

Chapter 1



Mesmerism, Hypnotism, and Spiritualism in the Nineteenth Century

Important antecedents of Jung's psychology lie in nineteenth-century psychiatry and in the earlier forms of psychosomatic medicine whose roots are in the eighteenth century. European psychiatry in the nineteenth century sought to subsume under its evolving categories of understanding all of those illnesses which could not be exclusively explained by physical medicine. There emerged from this process certain insights into human behavior that pushed psychiatrists to make statements about general psychology. Delimiting the normal from the abnormal became exceedingly problematical. The result was the differentiation of mental states and the establishment of psychiatric classification. In the nineteenth century, the development of methods of treatment modified and augmented these classifications.¹ But psychiatrists also encountered evidence of unusual psychological processes that escaped easy analysis and categorization. The phenomenon of the hypnotic trance and the spontaneous manifestations of mediums were important examples of this difficulty.

The data that emerged from the hypnotic trance and the spontaneous somnambulism of the medium indicated certain psychological processes that escaped conscious control. Moreover, these processes frequently appeared as a group of psychological fragments which gathered together in a personified form and occasionally suggested a capacity that surpassed that of the conscious mind. On a popular level these "personalities" were interpreted as indications of communication with a spiritual world. The psychiatric view, in general, accepted as factual the autonomy and even the personification of these subconscious formations but preferred to read them as evidence of a pathological state. It is at this point that Jung, as a young psychiatrist, entered the debate. For certain personal and professional reasons, which I shall outline in the forth-

coming chapters, the vital question for Jung became: Are such autonomous psychical processes as found in Spiritualism necessarily always pathological? When Jung later provided a negative answer to this question, he moved away from psychiatry to create a general psychology with transpersonal dimensions. The background of his question and the answer he provided lies in the nineteenth century with the intertwining of mesmerism, hypnotism, and Spiritualism.²

Henri Ellenberger has recently traced the beginnings of dynamic psychiatry to 1775, one hundred years prior to the birth of Carl Jung. The decisive event he refers to was the clash between the physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) and the Catholic exorcist Reverend Johann Joseph Gassner (1727–79). The latter was cast as the traditional man of God plying his trade as healer in the name of established religion; the former, a child of the Enlightenment supported by the spirit of the times. The importance of this encounter was that Mesmer could bring about and dispel at will various symptoms through what he called “animal magnetism,” thus duplicating the results of Gassner. This demonstrated the existence of a method of healing that required no ties to formal religion, satisfying the demands of the then emerging modern world.³

Gassner died a few years after this event and was soon forgotten, but Mesmer’s reputation increased. In spite of this, little is known of his early life other than that he was born into a Catholic family in the western region of Lake Constance, Switzerland, not far from where Carl Jung was born almost a century and a half later. At an early age Mesmer was taken in hand by the local Catholic hierarchy and sent to school in the hope that he would become a priest. In his late teens he entered the Jesuit theological schools of Dillingen and Ingolstadt where he studied theology, philosophy, and science.⁴ At this point there is a gap in Mesmer’s life—a fact which has given rise to some speculation as to his whereabouts. What is certain is that he left his homeland and distanced himself from his religion, both of which he returned to half a century later.⁵

In 1759 Mesmer enrolled in Law at the University of Vienna. The following year he changed to medicine entering the Old Vienna Medical School, one of the outstanding progressive schools of the day.⁶ Six years later, in 1766, Mesmer completed the required dissertation and published it under the title *Dissertatio physico-medica de planetarum influxu*. This work was only forty-eight pages in length and is heavily indebted to an earlier work of Richard Mead.⁷

In a letter written later Mesmer described what he set out to claim in this work:

that these great celestial bodies [the planets] act on our globe in general...like great magnets...[and] produce an effect on the human body which is analogous to the way in which they affect the tides, the different seas, and the entire atmosphere.⁸

While Mesmer's description of his dissertation may sound rather unusual, it, nevertheless, is rooted in a Newtonian model of the universe. Even his borrowing from Mead who has been called "the hard-headed empirical Englishman of the iatromechanical school," suggests Mesmer was a child of the Enlightenment.⁹ At the same time, Mesmer represents a direct link with earlier thinkers such as Paracelsus (1493–1541). And if, finally, his method of healing was somewhat inadequate, he does mark the dividing line between pre-scientific and scientific methods of the study and application of what was later called "hypnotism."

