subjects to be followed over five years who qualify as channelers (more, if financially feasible). The group does not have to be strictly 50% men and 50% women, as there is a current predilection for women to succeed as self-employed channels over men due to social stigmas in the West (Brown, 1997). The vetting process will be done by interviews based upon Klimo's taxonomy (i.e., types of channelers, channeled sources, and content). Each channeler will serve a dual purpose: their waking state will serve as a control for comparison to their dissociative state(s) in relation to the entire group.

*Statement of Purpose:* To determine if channeling functions as one of multiple human intelligences, per Gardner, and developmental lines, per Wilber, that develops through structure-stages or state-stages.

*Project Significance:* To prove scientifically that channeling is a unique developmental intelligence, one that has been successfully applied to socially accepted roles in the West over the past 40 years (i.e., jobs like life coaching, writing, psychotherapy, music composition and performance, and painting). If proven, channeling will be further legitimized for use in the mainstream, and the availability of funding for research for its practical application and pedagogy in a variety of fields (e.g., human potentials, the arts, psychotherapy, commercial and scientific innovation, and the military) will be accelerated.

### *Key Research Questions*

**UL (zones 1/2).** What are the key characteristics of dissociative states that unfold over five years as structure-stages? What are the key characteristics of dissociative states that unfold over five years in terms of state-stages? What are the effects of spontaneous versus willful volition over the onset, duration, and completion of dissociative states? What are the prominent cognitive, values, ethical, proximate self, and channeling vertical altitudes in the channeler over five years?

**UR (zones 5/6).** What brain modules are involved in the onset, duration, and completion of the waking state and dissociative state in each channeler over five years? What key differences in brain function occur between regular waking state and the dissociative state in each channeler in relation to the group over five years? What is the impact of brain injury or disease on any channeler over five years?

**LL (zones 3/4).** What is the moral impact of the channeler and their marketable artifacts in relation to their families, friends, and clients over five years?

**LR (zones 7/8).** How do channelers make a living? What prominent business and legal issues need to be dealt with? What marketable artifacts do they produce in relation to families, friends, and clients over five years?

**All Quadrivia.** How does tetra-mesh (all the above) impact overall development of dissociative states? What are the key factors in each quadrant that inhibit or promote development of healthy dissociative states?

### *Methods of Inquiry*

**UL (zone 1)** methods will include phenomenological reports:

- Journaling (including dream work).

**UL (zone 2)** methods will include integral psychographs (e.g., cognitive, values, moral, self, “channeling” lines). Exemplars include:

- Stanford-Binet 5; developed by Alfred Binet and Lewis Terman (cognitive line).
- Values Test, Change State Indicator, and Culture Scan; developed by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan (values line).
- Defining Issues Test (DIT); developed by James Rest (moral line).
- Integral Sentence Completion Test (SCTi); developed by Susanne Cook-Greuter (proximate self line) based on the work of Jane Loevinger.
- Absorption Subscale of the Differential Personality Questionnaire (DPQ), Dissociative Experiences Scale (DES), and Boundary Questionnaire (BQ); developed by Stanley Krippner and colleagues (“channeling” line).

**UR (zone 6)** methods include physiological and neurological tests to determine baseline, onset, duration, and completion of dissociative states, and specific brain modules involved. Exemplars include:

- PET, fMRI, CAT, EEG imaging.
- Measuring galvanic skin response, blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension during onset, duration, and completion of dissociative states.

**LL/LR (zone 4/8)** methods will include ethnography to explore how effective channelers communicate and effect the creation of moral social holons (zone 4), and relation to how they make a living, contend with legal issues, and produce marketable artifacts (zone 8). Exemplars include:

- Fieldwork, including direct observation of behavior, informal and formal interviews, genealogy, etc.

Finally, the above serves only as a general outline of the purpose, research questions, and methods of this proposed pilot study. Next steps include identifying potential funding sources and working with the Integral Research Center to form an advisory committee to refine project feasibility and AQAL-5 IMP compliance as details of staff responsibilities, facilities, timeline, and budget are tailored in scope and duration.

