



The Resurrection of Witch-Healers

: Reassembling Networks of Female Channelers via Channeling

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Introduction

About Contemporary 'Witch-Healers'

This study explores the process through which female 'channelers' achieve social reintegration via spiritual communication, known as 'channeling.' Channeling refers to a technique for communicating with spiritually superior non-human actors, often facilitated through a trance state. The 'channeler' serves as an intermediary, receiving and sharing messages from these non-human actors.

The female channelers identified themselves as "witches." The 'caduceus,' symbolically used by Channeler E, represents Hermes, the messenger god who mediated between the spiritual and material worlds. This symbol was employed by 'witch-healers' in the Middle Ages, who were oppressed and subjected to 'housewifization' through capitalism and the witch hunts (Mies 1998; Federici 2018).

Research Details

Period: 2024.9.2 – 2025.2.28. (6 months)

Participants: 1 male channeling teacher, 10 female channelers

Methods: Interview, Participation Observation

Conceptual framework : Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

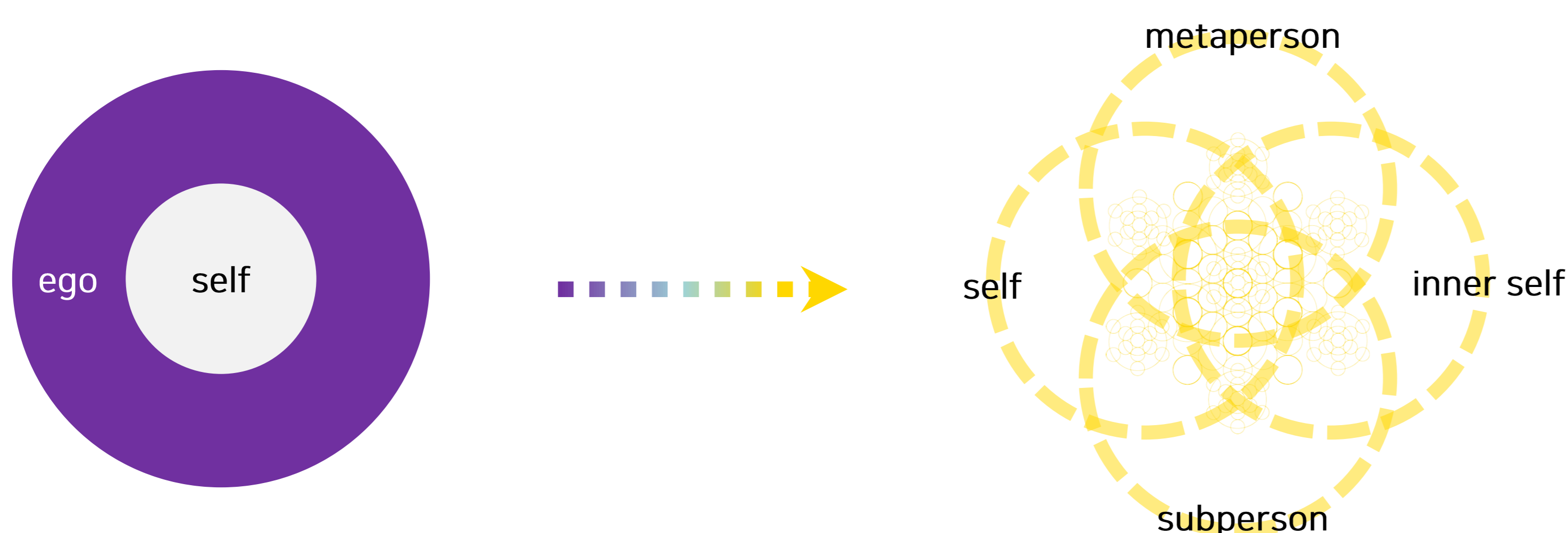
Main Research Questions

1. How do channelers reassemble networks as mediators of alliances?
2. How does a non-human actor's message gain power beyond distortion through the translation process by channelers?

Expanding or Reassembling a Network

Taking a Place to Recognize Non-human Actors

Channeler A said, "Empty your mind and thoughts to a NULL value." Channelers open the mind-space to others, becoming a being-as-other. Being-as-other alters and renews itself; it is never in itself but always in and through others (Latour 2013). Thus, the boundary is not confined to the area claimed by the ego for self-ownership but become a common network expanded with the mutual re-cognition.



Forging Alliances Among Others

Now the inner self is also treated as a communicable actor. The 'metaperson' (Sahlins 2017), whether as the higher self or future self, is connected through the mediation of Channeler A. The metaperson offers better guidance, and is sometimes even considered a 'deity'. But even a deity can present the risk of 'possession' if it draws too close. So it is essential to rebalance a distance for mutual re-respect.

