

# **An Interview with a 'Mesmerist'**



**An interview with 'Lee Gerrard-Barlow' by 'Sarah Janes'**

**SJ: We're very excited about you coming to talk to us about Mesmerism at The Explorers Club. How would you describe the forces at play when someone is being Mesmerized?**

**LGB: Thank you. It's certainly a very interesting subject, and something that the public should be made more aware of. I would defer from describing the forces that are at play, and would rather encourage people to actually experience them. Films of mesmerists at work are fine when someone does not have a mesmerist at hand, because they at least visually demonstrate some of the effects, but it really does have to be experienced in order to be understood. A human tendency is to gravitate toward explaining various phenomena we come across; unfortunately this is antithetical to the workings of Mesmerism which is instead a total or if you like – 'holistic' reaction. Whenever we identify, conceptualize or name something, we in fact create a barrier between a true experience of that 'thing'; which also bars us from truly connecting with or 'feeling' what may be understood to be the 'essence' of that thing. The mind is actually but one very small part of our entire being, and for so long now we have tended to work with the Cartesian notion of – "I think therefore I am". It would appear we don't even regard ourselves as existing unless we have an identifiable sense of 'Self' that can mentally affirm itself to itself. This is usually the endless monkey-like chatter of our thoughts that we actually regard as being our 'Self'. We have also the tendency to compartmentalize, which means that we have relegated the whole of our identity to our 'brain'. The brain is but a small part from which everything else 'extends' out from; our skin is in this sense an extension of what we call the brain. The Ancient Egyptians actually regarded the brain as quite un-important and even threw it away during the embalming process, whereas the other viscera, such as the Lungs, the Heart, Bowels etcetera were carefully taken out and preserved. Much of Mesmerism actually originates from Ancient Egyptian practices that gradually filtered into the western world. This may seem**

quite incredible to many, but it is the case nonetheless.

**SJ:** In your article in *Trebuchet Magazine* – you talked about therapeutic applications of Mesmerism. Can you give some examples of responses and outcomes to this sort of treatment?

**LGB:** Throughout the history of Mesmerism, in the accounts reported by all the great Mesmerists in the 1700s such as Mesmer himself, the Marquis de Puysegur; a little later ‘La Fontaine’, the Baron Du Potet and, in more recent times, the English Mesmerist; Du Potet’s student Dr. John Elliotson in the 1880s. Elliotson was a physician who helped to establish University College Hospital and constantly used Mesmerism on his patients. He recorded vast numbers of his case studies in his Magazine ‘The Zoist’. Esdaile, while posted in Calcutta during the first world war, also recorded very detailed accounts of his achievements, which were witnessed and verified by many others, he cured many people of ‘Shellshock’ through Mesmerism, today we call it Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

These days Mesmerism can be very useful for the regeneration of nervous debilitation; for getting an individual re-centered and re-balanced and to regain a healthy relationship to ones own body and increased awareness of ones own energies which amounts to the same thing . Mesmerism was regarded as a panacea by many ancient practitioners. It is very much a matter of experimentation, application and research by the individual practitioner. Reading up on all the historic accounts tells you what was achieved and how the various practitioners related to their art. In my work I actually utilize a variety of hypnotic methods in therapy tailored to each individual case, but Mesmerism itself is definitely the most rapid method for getting people into deep states where real change can occur. So this art forms the basis of it all. What is also amazing, is that it is completely ‘non verbal’, and used for ‘inductions’, it is by far the best method compared to

**the lengthy verbal inductions of traditional hypnosis.**

**SJ: Mesmer's idea about a universal 'vital' fluid surrounding and residing in all living bodies has resonances in current scientific thought about virtual particles, electromagnetic fields and quantum mechanics. I'm fascinated by the possibilities of a union between science and religion/spirituality. Can you see science and religion evolving together in the future?**