## Appendix I

### *A Compilation of AQAL-4 Developmental Lines*

Learning how these transitional structures interrelate, in terms of low, medium, and high development, is key to understanding the nuanced manner in which Ken Wilber uses orienting generalizations (i.e., his critical theory) in AQAL-5 to describe the vertical axis of transformation. For instance, Wilber often cites Lawrence Kohlberg’s research that found respondents answered questions from roughly 25% in one level, 50% in the next highest, and 25% in the next highest. Therefore, even these transitional structures can be “all over the place” depending on any given set of ethical circumstances. Although there tends to be a solid center of gravity (the 50%), we are still engaging immediately preceding and newly emerging structures *simultaneously within the same line*.

When scaled up and applied to all lines, we find *linear* basic and transitional structures (“ladder”), and *nonlinear* streaming (“view”) through them by the self-system (“climber”). Thus, when Wilber refers to the vertical altitudes of these lines in individual holons *in toto*, they are not clunk and grind, true or false facts, but orienting generalizations to situate multiple, sometimes contradictory perspectives within the AQAL matrix. Moreover, each of the low, medium, and high vertical altitudes represents “probability waves.” In other words, there is a 25%-50%-25% chance where certain interior structures and concomitant exterior behaviors have been found, and are most likely to be found again. Wilber wrote:

For AQAL metatheory, a structure is simply a probability wave (in any quadrant). For the paradigm of adequate structuralism, the probability wave refers specifically to the pattern or agency of interior holons—their internality codes or coherence profile (the “wholeness” aspect of the whole/part holon), whether in an “I” or a “we.” For AQAL, what all structures have in common is simply the probability of finding a certain behavior in a certain spacetime locale, and thus the safest orienting generalization is that an “interior structure” is a third-person description of finding a certain first-person reality in particular milieu of the AQAL matrix. (2003d, p. 42)

Wilber also organized these lines into three main types:

1. Cognitive lines (e.g., Piaget, Kegan, which also overlap with basic structure/ levels and provide a “necessary but not sufficient” anchor for most lines)
2. Self-related lines (e.g., morals, self-identity, needs, etc.)
3. Capacities or talent lines (e.g., musical, linguistic, mathematic, kinesthetic, etc.)

Groundbreaking work by Gardner (1983) matched neurological systems or modules in the brain that serve as the physical basis for each line. Although this does not yet apply to every line below, it serves as a solid model to match UL lines with UR brain modules to apply to AQAL-5 IMP-based research. While the most comprehensive compilation of lines can be found in *Integral Psychology* (Wilber, 2000d), the list below cites research that Wilber frequently mentions throughout AQAL-4. There is some overlap, and each line represents only one way—a snapshot—to view any subpersonality or subsystem within the self-system:

## CHANNELING

1. Moral development (e.g., Kohlberg, Gilligan, Armon)
2. Self-identity or proximate-self development (generally called “ego development”) (e.g., Loevinger, Cook-Greuter, Washburn, Wade, Pascual-Leone)
3. Visual-spatial thinking (e.g., Gardner)
4. Logico-mathematical thought (e.g., Gardner)
5. Linguistic-narrative knowledge (e.g., Gardner)
6. Cognitive development (e.g., Piaget, Kegan, Commons & Richards, Aurobindo)
7. Worldviews (e.g., Graves)
8. Interpersonal capacity (e.g., Selman, Perry, Gardner)
9. Psychosexual (e.g., Fortune)
10. Conative and motivational drives
11. Intimacy
12. Self-needs (e.g., Maslow)
13. Altruism
14. Creativity
15. Affective development (e.g., Goleman, Wilber)
16. Level of typical defense mechanisms
17. Mode of spacetime (spatio-temporal architecture)
18. Form of death-seizure
19. Epistemic mode
20. Various specific talents (musical, artistic, bodily-kinesthetic, sports, dance) (e.g., Gardner)
21. Object relations
22. Role-taking
23. Socioemotional capacity
24. Several lines that can be called *spiritual* (care, openness, ultimate concern, religious faith, meditative stages) (e.g., Fowler, Underhill, Baldwin, Wilber, St. Teresa, Patanjali)
25. Communicative competence (e.g., Habermas)
26. Modes of space and time
27. Mathematical competence (e.g., Gardner)
28. Gender identity (e.g., Wilber)
29. Empathy (e.g., Benack) (see Wilber, 1997b, p. 246, p. 256)
30. Aesthetic (e.g., Housen, Baldwin) (see Wilber, 2000d, pp. 197-217)