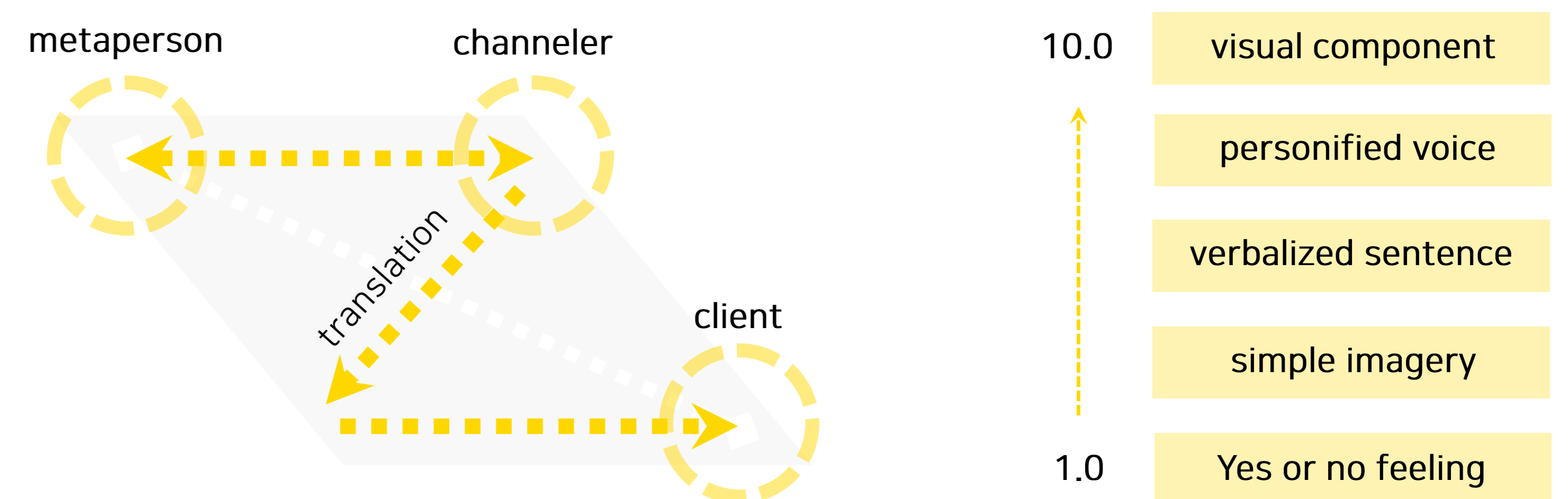
Creating and Cutting Connections

Believing that everything is potentially connected, channelers think they can link to a client's issues through specific technical imagery. They create beneficial new connections within the client for 'healing', and cut harmful ones with the 'subperson'; particularly specters.

Receiving or Translating a Message

Communicating with Metaperson

Channeler E sometimes felt like a mentally ill person talking to herself but kept practicing communication with the metaperson over a long period of time. Eventually, she was able to receive messages from the metaperson, clearly distinguishable from her own thoughts. As the channeling skill increases, the message evolve from simple imagery into narratives with visual components.



Translating Messages through a Z-shaped Detour

This communication process can involve errors of personification and distortions of language. The factuality of the information is not guaranteed, and the metaperson may deliberately provide false messages. There is no in-formation as a fact, only 'trans-formation'. The authorship of translated messages is not attributed to anyone.

Allowing the Message to Exert Power as an Actor

Purifying the translation process to speed up receiving and enhance performance may strengthen the client's belief but diminish the message's value. Without skipping steps as a 'double click' shortcut, the channeler allows messages enough time to exert power. Messages possess power in reality, much like a 'factish' (Latour 2010).

Conclusion

There is no central subject in the channeling process.

There is also no intentional actor focused on spiritual growth or development, nor on becoming a possessed avatar or being entirely independent. It is about maintaining and reassembling respectful distance as beings-as-others accordingly.

A channeling counselor just conveys the power of self-healing.

Whether or not the message's power functions as a 'performative narrative' depends on the client. So the channeler neither predicts the future nor seeks mystical charisma. Healing is ultimately completed through the client's reassembling their own network.

The resurrection of female channelers is not that dramatic.

Channeler E shared that she had lived timidly after becoming a housewife. While she has now reclaimed her social voice, her revival does not aim for more connections, recognition, or social success. It is simply about experiencing the things she once avoided, "like peeling away the endless layers of the onion of destiny".

References

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