As conceived by Mesmer, animal magnetism as a method of healing can be briefly summarized under four basic principles: (1) a subtle physical fluid fills the universe and forms a connecting medium between the human being, the earth, and the heavenly bodies as well as between one person and another; (2) disease originates from the unequal distribution of this fluid in the human body, and recovery is achieved when equilibrium is restored; (3) with the help of certain techniques, this fluid can be channeled, stored, and conveyed to other persons; (4) in this manner crises can be provoked in patients and diseases cured.¹⁰ In spite of Mesmer's insistence on basing his theory upon a fluid, his chief contribution to psychiatry was to demonstrate that the cures he effected through animal magnetism were primarily due to the systematic application of the power of suggestion based on the interpersonal relationship between himself and his patients. His method, therefore, is an important precursor to modern psychotherapy.¹¹

Mesmer was popular among his patients and became somewhat of a celebrity. At the same time he alienated other medical practitioners because of his unorthodox methods and his success in treating various patients. In the end he felt obliged to leave Vienna as a consequence and moved to Paris in 1778. Magnetism and the theory of magnetic fluid upon which it is based became his *idée fixe*. The inability to tolerate equals and the tenacity with which he

clung to his theories were his undoing. He finally brought condemnation upon himself and his method by scientific colleagues in a series of special medical commissions, the first one presided over by Benjamin Franklin in 1784.¹²

Despite his unshakable belief in the existence of magnetic fluid, Mesmer seems to have been forced to retreat more and more from the practical consequences of his theory. By the 1780s he had given up the use of magnets in treatment, replacing it by his *baquet* with its iron bars, water, and metal shavings. This device bore a strong resemblance to the contraptions used in electric therapy at that time and with which Mesmer may have shared certain basic assumptions.¹³ The strange phenomena surfacing from patients in trance states caused him, in 1781, to mention "a sixth sense" in his *Précis Historique*, and, in 1799, in *Mémoire*, to regard this "sixth sense" as clairvoyant.¹⁴ In fact, the latter work so removes itself from Mesmer's earlier position that it has been called "a treatise on the occult sciences."¹⁵ But this work was written some years after Mesmer had left Paris to live in semiobscurity in Switzerland, far from the din he had been so instrumental in creating.¹⁶ In the end, it is probably an accurate assessment of Mesmer to state he was not a man of theory but an explorer: "his French disciples took care of the system-building."¹⁷

If mesmerism lost its leader in 1785 as a result of Mesmer leaving Paris, his discoveries did not perish with him but went through a number of successive developments chiefly in France and Germany. His earlier followers can be divided into three groups: (1) the fluidists who held to the original idea that there was a physical fluid underlying the phenomena of magnetism; (2) the animists who believed that magnetism was a psychological phenomenon; (3) a smaller number who took an intermediate position and held that the fluid was directed by the will.¹⁸

In France the spread of mesmerism was interrupted by the revolution of 1789, but by 1812 Mesmer's teachings attracted a new group of admirers.¹⁹ This later group of Mesmer's followers explored the subject of trance states in a more scientific and empirical manner, documenting such "magnetic conditions" as dual personality, the influence of mind over body, and the possibility of curing diseases through suggestion. But, in the end, their efforts to make mesmerism acceptable to the scientific authorities failed chiefly because instead of concentrating on the elementary manifestations of the trance state, they chose to demonstrate their ideas with reference to the extraordinary phenomena produced.²⁰

The German mesmerists took a different course and showed their interests to be more philosophical in nature. This was chiefly because of the romanticist attraction to seeking universal truths. They perceived in Mesmer's magnetic fluid the justification for the notion that the universe was a living organism. Mesmer's idea, emphasized by his disciple Puységur (1751–1825), of a "sixth sense" in the magnetic fluid which endowed humans in trance with prophetic ability, moved the Germans to conclude this would enable the human mind to communicate with the World Soul.²¹

In the course of their experiments with various subjects, the mesmerists realized that certain ones were more susceptible to somnambulistic states than others. As Ellenberger has pointed out, the French sought these "as auxiliary subjects for medical practice," whereas the Germans "utilized them in an audacious attempt at experimental metaphysics."²² Among these extraordinary subjects who aroused a great deal of interest in Germany was Friederike Hauffe (1801–29). It was claimed that while in a trance she could foretell future events and receive messages from spirits about various matters. The movement of physical objects was also said to have taken place in her presence. She went on to reveal a cosmological system of "magnetic circles," which consisted of "seven sun circles" and "one life circle." This was apparently a symbolical representation of spiritual conditions.²³ Frau Hauffe's system is not unlike that revealed by the medium who was the subject of Jung's dissertation, as we shall see later.

Frau Hauffe created quite a sensation and was visited by philosophers such as Görres, Baader, Schelling, G. von Schubert, Eschenmayer, and the theologians David Strauss and Schleiermacher who came repeatedly to see her and discuss her revelations.²⁴ The physician Justinus Kerner (1786–1862), Mesmer's first biographer, published a work on her, *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, in 1829 shortly after her death.²⁵ He had taken her into his house and was partly successful in treating her psychosomatic illness with a mixture of exorcism and magnetism. He recorded in detail what took place during her trance states as well as the progression of her cure. It has been stated that his was the first monograph devoted to an individual in the field of dynamic psychiatry.²⁶

Kerner's study created quite a stir and was read even in Moscow, indicating how widespread was the interest in the subject of somnambulism.²⁷ One of the results of its popularity was to encourage the publication of similar reports as well as what may be the first periodicals devoted to psychical research, *Blätter von Pre-*

vorst (1831) and *Magikon* (1840).²⁸ Nevertheless, after 1850, under the impact of positivism and scientific rationalism, there was a rapid decline in the influence of mesmerism upon the French and German intelligentsia. This resulted in mesmerism being abandoned to street demonstrators and amateurs who made practical use of the occult beliefs to which many widely adhered. This popular use of mesmerism also occurred in America but unlike in Europe, not as the direct result of having been abandoned by physicians and metaphysicians.