**LGB: Science and Religion was in fact the same thing in ancient cultures. All practical formulas had a scientific basis in the respect of being highly technical and based upon actual recorded observations. However they were also drawn from certain beliefs. These days we would call such a thing Faith, but to the ancients these things were not belief but fact. The one culture I mainly refer to when I say 'ancient' is the ancient Egyptian culture. Despite all appearances they did in fact possess a very deep form of science beneath their practices – we are monkeys in comparison. What we now call the 'Enlightenment' period was actually an attempt by those in the know to retrieve and cause a re-birth, a renaissance of these old fragments of science. We see evidence that many of these great thinkers incorporated important key elements back into religious art and other forms of the science had to develop under private research. Current day Chemistry is a direct offshoot and by-product of the earlier researches of Alchemy. As for the first point of your question regarding the quantum aspect of Mesmer's 'Universal Fluid', this is a fascinating area in itself, and yes, it does have enormous relevance to current research. The recent work of Dr. Rupert Sheldrake and his 'Morphogenetic Fields' I think is highly relevant to your question; and what is also amusing is that he being a fully trained 'scientist' has recently published a book named 'The Science Delusion' (a counteractive pun on Dawkins' '-God Delusion' and it even has a similar cover!) In it he gives us 10 points that science holds its very foundation upon and operates from. He then systematically demonstrates how all these principles are based on pure supposition. He also points out that any**

**free-thinkers in science communities are nowadays being treated with the same contempt as in the days of the Inquisition where genuine enquiry was being attacked by the Church. He also points out that in science communities people such as he, are being given the nomenclature of the Inquisition by being labelled 'heretic' in official documents, and being barred from funding. He finds it most amusing that science has a tendency to fall back upon using the language of the very thing that they were being persecuted by at their inception .We must not forget however, that Sheldrake is a thoroughly trained scientist himself, and even now is held in high regard and still funded by Cambridge University. He is no quack.**

**SJ: I certainly feel myself drawn to particular people that emanate a charismatic or powerful energy. Now that you yourself practice Mesmerism, do you feel able to more keenly detect the magnetic potential or power in strangers on the street? And do you feel this sort of power is something that can be nurtured and drawn out?**

**LGB: Charisma and an accompanying sense of energy can be amplified in any individual with the right amount of training and application. In fact, in the highest level of NLP training, this is what they attempt to teach. I have never known such attention to detail regarding the development of 'Presence' as with the Continental School I originally trained with under Dr Marco Paret. I will be training people over here in England quite soon as the UK's first trainer in this System.**

**SJ: I was reading about the scandal Mesmer created when he was treating an 18 year old girl in Vienna, who had been blind since the age of four – he was said to have been responsible for a partial recovery in her vision (which later deteriorated when her parents forced him to cease his treatment) – but presumably a sexual intrigue of some type led to him fleeing Vienna. Is this the reason why 'Animal Magnetism' has such a strong**

**association now with sex and sex appeal?**

**LGB: This incident is depicted in the largely fictitious film *Mesmer* starring Alan Rickman. It is not possible to know how true the original account actually is, as there were many folk out to discredit his work at that time; it does bring us onto an important subject however.**

**The mis-application of these techniques in situations that are meant to be professional is obviously to be condemned, and therefore Mesmerism is no different to any other profession.**

**The question of issues such as holding oneself above sexual feelings or physical attraction is always a possibility in the mind of subjects, and maybe even in the minds of certain practitioners; however in actual practice the whole self is to be focussed on 'a different level' so to speak; the highest level of personal and professional integrity is required, and of course the purpose of the session is sacrosanct. Without doubt these techniques could be used very effectively between willing participants in private work to great effect for issues relating to sexual concerns and for amplification of certain sexual energies.**

**The point you make about sex appeal may be simply due to the fact that the cultivation of 'Presence' induces a certain glamour or magnetic appeal surrounding a practitioner of the art. The reasons for this are too much to go into here, but the term 'Animal Magnetism' is essentially a reference to our inherent connection to nature which is the only true source of healing.**

