

Reading Evaluation: "Mesmeric Revelation" by Edgar Allan Poe

Instructions: Read each question carefully and select the correct answer by circling the corresponding letter.

1. What was the primary historical and cultural context surrounding the practice of mesmerism during the 19th century?
 - A) A legitimate branch of traditional medical surgery focused on anatomy.
 - B) A popular pseudoscience involving animal magnetism, which fascinated writers like Poe.
 - C) An early form of psychoanalysis developed strictly by Sigmund Freud.
 - D) A religious cult based entirely on spiritualistic seances to communicate with the dead.
2. What medical condition afflicts Mr. Vankirk at the beginning of the story?
 - A) A terminal heart condition.
 - B) Cholera.
 - C) Tuberculosis (referred to in the text as phthisis or consumption).
 - D) Malaria.
3. According to Mr. Vankirk's philosophy in the story, what is the fundamental relationship between matter and spirit?
 - A) Matter and spirit are two entirely separate, opposing substances.
 - B) Matter is merely a temporary, subjective illusion created by the human mind.
 - C) Matter and spirit are locked in an eternal, irreconcilable conflict.
 - D) Spirit is simply matter in its most highly divided or rarefied form.
4. How does Vankirk define "unparticled matter"?
 - A) The fundamental substance that constitutes the Deity, or God.
 - B) The invisible, microscopic space between atoms in the physical world.
 - C) The physical, indivisible building blocks of the human soul.
 - D) Matter that has been completely destroyed by extreme energy.
5. In Vankirk's cosmology, which of the following best describes the nature of God?
 - A) God is a conscious, anthropomorphic being who created the universe out of nothing in seven days.
 - B) God is unparticled matter and is not omnipotent in the traditional sense, but infinite.
 - C) God is the sum total of all human consciousness trapped in a physical prison.
 - D) God is a malevolent, distant force that takes pleasure in human suffering and destiny.
6. According to Vankirk, what happens to human beings in the afterlife?
 - A) They are reincarnated into animal forms based on the sins they committed on Earth.
 - B) They remain in a state of eternal, dreamless sleep, devoid of all consciousness.
 - C) They are instantly transported to a literal, physical heaven with golden gates and angels.
 - D) They progressively shed denser forms of matter to become closer to the unparticled Deity.

7. What role does the narrator play in "Mesmeric Revelation"?

- A) He is a skeptical doctor trying to forcefully awaken Vankirk from his trance.
- B) He is a spiritual medium speaking through Vankirk while he is in a mesmeric state.
- C) He acts as Vankirk's caretaker but vehemently rejects the theories being shared.
- D) He acts as the questioner and recorder of Vankirk's philosophical revelations.

8. Vankirk presents a unique philosophical argument regarding pain and pleasure. What does he claim about them?

- A) They are only possible and perceptible through the medium of matter.
- B) They are entirely non-material illusions with no physical basis whatsoever.
- C) Pleasure is a spiritual state, while pain is strictly a material, worldly phenomenon.
- D) They do not exist in any form and are irrelevant to the human soul's progression.

9. How does Vankirk explain the process of creation in the universe?

- A) God physically molds and shapes pre-existing gross matter into various celestial bodies.
- B) God creates by withdrawing his own unparticled matter into localized, denser forms.
- C) The universe was formed by a collision of unparticled matter and gross matter.
- D) Creation is a random process governed entirely by the laws of chance and unparticled matter.

10. Edgar Allan Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" engages with which philosophical tradition by blurring the lines between the physical and spiritual realms?

- A) Existentialism.
- B) Solipsism.
- C) Materialism (or Spinozist Pantheism).
- D) Stoicism.