As early as 1784, mesmerism was a topic that was introduced into the highest levels of American society by the Marquis de Lafayette in a letter he wrote to George Washington.²⁹ Lafayette was a member of Mesmer's Société de L'Harmonie Universelle and sought permission from its founder to communicate its teachings.³⁰ Mesmer himself wrote to Washington on June 16, 1784 confirming that Lafayette could speak on his behalf, which he did before the American Philosophical Society and elsewhere, yet met with little success.³¹ As Robert Fuller has jocularly remarked: "It was to be a few more years before this magnetic fluid, ostensibly present throughout nature, would successfully cross the Atlantic."³²

When mesmerism did cross the ocean it came in a number of guises, one a Frenchman, Charles Poyen, a self-proclaimed "Professor of Animal Magnetism," who embarked on a lecture tour across New England in 1836.³³ Like his French mentor, Mesmer's disciple Puysegur, he focused more on the phenomena resulting from the somnambulist state than on the theory of a magnetic fluid.³⁴ His meetings had the character of religious revivals and, coupled with his talent for presenting mesmerism as a science, he could appeal to utopian yearnings and confidentially prophesy that this new teaching was destined to make America "the most perfect nation on earth."³⁵ After sowing the seed of his new gospel in the New World, Poyen returned to France in 1839.³⁶

The same year Poyen left for Europe an Englishman, Robert Collyer, arrived in America. He began a lecture tour spreading mesmerism along the Atlantic seaboard. Collyer was critical of American medical practices and presented mesmerism as a phenomenon on the leading edge of science.³⁷ The influence of Poyen and Collyer generated a widespread interest in mesmerism. In contrast to Europe, where it attracted the upper class, mesmerism was to have its impact in America on the lives of a large middle class.³⁸ And again unlike in Europe, despite its use by a few medical practitioners during the decade 1840-50, no school of mesmerism was

established in America. This effectively left it to others to introduce the practice of inducing trances and other phenomena which provided all the necessary ingredients for the making of a movement known as Spiritualism.³⁹

Spiritualism has been defined by Frank Podmore in his history of the movement as:

a system which in one aspect is a religious faith, in another claims to represent a new department of natural science—is based on the interpretation of certain obscure facts as indicating the agency of the spirits of dead men and women.⁴⁰

The rise of the loose system of beliefs and claims known as modern Spiritualism has often been explained as one of the religious responses to a time of crisis and uncertainty in various sectors of nineteenth-century Western society. Historians have usually argued that population shifts, the breakdown of formal religion, a lack of a developed theology of the dead among Protestants, accompanied by the rise of rationalism and rigid industrialization, were major factors. True as these explanations might be, the fact remains that modern Spiritualism has not received the attention it deserves from historians of religion.⁴¹ Modern Spiritualism is a nineteenth-century phenomenon which, because it is based on the possibility of communication between the dead and the living through the agency of a medium, is directly dependent on the phenomenon of trance. It is on this crucial point that the histories of both mesmerism and Spiritualism overlap and influence one another.⁴²

As the spread of mesmerism increased, the idea of magnetism reached a popular audience, and a number of Mesmer's disciples fell into wild speculation believing that what had been discovered amounted to a new revelation. Individuals in trance had shown peculiar abilities and some had even claimed to be in touch with other personalities while in this state. It is not difficult to see how the next step to believing these personalities were spirits was, for some, not such a hard one to take. As Freud once shrewdly observed on the matter of telepathy, "Dans ces cas pareils, ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte."⁴³ What was once Mesmer's *baquet* around which subjects sat with joined hands now became the closed circle of spiritualistic séances.⁴⁴

The phenomenon of mesmeric trance was known in America from about 1836 onwards but no conspicuous school that endured

seems to have been founded. Any physicians who concerned themselves with the matter appear not to have subjected it to careful investigation or to have imposed their views on others. Instead, it was a topic served to the general population by itinerant preachers, lecturers, and healers. Everyone seems to have become involved: clergymen, lawyers, politicians, lay persons of every sort, even farmers, as we shall see. Indeed, it has been called America's "first popular psychology."⁴⁵ Moreover, if the so-called scientific methods of Mesmer and some of his followers were seriously questioned and even thought to be discredited by the savants of Europe who adhered to more rigorous procedures, they were not wasted on the American public who, fired by such discoveries as the telegraph, were willing to believe that almost anything was possible, even communication between this world and the next.⁴⁶

This optimism also concealed a more menacing intuition about science and human life. As James Webb has remarked:

As the tide of rationalism and the new science rose higher, as the sense of collective insecurity waxed, men turned to the ultimate consolation of the immortality of souls. They could shout in the face of the bogey Darwin that they knew they were more than the outcome of a biological process, that they too had "scientific proof"—and that theirs was of the reality of the after-life. Death, the shadow at the backs of every generation, had in the 19th century to be met by many people face to face.⁴⁷

