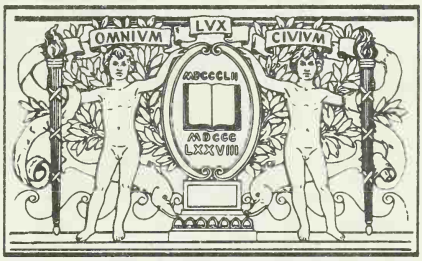
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AND AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIFE

ROBERT C. FULLER



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ROBERT C. FULLER

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To Matt

Acknowledgments

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my son, Matt, who has patiently waited his turn as other books have been dedicated to his mother, older brother, and grandparents. Blessed with a calm and independent spirit, he has taught me much about finding some serenity amidst the hectic moments of life.

Contents

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AND AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIFE

1

Introduction

AMERICANS HAVE BEEN both bewildered and amused at the number of offbeat "metaphysical movements" that the media have publicized in recent years. One of the best known has been a cluster of beliefs and practices commonly referred to as the New Age movement. *Time* magazine, for example, devoted a cover story to this loosely knit amalgam of unconventional spirituality. Major bookstore chains have devoted large display sections to "Religion/New Age" books and report burgeoning sales. Most of these books, which would formerly have appeared under the now-abandoned "Occult" heading, discuss such varied subjects as meditation, spirit "channeling," the mind's hidden parapsychological powers, and self-help techniques designed to help persons achieve some combination of spiritual growth and economic success. But perhaps what has most aroused public interest is the New Age movement's belief in nonmedical forms of healing. Herbal remedies, acupuncture, crystal healing, and psychic mending of the "astral body" are all being touted by the movement's adherents.

Consider, for example, actress Shirley MacLaine's belief that "natural, holistic approaches worked better for me than medicines or drugs. . . . Orthodox Western medicine relied far too heavily on drugs."[1] Abandoning medical pharmacology, Miss MacLaine has instead availed herself of the healing powers to be found in acupuncture, spirit messages, and crystal rocks. She now bathes with "four

quartz crystals sitting on each corner of the tub," and claims, "I have been learning to work with the power of crystals and that discipline has become part of my daily life."[2] This discipline has transformed Miss MacLaine's life to the point where she feels the presence of "spirit guides," has vivid memories of her past incarnations, and studies techniques for releasing the body's own healing energies.

Another Hollywood actress, Jill Ireland, credits meditation techniques combined with the healing power of crystals for her successful recuperation from cancer. She writes:

> I recalled the moment when I learned I had cancer. At the instant I had heard those fateful words, something in me had kicked over. It was as if a switch had been thrown. I felt myself gather all my forces and begin to fight. The energy was there waiting to be tapped. It knew what to fight. The enemy was within my body. The question was how.
>
> I also grasped the healing properties of quartz crystals for focusing and energizing my mind and body. A crystal is the only thing in the world that has a perfect molecular order; it is, in fact, perfect order. Sue Colin [her holistic health practitioner] used them for healing. She would hold a crystal in her hand, drawing the healing energy into her. Sometimes when I was with her, I would meditate using the energy of the crystal [and] held them during my cancer meditation.[3]

Like MacLaine and Ireland, several hundred thousand Americans have turned to some form of alternative healing in hopes of integrating body, mind, and spirit. And their pursuit of the "secret" of physical health has inevitably taken them beyond the mysteries of the body to those of the psyche and soul. In short, Americans' involvement with unorthodox medical practices often leads them to a variety of unorthodox religious beliefs.

This book is an attempt to put contemporary Americans' interest in metaphysical healing systems into a historical and interpretive context. It shows, for example, that the connection between unconventional medical ideas and unconventional religious ideas is not at all new in American culture. And although the practitioners of metaphysical healing operate according to ideas vastly different from those underlying either the medical establishment or the biblically based ministry, they nonetheless possess a tradition of their

own. The story of this tradition is, as we shall see, a fascinating chapter in the history of American medical and religious life.

Religion and Medicine: Cultural Relationships

To most modern Americans, religion and medicine would appear to have little in common. Religion speaks to our beliefs in a reality that transcends the physical. Medicine entails systematic efforts to repair organic damage caused by natural disease and injury. Whenever the media report an attempt to relate the two, most people react with skepticism and amusement and sometimes with indignation. The vast majority of the educated American public has little sympathy for Jehovah's Witnesses who refuse to let their children receive blood transfusions, Christian Scientists who decline immunizations, or charismatic healers who prefer blind faith to scientific medicine. The advent of modern science has tended to relegate religion and medicine to separate spheres, and most people feel quite comfortable with the assumption that religious beliefs are irrelevant to matters of healing and health.

What must be kept in mind, however, is that our culture's tendency to separate healing from religion is just as historically conditioned as were previous eras' efforts to unite them. Healing is a profoundly cultural activity. Labeling a disease and prescribing treatment express a healer's commitment to a particular set of assumptions about the structure and properties of physical existence. For this reason, the notion of orthodoxy pertains to medical systems as surely as it does to religious or political traditions. Ever since Descartes and the Enlightenment, medical orthodoxy has been defined by a commitment to the causal role of organic, or "material," factors in the etiology of disease. Western medical science is thus historically as well as conceptually opposed to the pre-Enlightenment world view within which the church supplied culturally compelling explanations of nonmaterial or spiritual causes of disease (e.g., sin or spirit possession) as well as corresponding schemas for therapeutic intervention (e.g., confession or exorcism). The continuous successes of medical science have had the cumulative effect of providing evidence for the superiority of its underlying conceptions and world view. As a consequence, religious explana-

tions of health and disease have been relegated to the realm of superstition. Pehaps in no other arena has the capitulation of Western religion to the forces of secularization been more complete, and religious and medical orthodoxies have for the most part been content with a clear-cut division of labor whereby the cure of souls and bodies is entrusted to their respective professions.

The fact that certain medical systems continue late in the twentieth century to espouse theories that defy scientific orthodoxy is thus of particular interest to the cultural historian. For example, popular fascination with holistic healing methods, laying on of hands, and Oriental systems for self-purification seems to indicate that a fairly large number of Americans subscribe to beliefs that belong neither to science nor to the more genteel theologies of our mainstream churches. By contradicting what might be called the "monistic materialism" underlying medical science, practitioners of unorthodox medicine become defenders of a point of view that by "official" cultural definition should be considered irrational and superstitious. Yet, strictly speaking, any medical system is rational insofar as its methods of treatment are logically entailed by its fundamental premises or assumptions about the nature of disease. We might, for example, recognize at least four different types of explanations that could "rationally" be used to describe the cause of disease and, therefore, healing: physiological, environmental, attitudinal/psychological, and spiritual or supernatural (i.e., caused by the activity of entities or forces that are considered to be both extrasomatic and extrapsychological). Those propounding "supernatural-cause" explanations of healing are thus not necessarily less rational than those engaged in medical science. They are, however, advancing a metaphysical claim concerning the existence of causal forces not recognized by contemporary scientific theory. It is also clear that, whether they conceptualize this "higher" spiritual agency in categories of transcendence or of immanence, they are providing their clientele with both empirical (i.e., experiential) and pragmatic grounds for adopting a religiously charged interpretation of reality.

Thus, it is not simply that unorthodox medicine draws its constituency from the ranks of those who are either educationally disenfranchised from scientific knowledge or so desperately ill that they no longer expect hope from the methods of conventional medicine. The persistence and popularity of unorthodox medical systems

is at least equally attributable to their articulation of a religiously significant way of viewing the world. Indeed, from a cross-cultural perspective it is clear that one of the most important functions of healing rituals is their capacity to induce an existential encounter with a sacred reality. In primitive societies, healing rituals involve participants in the reenactment of cosmological dramas; the shaman is both a healer and a mystagogue, or mediator between the divine and human realms. And in the case of Christianity, healing was thought to be a sign of Jesus's divine nature and was thereafter institutionalized as a function of Christian proclamation and ministry.[4] Yet, with the gradual divorce of physical healing from the church's routine activities, this means of introducing individuals to a higher spiritual reality necessarily shifted to the fringes of cultural orthodoxy.

Of course, not every system of healing that falls outside of the American Medical Association's sanctioned activities propounds a supernatural cause of healing. Nutritional and exercise therapies, for example, seek to strengthen and regulate basic metabolic processes through diet and sundry fitness regimens. Many massage and breathing systems likewise make no claims concerning the presence or activity of extrasomatic energies when explaining their programs for producing deep muscle relaxation and an overall sense of well-being.[5] It might be noted, however, that unorthodox systems of the nonsupernaturalist variety tend to emphasize preventive rather than curative practices. They are also not as likely to ask their clientele to make fundamental revisions in their conceptions of the causal forces at work in the universe. It is for this reason that this book is primarily concerned with those systems of unorthodox medicine that offer supernatural-cause explanations of healing. A distinguishing character of these systems is that they utilize vocabularies and techniques designed to induct individuals into a world view predicated upon the "fact" that under certain conditions extramundane forces enter into, and exert sanative influences upon, the human realm. They are, therefore, substantively religious in that they seek to induce consciousness of a sudden, felt intrusion of a "More" that is experienced as "other" than the material world and thereafter replaces all other forms of reality as normative or ultimately meaningful.[6]

The fact that many contemporary healing systems seek to inculcate supernaturalist beliefs in an essentially ad hoc and nonecclesias-

tical way does not detract from their ability to have a recognizable impact on American religious life. On the contrary, they are important reminders that many of our nation's religious beliefs are of the unchurched, or "folk," variety. For example, such decidedly supernaturalist systems of belief as astrology, spiritualism, and parapsychology are perduring sources of Americans' world views even though they have no formal relationship to normative cultural institutions.[7] Moreover, even though these groups have distinct historical lineages and utilize different terminology, they are nonetheless understood by their American adherents to be advocating quite similar conceptions of reality.[8] Historian Sydney Ahlstrom has described the kind of spirituality that Americans acquire from these self-proclaimed New Age movements as "harmonial piety" insofar as their doctrines articulate a view of the world "in which spiritual composure, physical health, and even economic well-being are understood to flow from a person's rapport with the cosmos."[9] Among the metaphysical doctrines supporting the harmonial interpretation of life are belief in the existence of unseen levels or realms of reality; the "correspondence" of the physical realm with higher metaphysical realms, enabling lawful patterns of interaction among them; the possibility that under certain conditions there might occur a flow of energies from higher dimensions into lower ones; and an emanationist cosmology that pictures the universe as an expression of an evolving divine force continuously seeking to move life onward and upward.

Americans' interest in medical systems based on a harmonial interpretation of the relationship between the physical and metaphysical spheres of life is hardly new. More than eighty years ago William James noted that a metaphysical healing system gives "to some of us serenity, moral poise, and happiness, and prevents certain forms of disease as well as science does, or even better in a certain class of persons."[10] What made these groups so significant in James's opinion was that they overthrew the pretension of positivistic science as the sole method for defining reality. These groups advocated a kind of science that embraced higher spiritual realities and thus portended a New Age in which humanity's scientific and religious needs were reconciled in a single intellectual system. By using healing methods that purported to show that under certain conditions "higher energies filter in" and that "work is actually

done upon our finite personality," practitioners of unorthodox medicine were furnishing empirical evidence in support of a religious outlook very similar to James's own radical empiricism.[11] He further observed that these groups were generating a wave of religious enthusiasm among those seeking a felt sense of an unseen order of reality, and he predicted that metaphysical healers would play as great a role in the evolution of popular religion in the twentieth century as Luther and Calvin had in their day.[12]

James's comparison of metaphysical healing systems with the Protestant Reformation was a bit exaggerated. He did nonetheless identify a certain strand of unchurched, or popular, religious thought that appears to have a particular affinity with American culture. This book attempts to examine this enduring strain of American religiosity and to set it in historical, cultural, and sociological contexts. Chapter 2 will treat the development of unorthodox medicine in the nineteenth century. Prior to the 1830s "regular," or orthodox, medicine had not become sufficiently institutionalized to make the notion of self-conscious commitment to a countervailing system a meaningful historical or cultural concept. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, America was awash in "irregular," sectarian, healing systems, among them homoeopathy, Thomsonianism, hydropathy, and sundry dietary regimens inspired by the unflagging efforts of Sylvester Graham. All of these movements resonated with the progressivist and perfectionist tendencies of early nineteenth-century American Protestantism, yet none logically entailed a "spiritual" or "metaphysical" causal explanation of healing. This is not, however, to imply that Americans failed to educe such religiously edifying notions from them. They did so largely by uniting, at the level of popular culture, ideas born of two new metaphysical systems competing for adherents in nineteenth-century America: Swedenborgianism and mesmerism.

The third chapter will examine the influence of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg and the Viennese physician Anton Mesmer on developments in unorthodox medicine in this country. Swedenborgianism and mesmerism offered late nineteenth-century Americans new terms for describing their relationship to the higher forces and energies upon which human well-being is thought to be ultimately dependent. The diffusion of Swedenborgian and mesmerist terminology into the American metaphysical vocabulary brought

exciting new dimensions to the references to the healing powers of nature found in homoeopathy, Thomsonianism, hydropathy, and Grahamism. The Swedenborgian and mesmerist systems articulated a locus of interconnection between the physical and spiritual realms—the human psyche—providing Americans with a profound sense of their own inner capacity for receiving an ecstatic influx of divine spirit into their systems. As a result, these movements gave birth to such quintessentially American religious philosophies as New Thought and Christian Science.

The fourth chapter will examine the emergence of two new unorthodox healing systems in the late nineteenth century: chiropractic and osteopathic medicine. As we will see, they are both indebted to the mesmeric model of human well-being and thus have at their core an explicitly metaphysical notion of healing. And although each has over the years gradually muted references to metaphysical concepts of disease, the origins of chiropractic and osteopathic medicine nonetheless constitute remarkable case studies in the intermingling of religion and medicine in American culture.

The fifth chapter will treat the twentieth century's concern with "holistic healing" techniques. The concept of a holistic approach to medicine does not in and of itself necessarily entail acknowledging the kind of metaphysical view of reality central to so many unorthodox healing systems in America. However, underlying such diverse healing practices as Ayurvedic medicine, Yoga, Shiatsu, rolfing, psychic healing, Therapeutic Touch, Alcoholics Anonymous, and New Age crystal healing is a conceptual system that recognizes that "every human being is a unique, wholistic, interdependent relationship of body, mind, emotions, and spirit."[13] And by introducing "spirit" as a causal agent alongside somatic and psychic factors in the determination of health and disease, these groups have emerged and functioned as prime carriers of the kind of popular religion to which William James so presciently pointed some ninety years ago.

