



## Smithsonian Institution

*Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives*

### John and Charles Wise Ballooning Collection - Scrapbook 3

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Deleuze, "whether its [artificial somnambulism] sudden propagation has not produced as much evil as good, and whether it would not have been better that this marvelous phenomenon had not been at first observed, and that people had confined themselves to magnetism as Mesmer taught it, and as many persons before him practiced it, without knowing whether they employed a particular agent, or a faculty common to all men."

The first step is thus made toward an explanation of Foster's doings, by the mesmeric theory, in the knowledge that the "power of magnetizing lies in every one." A second step will have been made by the abandonment of the commonly received view that two persons are essential in Mesmeric operations, one strong, the other weak; the first attracting, then bringing into reckless subjection, much as the serpent fascinates the bird. Deleuze describes at length the processes of magnetism; but the teaching of later Mesmerists is to the effect that the "power of magnetizing" is not only "common to all men," but extends to the magnetism of one's self.

"The methods of modern magnetism," remarks Dr. Fahnestock, "are scarcely less absurd than those of Mesmer and his immediate followers. Some operators of the present day, who believe in a magnetic influence, still pursue the ludicrous methods of sitting down opposite to the patient, holding his thumbs, staring into his eyes, making passes, etc., etc." He remarks further that he has never noticed any perceptible difference in the susceptibility of persons, "which depends more on the state of the subject's mind at the time of trial than upon sex, temperament," etc., etc. Again: "The operator has no power to produce this condition, and, independent of his instructions and his capability of managing while in it, has nothing to do with it." \* \* \* It is possible for any person to throw himself into this state at pleasure, independent of any one."

Dr. Fahnestock continues: "I have had over three hundred different individuals enter this state under my care, and have found by innumerable experiments that they are entirely independent of me, and can enter this state and awaken themselves whenever they please, notwithstanding all I can do to the contrary. They can throw the whole or any part of the body into this state at pleasure, and I have seen many do it in an instant, a single finger, a hand, an arm, the whole brain, or even a single organ (or portion) and awake them at pleasure."

"The powers of perception in this state, compared with the same function in a natural state, are inconceivably greater, and it is impossible for those who have not seen or made the necessary experiments to conceive the difference. Language fails to express it, and our common philosophy is too circumscribed to explain the reality."

"This function, when roused and properly directed, is extremely sensitive and correct, and most subjects, by an act of their will, can translate their perceptions to any part of the body, whether to the stomach, feet, hands, or fingers, and use them at these points as well as at any other."

"When a function of perception becomes active, while in a state of artificial somnambulism, it is enabled to perceive without the aid of the external senses."

If the testimonies of Dr. Fahnestock, who is still living, be true, he demonstrates the power of a person, thoroughly in the somnambulant state, to read the mind of another, far or near, and in this position he is supported by numerous writers.

Assuming for the moment the truth of the mesmeric propositions already quoted, and what does there lack of a full explanation of Foster's so-called invocation of spirits but fuller practical knowledge of this vast field of little-explored artificial somnambulism, against which, maybe with just and proper prejudice, we so determinedly shut our eyes? Capable of taking on and laying off the somnambulant state in an instant, he appears

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