This attitude was taken not only by the unlettered but by a number of serious scientific thinkers as in the example of A. R. Wallace (1823–1913), codiscoverer of the theory of evolution.⁴⁸ In America, mesmerism and Spiritualism were often not distinguished from one another. This is evident from the number of adherents to mesmerism who later became spiritualists—that is to say until 1848 when there occurred, in the words of Henri Ellenberger: "a seemingly trivial incident [which] became the starting point for a psychological epidemic of unexpected amplitude—the rise and spread of Spiritism."⁴⁹

It is now generally agreed that Spiritualism as a movement arose in the northeastern United States and, while indebted to Mesmer's ideas, this was the fertile soil upon which these ideas had to fall in order to grow into a force to be reckoned with before being exported back to Europe. As one student of the subject has stated:

To a large extent it [Spiritualism] grew out of the Mesmeric movement, and the motley collection of ideas which had fastened themselves to Mesmer were drawn along in the baggage. It was also connected closely with the millenarian expectations of the mid-century, both in social and religious terms. This legacy Spiritualism inherited from its time and its place of origin. Like the most contemporary American adventist movements, Spiritualism originated in the 'burned-over' district.... In the 'burned-over' district, successive waves of disoriented immigrants joined those who had felt the impact of Revivalist preachers to create a confusion of doubt and belief.⁵⁰

From its rather innocuous beginnings on March 31, 1848, in the bedroom of an American Methodist farmer, J. D. Fox, in western New York State, Spiritualism as a movement was born. The following is a summary of what occurred: In March 31, 1848 the Fox family were disturbed by inexplicable noises. The two Fox daughters, aged 12 and 15, began to make snapping noises and received a response by hearing a rap in reply. They established a form of communication and in a series of questions discovered they were in contact with the spirit of someone who had once lived.⁵¹ The next day a crowd gathered and the news circulated. Halls were rented at the direction of the spirits, lectures given, and the phenomenon of Spiritualism spread like a brush fire. By 1853 ten spiritualist periodicals had been established. Two years later it was claimed there were 2.5 million spiritualists and four years after, in 1859, a Catholic convention put the number at 11 million.⁵² While these figures may be somewhat inflated, they testify to the popular perception that the spread of the spiritualist movement had been extensive. Perhaps because of the manner in which Spiritualism spread, and its lack of organizational structure, exact estimates will remain impossible to calculate. As Janet Oppenheim has pointed out:

Spiritualistic prowess often spread among the members of a single family, for mediumship was catching, it would seem, and certainly the power of suggestion and example must have played a substantial part in the rapid multiplication of private mediums during the second half of the nineteenth century. Many of them, however, somewhat in awe of their abilities, shunned publicity, and it is impossible to compute with any precision the number of people, of all ages and

social strata, who became convinced spiritualists without ever venturing beyond their domestic séances.⁵³

By 1852 Spiritualism had crossed the Atlantic, invading England and shortly afterwards spreading to continental Europe. Jung's grandfather, C. G. Jung, mentions its occurrence in Germany in an entry to his diary dated April 11, 1853. In it he states:

Today one can read in the...newspaper...of table-turning in Bremen. The process is the following, that a chain is formed...and the participants are separated from one another by a foot. Their clothes should not touch.... Everyone places their hands on the table.... With the small finger everyone touches the small finger of the one beside them.... There is still nonsense in the world.⁵⁴

Spiritualism originally was a loose movement which did not organize into a sect nor demand a commitment of faith from its followers, let alone present itself in creedal formulas or in a systematic theology. Rather, for the most part it attracted people who were sick and tired of such things. Instead, it aligned itself with the popular conception of science, and, indeed, its *lingua franca* was drawn primarily from popular tracts on empirical science. For spiritualists there was no war between science and religion, but they did fear that science would become increasingly materialistic if it were not utilized to explore the more elevated realms which, it was held, were not discontinuous with matter but rather a higher, more evolved form of matter. From about 1850, the leaders of Spiritualism adhered to four basic principles: (1) a rejection of supernaturalism which maintained that the spirit world was discontinuous with the material world; (2) that natural law was inviolable; (3) a reliance on objectively established facts and not on vague subjective inner states; (4) a belief in the progressive development of knowledge. In short, Spiritualism sought not only to liberalize religion but to liberalize science as well.⁵⁵

The reaction to Spiritualism on the part of the Christian churches was mixed and among the clergy generally negative, as it was clearly perceived that any consorting with Spiritualism would compromise the moral and religious authority of Christianity. This was especially threatening in the late nineteenth century as Christianity itself was undergoing an identity crisis. Spiritualists themselves seem to have been of two minds about Christianity: some

were willing to mix it with their Spiritualism, others were not. Moreover, as Janet Oppenheim has sagely remarked:

This categorization of pro- and anti-Christian spiritualism is valid enough, as far as it goes, but like so many attempts to classify elusive attitudes, it merely highlights the black and white, leaving obscure the shades of gray.⁵⁶