The sixth and final chapter will attempt to make sense of Americans' continuing advocacy of medical theories and techniques that clearly run against the grain of scientific orthodoxy. This, the most analytical section of the book, will attempt to set these groups in their larger social and cultural contexts. Employing both current theory in the field of psychosomatic medicine and psychological

perspectives drawn from what is known as object relations theory, I will argue that these groups are particularly effective in bringing the resources of religion to bear upon the healing process. Far from promulgating religious notions inherently detrimental to their adherents' capacity for effective functioning in life, many of these groups appear to be fostering as mature and vivid a form of spirituality as might be expected in an age so dominated by secular rationality.

A few qualifications are in order. First, I would like to caution the reader that this is by no means intended to be an exhaustive treatment of "fringe" medicine in America. Its concern is with tracing the various ways in which medical systems have served as carriers of an unchurched strain of American religious thought. Groups have been selected or excluded not on the basis of their intrinsic significance to the history of medicine but rather on their ability to illuminate the patterns whereby sectarian healing movements come to articulate religious visions of reality. Second, let me repeat a word of caution from above. I am not arguing that every unorthodox medical group evokes a religiously salient world view. Nor am I maintaining that the groups discussed in this book were relegated to an unorthodox status solely because of the religious dimension of their theories. My project is more modest and seeks only to demonstrate the vast extent to which unorthodox medical systems have provided their adherents with beliefs and practices that together constitute an enduring tradition of unchurched American religious life. And third, nowhere does this book address what is commonly referred to as "faith healing." The concern here is not with religious groups that include healing in their ministries but with medical systems that dispense heavy doses of unconventional religion. Thus, although the presence of healing practices in our churched religious traditions is a fascinating topic, this book restricts its focus to the presence of religious symbolism in the therapeutic activities of groups with no formal religious affiliation. In fact, a major thesis of this book is that some unorthodox medical systems enable modern individuals to experience the sacred in ways that are more rejuvenating than can be found in many of our established churches. For this reason, they deserve special attention as a mode of religion which not only survives but actually thrives in our secular society.

2

Sectarian Healing and Protestant Perfectionism in the Nineteenth Century

INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONS are expressions of sociological structures. A developing nation consequently has few institutions and professions that possess widespread authority and prestige. In the United States, only the church and ministry had well-defined cultural functions throughout the colonial and early national periods, and it was not until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century that anything resembling an orthodox medical profession emerged.

The medical practices of the indigenous Indian population varied by tribal organization and contributed very little to the ongoing development of medicine in this country—except, perhaps, as a somewhat naive symbol by which later generations of Americans would occasionally voice a nostalgic yearning for a return to harmony with nature.[1] Nor was the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century colonial period able to produce much in the way of a cohesive medical profession. Nearly all educated men of the colonial era acquired some medical knowledge in the course of their normal reading. The ministry, as the most learned of colonial professions, was also the most knowledgeable in medicine and readily dispensed advice for the body as well as the soul. Thus, for example, Cotton Mather is remembered not only for his lofty theological acumen but also for the fact that he recommended the application of a poultice made of dung and urine. Apothecaries, bone setters, midwives,

barber-surgeons, and African tribal healers among the slave population also provided a range of healing services.[2] None, however, wielded sufficient influence to form anything that might be considered "orthodoxy."

After the Revolution, as Americans set themselves to the task of building a republic, a medical profession slowly emerged that for the most part mirrored the intellectual and cultural outlook of the pace-setting educated citizenry of the Northeast. The ideals of the Enlightenment held sway among those who devoted themselves to medical theory. Following the model of Isaac Newton, Enlightenment philosophers believed that the workings of the universe could be reduced to a single set of governing principles. The goal of science was to use empirical methods to find a single fundamental force or principle responsible for what otherwise appear to be complex phenomena. Ironically, it was this same Enlightenment notion—in a popularized form—that would give later "sectarian" systems of medical science such as Thomsonianism, mesmerism, and Grahamism their plausibility. Among the learned members of early nineteenth-century New England, however, this Enlightenment quest for a rational medical science gave rise to a more or less empirical effort to discern regular patterns in the body's interactions with the physical environment.

American medical orthodoxy, then, emerged as committed to the view that health is a function of the interaction between a person's constitutional endowment and the physical environment. This point of view was supported by a corollary theoretical assumption and carried with it a fairly distinct orientation to therapeutic activities.[3] First, it built upon the assumption that every part of the body is inextricably related to every other part—that is, health and disease were understood as having more to do with one's overall state of well-being than with particular causes. It must be remembered that it was not until 1876 that Pasteur and Koch finally discovered the role of microorganisms in producing disease. Nineteenth-century medicine thus did not—indeed, could not—concern itself with diagnosing the specific causes of disease. Second, and following from this, there were very few disease-specific therapies. Because the body was viewed in terms of its overall interaction with the environment, health was synonymous with equilibrium in these transactions. Disease was defined as a loss of equilibrium in the interactions between

the organism and its environment. Medicine consequently amounted to a set of procedures for regulating the systems of "intake" and "outflow" through which a person assimilated and discharged substances from the environment.

The physician, operating without the benefit of modern diagnostic techniques, had to rely primarily on his own visual observation of the patient's assimilations and excretions. By charting changes in the quantity and coloration of blood, urine, menstruation, or feces, a physician could hope to monitor the overall system of intake and outflow. The therapeutic arsenal at his disposal consisted of drugs and various invasive techniques that could influence a patient's ability to assimilate or excrete fluids. Bleedings, sweating, blistering, and the use of drugs aimed at inducing either vomiting or diarrhea were the most common therapeutic techniques. Thus, for example, calomel was the most widely used drug in the first half of the nineteenth century. Containing the chloride of mercury, calomel breaks down in the intestines into its poisonous, and even lethal, components. In so doing it irritates the bowels and serves as a violent laxative, producing effects consistent with the assumptions that antebellum Americans held concerning the etiology of diseases. It was therefore embraced as part of a fully rational system of medicine, along with the incessant bleedings, blisterings, and purgatives that comprised the period's dominant therapeutic activities.

The emerging corps of physicians who operated on the basis of this "rational" approach to medical science came to be referred to as practitioners of "regular" medicine. What regular physicians stood for above all else was a vehement scorn for the healing powers of nature. Regular medicine was allopathic—that is, it worked by seeking to counteract or even combat the forces of nature. As the preeminent physician Benjamin Rush put it, regular medical practice was predicated upon "believing in direct and drastic interferences" with the patient's system.[4] The regular physicians' weaponry of alcohol, opium, mercury, arsenic, and strychnine—let alone the continual bloodletting—eventually earned them the apt designation as practitioners of "heroic" medicine. Doctors literally assaulted their patients in an effort to stimulate and reinvigorate their constitutions. Those hardy patients who did not die in the course of these largely futile endeavors were at the very least weakened by the ordeal.

Fortunately, heroic medicine began to lose favor somewhat by the late 1830s. The influence of Parisian medical schools and their increased emphasis upon anatomical research, the art of diagnosis, and the use of the stethoscope began to diminish the dogmatic application of heroic assaults upon the patient. More controlled clinical trials and advances in physiological knowledge helped regular physicians to become more adept in their diagnoses and treatments. Medical historian John Warner reminds us that "nineteenth-century medical therapeutics *did work;* though perhaps not when judged by criteria of efficacy satisfying to a twentieth-century pharmacologist. Physicians were not ordinarily simpleminded, passive, or duplicitous, nor were they unobservant of the results of their therapies."[5] The point is not so much that medicine became increasingly scientific during the nineteenth century as that what counted as scientific changed and evolved. Medical therapeutics followed and benefited from changing conceptions of what constituted scientific study.

The damage wrought by heroic therapeutics was also circumscribed by recognition of the self-limiting character of many diseases and the accompanying willingness to allow nature to take its course. In addition, changes in therapeutic practice stemmed not only from scientific progress stimulated by "high" culture, but also from the competition that "low" culture provided in the crowded medical marketplace. John Duffy comments: "As much as anything, it was the public's decision to turn from the regular profession to the herbalists, homeopaths, hydropaths, and other medical sects eschewing heroic practices which literally forced orthodox physicians to reconsider their position."[6]

It is important to note that regular physicians, unlike those following systems whose underlying assumptions fell outside the purview of the dominant medical model, possessed sufficient socioeconomic clout to be at the forefront of early efforts to organize the kinds of societies, schools, and regulatory legislation that would protect their vested professional interests. Regular physicians began to establish both local and state societies as early as the eighteenth century.[7] The purpose of these societies was to standardize medical practice both by promoting the sharing of professional knowledge and by actively attempting to legislate competitors out of the marketplace. Most of the early regulatory legislation proved ineffective

and was, in fact, later repealed under the pressure of the Jacksonian era's confidence in the common person's right to pursue his or her self-interest unfettered by restraints imposed by the privileged classes. Nonetheless, regular physicians continued to institutionalize their own rational and scientific approach to medicine. The American Medical Association (AMA), while largely ineffective until the twentieth century, was founded in 1847 to uphold the ideal that physicians "should study, also, in their deportment, so to unite tenderness with firmness, and condescension with authority, as to inspire the minds of the patients with gratitude, respect, and confidence."[8] The AMA code also detailed the obligations of patients to their physicians. The counseled its members to instruct patients to confide in them freely, without, however, bothering them "with a tedious detail of events or matters not appertaining to his disease" nor with "the details of his business nor the history of his family concerns." The patient was further warned that his "obedience . . . to the prescriptions of his physician should be prompt and implicit" and "after his recovery, [he should] entertain a just and enduring sense of the value of the services rendered him by his physician; for these are of such a character that no mere pecuniary acknowledgment can repay or cancel them."[9] It would thus appear that, from its outset, the AMA sought not only to promote scientific progress but to ensure for its members a preeminent cultural status.

What medical societies and early legislative efforts failed to achieve in the way of promoting medical uniformity was gradually accomplished by the proliferation of medical schools. In the first few decades of the nineteenth century, only 4 medical schools existed in the United States; by the end of the century 157 existed, all but 31 of which were dominated by regular physicians.[10] Of course, medical school education during these years differed greatly from what we know today. Most schools required attendance at only two four-month lecture sessions. There were generally no clinical training sessions, no laboratories, and for that matter no admissions requirements. Even as late as 1870, only a very small percentage of medical students had earned a bachelor's degree. But, significantly, the very existence of medical schools served to standardize medical practice in this country. The publication of new textbooks designed to complement the basic lecture sequence promulgated a common core of medi-

cal knowledge. And as the established medical schools finally began to perceive the need for clinical training and entered into cooperative agreements with hospitals to establish internships and residencies, they gained ever more control over who would be allowed entrance into the profession. Thus, without question, the regular physicians and their "material-cause" outlook on health and disease attained in the 1800s the position of medical orthodoxy.

Thomsonianism and the Rise of Sectarian Medicine

Even as state and local medical societies were growing, licensing laws being enacted, and medical schools being standardized, the first real challenge to the orthodoxy of regular medicine appeared in the form of Thomsonianism. Samuel Thomson (1769–1843) came from a poor farming family in rural New Hampshire. In early adulthood he saw his mother die from what he took to be excessive doses of mercury and opium prescribed by a physician. A few years later his wife fell ill from complications following childbirth and barely survived the mercurial drugs and relentless bleedings forced upon her by a regular doctor. At least Thomson called upon two local "root and herb" doctors, and credited their botanical compounds with effecting her recovery. Thomson's experiences led him to the study of the medicinal value of herbs, and in 1805 he struck out on his own as an itinerant botanical healer.

The healing philosophy that Thomson gradually evolved was in many respects little more than a variant of regular medical theory. In line with the period's penchant for deducing a single fundamental principle to account for the whole of medicine, he surmised that there was only one cause of disease, cold, and one cure, heat.

> Heat, I found was life; and Cold, death. . . . Our life depends on heat [and when the body loses heat] the man is sick in every part of the whole frame.
>
> This situation of the body shows the need of medicine, and the kind needed; . . . raise the heat again, and nourish the whole man. All the art required to do this is, to know what medicine will do it, and how to administer it, as a person knows how to clear a stove and the pipe when clogged with soot, that the first may burn free, and the whole room be warmed as before.[11]

To perform this "clearing out" function Thomson used botanics (e.g., sumac, spruce, bayberry) that served as emetics, purgatives, or diuretics. Combining steam baths with other botanics such as cayenne pepper, he was able to restore "heat" to the system and gain control over the general intake and outflow of vital body fluids. One great differences between Thomsonianism and regular medicine was that it did not utilize harsh bleedings or mercurial drugs. Nor did it require economic dependence on physicians who cloaked themselves in an aura of cultural superiority.

Thomson began issuing circulars and pamphlets explaining his system and, in 1822, published a book entitled *New Guide to Health; or Botanic Family Physician.* He commissioned agents to help him sell his book for $20 per copy. The purchase price entitled the buyer to practice this "entirely new" system of botanic medicine within his or her own family. Thomson claims to have sold about 100,000 copies of this book. Its readers organized into local Friendly Botanic Societies to help promote its healing philosophy, and new disciples founded journals such as the *Boston Thomsonian Manual* and *The Boston Thomsonian Medical and Physiological Journal.* The Thomsonian system could be easily and inexpensively incorporated into family medical practice. For this reason, as medical historian William Rothstein notes, "of the various alternatives to regular therapy, only botanical medicine was widely used and understood by the public."[12] Before long the movement spread throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

It is surely not surprising that, with the deplorable condition of regular medicine, the nineteenth century spawned a number of alternative, or sectarian, healing systems such as Thomsonianism. What is remarkable is the extent to which these movements were implicated in the period's moral and religious life; and, as we shall see, a good many of the period's unorthodox medical systems were fraught with notions of metaphysical causality that ran counter to the general tide of secularization then gaining momentum not only in the burgeoning fields of science but in institutionalized religion as well.

The Thomsonian system appealed to Americans in the first few decades of the nineteenth century because of its ability to convey a number of salient cultural themes. First, and most obviously, it gave succinct popular expression to the fierce democratizing spirit of Jacksonian America. Samuel Thomson was a living symbol of the

period's belief in the resourcefulness and natural wisdom of the common man. He repeatedly spoke out for seizing medicine back from the rich and powerful and returning it to the private citizen. The *Boston Thomsonian Manual* pronounced that the movement intended nothing less than "To make every man his physician."[13] Another Thomsonian advocate wrote that this would put an end to the system of regular medicine, whose practices operated exclusively to "make the rich,—richer, the poor,—poorer."[14] Understanding well the larger cultural forces symbolized by his medical reformation, Thomson wrote that "The priest, the doctor, and the lawyer" were all guilty of "deceiving the people."[15] The Thomsonian system thus gave the average person a tool of political power. It enabled men and, to an even greater extent, women to express their yearning for freedom from elitism, institutionalism, and remote sources of authority and power.[16] The *New Guide to Health* returned medicine to the domestic unit. All of this played well in an era in which the common person yearned for common remedies to common ailments.

