Modern day Mesmerism

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Many people are familiar with ‘Hypnotism’ in it’s various forms such as Stage Hypnosis and Hypno-therapies, and its modern hyper-packaged cousin ‘Neuro Linguistic Programming’.

‘N.L.P’ has become a household name, having been popularised by the likes of Paul McKenna and Derren Brown. You may think that ‘Hypnotism’ is strange enough, but a curious fact is that even serious students of disciplines such as ‘Clinical Hypnosis’ are rarely taught or even encouraged to research the far stranger origins of their profession. That to which I refer is ‘Mesmerism’.
These days, many people are completely unaware of where the commonplace word ‘Mesmerism’ derives from.

‘Mesmerism’ is the term coined due to ‘Franz Anton Mesmer’ (1734-1815), a most curious Austrian gentleman, well worthy of further research, who practised and popularised a therapeutic form known as ‘Animal Magnetism’. He believed in the reality of a ‘universal fluid’ that surrounds every living thing, that can be directed ‘at will’ by an individual operator. This has interesting implications when seen in the light of more recent ideas on Quantum Theory.

Although it is of popular belief that mesmerism (also known as ‘Animal Magnetism’ or simply ‘magnetism’) fell into obscurity purely due to its being disqualified by the medical profession. In fact it was the hiatus caused by the onset of the French Revolution that obscured the art. Mesmer did in fact have many patrons from the nobility of European Society.

Word of the powerful healing abilities of Mesmerism persisted despite its going underground, until in England in 1884 the surgeon James Braid of Manchester, after having personally observed the demonstrations given by the travelling mesmerist ‘Charles La Fontaine’, made an attempt at laying the ‘mystical’ belief in animal magnetism to rest by making a concise study of it; thereby forming the foundation of the so-called ‘science’ of certain procedures that are to this day utilised by hypnotherapists. Braid did a very good job, being an expert physician in studies of the eye and the muscular system, but sadly threw out the baby with the bathwater with regard to his rejection of some of the more potent and unusual methods of ‘Magnetism’. And yet despite his attempts, various practitioners of the art continued their work in various locations.
It is very interesting that at Mesmer's grave in Meersburg, Germany there is an allusion to the connection that Mesmer had with many 'concealed' 'mystical' Western systems of thought. His grave is a curious triangular monument complete with one face showing the planetary orbits, and another of the three faces showing the Eye in the triangle, all topped by a Sundial. When the monument was commissioned by Dr Karl Wolfart and first built, all of the etchings were inlaid with real gold.

It must here be noted that the vast interest that Mesmer caused in France later resulted in Sigmund Freud becoming interested in learning this art in his very early career. However, Freud failed to get the results that so many of the French 'Mesmerists' were attaining and eventually gave it up in favour of 'word association'; a practise which formed the basis of his therapy from that point onwards.

What is so often not made clear to eager students of Hypnotism in most schools of 'Clinical Hypnosis' when learning of the history of their art, is that some of the figures that are upheld as being of the greatest importance in Hypnotism (due to their well-recorded ability to perform great feats of immediate anaesthesia without the use of drugs, or by creating extremely powerful states of trance that could even induce 'catatonia' and deep 'coma states' within a fraction of the time that our current day hypnotists are capable) were in fact 'Magnetists' and not 'Hypnotists' (as we now understand the term).

Since that time Magnetism or Mesmerism has become a most obscure and esoteric pursuit, often only being researched by the most ardent individuals. One very curious application that mesmerism is capable of is its use on animals. There are many stories of various mesmerists being used to great effect upon
animals both small and large. Dogs, birds, even lions.

Mesmerism is however making quite a comeback. In 1994 the film Mesmer starring Alan Rickman was released, albeit largely fictitious and of course given a romanticised view-point.

More importantly, in the real world right now in Nice, France, there exists a modern school teaching the art of Mesmerism, headed by a Dr. Marco Paret. Paret is currently one of the world's leading authorities on the subject.

To help readers understand a little more of the applications of Mesmerism; according to ‘Magnetic’ theory, ill health is caused by an ‘imbalance’ in the human bio-system; yet this also has implications on a quantum level, as it is said that the operator forms a ‘Quantum entanglement’ with his subject.

“A collapse into one invariable direction on the part of the wave function in our life is what is termed imbalance. This imbalance consists in a lopsided “reduction” of the variety which the world is characterised by. This concept carries certain implications for one’s health as well,... It is the same thing as seeing too much from one eye and too little from the other, reality becomes dis-featured” .... Balance, on the other hand, is well being, which ought to be understood in this context as signifying harmony.” – Magnetism and Magnetic Ascent, Dr. Marco Paret.