**SJ: Mesmerism is a form of non-verbal communication, I see similarities between Mesmerism and Reiki, is that valid do you think?**

**LGB: The first and most obvious reaction to seeing Mesmerism is that many find it similar to Reiki. Obviously both are working with energy. But the**

methodology and whole approach is very different. If you see **my video** on You Tube:

While watching the film it may be seen that I'm 'feeling' the difference in various areas in the energy fields. And this awareness can manifest to my self and the client in a number of ways. It's exactly due to this that I understand which areas are to be worked upon. The client is usually also very aware of distinct 'visceral' reactions while working upon them. The video, if watched carefully, especially in the last couple of minutes ( 6:26 ), clearly shows reactions that have absolutely nothing to do with suggestion as the subject has her eyes fully closed throughout; and I am often implementing the various types of 'magnetic passes' from behind the subject.

There is a great deal to be said in favour of approaches that insist upon keeping a simple, grounded and very gradual approach. An approach preferably removed from the need or the desire for mental gymnastics, or to overcomplicate ones direct experience. I make the point in **my article** in *Trebuchet Magazine* – that the path of the Mesmerist is based upon various exercises which can be demanding and testing for the more serious practitioner, but it's also transformational.

The cultivation of 'PRESENCE' really is the true key factor in all this and is the very thing missing in most books and other teachings I have either read or come across regarding Mesmerism. Presence is the most sublime path that can very easily become the essence of ones daily work. It's this 'Presence' that fuels the work with magnetism, and is definitely something you need to be introduced into by an experienced teacher, as is also the case with Mesmerism. 'Presence' is an opening out of the senses; where things become more 'vivified', with an accompanying increase in energy.

**SJ:** Non-linguistic understanding is a really interesting subject – I wonder

**if you have read anything about the theory of the bicameral mind? Does this theory fit in with the idea of Animal Magnetism and the idea Mesmer had, about the body not being able to lie?**

**LGB: This touches upon a very interesting area. In fact every facet of the subject of Mesmerism opens up other vast subjects. In clinical hypnosis we understand hypnosis to be defined in terms of – “The bypassing of the critical faculty of the mind”. Personally, I have found this term to be both clumsy and inadequate, yet it is useful as a preliminary working paradigm, especially in hypnotherapy which works mainly upon the psychological level. Julian Jaynes in his theories on “The Bicameral Mind” implies that we were in the earliest times ‘Automatons’ to external nature with no connection at that time with our internal feedback. In contrast, I would say, and I think Mesmer would have agreed, that our earliest form of consciousness was in fact a total or ‘Pan-Consciousness’ and that it is this complete open-ness to all phenomena both inside and outside of us, that we have gradually ‘dis-engaged’ from. Jaynes appears to say that we are now Unicameral, that we are currently using both halves of the brain. What we are doing in Mesmerism is in fact working from the idea that we have devolved from a fully integrated state, or alternatively we are still not yet fully evolved into it. Mesmerism engages all levels of ‘Being’ along with the physical basis of the entire Central Nervous system and its ganglia in order to balance both halves of it all, and not just the brain. In our earliest stages, we may not have needed the ‘Mind’ as we currently understand ‘Mind’ in the sense of being ‘Identified’ with it. The Mind is only a part of our being, as I said earlier we tend to believe that “I think therefore I am”. It is this over-identification with the mind that we tend to become attached to, even enslaved to, which tends to be the source of many current day psychological ailments. It’s actually this that we call ‘The Ego’. As for your reference to the ‘Universal Fluid’, it may be said that it was seen as a kind of Universal Solvent that reconnects and heals not only the mind, but also all the other possible levels of what constitutes a human being. This is actually a very deep and complex teaching that unfortunately cannot be answered in the extremely limited context of a printed interview. These things are**

**essentially experiential; something of this can only begin to be grasped, not just thought but viscerally 'felt' and understood while in the state of what we label for the sake of convenience: Mesmerism.**

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