Medical systems are multivalent phenomena. As Charles Rosenberg has observed, "Therapeutics is after all a good deal more than a series of pharmacological or surgical experiments. It involves emotions and personal relationships, and incorporates all of those cultural factors which determine belief, identity, and status."[17] Insofar as sectarian medical systems are successful in attracting a popular following, they are necessarily making new and creative use of "those cultural factors" determining our beliefs and identities. Particularly dramatic instances of sectarian medical formation are thus prime instances or expressions of what cultural historian William McLoughlin calls "awakenings."[18] According to McLoughlin, awakenings are periodic phases of social life in which a people reshapes its identity, transforms its patterns of thought and action, and redefines the means for sustaining a healthy relationship with the wider powers upon which its well-being is dependent. Awakenings typically give rise to a number of sectarian religious, political, and social movements that seek to give inherited belief systems a new and more functional expression. Such was the case, McLoughlin tells us, in the 1830s (when Thomsonianism, homoeopathy, Grahamism, and hydropathy all began to surface in American life), the 1880s (which witnessed the emergence of New Thought, Christian Science, and the

beginnings of chiropractic and osteopathic medicine), and the 1960s (which gave rise to holistic health awareness, an avid appropriation of Oriental systems of self-purification, and a rebirth of New Age thinking).

Of central importance is the fact that the major periods of cultural renewal or awakening in American history have all entailed the reinvigoration of a fairly small core of conceptions that have shaped our country's experience. Among the most salient of these core beliefs are

> the covenant with God; the higher (biblical or natural) law, against which private and social behavior is to be judged; the laws of science, presumed to be from the Creator, and evolutionary or progressive in their purpose; the free and morally responsible individual; and the benevolence of nature under the exploitative or controlling hand of men.[19]

Each major awakening reinterprets these shaping symbols in ways befitting contemporary patterns of social, economic, and political change. In the 1820s and 1830s, the demand to push forward the frontiers of a spanking new nation made the older, Calvinist version of these ideas untenable for a good many Americans. The revivalist preachers of the era had done much to sway popular opinion away from the Calvinist preoccupation with humanity's helplessness and depravity. Instead, the theological climate promoted emphasis upon our particular sins (e.g., intemperance, Sabbath breaking, unchastity); by overcoming these sins we might—by our own will and effort—restore our rightful relationship to God and the providential forces that God has implanted for us in nature. At the core of all of this was a renewed faith in human perfectibility.

Medical sectarians like the Thomsonians were thus supplying the physiological counterpart to the period's theological perfectionism. Paralleling the revivalist preachers, they too told their audiences that worldly happiness is intended by both divine and natural law. It followed that all we had to do to avail ourselves of God's progressive plan was to assume willful responsibility for our own physiological salvation. The medical sectarians insisted that disease is by no means a deserved reprimand from a wrathful God, but was instead a natural phenomenon and thus subject to laws that human reason could discover and systematically apply. Small wonder, then,

that much of the interest in medical sectarianism was linked with the revival-born enthusiasm for finding new and more efficient ways of doing God's work on earth.[20] In fact, Thomsonianism spread along precisely the same geographical lines that revivalist preachers had traveled (i.e., roughly from Vermont and New Hampshire into western New York State and into the Ohio Valley) spreading the new theological mood of optimism and perfectionism.[21]

Those infected by the prevailing theological mood—especially the clergy—were understandably prone to ask more of medical theory than the regular physicians were able to supply. They sought what might be described as a physiological Arminianism, that is, a patented panacea whereby individuals could take control of their own physical and spiritual salvation. Thomsonianism presented individuals with the opportunity to renounce self-defeating practices and instead align themselves systematically with the lawful patterns that God had established for the continuing improvement of His world. The national mood thus conjoined themes that were logically separable. Confidence in progress, trust in nature, and distrust of elitist authority were united in the period's outlook in a way that enabled the peculiar tenets of Thomsonianism to attract a far more loyal following than its therapeutic record alone warranted. Consider, for example, the testimony of a New York State senator in 1844 as he hailed the virtues of Thomson's system:

> The study of the healing art may be pursued to as great advantage by the inquiring and enlightened mind, by reading the great book of nature, which a wise and bountiful providence has spread before him; and obtain from it as great a knowledge of healing . . . as can be obtained from the study of musty books in the halls of institutions of materia medica.[22]

The Thomsonian system aimed at nothing less than "reform in medicine, dietetics and morals, or, in short, a reform in physiology and morality."[23] It eschewed the "poisoning, bleeding, blistering, or physicing" of the regular physicians and instead countenanced "the use of those remedies only, that act in harmony with Nature's laws."[24] In so doing, it not only endorsed a set of medical practices, but articulated the very "cultural factors" that oriented the general public to issues of identity, status, and belief. Medical sectarians bespoke newer, more progressive interpretations of the covenant

linking individuals to those transcendent forces upon which they believed their lives to be dependent. In the final analysis, a major reason Thomsonianism was able to win the allegiance of nineteenth-century popular audiences was that it promised them wholeness in ways that resonated clearly with the theological symbols by which they took their bearings on life.

Homoeopathy

A second form of "irregular" medicine, homoeopathy, began to emerge more or less concurrently with the public's gradual loss of enthusiasm for the Thomsonian system. A major difference between the two was that while Thomsonianism was advocated by persons clearly outside the orthodox, or regular, medical system, practitioners of the homoeopathic system often came from the ranks of the regular physicians themselves. Moreover, while the clients or patients of Thomsonianism tended to be rural and poor, homoeopathy thrived among the urban upper classes. This latter fact led to direct economic competition with the regular system; and thus from its very inception in American culture, homoeopathy existed in self-conscious opposition to the orthodox medical profession.

The homoeopathic system of medicine was the creation of the German physician Samuel Christian Hahnemann (1755–1843). Hahnemann grew increasingly critical of the indiscriminate prescription of drugs by his contemporaries. He was particularly disturbed by the tendency of allopathic physicians to combat disease with heavy doses of several drugs taken in combination. Believing that much more needed to be learned about the therapeutic effects of each individual drug, he began taking doses of the purest samples of various drugs in an effort to observe the particular physiological changes they brought about. When he swallowed a dose of cinchona, a bark commonly used to combat fever, he broke out in a fever himself. Hahnemann deduced from this that a drug that causes an illness in a healthy person will cure that same illness in a sick person. This principle, which he termed *similia similbus curantur,* or "like is cured by like," became the cornerstone of his homoeopathic doctrine.

Hahnemann set forth a thorough exposition of his healing system

in an 1810 volume entitled *Organon of the Rational Art of Healing.* Hahnemann's healing art was based upon the premise that a disease is synonymous with its symptoms. As he put it, "A disease in its whole range is represented only by the complex of morbid symptoms. . . . in disease there is nothing to lay hold of except these phenomena."[25] He reasoned that physicians should carefully study the symptoms that different drugs produce in healthy persons and, following his "like is cured by like" principle, prescribe drugs that produce effects most similar to a patient's symptoms—because, to again quote Hahnemann, "the healing power of medicines depends on the resemblance of their symptoms to the symptoms of disease."[26]

Hahnemann went on to enunciate a second fundamental principle of homoeopathic medicine, which came to be known as the doctrine of infinitesimals. It was his conviction that the greatest therapeutic benefit was to be obtained by administering diluted doses of a drug. He claimed, for example, that even $\frac{1}{500,000}$ or $\frac{1}{1,000,000}$ of a gram was in actuality more potent than a larger dose. Interestingly, regular physicians were somewhat at a loss to argue against homoeopathy on the grounds of its "like is cured by like" principle. After all, they too sought to attack symptoms through the use of selected drugs and really had no theoretical basis upon which to attack homoeopathy's major premise. The notion of diluted doses, however, struck regular physicians as nonsense and gave them opportunity to denounce homoeopathy as therapeutically ineffectual. Though, ironically, the homoeopathic physicians' use of small doses undoubtedly negated any therapeutic value their drugs might have had, at least these small doses had the virtue of not assaulting the patient's own recuperative powers as did the regular physicians' use of bleeding and poisonous drugs. It is thus not surprising that so many ailing persons turned to homoeopathy as a viable alternative to orthodox medicine. It should also be noted that homoeopathy's popular appeal was a major factor in the formation and success of the American Medical Association, as economic motives joined with scientific ones to rally regular physicians in opposition to their irregular competitors.

Homoeopathy spread quite rapidly in the United States.[27] It was first introduced by Hans Gram, who opened an office in New York after studying the homoeopathic system in Europe. By 1835 a homoeopathic college had been formed, and in 1844 the Ameri-

can Institute of Homoeopathy was organized and constituted the first national medical association in the country (predating the AMA by three years). Throughout the 1800s, ten to twelve percent of the total number of the country's medical schools and medical school graduates were adherents of homoeopathy.[28] The spread and relative popularity of the homoeopathic system provide an instructive lesson in the functions of alternative medicine in American culture. A first, and not insignificant, reason for homoeopathy's popular appeal was its use of less invasive forms of therapy. The infinitesimal doses used by homoeopathic physicians proved far more beneficial in cases where the bleedings and purgings of regular physicians so weakened patients that they failed to overcome illnesses that if left alone, would have run their natural courses and receded. Thus, for example, in cholera epidemics homoeopathic advocates could point to demonstrably better results among their patients.

A second reason for homeopathy's popularity is reflected in medical historian Joseph Kett's observation that it flourished in the same areas in which Thomsonianism had been successful earlier.[29] Kett persuasively argues that homoeopathy offered a new outlet for those whose enthusiasm had been previously aroused by the Friendly Botanic Societies. Homoeopathy's tirades against regular physicians went even further than Thomsonianism in appealing to the period's faith in the beneficence and progressive tendencies of the laws of nature. As one of the movement's spokespersons put it, "We Homoeopathic physicians abjure Allopathia for this—she ignores nature and her powers, in her practice violates her, and in her place sets up the supremacy of her own art."[30] In stark contrast, homoeopathic physicians sought to strengthen nature's own tendencies toward healing and perfection and, in so doing, articulated a philosophy that satisfied the public's desire to learn how they might best align themselves with providential laws and purposes.

Having noted that homoeopathy had certain similarities with Thomsonianism, it is all the more important to focus upon their significant differences. Thomsonians made little or no real effort to part from a material-cause view of healing. They simply substituted their herbs for the regular physicians' noxious drugs. Homoeopaths, however, moved increasingly in the direction of advocating a spiritual or metaphysical view of healing and for this reason were

among the first to align alternative medicine with powerful currents in the period's unchurched religious thought. Hahnemann had from the start imbued homoeopathy with a thinly veiled vitalism. In the *Organon* he observed that "the action upon the living human body of the remedial counter-force which constitutes a medicine is so profound . . . that this action must be called spirit-like."[31] Hahnemann's writings, which finally became available in English translations in the 1840s, encouraged progressive thinkers to envision a subtle form of interaction between the material and spiritual dimensions of life. Homoeopathic medicine had unveiled the secret whereby humanity might bring physical events under the action of a "higher law." As Hahnemann wrote, his system of therapeutics possessed the power to affect the vital spirit responsible for organic life: "Homeopathic dynamizations are processes by which the medicinal properties of drugs, which are in a latent state in the crude substance, are excited and enabled to act spiritually [i.e., dynamically] upon the vital forces."[32]

These cryptic references to the "spirit-like" activity of certain medical substances caught the imagination of many intellectuals seeking innovative answers to the perennial question of the relationship of the world of matter to the world of spirit. Hence, although the names of Thomsonian supporters are barely known to us today, homoeopathy won the endorsement of some of the leading philosophers and religious thinkers of the day. Homoeopathy gave its advocates a medium in which to exercise their metaphysical imaginations. Most of the directions in which they pushed were soon to be reinforced by Swedenborgianism and mesmerism, as we shall see. A contemporary, writing about Hans Gram's followers and the new ideas they were coming to embrace, noted:

> In each of these directions Gram led the way to a wider and deeper knowledge of the relations between soul and body, the human and divine, the transitory and the permanent, than can be entertained by purely materialistic researches.[33]

The homoeopaths were flirting with an overtly metaphysical view of the causal forces influencing human health and well-being. By contrast, Thomsonians stuck to the commonsense view that matter is matter and spirit is spirit, thereby aligning themselves with the

orthodox world view held not only by Western science but by the churches as well. Homoeopaths seemed to insinuate a more mystical view in which matter, if not exactly an expression of spirit, was at least receptive to spiritual infusions. For this reason, their healing system was avidly investigated by many followers of Transcendentalism and others who had become disillusioned with the static conceptual categories of Enlightenment rationality. Whatever the therapeutic benefit of homoeopathic practice, it certainly struck a number of educated Americans as a sanative philosophy.

Hydropathy

References to the curative power of water can be found in almost every culture throughout world history. In India, the waters of the Ganges are thought to purify both body and soul. In Western culture, Greek and Roman physicians praised the healing properties of water administered either internally or externally. And in the United States, faith in the restorative powers of mineral springs had long existed among the native Indians; by the 1660s, numerous mineral water sites were commonly used by the early European settlers of the New World.[34] It was not, however, until the mid-1840s that the healing practices of Vincent Priessnitz made their way across the Atlantic from his native Austria and that a fully articulated system of hydropathy, or water-cure, evolved in the United States. For Priessnitz, hydropathy consisted primarily of the external application of cold water to ailing parts of the body. Showers, baths, and wet-packs were all used to apply water's intrinsic therapeutic powers to bodily infirmities. The first American proponents of Priessnitz's system saw in it a viable alternative to allopathic medicine's excessive use of drugs and sought to make it the nucleus of an encompassing medical philosophy that would include also the essential insights of Thomsonianism, homoeopathy, and Grahamism.

The first major spokesman for hydropathy in the United States was Joel Shew. Shew, along with his associate Russell Trall, opened a water-cure institute in Lebanon Springs, New York, in 1845. Two years later Shew began publishing *The Water-Cure Manual* to promote his conviction that "too much, indeed, cannot be said in praise of cold water. . . . [for nowhere else] has Providence provided any

thing as a beverage so grateful."[35] Shew advised his clientele to combine the therapeutic benefits to be had from the internal and external applications of water with the curative powers of fresh air, exercise, diet, sleep, and proper clothing. The comprehensive water-cure regimen was, in Shew's opinion, a veritable panacea. It could cure fever, hiccups, cholera, stomach bleeding, constipation, poisoning, as well as improve the digestion. Other water-curists added to this list malaria, whooping cough, diseases of the ear, gout, bladder infections, obesity, and excessive sexual desire.