Indeed Mesmer himself created ‘la Société de l’Harmonie’ (The Society of Harmony) in honour of this principle of harmony. He did in fact once conclude after lengthy ventures in the mountains that ‘the whole of nature is in harmony; except for man’ and that there was therefore a need to restore the balance that animals and nature exhibit in abundance.

“All beings of the universe are so connected that it is as if they touched each other” (Mesmer)

Mesmer’s aim was to reconnect humankind to this awareness of interconnectedness; believing that this would be in itself a form of ‘medicine’. In fact it is these very states of ‘Connectivity’ and ‘harmony’ a magnetic operator must enter into in order to effect the healing properties of this art. While understanding that it may be a difficult subject to grasp for interested students or even for readers of general interest, I recently posed a few questions to Dr. Paret that could help anyone new to this fascinating subject.

What can Magnetism offer the world at large today?

Marco Paret: Firstly we can think that learning these techniques is a path of personal development. They resort to vitality and the exercises you learn are for enhancing well-being and vitality. These exercises develop energy and awareness, as awareness and energy are strictly related. About the other uses, we can use these techniques for therapy, coaching, education.” Pratically, whenever hypnosis is resorted to, magnetism has the ability of amplifying its effect. What is different, however, is that the approach which mesmerismus takes pays great regard to the body, and
undoubtedly operates at a more subliminal level than classical hypnosis. Each person has a body. The key, as far as many people are concerned, lies in recovering the bodily perception which so many people deny to themselves.

Dr Marco Paret

The truth is that all the patients are very happy about this kind of techniques, and they invariably record excellent results. As for the speed at which results materialise, results might be within closer reach due to the fact that the non-verbal is denser than the verbal, as the latter follows the speed of words. Non verbal sometimes is immediate.

How can people learn these techniques?
Marco Paret: The best is through a live course. We have also published many books, but the true essence of the technique needs a live course. It is a practical ability, as is skiing, swimming etc… Videos can be useful, but only if a person has already learnt the basics.

How is Magnetism different to other disciplines, such as Hypnotism & NLP?

Marco Paret: Neuro Linguistic Programming might be complementary to our discipline, but the departure point is different. Neuro-Linguistic Programming is founded on the concept of a “dominant channel”, whereas magnetism, being the way of gaining access to the sixth sense, to the so-called quintessence, to true intuition and magnetic strength, can only emerge after one has equally developed the other five channels. Magnetism can even be complementary to hypnosis as it is currently practised. Hypnosis as currently practised is essentially verbal. Magnetism and ‘mesmerismus’ are non-verbal. Words are endowed with a lower density than gestures. What is non-verbal is denser than the verbal. The self, the
In the media in the last three years there has been quite a lot written on ‘Mindfulness’. In your courses you teach ‘Presence’ as a tool for self development and you also point to its therapeutic value. ‘Presence’ can seem very similar at first to ‘Mindfulness’, how do these concepts differ?

Marco Paret: They are the very same concept, as all true traditions converge. Just what we can observe in the preliminary stages working in presence we have a very clear path to get these results. A strong point is bringing attention to the body. This concept is very important for the modern man that has lost this sensitivity. Even the attention to the “energies” typical of the first steps in magnetism is a recovering of some bodily sensations often forgotten but nevertheless existing. But the path can go a lot further.

In the following video link Dr. Paret speaks in his native Italian; but the video has many annotations and is a good demonstration of the various ‘states’ that subjects can enter.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCx3dpU7Pbk&feature=player_embedded

At this point, and from an ‘experiential’ point of view based upon what I witnessed during the course in Nice I shall personally attempt to answer this basic question.

WHAT IS MAGNETISM?

During these seminars in Nice, the real revelation for me was when I understood that the whole principle of magnetism is in fact extremely simple. As stated, Mesmer believed that disease was created in an individual by an ‘imbalance’ or blocking in the energy of a being; human or animal. For example: the body follows the basic ‘duality’ of the C.N.S (Central Nervous System) thus we have two Major halves of the brain, two eyes, two ears and the extended ‘Peripheral Nervous System’ (P.N.S or ‘Enteric Brain’) which reflects this dualistic trend. What I am about to describe is slightly different, yet follows this principle of ‘duality’.