Generally, spiritualists had an aversion to Christian orthodoxies with their various insistence on perceiving the deity as trinity, the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, the vicarious atonement wrought by the crucifixion, final judgment, and especially the belief in an eternal hell. Heaven, spiritualists held, was but the continuation of the present life, and Jesus Christ was really a highly evolved being who had progressed to a higher state. God, instead of being personalized, was thought of as the force that pervaded all of life on this plane and on higher planes. Morality too was not something that could be dictated in creedal formulas and enforced by the whispers and penances of an army of clerics, but a question of personal development and self-realization. Needless to say, the extent to which any of the above was added to, or subtracted from, depended on the religious orientation, or lack of it, of individual spiritualists on either side of the mean. What all spiritualists did agree upon was in describing themselves as empiricists and claiming that the truths they believed in had been established by direct experience in the form of communication with deceased women and men through the agency of a medium.

While most continental European spiritualists followed in the footsteps of their mesmeric predecessors and inherited the use of the various paraphernalia of the séance from their British and American brethren, their own contribution to Spiritualism was to be in the realm of doctrine. Specifically, the continental European contribution to Spiritualism is to be found in the doctrine of reincarnation propounded by a Frenchman known as Allan Kardec (1804–69). In *Le Livre des Esprits* (1856), which became the textbook of continental European Spiritualism, Kardec proposed a theory of reincarnation. The basis for this new doctrine allegedly came to him during séances with a medium who was in contact with a number of spirits, including that of Mesmer. This doctrine of reincarnation met opposition from Anglo-American spiritualists, but emerges as one of the central items of continental European séances, including the ones that were the subject of Carl Jung's dissertation.⁵⁷

The spread of Spiritualism in continental Europe brought to the fore a number of remarkable mediums who exhibited what seemed to be extraordinary psychic abilities. In addition to the usual table turning, there were reports of spirits manifesting themselves, photographs of them, levitations, and so on. All of this attracted a good deal of attention, and a number of serious but insufficiently critical studies were made of the mediums and the phenomena they produced. One early example was the study by Maximilian Perty, Professor of Philosophy, University of Berne, Switzerland. In *Die mystischen Erscheinungen der menschlichen Natur* (1861) he described the phenomena produced by mediums, attributing them to the unconscious exercise of occult powers in the organism. To account for these powers Perty was forced to assume the existence of planetary spirits with whom the medium entered into communication.⁵⁸ In the end, this theory amounted to a somewhat spiritualized version of the theory Mesmer proposed one hundred years earlier. Gradually other studies emerged which were more critical and less speculative and whose authors were chiefly concerned to surmise there must be a connection between the observed phenomena and the personalities of the mediums.

Until the 1860s the scientific communities in England and America almost universally rejected or ignored the claims of Spiritualism and expressed no interest in subjecting them to careful study. After this period, and for the next two decades, the topic of Spiritualism would exercise a considerable fascination over a number of leading scientists, even succeeding in converting a few of them, as in the example of W. Crookes.⁵⁹ What attracted scientists to Spiritualism was the assertion by its adherents that its claims were open to scientific investigation. In view of the fact that science was just beginning to be professionalized, the debate over the scientific status of Spiritualism became entangled in the debate among scientists as to who among them were really amateurs and who were professionals.⁶⁰ For some scientists, Spiritualism seemed to allow them, as S. E. D. Shortt maintains,

on the one hand, ostensibly to retain the empirical canons of their professional identity, while on the other, to reject the stark materialism to which many of their colleagues had succumbed.⁶¹

By the early 1870s this kind of support was adding scientific credibility to the claims of Spiritualism.⁶²

The only professional group which seemed able to remain aloof and critical were physicians. Already in 1851 three physicians from the University of Buffalo had pronounced a negative judgment on the spiritualistic phenomena of the Fox sisters.⁶³ In 1853, Dr. Edward C. Rogers of Boston argued that the medium's ability had to do with an abnormal nervous constitution and not with spirits. The extraordinary phenomena produced while the medium was in trance he attributed to "unconscious cerebration."⁶⁴ Mediumship came to be looked upon by the medical profession as some sort of illness of a neurological and psychiatric order. Those specializing in these fields of medicine assumed center stage in the energetic debate that ensued on the subject of Spiritualism.⁶⁵ In general these physicians sought to disengage spiritualist claims from the trance and other phenomena exhibited by mediums. They did this by dismissing outright the more outlandish claims and interpreted the others in neurophysiological and psychological terms. As one scholar has stated,

The neuroscientists were claiming epistemological sovereignty over a specific area of human experience to the exclusion of metaphysical or theological rivals. Science and religion, they believed, were separate realms of knowledge. Spiritualists, in attempting to employ science to prove their religion, were guilty of replacing faith with materialism.⁶⁶