The theoretical rationale of hydropathy centered upon the power of water to restore humans to a condition of purity. Whether taken internally or applied externally by wrapping the patient in what was known as a "wet sheet," water had an almost sacramental power to remove impurities. The hydropathists' wet sheets brought the skin into direct contract with pure water and thus made possible a sanative flow of vital fluids in and out of the body. Impurities from the patient's body could be eliminated through the skin while pure water could be ingested from the sheet or bath and restore purity to the physical system. The "philosophy of water-cure," then, was based not so much on combatting illness as on enhancing the natural vitality intrinsic to living organisms.[36] Water-curists were ideologically opposed to regular medicine. Dr. Henry Nichols, a leading hydropathist of the time, wrote an article for the *Water-Cure Journal* in which he compared the underlying rationale of all the various "pathies." While finding homoeopathy and Thomsonianism sound, if somewhat less profound than hydropathy, he launched a vituperative tirade against allopathic medicine and its principle of counterirritation. He charged that the drugs, emetics, and bleedings of allopathic medicine act as "paralyzers" and "stupefacients." Hydropathy, on the other hand, is based upon the "application of the principles and agency of nature to the preservation of health and the cure of disease."[37]

Hydropathy made harmony with nature the cornerstone of a comprehensive vision of human nature. One editorial pronounced:

> The natural state of man, as of all plants and animals, is one of uninterrupted health. The only natural death is the gradual and painless decay of old age. Such a life and death are in happy harmony with nature; pain, and disease, and premature mortality are the results of violated laws.[38]

In the final analysis, disease is the lawful consequence of humanity's failure to abide by the providential structures that God has stamped onto the natural order of things. As another hydropathist put it:

> We regard Man, in his primitive and natural condition as the most perfect work of God, and consider his present degenerated physical state as only the natural and inevitable result of thousands of years of debauchery and excess, of constant and wilful perversions of his better nature, and the simple penalty of outraged physical law, which is as just and more severe than any other.[39]

Hydropathy was thus suggesting that all impediments to health and human progress could be removed by a better understanding of physical law. Its investigations, therefore, were both physiological and moral. The principles of life it uncovered were proclaimed to be the true foundation of any reform of the human condition since they sought to "purify the body as well as educate the mind . . . reforming the whole man."[40] The *Water-Cure Journal* carried the apt subtitle "Herald of Reforms Devoted to Physiology, Hydropathy and the Laws of Life," and in one issue informed its readers that "the Water-Cure revolution is a great revolution. It touches more interests than any revolution since the days of Jesus Christ."[41]

Hydropathy eventually became entangled with so many "interests" that it gradually lost its distinctive character and became loosely incorporated into a number of diet and exercise philosophies. Russell Trall, along with editing *The Hydropathic Encyclopedia* and establishing a Hygieo-Therapeutic College in New York, also helped found the American Vegetarian Society. In this latter connection Trall aligned the principles of hydropathy with the crusading themes of the likes of William Alcott, Lucy Stone, Amelia Bloomer, Susan B. Anthony, and Horace Greeley. Trall also formed a partnership with the New York publishers Orson Fowler, Lorenzo Fowler, and Samuel R. Wells. The Fowlers and Wells were metaphysical dilettantes and make for an interesting story in their own right. Not only did they personally dabble in water-cure, phrenology, vegetarianism, mesmerism, Grahamism, and spiritualism, but they also published the most significant books on these topics. Of further interest is the fact that they brought all these diverse beliefs to the attention of the American reading public on the same adver-

tisement pages. In doing this, Wells and the Fowlers were undoubtedly justified. For whether logically compatible or not, metaphysical theories of all kinds were linked by the popular intellectual climate. A good many Americans were dissatisfied with orthodox theology and were seeking progressive-minded insights into the higher laws of nature. Eclecticism and broad-minded synthesis appealed to those seeking a philosophy fit for a new age in which religion and science might be combined in some kind of transcendent intellectual synthesis. The Fowlers and Wells saw to it that unorthodox medical systems contributed to promoting this metaphysical mélange.

The water-cure movement thus attracted a number of mid-century Americans seeking a more encompassing vision of the forces upon which our health or well-being depends. Susan Cayleff has shown that several interconnected factors contributed to hydropathy's ideological appeal: it offered noninvasive hygienic principles in place of drug-based therapeutics; it provided distinct opportunities for a "conversion" to a new world view in a revival-like setting; and it fostered self-determination through changes in personal habits, as well as promoted a reformist and even emancipationist social outlook toward the class- and gender-based status quo.[42] Particularly interesting is the last of these, hydropathy's overt concern with overturning the hierarchical class and gender structures associated with allopathic medicine and substituting a more egalitarian model of social organization. The hydropathic movement rejected university training or professional membership as necessary criteria for restoring a patient's health. By emphasizing home self-doctoring and by offering sliding fees and other cost-reducing innovations, hydropathists broke down barriers between healers and clients and thereby fostered a sense of cooperation in the healing process. Hydropathy's reformist impulse was especially pronounced in its articulate attention to women's physiology. Water-cure writers such as Mary Gove Nichols and Russell Trall advocated a demystification of women's physiology and stressed the "naturalness" of the female reproductive system. Insisting, in fact, that "the sexual orgasm on the part of the female is just as normal as on the part of the male," Trall underscored hydropathy's commitment to a new and self-consciously progressive ideological matrix.[43]

One final hydropathist deserves to be singled out: James Caleb

Jackson, who established a water-cure in Dansville, New York. Seeking to outdo the other water-cure establishments throughout the country, Jackson constructed a palatial resort in which he combined hydropathic facilities, organized exercise programs, educational lectures, theater, and health food meals. One interesting sidelight is that Jackson began to produce health foods as a commercial venture, and among his first packaged products was a dry cereal he called "Granula," for which he ultimately won a trademark lawsuit against John Harvey Kellogg. Of greater importance is the fact that Jackson's resort, "Our Home on the Hillside," served as the meeting place for the individuals who were to join hydropathic principles to those of the fourth of our countervailing healing systems, the health food regimen inspired by Sylvester Graham.

Grahamism and the Christian Health Movement

Sylvester Graham represents something of a case study in the confluence of religious intentions and health reform during the first half of the nineteenth century. As Stephen Nissenbaum has shown in his critical study of Grahamism, Graham's life affords a microcosm of "Victorian physiological theory and practice in the very act of coming into being—as a complete ideological system governing every aspect of private routine."[44] Graham's health-reform system was essentially preventive rather than curative in design and therefore lies somewhat outside the scope of this book. Yet his ideas were so avidly appropriated by those espousing Thomsonianism, homoeopathy, hydropathy, and mesmerism that they can scarcely be separated from the nineteenth century's legacy to countervailing medical traditions.

Sylvester Graham (1794–1851) began his career as an ordained Presbyterian minister and itinerant evangelical preacher. Typical of the Arminian-leaning theological spirit of his day, Graham believed that humans have an important role in effecting their own salvation and, therefore, that the ministry is obligated to become involved in any reform movement dedicated to the progressive improvement of the human condition. Graham's primary interest lay in the temperance movement. His impassioned lectures and writings brought the zeal of Protestant piety to bear upon indi-

viduals' ability to take control of their physical well-being. James Whorton notes in his *Crusaders for Fitness* that "temperance lecturers such as Graham were in reality evangelical preachers mixing rum with brimstone and demanding total abstinence from alcohol as a prerequisite for Christian perfection."[45] What was novel in Graham's approach was that he not only detailed the eternal consequences of unregenerate behavior such as the consumption of alcohol, but enumerated the worldly wages of sin as well. He denounced "every liquid stimulant stronger than water" on the ground that they were "disturbing to the body, wearing it out sooner, and . . . detrimental to the health."[46]

Graham's commitment to the complete regeneration of every individual made it impossible for him to limit his attention to the unrestrained consumption of alcohol. He soon broadened the sphere of his prophetic witness to include the dangers of masturbation and sexual excess. While not unmindful of how the passions might lead one to trespass against God's revealed moral laws, Graham pricked the conscience of his audiences by drawing their attention to the bodily defilement wrought by carnal desires. In his 1832 *Lectures to Young Men on Chastity* he described how overstimulation of the sexual organs causes diabetes, jaundice, acne, bad hearing, and the loss of teeth. His research on the connections between moral conduct and physical health, he claimed, proved "that the Bible doctrine of marriage and sexual continence and purity is founded on the physiological principles established in the constitutional nature of man."[47]

In time Graham came to concentrate on the area of hygienic reform in which his contributions were to be the most original and long lasting: diet. He studied the physiological research of the French medical theorists Xavier Bichet and Francois Broussais, as well as the work of Benjamin Rush, and concluded that health depends upon the activity of the stomach. The stomach, it seems, is the physiological agent responsible for delivering "vital power" to the organism in its quest to overcome the various causes of disease and death. The stomach must be supplied with pure, nutritive substances, but must under no condition be "overstimulated." This purported physiological fact led Graham to embrace vegetarianism. While Graham was not the first proponent of vegetarianism in the United States, he became its most distinctive nineteenth-century advocate owing to the strictly

physiological arguments he presented in its behalf. Earlier vegetarians such as Rev. William Metcalfe had provided religious and moral reasons for abstaining from meat eating. Graham's advocacy of a strictly vegetarian diet, like all his health-reform suggestions, was derived "purely by my physiological investigations."[48] To be sure, Graham was incapable of understanding human physiology in ways that would be inconsistent with his era's religious morality. But in his lectures and writings he professed that his various hygienic proposals were based upon a scientific rationale.

At the heart of Graham's dietary crusade was his insistence that the stomach required a steady supply of "well-made bread" in order to provide the system sufficient organic vitality without overstimulation. Denouncing the bread baked from the heavily refined flour manufactured by the country's burgeoning bakery industry, Graham insisted on the use of unbolted wheat flour. This coarse bread, later produced in cracker form, carries his name to this day. Graham was not content with simply telling his readers and listeners what they should eat; he offered advice on how it was to be prepared and eaten as well. Bread, for example, owing to the "intimate relation between the quality of the bread and the moral character of a family," should ideally be baked by "a devoted wife and mother."[49] And, to avoid overstimulating the stomach, meals were to be taken at least six hours apart; one should never eat before going to bed; one should avoid spicy condiments; and one should abstain from tea and coffee as they stunt growth and poison the body. Added to all of this were lengthy instructions on proper sleep, exercise, dress, personal hygiene, and avoidance of medicine ("All medicine, as such, is itself an evil").

The significance of Graham's regimen was not altogether confined to its explicitly stated goals. His audiences read a great deal more into his systematic program for health reform than the modern reader is likely to appreciate. To nineteenth-century Protestants seeking "new measures" whereby the entire universe might be reformed so as to be befitting to God, Grahamism had all the trappings of a sure-fire path to the millennial dawn. The Grahamite American Health Convention assembled in Boston in 1838 resolved:

> That the blessed cause of human improvement, the spread of the Gospel, and the universal regeneration of the world, can never be successfully

> carried forward without the aid of the great work which we are now assembled to advance.[50]

Graham's ideas were among the most widely circulated of all the nineteenth century's health philosophies. They were implemented at hundreds of hydropathic clinics and spread into homoeopathic health counsels as well. The widely traveled evangelist Charles G. Finney became a convert to the Grahamite cause and brought it squarely into the perfectionist program that pervaded the nation's religious outlook. Several of the period's communitarian experiments—Brook Farm, Fruitlands, the Shakers—based their dietary programs on Graham's principles. The most intriguing extension of Grahamism, however, is undoubtedly its extension into the second largest religious denomination ever to emerge in the United States, the Seventh Day Adventists. The prophetess and foundress of Seventh Day Adventism, Ellen Gould White, was an occasional visitor at James C. Jackson's "Our Home on the Hillside" hydropathic resort in Dansville, New York.[51] Several years after her exposure to Graham's dietary program at Dansville, Ellen White had a mystical vision in which God revealed to her that his hygienic laws were to be kept as faithfully as the Ten Commandments. Thereafter all of those who joined her in awaiting the Second Coming of Christ were admonished to keep the body temple pure through adherence to Grahamite principles.

Ellen White was, as Gerald Carson has wryly observed, perhaps the only individual who could state with the full force of prophetic authority that "The health food business is one of the Lord's own instrumentalities."[52] Her concern for the "health food business" was inspired both by divine and pecuniary interests. She had taken under her wing a young Seventh Day Adventist who had studied medicine at Trall's Hygieo-Therapeutic College (where Grahamism was firmly ensconced) before earning a medical degree from New York's Bellevue Hospital. This young protégé, John Harvey Kellogg, soon took over the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek, Michigan, which Ellen White had founded as an Adventist counterpart to the Dansville hydropathic resort. The Adventist sanitarium (affectionately referred to as the "San" by its patrons) grew into a large and diverse health resort and, under Kellogg's direction, attracted such luminaries as J. C. Penney, Montgomery Ward, Al-

fred DuPont, John D. Rockefeller, and President Taft. As described in an advertising brochure, its operating philosophy was that

> no drugs whatever, will be administered, but only such means employed as NATURE can best use in her recuperative work, such as Water, Air, Light, Heat, Food, Sleep, Rest, Recreation, &c. Our tables will be furnished with a strictly healthful diet.[53]

In his efforts to provide this "strictly healthful diet" to a wider audience, John Harvey Kellogg and a former patient of the San, C. W. Post, began to develop dry, prepackaged breakfast cereals such as corn flakes, shredded wheat, and variations upon Jackson's Granula. The rest, as they say, is history.

Summary and Prospectus

Thomsonianism, homoeopathy, hydropathy, and Grahamism all thrived as countervailing medical voices in the nineteenth century for many reasons. For one thing, they were generally less expensive than their "regular" competition. Second, they did not assault the patient through heavy doses of poisonous drugs and bleeding, thereby allowing the patient's own recuperative powers the chance to effect cure. A third reason, as Stephen Nissenbaum has so ably pointed out, is that they also offered an essentially nostalgic vision that placed healing in the hands of a loved family member rather than yet another representative of the steadily growing industrial and professional classes. Thus, for example, Graham's appeal to eat homemade bread was a powerful symbolic appeal to the ethic of self-sufficiency in an age in which the industrial revolution was shifting the production of basic commodities from the home to the factory.