Dr Paret asked us to perform a simple exercise where the whole human body acted as a pendulum, the basic method of ‘dowsing’ or ‘divination’ with a pendulum being an ancient art used for centuries, and perhaps much longer, by ordinary country folk and farmers when needing to find answers to problems. A question would be posited, such as where is a new water supply in my field?, or in the case of diagnostics: where is the problem in the body?, etc. The pendulum then begins a swaying motion back and forth and a decision is usually made by the practitioner to assign a ‘Yes/No’ to this movement.

In the case of a human body acting as the pendulum the basic principle of attraction/repulsion comes into play when the practitioner asks the client to think of something they like or want, and the opposite, something they really dislike. And ‘Behold’! .. the body cannot lie, unbeknownst to the client (due to the fact they have their eyes closed) the body sways forwards or backwards as they are repelled or attracted to the idea in their mind.

This simple example forms the basis of much more advanced work on the ‘magnetic polarities’ of the body.
It crossed my mind that certain individuals are so deeply immersed in the layers of what may be termed their ‘conscious’ beliefs and so utterly identified with these beliefs that they have to a greater or lesser extent lost ‘contact’ with the feedback of the ‘true self’. This method cuts through these layers and replaces the more usual ‘ideo-motor’ signalling of standard Hypno-therapeutic practise, which relies upon ‘sub-conscious’ and ‘involuntary’ (from a conscious perspective) muscular twitches. The ‘Magnetic’ Method just described supplies practitioners with a tool which is (in my opinion) far superior.

This method in fact is extended to a point in ‘magnetism’ where the practitioner even begins to ask questions ‘mentally’ and awaits the response. A most interesting phenomenon, and when this stage is attained one can evolve the process into ‘mentally’ asking if certain points on the body should be worked upon, and for this Dr Paret supplied us with a variety of symbolic forms to utilise, on the basis that symbols are a much more direct route to our subconscious relationship with our energy.

The results in practise were astounding, but this is most definitely the point where it becomes almost impossible to describe but rather has to be experienced.

The following video link demonstrates various Magnetic Phenomena occurring; especially at 6:25 minutes into the film.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=CoHtkGNgv4y8

An account of my own experience among the ‘modern day mesmerists’:

There was an incredible harmony in the group that I have never previously witnessed in any other types of training. This was maintained throughout all six days on the course. This I attribute to Marco’s own skill in creating this ambience. The venue itself was resplendently decked out in a style that would not have been amiss in Venice of the 1700’s; yet aside this glamour, I would also attribute it to the genuinely compelling situation of the direct experience of a subject that essentially is not to be understood by the rational. Marco’s own indisputable skill in his knowledge of the subject and delivery kept all constantly fixed in the moment. In fact a large part of this training focused upon just that: ‘Staying in the Presence’.

“Children have neither a past nor a future. Thus they enjoy the present– which seldom happens to us.” – Goethe

‘Presence’ at first appears a simple concept, but it soon becomes clear that the majority of the human race are very far from this state of real ‘Presence’. Paret utilises this method for therapeutic purposes with clients, but he also emphasises the need for this in our own everyday lives for our personal maximum effectiveness. He regards the whole ability to maintain ‘Presence’ as being the key component for maximum success in Mesmerism.

Those who come to these ‘experiential events’ thinking that they may be about to witness a standard NLP or hypnosis training simply twisted into a new kind of branding will be severely shocked; in fact, those forms derive from this more ancient form. This training is more akin to that of the Taoist, the Yogi or ‘Warrior
Monk, as during his courses many exercises are undertaken to ‘amplify’ the powerful inner states necessary for the successful performance of ‘Magnetism’ that practitioners such as Franz Anton Mesmer originally applied to their patients.

During Dr. Paret’s courses, many of these exercises are performed out in nature under natural light with the aim of allowing a maximum excitation in the cortex of the brain.

As we have learnt, the major difference between hypnotic work and Magnetism is that the former appears to require no ‘belief’, but only the application of procedure. The latter is more a ‘Path’, developing a kind of personal ‘Illumination’ and in this way the parallel to a Yogic system of ‘self training’ holds well. Magnetism (Mesmerism) does however have direct therapeutic applications.

Here we summarise, that Mesmerism is the ‘Missing Heart’ of modern hypnotic therapies; and it also appears to give more than just a gentle nod to some of history’s most hidden mystic traditions of the Continent.

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WEBSITE FOR U.K COURSES & PRIVATE SESSIONS: http://arcanatherapies.com/

VIDEOS: http://www.youtube.com/user/ArcanaTherapies

To Contact the School of Nice & for a Free fascination course online write to: mesmerismus_eng@getresponse.com

Free online courses available by writing to: http://www.mesmerismus.info.