In the more strictly scientific circles of Europe there was a slightly different and more immediate consequence of the rise of Spiritualism. Mesmerism, which had fallen into disrepute from 1860 to 1880, now reappeared as an acceptable subject of discussion in its rehabilitated form known as hypnotism.⁶⁷ This period also marks the rivalry between the two French medical centers of Salpêtrière and Nancy with regard to the correct interpretation of the hypnotic state. Salpêtrière, under the leadership of Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–93), interpreted hypnosis to be "a physiological condition very different from sleep...that could occur only in individuals predisposed to hysteria, and could not be used for therapeutic purposes."⁶⁸ On February 13, 1882 Charcot, the most distinguished neurologist of his day, delivered a paper on hypnotism before L'Académie des Sciences in Paris. It was, reportedly, a *tour de force* and brought the subject of hypnotism back into medical circles, ironically, before the very institution that had condemned it before when it was known as "mesmerism."⁶⁹ In contrast to Charcot and the Salpêtrière school, the Nancy school under the leadership

of Hippolyte Bernheim (1840–1919) had quietly experimented with hypnotism. Bernheim understood the hypnotic trance as “merely a sleep, produced by suggestion, with therapeutic implications.”⁷⁰

The debate between the two schools attracted a good deal of public attention and created a stir in the medical and popular press.⁷¹ If the medical community had forgotten that hypnotism was simply mesmerism under an assumed name, the general public did not and, coupled with the widespread impact of Spiritualism, there was a waiting audience for any news on the subject. Such news came in the form of a murder trial which took place in Paris, in 1890, during which a woman accomplice claimed, as her defence, that she acted under posthypnotic suggestion.⁷²

The trial attracted wide attention and made even more public the debate over hypnotism conducted for years by the two French schools of Salpêtrière and Nancy. In fact, members of the two schools became directly involved in the proceedings by presenting themselves as expert witnesses, effectively making the guilt or innocence of the accused the means of finally settling the debate.⁷³ Sensational claims were made for the powers of hypnosis which fired the public imagination and disturbed the French authorities.⁷⁴ In the end not only was the accused found guilty, partially vindicating the Salpêtrière school, but new laws were eventually introduced to prevent public demonstrations of hypnotism by street practitioners.⁷⁵ The consequences for hypnotism were similar to those which occurred for Spiritualism: the medical profession came to place hypnotism under its control and subject to its laws of explanation and interpretation.⁷⁶

Another consequence of the rivalry between the two French schools was to encourage researchers to apply more rigorous methods in the study of the trance state, thereby removing it from the so-called occult complexities in which it had become entangled.⁷⁷ Psychiatrists such as the Austrian Richard Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), whose *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie auf klinischer Grundlage* (1890) was instrumental in Jung’s decision to choose psychiatry as his profession, were drawn into the study of hypnotism.⁷⁸ Auguste Forel (1848–1931) studied hypnotism under Bernheim at Nancy and applied it to both his patients and staff in the Burghölzli Mental Hospital in Zurich.⁷⁹ Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939), who succeeded Forel as director of the Burghölzli, underwent hypnosis himself and encouraged its usage in the hypnotism clinic that had been established.⁸⁰ Jung, who joined the Burghölzli in 1900, was placed in charge of this clinic.⁸¹

As a student, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) had observed a public demonstration by the well-known stage hypnotist Hansen. Freud became convinced of its authenticity and may have seen Josef Breuer (1842–1925) use it when he was in his twenties and attempted it himself in 1885.⁸² However, its full impact upon him was only obvious when he returned from studying with Charcot in 1886.⁸³ At the end of the following year Freud devoted himself to the study of hypnotism and shortly afterwards embarked on the translation of Bernheim's *De la suggestion et de ses applications à la thérapeutique* (1886) which was accompanied by a preface and published in 1888.⁸⁴ Freud seems to have been rapidly disillusioned with the use of hypnosis and never became adept in its practice.⁸⁵ He contacted Forel, whose book on hypnotism he was reviewing at the time. Through him Freud was able to arrange to spend some time with Bernheim in order to improve his technique.⁸⁶ While retaining an interest in the theory of hypnosis, Freud allegedly abandoned its use after ten years of practice in 1896 and considered it as a prelude to the psychoanalytic technique. However, there is a possibility that he may have taken it up again in the 1920s.⁸⁷

Other physicians continued to pursue the study of the trance state, selecting unusual subjects who were particularly susceptible to hypnotic suggestion. Increasingly it had become obvious that while the hypnotic state and the self-induced trance of the medium had much in common, it was the latter that offered the more spontaneous and original subject matter. In the 1880s Charcot, who had amassed a large collection of rare works on witchcraft and possession, addressed this topic in a lecture, "Spiritualism and Hysteria."⁸⁸ Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), the founder of experimental psychology, participated in séances and wrote on the subject.⁸⁹ Pierre Janet (1859–1947), with whom Jung later studied in Paris, Fredric Myers (1843–1901) and the Society of Psychical Research in England, William James (1842–1910) in America, and others were attracted by the bizarre demonstrations of mediums and published extensively on the subject.⁹⁰