And yet, as we have seen, above and beyond all of these factors was the ability of these healing movements to appeal to the core conceptions of American culture and to do so in ways that resonated with the progressivist temperament of the time. All four movements had deep roots in the Second Great Awakening, which accentuated the role of humans in effecting the Kingdom of God on earth. In both the ideas they embraced and the persons who

articulated them, these movements carried the ideological thrust of that religio-cultural awakening to its most practical applications. These movements, like so many other "pseudosciences" of the nineteenth century, resonated well with the nation's utilitarianism, its egalitarianism, its implicit faith in America's special destiny, and the widespread anticipation that Americans would some day witness the complete transformation of their physical and spiritual beings.[54] Thus, when they asked their clientele to trust the progressive powers of nature to restore them to purity, they needed little in the way of empirical proof. The ideas carried about them the aura of self-evident truths.

There were, of course, considerable differences among these healing systems (although most of these differences were ignored by the general public that interpreted them with its own agenda in mind). We have already noted that Thomsonianism was a philosophy prone to acceptance by the poor, ill-educated, and rural. Homoeopathy, on the other hand, appealed mostly to the upper classes, the well educated, and urban. In his study of Grahamism, Nissenbaum makes much of the sharp contrasts between Sylvester Graham and his contemporary Ralph Waldo Emerson.[55] While each emphasized that the source of true authority is to be found in the individual, they understood the "inner person" in completely different ways. Emerson was a mystic and Transcendentalist. He believed that beneath the conscious intellect was an inner faculty for becoming receptive to a higher power. The final source of all regenerative and progressive actions, then, was the spiritual emanations of the Over-Soul which filtered through the mind's inner recesses. To Emerson, true spirituality had nothing at all to do with the Bible or traditional Christian morality. It instead entailed an aesthetic appreciation of one's own inner connection with the fundamental laws of the universe. In sharp contrast, Graham was a Protestant moralist. For him, all progressive activity was in the final analysis due to strict conformity with divine will. Graham called for scrutiny, control, discipline, and regimen in living, for the purpose of guarding against our tendency to fall away from conformity with God's lawful patterns. Emerson thought that consistency—as with all narrowing activities of the rational mind—was precisely what prevented humanity from letting go and becoming receptive to the forces hidden in the psyche's depths. In this contrast we have the two princi-

pal temperaments of American Protestantism—the ascetic (Graham) and the aesthetic (Emerson). And, in turn, we have the key to the different paths that alternative medical philosophies might travel as they make their way through the collective American mind.

Upon closer analysis, little in the four nineteenth-century healing systems we have examined could be called overtly or distinctively religious. The means of healing—herbs, minute drug doses, water, and nutritive food—all fall into the category of "material" therapeutic causes. True, the substances they utilized were not recognized by regular physicians as having curative power, but none of these unorthodox healing systems challenged the conceptual basis of regular medicine by explicitly professing belief in the therapeutic power of nonmaterial agents. And thus, although all four shared the Second Great Awakening's mission to narrow the great gulf that Calvinism had posited between a stern, wrathful God and His weak, depraved creation, none did anything to eliminate this gulf altogether. Ironically, the more overt their connection with institutional Christianity, the less likely were these theories to espouse anything resembling a spiritual- or metaphysical-cause explanation of healing. Instead, they conformed with ascetic Protestantism and its emphasis upon willful obedience to divine law. Almost entirely absent was anything that a historian of religion might describe as bearing the imprint of ecstasy or mystical encounter with the holy. For this to come to the fore, the aesthetic style of religious thought and its belief in humanity's inner capacity to become receptive to an "influx" of divine spirit had to make its way into popular healing practices.

Catherine Albanese has written of the metaphysical turn taken by many medical theorists in the nineteenth century. These theorists, she observes, learned to perceive hidden spiritual depths in nature and steadily linked this numinous nature to theories of the mind.[56] The homoeopaths, as might be expected, were among the first to strike out in this direction. In an essay appearing in *The Homoeopathic Advocate and Guide to Health* in 1851, W. O. Woodbury ventured that

> The *mind* is the power which produces in the human body, not only the intellectual and moral but also the vital phenomena. As the *almighty*

> *mind* produces all the wondrous and mysterious workings throughout the material universe, . . . all in accordance with its own inherent impressions of love, mercy, justice, goodness, wisdom and truth, so does the *human mind* produce in its own little universe, the body, all its varied phenomena, from the lowest action of vitality to the most powerful physical motions, and thence upward to the highest grade of intellectual and moral phenomena.[57]

This homoeopathic advocate had identified a fundamental correspondence between the macrocosm (universal mind) and the microcosm (human mind), but he had still not educed any physiological or psychological interconnection that might explain interaction between the two spheres. The world view that his theory expressed was simply too one-dimensional to permit notions of spiritual or metaphysical causality.

It was to this need that Americans would apply the ideological resources of yet two more European-born "isms." Swedenborgianism and mesmerism were all but destined to be pulled into the center of nineteenth-century America's metaphysical musings. Both, as we shall see, lent scientific and intellectual authority to an aesthetic spirituality that looked to humanity's psychic depths for a point of interconnection with a higher spiritual power.

3

From Physic to Metaphysic: The Spiritualizing of Alternative Medicine

A MUCH ABUSED and fad-weary public awaited Charles Poyen at the beginning of his American lecture tour in 1836. Inundated with "doctors of the people" out to capitalize on their physical sufferings, many Americans had learned to regard all medical theories with a skepticism mitigated only by their desperate desire for a more reliable program of cure. Poyen's audiences knew virtually nothing about his subject and, by his account, seemed to prefer it that way. Poyen consoled himself with the knowledge that all great truths—even when espoused by the likes of Galileo, Columbus, or Christ—are initially dismissed by the general populace. His confidence and evangelical zeal emanated from the conviction that he was speaking on the basis of "well-authenticated facts concerning an order of phenomena so important to science and so glorious to human nature."[1] Knowing that his audience's indifference was rooted in simple ignorance, Poyen persisted in his prophetic mission to acquaint Americans with Franz Anton Mesmer's science of animal magnetism.

Mesmer (1734–1815) had attracted a good deal of attention when he presented himself to European intellectual circles as the bearer of an epoch-making discovery.[2] The Viennese physician claimed to have detected the existence of a superfine substance or fluid that had until then eluded scientific notice. Mesmer referred to this invisible fluid as animal magnetism and postulated that it per-

meated the physical universe. He explained that animal magnetism constituted the etheric medium through which forces of every kind—light, heat, magnetism, electricity—passed as they traveled from one physical object to another. Every event transpiring in nature depended upon the fact that animal magnetism linked physical objects together and made possible the transmission of influences from one to another.

Mesmer believed that his discovery had removed the basic impediment to scientific progress and that every area of human knowledge would soon undergo rapid transformation and advancement. He was most concerned with its application to the treatment of disease. Animal magnetism was said to be evenly distributed throughout the healthy human body. If for any reason an individual's supply of animal magnetism was thrown out of equilibrium, one or more bodily organs would consequently be deprived of sufficient amounts of this vital force and eventually begin to falter. "There is," Mesmer reasoned, "only one illness and one healing."[3] Therefore, since any and all illnesses can ultimately be traced back to a disturbance in the body's supply of animal magnetism, medical science could be reduced to a simple set of procedures aimed at supercharging a patient's nervous system with this mysterious life-giving energy.

Before Mesmer's theory reached American shores, his pupils had introduced significant changes that would drastically alter the science of animal magnetism. The Marquis de Puysegur exerted the greatest influence upon subsequent interpretations of his teacher's remarkable healing talents. Puysegur faithfully imitated Mesmer's techniques, only to have his patients fall into unusual, sleeplike states of consciousness. They had, so to speak, become "mesmerized." These entranced individuals exhibited the most extraordinary behaviors. Puysegur's subjects responded to his questions with more intelligent and nuanced replies than could possibly be expected given their educational and socioeconomic background. Many subjects suddenly remembered long-forgotten experiences with astonishing accuracy. A select few appeared to drift into a much deeper state of consciousness, which Puysegur described as one of "extraordinary lucidity." These subjects spontaneously performed feats of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition. Puysegur had stumbled upon the existence of a stratum of mental life just below the threshold of ordinary consciousness and quite different

than anything of which humanity had yet been aware. In discovering the means of inducing persons into this unconscious mental realm, he had initiated a revolution in the study of human nature.

Animal Magnetism Enters the American Mind

Charles Poyen had studied directly under Puysegur and thus confidently stood before his American audiences as a self-appointed Professor of Animal Magnetism. Like his mentor, Poyen believed that mesmerism's single most important discovery was that of the somnambulic, or mesmeric, state of consciousness. His public lectures consequently centered upon on actual demonstrations of the mesmeric state and all of its attendant phenomena. For these demonstrations Poyen depended in part upon the services of an assistant who was particularly adept at entering into the entranced state. He also made a practice of enlisting a few volunteers from the audience. He would explain to his subjects that his manual gestures heightened the activity of their body's own supply of animal magnetism to the point where their "external sensibilities" temporarily receded from consciousness, inducing a sleeplike condition. Poyen usually succeeded in putting about half of his volunteers into a trance that rendered them peculiarly unresponsive to their surroundings. Loud hand clapping and jars of ammonia passed under their noses failed to evoke even the slightest response. To all appearances, their minds had withdrawn from the physical world.

Staged exhibitions of mesmerism proved to be great theater. Crowds gathered to see their friends and relatives transformed before their eyes. The entertainment value of these demonstrations obviously outstripped their application to contemporary medical science. The frivolity that inevitably accompanied the demonstrations predictably alienated mesmerism from the established medical and scientific communities. Despite their unintended disservice to the science of animal magnetism, however, Poyen's lecture-demonstrations stimulated the public's imagination with novel "facts" about human nature—facts that, if not as "important to science" as Poyen had hoped, were soon thought to be more "glorious to human nature" than even he had dreamed.

Many of Poyen's volunteers came in hope of a medical cure. He

obliged by making repeated "passes" with his hands in an effort to direct the flow of animal megnetism to the appropriate part of the body. A large proportion of those receiving this treatment awoke from their mesmeric sleep and, remembering nothing of what had transpired, claimed cure. Poyen's own account, in many cases supported by newspaper reports and letters to the editor, lists successful treatment of such disorders as rheumatism, nervousness, back troubles, and liver ailments.

Roughly ten percent of the subjects mesmerized by Poyen attained the "highest degree" of the magnetic condition. Their behavior went beyond the peculiar to the extraordinary. The onset of this stage in the mesmerizing process was marked by the formation of an especially intense rapport between the subject and the operator. A crucial ingredient of this rapport was the establishment of some nonverbal means of communication by which the subject telepathically received unspoken thoughts from the operator. Most subjects obligingly attributed this ability to a heightened receptivity to animal magnetism flowing into their system from without. Some actually reported feeling animal magnetism act upon their nervous systems; they felt prickly sensations running up and down their bodies. Others claimed up to "see" dazzling bright lights. Nor was it uncommon for subjects to perform feats of clairvoyance and extrasensory perception. They would locate lost objects, describe events transpiring in distant locales, or read the minds of persons in the audience. Upon returning to the waking state, they remembered little of their trance-bound experiences. It was as if they had temporarily existed in an altogether different realm. They knew only that they were now refreshed, energetic, and healed of their former ailments.

Word of Poyen's fantastic healing methods spread throughout New England. His 1837 treatise on the progress of animal magnetism in New England declares that "nineteenth months have elapsed since that period and already Animal Magnetism has sprung from a complete state of obscurity and neglect into general notice, and become the object of a lively interest throughout the country."[4] Newspapers began to take notice. The *Providence Journal* reported that more than one hundred cases of "Magnetic Somnambulism" had been reported in Rhode Island alone. Poyen's system was, according to one observer, fast becoming a "steady theme of interest in New England papers" and making "a deep impression upon

some of the soundest and best balanced minds."[5] Poyen cited articles published in Rhode Island, Maine, and Connecticut supporting his contention that the science of animal magnetism had become a topic of conversation in all classes of society, especially—as he was quick to point out—among the learned and well-to-do.

It is not difficult to see why. Poyen was an able and evocative speaker. A former activist in the abolition movement and the author of a pamphlet detailing methods for promoting the spirit of Christianity, Poyen was merely shifting the focus of his evangelic zeal. He now played upon the growing public confidence in the ability of science to help initiate a utopian order. He prophesied that, when fully accepted by the "intelligent and fast progressing" American people, mesmerism was destined to make America "the most perfect nation on earth."[6] In this way Poyen not only launched mesmerism into the surging tide of American nationalism, but also associated it with the Jacksonian era's belief in the ultimate perfectibility of society through the progressive improvement of its individual citizens. By appealing to deeply rooted beliefs concerning the nation's manifest destiny, Poyen quite unwittingly hastened the identification of magnetic cures with other programs for personal rejuvenation then enjoying the enthusiastic support of various New England constituencies.

Poyen returned to his native France in 1839. His efforts had attracted a host of American followers eager to become spokesmen for the science of animal magnetism. According to one estimate, by 1843 more than two hundred "magnetic healers" were selling their services in the city of Boston alone.[7] Claims of successful cures accumulated. Among the conditions for which cure was claimed were rheumatism, loss of voice, stammering, nervousness, epilepsy, blindness, insomnia, St. Vitus's Dance, and the abuse of coffee, tea, and alcohol.[8] Growing public interest in this new medical science stimulated demand for books and pamphlets, and the American mesmerists willingly complied. Most of the dozens of works to appear over the next twenty years followed a common format: an introductory exhortation to open-mindedness; a short history of Mesmer's discovery; a catalogue of typical cures; documented reports of clairvoyance and telepathy; and last, but not least, a set of do-it-yourself instructions. One widely circulated pamphlet bore the appropriate title *The History and Philosophy of Animal Magnet-*

ism with Practical Instruction for the Exercise of this Power. Another included in its title the promise to explain "the system of manipulating adopted to produce ecstasy and somnambulism."[9]

A consensus about the scientific principles established by mesmeric phenomena soon emerged in the literature. Relying heavily on the writings of a British mesmerist named Chauncy Townshend, American investigators came to view the mesmerizing process as a technique for shifting mental activity along a continuum.[10] Each stage or point along the continuum was said to correspond to a successively deeper level of consciousness. The mesmerizing process dismantled the normal waking state of consciousness and induced individuals to shift their attention inward, away from events occurring in the physical world. As the sensations by the five physical senses gradually receded from consciousness, subjects entered the beginning stage or level of the mesmeric state. In this relatively light trance state subjects would appear totally insensible to any external sensation other than the voice of the mesmerist. This condition, which today we might call light hypnotic trance, facilitated the mesmerists' ability to use "passes" to stimulate the flow of animal magnetism within the body and to transmit willfully this spiritual fluid from his own body to that of the patient.

