

Hahnemann, The Organon and Mesmer

What or who is Mesmer – and what has Hahnemann to do with it?

Take out your Organon or go to <http://www.homeoint.org/books/hahorgan/index.htm> and go to § 288 for the 6th ed., or § 293 for the 5th ed.

From the website listed above, here's the quote:

Boericke - Sixth Edition

§ 288

I find it yet necessary to allude here to animal magnetism, as it is termed, or rather Mesmerism (as it should be called in deference to Mesmer, its first founder) which differs so much in its nature from all other therapeutic agents. This curative force, often so stupidly denied and disdained for a century, acts in different ways. It is a marvellous, priceless gift of God to mankind by means of which the strong will of a well intentioned person upon a sick one by contact and even without this and even at some distance, can bring the vital energy of the healthy mesmerizer endowed with this power into another person dynamically (just as one of the poles of a powerful magnetic rod upon a bar of steel).

It acts in part by replacing in the sick whose vital force within the organism is deficient here and there, in part also in other parts where the vital force has accumulated too much and keeps up irritating nervous disorders it turns it aside, diminishes and distributes it equally and in general extinguishes the morbid condition of the life principle of the patient and substitutes in its place the normal of the mesmerist acting powerfully upon him, for instance, old ulcers, amaurosis, paralysis of single organs and so forth. Many rapid apparent cures performed in all ages, by mesmerizers endowed with great natural power, belong to this class. The effect of communicated human power upon the whole human organism was most brilliantly shown, in the resuscitation of persons who had lain some time apparently dead, by the most powerful sympathetic will of a man in full vigor of vital energy,¹ and of this kind of resurrection history records many undeniable examples.

If the mesmerizing person of either sex capable at the same time of a good-natured enthusiasm (even its degeneration into bigotry, fanaticism, mysticism or philanthropic dreaming) will be empowered all the more with this philanthropic self-sacrificing performance to direct exclusively the power of his commanding good will to the recipient requiring his help and at the same time to concentrate these, he may at times perform apparent miracles.

¹ Especially of one of such persons, of whom there are not many, who, along with great kindness of disposition and perfect bodily powers, possesses but a very moderate desire for sexual intercourse, which it would give him very little trouble wholly to suppress, in whom, consequently, all the fine vital spirits that would otherwise be employed in the production of the semen, are ready to be communicated to others, by touching them and powerfully exerting the will. Some powerful mesmerisers, with whom I have become acquainted, had all this peculiar character.

§ 289

All the above-mentioned methods of practicing mesmerism depend upon influx of more or less vital force into the patient, and hence are termed positive mesmerism.¹ An opposite mode of employing mesmerism, however, as it produces just the contrary effect, deserves to be termed negative mesmerism. To this belong the passes which are used to rouse from the somnambulant sleep, as also all the manual processes known by the names of soothing and ventilating. This discharge by means of negative mesmerism of the vital force accumulated to excess in individual parts of the system of undebilitated persons is most surely and simply performed by making a very rapid motion or the flat extended hand, held parallel to, and

about an inch distant from the body, from the top of the head to the tips of the toes.² The more rapidly this pass is made, so much the more effectually will the discharge be effected. Thus, for instance, in the case where a previously healthy woman,³ from the sudden suppression of her catamenia by a violent mental shock, lies to all appearance dead, the vital force which is probably accumulated in the precordial region, will, by such a rapid negative pass, be discharged and its equilibrium throughout the whole organism restored. So that the resuscitation generally follows, immediately.⁴ In like manner, a gentle, less rapid, negative pass diminishes the excessive restlessness and sleeplessness accompanied with anxiety sometimes produced in very irritable persons by a too powerful positive pass, etc.

¹ When I here speak of the decided and certain curative power of positive mesmerism, I most assuredly do not mean that abuse of it, where, by repeated passes of this kind, continued for half an hour or a whole hour at a time, and, even day after day, performed on weak, nervous patients, that monstrous revolution of the whole human system is effected which is termed somnambulism, wherein the human being is ravished from the world of sense and seems to belong more to the world of spirits - a highly unnatural and dangerous state, by means of which it has not infrequently been attempted to cure chronic diseases.

² It is a well known rule that a person who is either to be positively or negatively mesmerised, should not wear silk on any part of the body.

³ Hence a negative pass, especially if it be very rapid, is extremely injurious to a delicate person affected with a chronic ailment and deficient in vital force.

⁴ A strong country lad, ten years of age, received in the morning, on account of slight indisposition, from a professed female mesmeriser, several very powerful passes with the points of both thumbs, from the pit of the stomach along the lower edge of the ribs, and he instantly grew deathly pale, and fell into such a state of unconsciousness and immobility that no effort could arouse him, and he was almost given up for dead. I made his eldest brother give him a very rapid negative pass from the crown of the head over the body to the feet, and in one instance he recovered his consciousness and became lively and well.

Already in § 319 of the 3rd edition of the Organon, published in 1824 in Dresden, Hahnemann had written about the 'animal magnetism', i.e. Mesmerism. Thee 2 aphorisms referring to Mesmer underwent some changes from the 4th edition to the 6th editions, several parts were crossed out, footnotes added.

Yet, already in his dissertation published in 1779, he mentioned Magnetism and Mesmerism in the list of nerve remedies:

"Magnetismus, (in Odontalgia) Mesmerianae Curationes"

Who was Mesmer?

Franz Anton Mesmer - a pioneer

(1734 - 1815)

In Vienna Mesmer received his doctorate degree of medicine in 1756, writing "About the influence of planets on human health", not from an astrologic but from a natural scientific point of view.

First he used natural magnets, then from 1774 on he employed the so-called 'animal magnetism'. In his final most important work 'System der Wechselwirkungen' (system of alternating effects), published in 1814 by Wolfart, he describes many basic processes, like the 'crisis', an intensification of symptoms, after which a cure results:

"Magnetizing finally is nothing else than communicating immediately or mediately the tonic movement of the fine flood with which the substance of the nerves is impregnated; this is,

what this agens sets, which can determinate curative crises of all sorts as the true means to cure." [translation Gaby Rottler]

His popularity throughout Europe had grown during his travels, his fame even spread into the so-called New World: Benjamin Franklin was said to be one of his followers.

In 1778 Mesmer moved to Paris where he practiced at the Place Vendôme. Hundreds of patients, aristocrates as well as the poor people, were continually visiting his house.

Some of his disciples founded the 'Société de l'Harmonie' - a rare mixture of business enterprise, private school and freemasonry (quote: Ellenberger) and established several magnetic clinics in France. Because of the public discussion - the king had summoned a commission to investigate some of Mesmer's assertions - and the way his followers used and spread his teachings, Mesmer left Paris and disappeared. During the French Revolution the magnetic clinics were destroyed.

Mesmer went moved to Baden in Germany, then to Frauenfeld in Switzerland where he treated poor and rich people for free in his clinic with his magnetic curative method.

In 1812, a scientist named Wolfart got into contact with Mesmer and published Mesmer's ideas in the volumes mentioned above.

Mesmer died in 1815 in Meersburg, Germany.

References:

Knapp-Diederichs: Franz Anton Mesmer - Pionier der modernen Körpertherapie

Mesmer, Friedrich Anton: Mesmerismus oder System der Wechselwirkungen, 1814 (reprint Bonset, 1966)