Not all of these investigators were of the same mind about the subject of mediumistic phenomena. The development of the neurosciences and the emerging detailed classification of pathological states seemed, when fraud was ruled out, to give those among scientists who were positivists all the explanation they needed. The manifestation of secondary personalities in individuals under hypnosis or at séances was interpreted as evidence that the personality when weakened had a tendency to dissociate and form alternate

personalities. The appearance of spirits in séances was considered to be but exaggerated and pathological examples of hysterical dissociation which occurred in milder forms of psychiatric disorder. As a result it was precisely the phenomena of multiple personality that fused pathology, hypnosis, and Spiritualism in the minds of numerous investigators and became the focus of great interest and controversy.⁹¹

Other investigators, largely those of the societies of psychical research in America and Britain, concurred with their positivistic colleagues on the subject of the pathology of multiple personality with one important caveat, that the pathology was only one aspect of the phenomenology of multiple personality. Another part of the spectrum of multiple personality, it was claimed, might indicate a consciousness capable of paranormal perception and even evidence of the possibility of postmortem survival. To a great extent, these psychical researchers were motivated by the same impetus that gave rise to the phenomena of Spiritualism: a desire to keep science open to the religious dimension and not to dismiss it as otiose or to subject it to the reductionism of positivism.⁹²

Conversations with spirits, automatic writing, crystal balls, gazing into mirrors to divine the future, and similar practices were investigated with a great deal of seriousness. While certain phenomena emerged which presented problems for these investigators, it was generally concluded that these various "arts" brought to light subconscious material of the individual subject. This conclusion did not compel any of these pioneers to attempt to synthesize all the material in a bid to explain such phenomena and present an enduring model of the psyche. Instead, this was to be the great achievement of the following generation of which Freud's and Jung's psychological systems are notable examples.

Following the emergence of psychoanalysis at the beginning of the present century, multiple personality as a psychological phenomenon gradually lost its separate classification and became absorbed into a general classification as a form of dissociative hysteria. The conceptual shift from dissociation leading to multiple personality to defense leading to repression was, by 1912, complete. In that year Freud sent a paper to the Society for Psychical Research in Britain in which he criticized the idea of multiple personality as a misnomer because it implied consciousness within the unconscious. A better explanation of such phenomena, Freud maintained, was to regard it as a "shifting of consciousness,—that function—or whatever it be—oscillating between two different psy-

chical complexes which become conscious and unconscious in alternation."⁹³

Jung, while indebted to Freud, in the end held views on multiple personality that were more in harmony with those of Janet and another largely forgotten authority on mediums, the Swiss psychologist Theodore Flournoy (1854–1920).⁹⁴ In particular pride of place must be given to the latter's *Des Indes à la planète Mars: Etude sur un cas de somnambulisme avec glossolalie* (1900). The significance of this work is that it was, and remains, the most thorough and detailed study of a medium from a psychological point of view. It was the result of five years of observation and many more years of experience examining the products of mediumistic trance. The following is a brief history of its contents: The medium was a woman of thirty. She would fall spontaneously into trance exhibiting changes in her personality and re-enacting scenes from her former lives. In the first cycle of these lives she was a 15th century Hindu princess; in the second she was Marie Antoinette; in the third she was an inhabitant of Mars. Flournoy was able to show the medium borrowed most of these details from a book she read as a child. He interpreted as romances of the subliminal imagination these and other "revelations." He held they were based on forgotten memories and wish fulfillments all of which was constructed upon a reversion of the personality to different stages of her earlier life. The guiding spirit, Flournoy claimed, was in fact the emerging subconscious personality of the medium.⁹⁵

Flournoy's work came to serve as the model for most studies of mediums which followed, including the one Jung published as his medical dissertation, *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena* (1902), which will be examined in a later chapter. In particular it was Flournoy's positive psychological approach to his subject that was to exercise considerable influence over Jung and depth-psychology in general. As Ellenberger has remarked: "It was a great step forward for dynamic psychiatry when Flournoy at the end of the nineteenth century, followed soon by C. G. Jung, undertook a systematic investigation of mediums."⁹⁶ In the course of Jung's professional career as a psychiatrist, his views of mediumistic phenomena and multiple personality became somewhat more complex. The development of these views, which is the chief subject of this study, will be examined in upcoming chapters.

In addition to surveying the impact of Spiritualism on psychiatry and psychology, it is also important to understand its influence on the general populace. An important source of this influence

is to be found in the literature of the time, which frequently shows a concern with the subject of the double. Spiritualism was to add to this legacy of the double as it made its mark on the literary products of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Mesmerism had influenced European literature and fostered the idea of the double especially in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann. After Hoffmann's death in 1822, the influence of Mesmerism seems to have subsided, caused by, in the words of one scholar:

The contaminating effect of occultism, which remained in popular esteem; both doctrines [mesmerism and occultism] emerged in a general reputation of being undistinguishably obscure cults of the supernatural, and the scientific character of the theories of animal magnetism was, to a great extent, lost.⁹⁷

What is being referred to here as the "occultism which remained in popular esteem" and which replaced mesmerism, is most probably evidence of the influx of Spiritualism which seemed to grow quite naturally out of mesmerism and to follow in its wake.