The most distinctive claim made by the mesmerists, however, was that the mind could be moved even farther along this continuum until, freed at last from its bondage to the five physical senses, it opened up to wholly new ranges of experience. As Townshend had put it, mesmerism brings about "the inaction of the external operations of the senses, coexistent with the life and activity of some inner source of feeling."[11] The mesmeric state had made possible a giant breakthrough in the scientific study of the human constitution. The mesmerists' experiments were hailed as having empirically proven that there exists "a sense in man which perceives the presences and qualities of things without the use of . . . the external organs of sense."[12] At this deeper level, the mind detects orders of sensation never monitored by the physical senses. The patient is now freed from dependence upon the mesmerists insofar as he or she is in a condition uniquely receptive to the unmediated inflow of animal magnetism. Healings occur spontaneously in this exalted state of consciousness. The activation of what Townshend called "the inner source of feeling" was also said to afford clairvoyance,

prevoyance, telepathy, and intuitive knowledge of universal laws and structures.

These deeper realms of the mesmeric state had a decidedly mystical element. Subjects felt that they had transcended the mundane affairs of ordinary existence and entered into an intimate rapport with the cosmos. In the mesmeric state individuals temporarily felt endowed with omnipresent and omniscient powers. One investigator reported that mesmerized subjects "speak as if, to their consciousness, they had undergone an inward translation by which they had passed out of a material into a spiritual body. . . . The state into which a subject is brought by the mesmerizing process is a state in which the spirit predominates for the time being over the body."[13]

In mesmerism, the healing process was propaedeutic to spiritual discovery. The mesmerists' psychological continuum defined both an experiential path initiated by the healing process and a metaphysical hierarchy. That is, the "deeper" levels of consciousness achieved during the mesmerizing process put individuals into contact with qualitatively "higher" planes of reality. The mesmerists were thus articulating a healing philosophy that attributed the true cause of healing and personal growth to a distinctively metaphysical, as opposed to physiological or psychological, agent.

Linking Matter, Mind, and Spirit

The mesmerists were launching their medical theory into uncharted cultural waters. Their commitment to the causal agency of animal magnetism (often referred to as vital fluid, vital force, divine electricity, etc.) placed their theoretical endeavors equally far outside the spheres of Protestant orthodoxy and regular medicine. The problems inherent in uniting matter, mind, and spirit (i.e., animal magnetism) in a single cosmological system were at once its major liability and its major attraction. Thus, for example, a Midwestern physician and self-styled progressivist by the name of Joseph Buchanan embraced mesmerism as the key to a "neurological anthropology" that would encompass medical science, philosophy, and religion. To Buchanan, mesmerism was a hermeneutic principle unveiling humanity's psychosomatic unity. The doctrine of animal

magnetism taught that "positive material existence and positive Spiritual existence—however far apart they stand, and however striking the contrast between their properties—are connected by these fine gradations . . . both are subject to the same great system of laws which each obeys in its own sphere."[14]

According to Buchanan, strictly physiological theories of human nature lead inevitably to materialism, pessimism, and atheism. He rejected contemporary medical science as an inadequate framework for describing the human constitution, "since it lacks the essential perspective of the modus operandi of life power."[15] Theological dogma, while recognizing humanity's higher, spiritual nature, was likewise unacceptable because it undermined the inductive spirit of any true anthropology. Mesmerism signaled an intellectual breakthrough of the highest magnitude. It forged the relative contributions of medical physiology and theology into a higher synthesis. At last Buchanan could confidently affirm that "the power of disembodied mind and intellectual manifestations . . . fall within the scope of the fundamental principles of the constitution of man, and spiritual mysteries, too, are beautifully elucidated by the complete correspondence, and mathematical harmony, between the spiritual and material laws of our being."[16]

Buchanan's interest in mesmerism's religious and metaphysical implications was widely shared. As early as February 1837 a letter addressed to the editor of the *Boston Recorder* had testified:

> George was converted from materialism to Christianity by the facts in Animal Magnetism developed under his [Poyen's] practice . . . it proves the power of mind over matter . . . informs our faith in the spirituality and immortality of our nature, and encourages us to renewed efforts to live up to its transcendent powers.[17]

A high school teacher wrote to the *Providence Journal* that "God and eternity are the only answer to these mysterious phenomena—these apparitions of the Infinity and the Unknown."[18] An early tract on the science of animal magnetism drew attention to the ways in which it casts "light on how we are constituted, how nearly we are related to, and how far we resemble our original . . . God who is a pure spiritual essence."[19] The same author went on to boast that mesmerism "shows that man has within him a spiritual nature,

which can live without the body . . . in the eternal NOW of a future existence."[20]

Those who experienced the mesmerizing process described it as a decidedly numinous experience. Direct contact with the instreaming animal magnetic forces was thought to momentarily transform and elevate a person's being. A typical account relates that

> the whole moral and intellectual character becomes changed from the degraded condition of earth to the exalted intelligence of a spiritual state. The external senses are all suspended and the internal sense of spirit acts with its natural power as it will when entirely freed from the body after death. No person, we think, can listen to the revelations of a subject in a magnetic state, respecting the mysteries of our nature, and continue to doubt the existence of a never dying soul and the existence of a future or heavenly life.[21]

It is evident that Americans saw mesmerism as rejuvenating individuals in ways that went well beyond the healing of isolated complaints. They believed that the mesmerizing process helped them to reestablish inner harmony with the very source of physical and emotional well-being. In the mesmeric state, they learned that disease and even moral confusion were the unfortunate consequences of having fallen out of rapport with the invisible spiritual workings of the universe. Conversely, health and personal virtue were the innate rewards of living in accordance with the cosmic order. When patients returned from their ecstatic mental journey, they saw themselves as having been raised to a higher level of participation in the life force that "activates the whole frame of nature and produces all the phenomena that transpire throughout the realms of unbounded space."[22]

Mesmerism had no overt connections with institutional religion. It was nonetheless interpreted as a progressive variation of the religious revivals which had by then become the most effective institution in American religious life. Appearing in the mid-1830s, mesmerism—with other antebellum sectarian medical systems—was swept along in the wake of the religious enthusiasm unleashed by the outburst of revivalist activity that historians call the Second Great Awakening. Numerous revivalist preachers had disposed the popular religious climate toward an "alleviated Calvinism." In this view sin, rather

than being thought to originate in humanity's inherent depravity, was instead understood as a function of ignorance, lack of self-discipline, or the result of faulty social institutions. Humankind's "lower nature" was therefore considered to be correctable through humanly initiated reforms. American religious thought during this period thus implicitly sanctioned experimental doctrines seeking the immediate and total renovation of humanity.

The period's most successful revivalist, Charles Grandison Finney, epitomized the changing outlook that made a healing philosophy such as mesmerism so religiously salient. Finney's *Lectures on Revivals,* published in 1835, outlined what he believed to be an empirically tested system of techniques designed to turn the conversion process into a lawful science. In Finney's estimation, a conversion "is not a miracle or dependent on a miracle in any sense . . . it consists entirely in the right exercise of the powers of nature."[23] By implication, religious experience can be humanly engineered. His was a scientific pneumatology predicated on the fact that "God had connected means with ends through all departments of his government—in nature and in grace."[24]

Finney was articulating a progressivist religiosity that matched the sense of expansion and discovery so predominant in the 1820s and 1830s. "New measures," he wrote, "are necessary from time to time to awaken attention and to bring the gospel to bear upon the public mind."[25] The "new measures" Finney had in mind were emotionally charged techniques whereby a charismatic individual might bring others to the point of ecstatic religious experience. According to Whitney Cross, the instrumental role of the revivalist in initiating the regenerative process established "the notion that special efforts under a person of particular talents would create a keener spirituality than the ordinary course of events could achieve."[26]

Historians have referred to the religious innovations set in motion by revivalists such as Finney the "burned-over" phenomenon. Between 1800 and 1850 religious fervor reached a stage of intensity that prompted many to compare the spread of experiential forms of religion with the ravaging flames of a forest fire. Termed "ultraism" by contemporaries, this peculiarly American religious creation has been described by Whitney Cross as a "combination of activities, personalities, and attitudes creating a condition of society which could foster experimental doctrines." Mormonism, Shakerism, Ad-

ventism, communitarianism, and millenarianism all emerged among those engaged in a protracted search for new ways of getting "the automatically operant Holy Spirit to descend and symbolize the start of the New Life."[27] Innovation was, as Cross documents, at the very heart of the period's religious quest:

> Popular demand, whetted by constant revivals, invited ever-more-novel departures. Finney's relatively sane popularizing tendency grew among his emulators into a mania. More than one itinerant may have claimed to be "recipient and channel of a sensible divine emanation, which he caused to pass from him by a perceptible influence, as electricity passes from one body to another."[28]

That mesmerism—more than any other nineteenth-century sectarian medical system—was able to stimulate Americans' metaphysical imaginations in "ever-more-novel" directions is not at all surprising. The mesmerists traveled from town to town on a New England circuit nearly identical to that of the revivalists. Some came to hear them out of sheer curiosity, but many came out of desperation. Those suffering from prolonged illness or from an inability to get a firmer hold on life were naturally vulnerable to the mesmerists' impassioned rhetoric concerning an invisible spiritual power with which they were in all likelihood out of touch. Like the revivalists, the mesmerists were preaching that individuals would continue to be plagued by sundry physical and emotional ills so long as they refused to open themselves up to a higher spiritual power. Mesmerism provided inwardly troubled individuals with an intense experience thought to restore them to harmony with unseen spiritual forces. The mesmeric state, no less than the emotion-laden conversion experience, gave powerful and convincing experiential grounds for the belief that humanity's lower nature can be utterly transformed and elevated when brought under the guiding influence of spirit.

Yet the mesmerists differed from the revivalists in at least one important respect. Far from reproaching individuals for challenging orthodox religious thinking, they encouraged them to do so. Mesmerism's doctrines tended to appeal to those whose religious sensibilities could not be constrained by scriptural piety and who yearned instead for a progressive, co-scientific religious outlook. As

one advocate put it, mesmerism "not only disposes the mind to adopt religious principles, but also tends to free us from the errors of superstition by reducing to natural causes many phenomena."[29] Mesmerism's ability to help individuals fashion a way of viewing the world that was at once religiously and scientifically satisfying was greatly assisted by its unofficial alliance with yet another European-born metaphysical system—Swedenborgianism.

Swedenborgianism and American Harmonial Piety

The teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1771) were not inherently germane to the unorthodox medical systems emerging in nineteenth-century American culture. It was their form and vision, not their substance, that gave them their poignancy. Their influence was much like that exerted by the writings of Teilhard de Chardin, which in the 1960s and 1970s helped pull together the religious and scientific interests of many involved in holistic and psychic healing. That is, they lent an ideological matrix to a wide array of activities and gave them a certain plausibility they might otherwise have lacked.

An eminent scientist in his day, Emanuel Swedenborg had made significant contributions in such varied fields as physics, astronomy, and anatomy before finally dedicating himself to the study of the secret mysteries contained in Christian scripture. By this time he had, however, moved beyond the inductive methods of laboratory science. Swedenborg claimed that, while in states of mystical reverie, he had been granted "perfect inspiration." He was not nearly as reticent as mystical seers are usually wont to be and wrote more than thirty volumes purporting to uncover the spiritual essence buried beneath the literal sense of Christian doctrine.

Swedenborg's writings carried with them a gnostic intrigue that appealed to those wishing to find a spirituality that went beyond routine church affairs. His revelations freed the essence of the Christian message from bondage to ancient scripture. Swedenborg was himself living proof that the truths of religion could be known directly through inward illumination. He explained that the universe is composed of several interpenetrating dimensions—physical, mental, spiritual, angelic, among others. Each of these dimensions is

in some imperceptible way connected with every other. It follows, then, that complete harmony in any one dimension of life depends upon establishing rapport with other levels on the cosmic scale. All true progress proceeds according to influences received from above. The physical body achieves inner harmony by first becoming attuned with the mind, the mind through contact with the soul, the soul through connection with superior angelic beings, and so on up the spiritual hierarchy. Through diligent study and prolonged introspection, anyone might obtain the requisite gnosis to make contact with higher spiritual planes. The benefits to be obtained were numerous: spontaneous insight into cosmological secrets; conversations with angelic beings; intuitive understanding of the hidden spiritual meaning of scripture; and the instantaneous healing of both physical and emotional disorders.

Swedenborg's undaunted confidence in the soul's capacity for limitless development contrasted sharply with the Calvinists' insistence upon human depravity. His doctrines thus complemented and appealed to many of the sectarian groups that populated the nineteenth-century religious landscape.[30] Communitarians, Transcendentalists, spiritualists, and wealthy dilettantes such as Henry James, Sr., were alike encouraged by his expansive doctrines. John Humphrey Noyes of the Oneida Community perhaps best explained the reasons for Swedenborgianism's appeal to such diverse religious and intellectual dispositions:

> The Bible and revivals had made men hungry for something more than social reconstruction. Swedenborg's offer of a new heaven as well as a new earth, met the demand magnificently. . . . The scientific were charmed, because he was primarily a man of science, and seemed to reduce the world to scientific order. The mystics were charmed because he led them boldly into all the mysteries of intuition and invisible worlds.[31]

The key to Swedenborg's system, and the reason it was simultaneously scientific and metaphysical, was his doctrine of "correspondence." As Ralph Waldo Emerson explained it, the Swedenborgian notion of correspondence represents the "fine secret that little explains large, and large, little. . . . Nature iterates her means perpetually on successive planes." The doctrine of correspondence was not simply a method for understanding the relationship between physi-

cal laws and their metaphysical correlates; it was also, and far more importantly, a doctrine of causality. When inner harmony or resonance between realms is established, energy and guiding wisdom from the higher plane can flow into and causally influence the lower plane. Swedenborg was proclaiming that men and women are inwardly constructed so as to be able to receive "psychic influx" from higher planes of reality.

Swedenborg's doctrines gave the nineteenth century its most vivid articulation of a form of piety in which "harmony," rather than contrition or repentance, is the sine qua non of the regenerated life. In historian Sydney Ahlstrom's words, harmonial religion "encompasses those forms of piety and belief in which spiritual composure, physical health, and even economic well-being are understood to flow from a person's rapport with the cosmos."[32] The deity—here conceived as an indwelling cosmic force—is approached not via petitionary prayer or acts of worship, but through a series of inner adjustments. As the barriers separating the finite personality from the "divinity which flows through all things" are gradually penetrated, vitality spontaneously manifests itself in every dimension of personal life.

