



purchase of special equipment for the sickroom, changing a patient's bedroom into a barren, hospital-style ward. In some ways the current popularity of home care is a return to an era of patient control over the care environment. Another effect of medical reforms was the licensing and regulation of medical practitioners; before this, just about anyone could treat sick people. Medicine, after all, didn't have a great success rate.

Medical reforms such as these made mesmerism seem conservative. Its mode of diagnosis and treatment was, to many, "more proper" than hospital practice. Now that invasive medicine is the standard for the investigation and treatment of many conditions, it can be hard for today's physicians to appreciate how auscultation and percussion were cultural shocks to the Victorian patient. The professionalization of medicine required patients to learn new ways of being sick. Winter argues that mesmerism was a countercurrent to these changes in medical practice, one that empowered patients — especially several prominent women such as Ada Lovelace, Elizabeth Barrett and Harriet Martineau, who publicized their cures.

Winter's book will appeal to physicians interested in the history of medicine and to anyone practising clinical hypnosis. *Mesmerized* is an entertaining exploration of a neglected subject, even if in the end it reads like a feverishly overwritten doctoral thesis.

Peter Vaughan, MD, MPH

Dr. Vaughan is Secretary General of the CMA.

[Y]ou cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind to the last generation, by ... ascertaining the secret of the magnet which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (1831 edition)

Two thousand words



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Men's and women's sitting rooms, Perley Home for Incurables, Ottawa, January 1904