The advent of Spiritualism in Europe produced a flood of literature either written by spirits or purported to have come from the beyond. These were usually dictated through a medium who acted as a channel. Automatic writing became popular and even such literary figures as Victor Hugo (1802–85) were involved in séances. In this instance, Hugo's son, Charles, acted as the medium and illustrious men such as Aeschylus and Shakespeare dictated fine French poetry to him which resembled Hugo's own.⁹⁸ Hugo himself was alleged to have put in an appearance seven years after his death as the spirit-control of the medium Flourney studied.⁹⁹ The French astronomer Camille Flammarion (1842–1925) wrote *Les Habitants de l'autre monde* in the early 1860s, revealing, among other things, a book of Genesis supposedly dictated to him by another illustrious man, Galileo. While skeptical at first, he too succumbed to a belief in the existence of spirits.¹⁰⁰ Several mediums themselves wrote literary productions which were purported to have been delivered to them by spirits and which, in some cases, were of an unexpectedly high level.¹⁰¹ One of the most publicized examples of this was the completion by an American medium of an unfinished work by Charles Dickens (1812–70). The manner, style, and peculiarities of Dickens were so evident in the work that many were convinced it originated in Dickens himself. Flourney pointed

out that the unfinished portion of this work has been found and bears no resemblance to the "newly finished novel of Dickens."¹⁰²

In addition to automatic writing was the slightly later occurrence of automatic drawing. The French dramatist Victorien Sardou (1831–1908), in whose plays Sarah Bernhardt made her triumphant return to the Paris stage, attracted attention with his drawing that allegedly depicted houses owned by Zoroaster and Mozart on the planet Jupiter.¹⁰³ Jules Bois, who was well acquainted with Charcot, had even advanced the theory that the Symbolist school of art, which began in the 1890s, was largely indebted to mediumistic drawings for its style.¹⁰⁴

Hypnotism was hardly distinguished from either mesmerism or Spiritualism, as is evident in a prayerful remark by Christina Rossetti (1830–94):

Please God, I will have nothing to do with spiritualism, whether it be imposture or a black art; or with mesmerism, lest it clog my free will; or with hypnotism, lest wilful self-surrender becomes my road to evil choice.¹⁰⁵

The basic plot of most novels that took up the subject of hypnotism was the misuse by cunning individuals of their ability to induce hypnotic states in potentially profitable and desirable victims. In De Maupassant's *Le Horla* (1887) he has the victim remark upon realizing he has been hypnotized:

Someone possesses my soul and governs it. Someone directs all my actions, all my movements, all my thoughts. I myself am nothing but a terrified, enslaved spectator of the things which I am accomplishing.¹⁰⁶

From 1880 on these novels become increasingly "psychological" and the subject of multiple personality assumes the status of a literary genre. The high point of this style was Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* published in 1886.¹⁰⁷ It is also interesting to note that the chief character in this novel was a physician. In Stevenson's work and in others which followed we find not so much a departed spirit taking possession of another person but rather the personality of the victim comes under the influence of another part of themselves. After having been influenced by mesmerism, Spiritualism, and hypnotism, literature came under the sway of depth-psychology whose chief representatives were

Freud and Jung and whose ideas about the unconscious became popularized, providing material for the new psychological novels of the twentieth century.

In briefly outlining the background and setting of the nineteenth-century phenomenon of the trance state and its psychology, I have attempted to demonstrate the role of Spiritualism in this history by situating it in context of the time. Jung unquestionably came under the influence of the profession of psychiatry with which he associated himself and stands in a long line of investigators into the more unusual dimensions of the human psyche. His psychology grew out of the contending factions that existed in nineteenth-century European psychiatry. As a young psychiatrist he concerned himself with the psychopathology of mental disorder. The history of research into this area in the nineteenth century devoted a great deal of time to the subject of trance states and their pathology. The question of the origin of these unconscious processes and their relation to the personality as a whole assumed great importance. A significant portion of the population of both America and Europe was willing to tolerate as religiously and scientifically acceptable the possibility that mediums in trance could have access to transpersonal states and mediate the communication between the living and the dead. The medical view as represented by neurology and psychiatry argued, for the most part, that these processes were abnormal and indicated a dissociation of personality which would split off into personified fragments. Jung's own contention, as we shall see, was that the psychiatric model provided a basis for understanding the psychology of these unconscious processes. Nevertheless, he was unwilling to capitulate completely to a reduction of these processes to pathology.

In the chapters that follow I will also suggest that Jung's contact with these unusual dimensions of the human psyche came not only from the formal scientific efforts that preceded him but also from the more immediate influence of Spiritualism on the populace of Europe which, it would seem, was rather extensive in the late nineteenth century. For this reason I have sketched some of the important points of contact between mesmerism, Spiritualism, and hypnotism. In the next chapter I will show how Spiritualism, and the ideas associated with it, are evident in the lives of Jung's immediate ancestors, and in his own early life, in order to determine what influence this may have had on his later psychological theories. As will become clear in the course of the subsequent chapters, I will argue that Jung's later unwillingness to capitulate to a reduc-