The harmonial piety so eloquently depicted in both Mesmer's and Swedenborg's writings gave practitioners of unorthodox medicine a metaphysical rationale for the efficacy of their various therapeutic practices. Whitney Cross has aptly summarized the reasons mesmerism and Swedenborgianism established themselves in the American metaphysical imagination to a greater extent than their doctrines probably warranted:

> Before they [nineteenth century Americans] ever heard of Mesmer or Swedenborg, they expected new scientific discoveries to confirm the broad patterns of revelation as they understood them: to give mankind ever-more-revealing glimpses of the preordained divine plan for humanity and the universe. They expected all such knowledge would demonstrate the superiority of ideal over physical or material force, and that it would prove the relationship of man's soul to the infinite spiritual power.[33]

The Swedenborgian world view depicted interaction between the physical and metaphysical orders of reality as a lawful occurrence.

It only remained for adherents of various medical and religious sects to elaborate the means whereby this influx takes place. Thus it was that Swedenborg's American followers gave scrupulous attention to every word of his essay "On the Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body Which is Supposed to Take Place Either by Physical Influx or by Pre-Established Harmony." Most seemed to favor the idea of physical influx. For example, Emerson spoke for the Transcendentalist movement when he concluded that the mind is "an organ recipient of life from God."[34] An 1838 edition of American Swedenborgianism's principal journal, the *New Jerusalem Magazine,* clumsily suggested that "life from God flows-in into man through the soul, and through this into the mind, that is, into the reflections and thoughts of the mind, and from these into the sense, speech and actions of the body."[35]

The combined influence of mesmerism and Swedenborgianism in providing Americans with a way to attribute mental and physical events to metaphysical causes can be seen in Dr. George Bush's 1847 volume, *Mesmer and Swedenborg.* Claiming to have studied most of the two thousand works already published on the subject of animal magnetism, Bush concluded that "when taken together, the investigations of the mesmeric state point to an entirely new class of facts in psychology." And, more to the point, this new class of facts gave empirical support to the Swedenborgian system by proving "the grand principle that man is a spirit as to his interiors and that his spiritual nature in the body often manifests itself according to the laws which govern it out of the body."[36] Bush further reasoned that "the indubitable facts of mesmerism are affording to the many senses of man a demonstration which cannot be resisted, that Swedenborg has told the truth of the other life."[37]

The reports of entranced subjects could safely be considered descriptions of a higher metaphysical plane. Bush himself experimented with mesmerism and found clear evidence of the existence of extrasensory perception, telepathy, and clairvoyance. Many of his subjects reported experiencing periods of mystical rapture as they came under the influence of this numinous state of consciousness. Some even told of seeing "mental atmospheres" composed of ultrafine rays of light surrounding people's heads. Surely animal magnetism must be the medium of psychic influx postulated by Swedenborgian metaphysics all along.

The fusion of mesmerism and Swedenborgianism enabled Bush to link matter, mind, and spirit. The study of the mesmeric state and its revelation of our inward capacity to receive psychic influxes, he claimed, added new scientific information concerning the human constitution "just at that point where anthropology weds itself to Theology."[38] He concluded that "On the whole it must, we think, be admitted that the phenomena of mesmerism taken in conjunction with the developments of Swedenborg, open a new chapter in the philosophy of mind and in man's relations to a higher sphere."[39] And it was precisely these developments that would inject a metaphysically charged vocabulary into the lexicons of many unorthodox American medical philosophies.

The Metaphysical Connection

The contributions of mesmerism and Swedenborgianism to nineteenth-century religious and medical sectarianism go well beyond the measure of their formal memberships; shared reading lists, parallel lecture circuits, joint memberships, and historical patterns of cross-fertilization are all greater indices of sustained traditions in unchurched religious thought. Thus, while relatively few Americans proclaimed exclusive allegiance to these movements, thousands found in them the intellectual categories to identify a "spiritual" or "metaphysical" dimension to life.

Of the unorthodox healing systems we have examined thus far, Thomsonianism was the least influenced by the "metaphysical connection" that mesmerism and Swedenborgianism forged between physical healing and higher spiritual agencies. Thomsonianism presented a clear-cut reliance on the pharmaceutical properties of natural herbs and educed little in the way of a novel world view from its therapeutic activities. Graham's Christian-based dietary reforms were also originally sealed off from contact with heretical cosmologies. Graham was a subscriber to the "ascetic" model of Protestant thought, which posits a wide gulf between the realm of the supernatural and the earthly sphere that is optimally to be controlled by the disciplined human will. Ellen White was likewise a hawkish defender of Protestant orthodoxy and its suspicion of cosmologies that picture the natural order of things as susceptible to invisible

influences. Like Graham, she was heir to the ascetic style of American Protestantism and grafted all healing concepts onto a fierce biblical fundamentalism. She wrote at length about the "danger in speculative knowledge" and charged that "One of the greatest evils that attends the quest for knowledge, the investigation of science, is the disposition to exalt human reasoning above its true value and its proper sphere. Many attempt to judge of the Creator and His works by their own imperfect knowledge of science."[40] Especially to be vigilant against were contemporary pantheistic conceptions which "if followed to their logical conclusions sweep away the whole Christian economy."[41]

As it turned out, some of Ellen White's followers strayed from the orthodox tenets of Seventh Day Adventist faith. The San in Battle Creek drew a great many of the period's metaphysical seekers such as mind-curists and sundry spiritualists. They came to the San despite Ellen White's biblical theology, and their influence apparently turned some individuals in new intellectual directions. John Harvey Kellogg himself was sufficiently swayed by the pantheistic cosmologies circulating at the San to find in them a way to reconcile his religious beliefs with scientific evolutionary thought. He eventually went so far as to identify instinct as the voice of God and to write that

> God is *in* nature. . . . God actually entered into the product of his creative skill, so that it might not only outwardly reflect the divine conception, but that it might think divinely, and act divinely.[42]

Kellogg's insinuation that matter and spirit might be interpenetrating dimensions of a single lawful reality was a heresy that earned him disfranchisement from the Adventist church. Yet his slight leaning toward harmonial piety was mild when compared to the ways in which C. W. Post assimilated contemporary metaphysical notions into the dietary movement. Post proclaimed that "the white light of the higher intelligence . . . psychic sense, Soul, Life, or Divine Mind, whichever term seems best," is the true source of human well-being.[43] Diet is at best a secondary means of inducing the psychic influences from our higher self to enter into and exert their life-giving properties on our conscious life. Strongly influenced by the mind-cure movement and its reliance upon mesmerist psychology, Post

taught that "the real man . . . lies upon a plane above the plane of matter" and that to achieve vibrant living we must learn to make inner contact with this higher dimension of selfhood.[44]

Hydropathy was far more amenable to metaphysical alliances. In 1840, Dr. Russell Trall began to formally instruct new hydropathic practitioners on hydropathy's connections with mesmerism. Among the original faculty in Trall's hydropathic college was Lorenzo Fowler, who constituted something of a living symbol of eclectic thought. Under Fowler's tutelage, practitioners of hydropathy learned to view their healing art as intricately interwoven with such causes as temperance, phrenology, and mesmerism. Another interesting spokesperson for the cause, Mary Gove Nichols, first connected hydropathy with Grahamism before adding mesmerism, free love, and spiritualism. It is, then, not at all surprising that a journal by the name of *The Magnetic and Cold Water Guide* would emerge and include the following testimonial by an Ohio physician:

> Physiology, Phrenology, and Magnetism are the keys that are unlocking the great mysteries of nature and mind, and letting us in, as it were, to the inner temple, where the sunbeams of light and truth are filling the minds and understandings of all the truly devout worshippers of the Eternal principles which govern all things.[45]

Homoeopathy provides the clearest example of the metaphysical dimensions that mesmerism and Swedenborgianism infused into nineteenth-century healing movements. Hahnemann himself had advocated mesmerism as a means of balancing the vital power throughout the body and as a clue to the lawful interconnection between things physical and spiritual. The physical manipulations and mental focusing taught by the mesmerists revealed to him how vital power could flow from a spiritual source into matter and vice versa. Mesmerism afforded homoeopaths a metaphor or conceptual model for affirming a lawful relationship between matter and spirit. That this link proved to be the fundamental attraction of both movements is indicated by John Gray's early history of homoeopathy in the United States. Recollecting the fascinating lessons he had learned from Hans Gram, Gray specifically mentioned Gram's interest in mesmerism and kindred systems and remarked that

> In each of these directions Gram led the way to a wider and deeper knowledge of the relations between soul and body, the human and divine, the transitory and the permanent, than can be entertained by purely materialistic researchers.[46]

Homoeopathy had a similar affinity with Swedenborgianism. As Joseph Kett has pointed out, this affinity is to be explained not so much by the number of homoeopaths who formally embraced Swedenborgianism as by the similarity of their visions of an ordered and predictable universe in which matter and spirit were perfectly synthesized.[47] Thus, Transcendentalists such as Theodore Parker, Bronson Alcott, and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody saw homoeopathy as a vital aspect of their Swedenborgian-inspired mystical world view. Likewise, prominent homoeopaths found in Transcendentalism and Swedenborgianism ready-made systems for articulating their intuitive sense of the physical body as but an outer covering of some inner spiritual energy. Dr. William Wesselhoeft and Dr. William Henry Halcombe were among those homoeopathic physicians who found in Swedenborgianism the crucial link between their scientific commitments and their faith in the primacy of spirit over matter.

A final observation is necessary concerning the way in which mesmerism and Swedenborgianism helped provide metaphysical dimensions for both nineteenth-century healing systems and their twentieth-century legatees. Both of these metaphysical movements were prime factors in the emergence of spiritualism as a distinct tradition of unchurched American religiosity. The gaudy seances and shoddy deceptions for which spiritualism is best known have tended to obscure the aesthetic and harmonial spirituality that permeated the movement in its early stages. Andrew Jackson Davis, the leading spokesperson for spiritualism in the nineteenth century, was an apprentice cobbler in 1843 when the famed mesmerist J. Stanley Grimes passed through his hometown of Poughkeepsie. During a lecture-demonstration, Grimes randomly selected the young Davis for a volunteer subject. Davis turned out to be an adept trance subject and was soon performing such standard mesmeric feats as reading from books while blindfolded and reporting clairvoyant travels to distant locales. After several months of repeated journeys into the inner recesses of his mind, Davis suddenly realized that the self-induced mesmeric trance state was one in which "mighty and

sacred truths spontaneously gushed up from the depths of my spirit."[48] Davis insisted moreover that these truths were being communicated to him by departed spirits. Not the least of these discarnate entities was Emanuel Swedenborg, who from his vantage point in heaven now had even more lessons to teach.

Davis soon enticed friends to record the metaphysical lessons delivered through him by his contacts in the spirit world. In his major work, *The Harmonial Philosophy,* Davis and his spirit tutors wedded mesmerist psychology to Swedenborgian metaphysics. The text explains that human consciousness is arranged along a continuum, ranging from "rudimental" sensory awareness all the way to the "spiritual state," in which we may experience "a high reality, an expansion of the mind's energies, a subjugation of material to spiritual, of body to soul."[49] Healing became for Davis, as for other prominent "trance channelers" even to this day, a natural extension of a harmonial philosophy centered upon the practical benefits to be derived from becoming attuned to a higher reality. The healing practices of most early spiritualists were almost wholly imitations of those of their mesmeric predecessors and colleagues. Explaining illness as the consequence of an obstruction of the free flow of "spirit" or "vital fluid" in the body, they emphasized the use of hand gestures, or passes, to restore harmony to the body's system. Of central importance is the fact that the founders of chiropractic medicine, D. D. Palmer, and of osteopathic medicine, Andrew Taylor Still, picked up the root metaphors and fundamental techniques of their medical philosophies from mesmerist and spiritualist sources.

Over time, spiritualism gravitated toward the staging of showy seances that offered a paying clientele ostensible evidence that their departed loved ones still "existed" in another realm. As a consequence, those interested in the reconciliation of religion and science shifted their energies elsewhere. In his *In Search of White Crows,* R. Laurence Moore shows how twentieth-century interest in parapsychology and psychical research grew directly out of the same cultural forces that had earlier given rise to spiritualism.[50] The important point is that to this day mesmerist and Swedenborgian metaphysical teachings still abound in the writings and activities of those involved with parapsychology. New Age trance channeling, Eckankar, the Association for Research and Enlightenment, crystal healing, and attempts to link Eastern meditational

practices with contemporary American concerns all draw upon a similar cluster of metaphysical conceptions. As we shall see, American culture continues to find metaphysical connections among philosophies of quite diverse origins; the motivating impulse for much of this metaphysical eclecticism appears to be the ongoing interest in unorthodox healing practices.

The Legacy of Mind Over Matter

During his proselytizing tour through New England in 1838, the mesmerist Charles Poyen stopped in Belfast, Maine. Attending his lecture-demonstrations was a young clockmaker who was destined to become the most successful "mental healer" in the United States. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802–1866) was inspired by Poyen's astonishing exhibition to begin investigating the science of animal magnetism on his own. With the help of a particularly adept trance subject by the name of Lucius Burkmar, Quimby soon established his own healing practice. Quimby would put Lucius into the mesmeric state and direct him to use his clairvoyant powers to diagnose a person's illness and then to prescribe an appropriate medicinal remedy. On some occasions Quimby dispensed with Lucius's assistance and instead made the classic mesmeric passes over his patients' heads in an effort to recharge their systems directly with animal magnetism. Whichever the method, Quimby believed that the resultant healings were "the result of animal magnetism, and that electricity had more or less to do with it."[51]

With the passage of time Quimby became increasingly skeptical that animal magnetism alone could be responsible for all of his therapeutic successes. It dawned upon him that Lucius might not be diagnosing the patients' ailments at all, but that, more likely, his assistant was merely using his deep rapport with patients to learn what they already believed to be the cause of their troubles. His "accurate" diagnoses so utterly astonished patients that they put their full confidence in his curative powers. Thus, the herbal remedies Lucius prescribed worked more upon the patients' beliefs about their problems than upon the actual physical disorder. Most of the remedies were innocuous substances that proved equally effective on a number of ailments. On one occasion Quimby actually substi-

tuted a less expensive substance for the costly one Lucius had suggested—and the patient recovered just the same!