Finally, Wilber further expanded his definition of the overall self-system to include four simultaneously nested *self-system lines* (not to be confused with the three types above) that also “develop relatively independently” (Fig. 2):

1. Frontal (Ego)
2. Deeper Psychic (Soul)
3. Witness (Self) (see Wilber, 2000a, p. 273)
4. Nondual

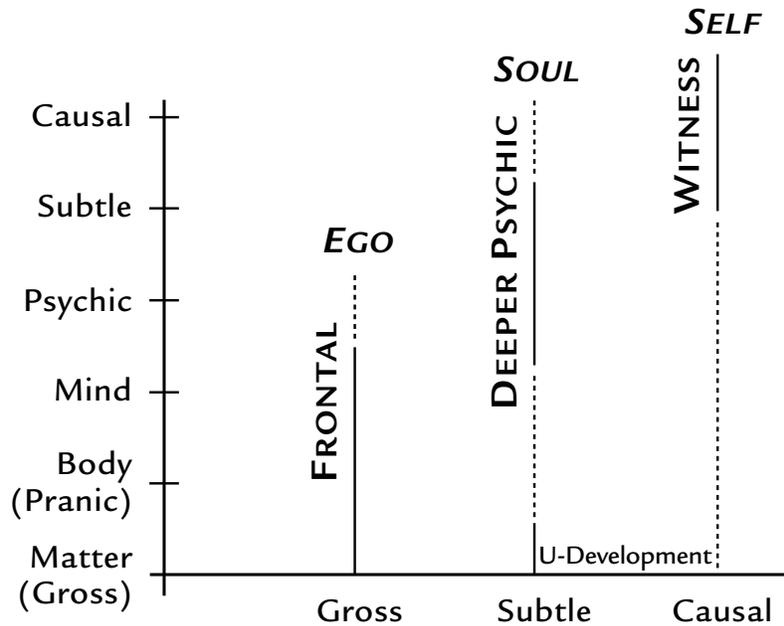


Figure 2. Development of the three major self-system lines. From Reynolds (2004, p. 346); used with permission.

Paradoxically, the nondual “line” is not really a line. It is simultaneously the “ground and goal” of all lines. Also, the *frontal*, *deep psychic*, and *witness* lines may show variations of the traits listed in the main list. However, there remains much research to be done to verify just how they develop. Wilber pointed out that:

The self and therefore *all of the self-related lines* can be modeled in this fashion, with gross, subtle, causal, and nondual streams (of morals, perspectives, drives, etc.) developing relatively independently. It must be strongly emphasized, however, that the number of these streams—if any—that actually develop independently can only be determined by careful research guided by models of this type. The lines (cognitive, self-related, etc.) are prevented from total independence by both the self’s overriding drive for integration and the necessities of holarchical development in general. Many of the lines are necessary but not sufficient for others, and all of them are bound to some degree by the self-system....Although a few of these relationships can be logically deduced, most of them can only be determined by careful research. [emphasis in original] (2000d, p. 258n)

Wilber also pointed out that most developmental research to date measures *only* the frontal (i.e., proximate and distal) selves within the self-system, thus opening the door to explore new relationships between these *self-system lines* through Integral Research.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Huxley (2002, p. 160).

<sup>2</sup> My use of the terms *vertical depth* and *horizontal span* refer to the fundamental axes of AQAL-5 holonic development. It is understood that these terms represent the multidimensional nature of these axes, and are not to be construed as simple binary, X-Y coordinates in a two-dimensional flatland.

<sup>3</sup> In general, I use the term AQAL-5 to include *all* of Wilber's various definitions through 2009. However, since their subtleties may not always be apparent, I will call them out when necessary. Here, the *proximate self* presents the "I" or self-sense in relation to the "me" or *distal self*, and the "I-I" or ever-present *Witness*. Together, these three form the *overall self*. The proximate self shows development, however, but "the overall self does *not* show a sequential or stage-like development" (Wilber, 2000d, p. 34).

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