Many mesmerists had deduced that the patients' beliefs and expectations were at least partially responsible for their rapid recoveries. But Quimby arrived at the more radical conclusion that the illnesses were caused by their ideas or beliefs in the first place. He declared that our minds are the sum total of our beliefs, and that if a person is "deceived into a belief that he has, or is liable to have a disease, the belief is catching and the effects follow from it."[52] Quimby was thus forging a connection between mesmerism-born metaphysical notions of healing and modern psychosomatic medicine. He clarified this connection by specifically identifying faulty ideas—not magnetic fluids—as the root cause of both physical and emotional disorders. In Quimby's words, "all sickness is in the mind or belief . . . to cure the disease is to correct the error, destroy the cause, and the effect will cease."[53]

It is important to note that Quimby's theory of illness was not the mentalistic or purely psychosomatic explanation for which many of his interpreters have mistaken it. He saw the patient's belief or attitude as only an intervening variable. Quimby held that the real source of health was the magnetic fluid, or vital force, flowing into the human nervous system through some deeper level of the mind. Beliefs function like control valves or floodgates—they serve to connect or disconnect the conscious mind and its unconscious depths. "Disease," Quimby insisted, "is the effect of a wrong direction given to the mind."[54] When persons identify themselves solely in terms of outer conditions, they place their minds at the mercy of noxious external stimuli; and as long as the mind is reacting to sensations received through the physical senses, it is unreceptive to the inflow of magnetic forces and therefore depletes the body of its proactive energies. The result is disease.

According to Quimby, health can be achieved only by permanently banishing self-defeating attitudes. It follows that "the theory of correcting diseases is the introduction to life."[55] Quimby thought that if he could but illustrate to his patients "that a man's happiness is in his belief, and his misery is the effect of his belief, then I have done what never has been done before. Establish this and man rises to a higher state of wisdom, not of this world, but of that World of Science . . . the Wisdom of Science is Life eternal."[56]

Quimby's gospel of mind cure had a beautiful simplicity. Right beliefs channel health, happiness, and wisdom out of the cosmic ethers and into the individual's psyche. If we can control our beliefs, we will control the shunting valve that connects us to psychological and physiological vitality. Quimby counseled that the secret to happiness of every kind is to identify oneself in terms of internal reference points. The human nervous system cannot rely solely upon the capricious messages supplied by the physical senses without eventually becoming embroiled in fear, worry, and finally disease. Human misery, then, is the necessary consequence of allowing other persons and outer events to supply us with our sense of self-worth. In Quimby's words, "disease is something made by belief or forced upon us by our parents or public opinion. . . . Now if you can face the error and argue it down you can cure the sick."[57]

Quimby's theories amounted to a translation of the metaphysical categories of mesmerism and Swedenborgianism into a practical philosophy of life. "There are," he declared, "two sciences, one of this world, and the other of a spiritual world, or two effects produced upon the mind by two directions."[58] Quimby seemed to be saying that each of us has a higher and lower nature and that it is within our own power to determine which of the two predominates. He taught his patients that by making appropriate adjustments in the microcosm of the psyche they could establish rapport with the very powers that activate the macrocosm.

Quimby's teachings lived on through the work of his patients. One, Mary Baker Eddy, founded one of the five largest religious denominations to have emerged in American history (Ellen White founded one of the other five). She arrived at Quimby's doorstep in 1862 a helpless physical and mental wreck. The mesmeric healer cured her afflicted body and, in the process, filled her receptive mind with new ideas. Once healed, Mrs. Eddy resolved that she, too, would take up a career in mental healing. Her first public lecture, "P. P. Quimby's Spiritual Science Healing Disease as Opposed to Deism or Rochester-Rapping Spiritualism," made her the first spokeswoman for the philosophy of mind cure. Soon after Quimby's death she transformed the lessons she had learned from him into the foundations of her own Christian Science. Until her death in 1910, Mrs. Eddy worked incessantly at giving literary, theological, and institutional embodiment to the science of mental

healing.[59] Her Church of Christ, Scientist, was self-consciously founded as "a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing."[60] Mary Baker Eddy's principal text, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,* made clear her intention to shift the science of healing away from mesmerist categories to ones that bore more resemblance to Christian scripture. In brief, her Christian Science theology asserts that God created all that is, and all that God created is good. Mrs. Eddy followed this line of reasoning to the conclusion that such things as sickness, pain, or evil possess no positive ontological status. They are only the delusional appearances created by an erring, mortal mind. The healing ministry in which Christian Scientists engage is dedicated to the task of assisting individuals in keeping their minds and mental attitudes centered solely on the higher laws of God's spiritual presence. To help people overcome the errors of their mortal minds, Mrs. Eddy established churches nationwide and certified a small army of Christian Science "practitioners" to assist sick individuals by teaching them how they might elevate their mental and emotional lives to a higher spiritual level. Although no formal membership statistics are available, Mrs. Eddy claimed that *Science and Health* had sold more than 400,000 copies by 1900, and the Christian Science denomination is now entering its second century of witnessing to the conviction that the mind has access to a higher spiritual reality that is the source of health and wholeness.

The healing activities of institutionalized religion lie beyond the scope of this book. However, the fact that two of America's five native-born religious traditions emerged with explicit connections to unorthodox healing movements underscores how fully religion and medicine are linked in our cultural heritage. We might also note that the other three native-born religious groups, the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and various Pentecostal groups, have all had strong interest in religious healing (although, like the Seventh Day Adventists, their healing interests have been overtly connected with biblical rather than metaphysical conceptions of causality).

After Mary Baker Eddy, the second most notable of Quimby's students was a former Methodist Episcopal minister and ardent Swedenborgian by the name of Warren Felt Evans.[61] Evans followed in Quimby's footsteps by opening a healing office of his own

in Boston, where for the next twenty years he spearheaded what is variously referred to as the Mind Cure or New Thought movement. Evans, a gifted healer in the Quimby tradition, brought mind-cure ideas to the attention of the nation's large middle class with his pen. By 1875 his *The Mental Cure* (1869) and *Mental Medicine* (1871) had gone through seven and fifteen editions, respectively. In these and numerous other books, with titles like *The Divine Law of Cure, Esoteric Christianity and Mental Therapeutics,* and *The Primitive Mind Cure,* Evans expounded the doctrine that through contact with the deepest recesses of our unconscious minds we can avail ourselves of a divine healing energy.

Evans proclaimed that through their discovery of the higher reaches of the human psyche, the mesmerists and Swedenborgians had recovered the kerygma of the early Christian church. The attainment of mental states in which we are receptive to subtle spiritual influences was for Evans a sacramental experience. He wrote that by learning to cultivate meditative states of consciousness we can all learn to "come into direct and immediate communication with God [so] that His creative energy shall be added to our cognitive and volitional power."[62]

Another New Thought author, Ralph Waldo Trine, provided perhaps the clearest exposition of the movement's harmonial piety:

> In just the degree that we come into a conscious realization of our oneness with the Infinite Life, and open ourselves to the Divine inflow, do we actualize in ourselves the qualities and powers of the Infinite Life, do we make ourselves channels through which the Infinite Intelligence and Power can work. In just the degree in which you realize your oneness with the Infinite Spirit, you will exchange dis-ease for ease, inharmony for harmony, suffering and pain for abounding health and strength.[63]

"As a man thinketh, so is he" was no mere aphorism for the New Thoughters; it was metaphysical law. Mesmerism and Swedenborgianism had laid down the foundations for a cosmology in which mind controls our access to higher causal energies. Thus, Trine could assert that "in the degree that thought is spiritualized, does it become more subtle and powerful . . . this spiritualizing is in accordance with law and is within the power of all."[64] For the New

Thoughters, then, a very real metaphysical power was envisioned when they boasted of "the power of positive thinking." They taught that preoccupation with outer conditions blinds the individual to the higher causal principles governing the universe. It is far more beneficial to spend a few moments alone in silence for the purpose of activating the powers available through the unconscious mind. For just beneath the threshold of waking consciousness resides what Evans termed "a battery and reservoir of magnetic life and vital force" ready to replenish the exhausted nervous system and restore us to a condition of vitality.[65]

The harmonial philosophy exemplified by New Thought has become a ubiquitous element of twentieth-century American religious thought. As Sydney Ahlstrom notes, it is "a vast and highly diffuse religious impulse that cuts across all the normal lines of religious division. It often shapes the inner meaning of the church life to which people formally commit themselves."[66] To appreciate the popular extension of this metaphysical vision, which so readily links contemplative spirituality with schemes for achieving personal success or self-actualization, one need only turn to Norman Vincent Peale's phenomenally popular *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Peale has infected millions of readers with the patently harmonial conviction that "by channeling spiritual power through your thoughts . . . you can have peace of mind, improved health, and a never-ceasing flow of energy."[67]

The concept of a metaphysical linking of the individual's inner mind with a higher cosmic source of spiritual power pointedly addressed the societal dis-ease that accompanied the dawn of modern American culture. Urbanization, industrialization, immigration, and the splintering of any theological consensus around which national life might revolve all jarred the American psyche loose from traditional sources of stability. Whether psychosomatic illness actually increased around the turn of the century is difficult to ascertain. It is, however, safe to assume that Americans' awareness of the mental/cultural origin of so many of their ailments increased dramatically. The often cited writings of Dr. George Beard, a New York neurologist, provide a helpful insight into Americans' earliest efforts to make sense of a world that put increasing strain on our inner or psychological life. Writing in the 1870s and 1880s, Beard was convinced that the rapid rate of change in modern life was robbing individuals of

their mental energy.[68] Railway travel, the periodical press, the telegraph, religious liberties, the intellectual activity of women, sectarian religious movements, loud noises, the specialization of labor, social conventions that suppress emotional expression, and the chaotic flux of new ideas were all sapping Americans of their mental strength. The human brain just wasn't equipped to handle so much stimuli and, as a consequence, the American populace had become beset by "nervous exhaustion." The symptoms were many: headaches, insomnia, inebriety, cerebral irritation, emotional distress, premature baldness, hopelessness, fear of being alone, fear of society, fear of fears.

Beard spoke for the entire regular medical profession when he admitted that there was little or nothing physicians could do for these problems. The materialistic basis of his own medical theory led him to the conclusion that any substantial improvements would have to await the future evolutionary development of sturdier neural equipment. In the meantime his contemporaries would just have to learn to cope with diminished inner resources.

Beard's fatalistic prognosis for nervous exhaustion implicitly indicted American culture for an inefficient channeling of the human energies at its disposal. The high incidence of stress-related illness attested to the rigorous demands which a pluralistic society places upon a person's efforts to be inner-directed. Individuals were constantly being forced back upon their own inner resources. Confronted with difficult choices in nearly every area of their lives, many at last fell prey to their own indecisiveness. Their illnesses testified to an agonizing paradox: afflictor and afflicted were one and the same. Outer symptoms mirrored inner conflict. Worse yet, there appeared no way out of the syndrome of nervous exhaustion. Diligence and redoubled effort could only overtax, not replenish, precious human energies. By definition, the debilitated individual lacked the inner resources to bring about a full recovery. Help would have to come from without. But where were these extrapersonal energies to be found? Who would point the way?

The churches were of little help. Intellectual secularism and social pluralism combined to undermine the single most effective healing ritual at their disposal—revivalism. Revivalism had flourished in a comparatively unsophisticated social and intellectual environment. Inner renewal from contact with the Holy Spirit was

thought to lead automatically to one or another version of Calvinist piety and membership in a local church. But in the late 1800s Protestant churches lacked the social resources to carry out their former role to bring about personal and cultural renewal. Many suddenly found themselves occupying a "downtown" location. Their memberships were no longer isomorphic with geographical districts. The churches' responsibilities for ministering to the needs of an urban population were as amorphous as their demographic boundaries. Over what domain were the churches to exercise their guidance? To whom should their members direct mutual edification or fraternal correction?

Culture lag had set into church life, creating what intellectual historian Arthur Schlesinger deems "the critical period" in American religious thought. Church ministry had failed "to adjust to the unprecedented conditions created by rapid urban and industrial growth. American Protestantism, the product of a rural, middle class society, faced a range of problems for which it had neither the experience nor the aptitude."[69] The nation's "official" religion, like its "official" medicine, had little to offer those afflicted with nervous exhaustion. A cultural niche was thus opening up in which metaphysically inclined medical systems might flourish, and flourish they have.

The metaphysical healing vision spawned by mesmerism and Swedenborgianism continues even to this day to provide the underlying metaphors and imagery for many alternative healing philosophies. Holistic healing groups, psychic healers, New Age trance channelers, Therapeutic Touch practitioners, and even Alcoholics Anonymous have drawn heavily upon this legacy of belief in the mind's capacity to draw upon higher healing energies. And, too, belief in the power of physical manipulation to realign the body with a higher spiritual power provided the founding vision of two of the most popular of the twentieth century's healing systems, the chiropractic and osteopathic systems of medicine.

4

At the Fringes of Orthodoxy: Chiropractic and Osteopathic Medicine

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, regular physicians redoubled their efforts to rid the medical scene of their irregular counterparts. The regular physicians demarcated the boundaries of orthodoxy through such activities as forming state and local medical societies, lobbying the legislature to protect public well-being through rigid licensing regulations, and—above all—continuing to pressure hospitals to restrict their internships and staff to graduates of recognized medical schools. The New York Academy of Medicine, for example, explicitly excluded from eligibility "all homoeopathic, hydropathic, chronothermal and botanic physicians, and also all mesmeric and clairvoyant pretenders to the healing art, and all others who at any time or on any pretext claim peculiar merits for their mixed practices not founded on the best system of physiology and pathology, as taught in the best schools in Europe and America."[1] The American Medical Association gradually rose above the state and local societies to become the dominant professional organization for orthodox physicians. Henceforth, all other contenders for a share of the nation's medical market would find their unorthodox status clearly and repeatedly defined for them by a formidable adversary.

At the turn of the century, however, the AMA was to find at its fringes two worthy opponents. These unorthodox systems were both rooted in a mesmerism-based metaphysical view of the ulti-

mate cause of healing, and both were to endure in the face of the orthodox system's repeated efforts to banish them from cultural respectability. Chiropractic and osteopathic medicine are for this reason paradigmatic examples of the paths metaphysical healing systems would have to take in the twentieth century if they insisted upon openly competing with the AMA for access to the nation's medical marketplace. Although remarkably similar in their founding ideologies, chiropractic and osteopathic medicine subsequently steered quite different courses in their quests for professional recognition and broad-based public support. Each succeeded in carving out for itself a viable niche in the American medical environment. There are currently over 19,000 chiropractic physicians in the United States treating at least three million patients annually.[2] Osteopathic physicians number more than 24,000 and treat twenty million persons per year.[3] And thus, although the founding philosophies of both chiropractic and osteopathy are at considerable variance with medical orthodoxy, they have fully established themselves in the wider institutional context of American health care.

Unlike the twentieth-century healing movements we will study in Chapter 5, both chiropractic and osteopathic medicine have muted their metaphysical overtones. This is particularly true of osteopathy, which in its eagerness for peaceful coexistence with the AMA was fairly quick to drop its mesmeric origins and metaphors. Osteopathy was rewarded with easier access to the hospital and insurance industries, whose doors are well guarded by the accredited sentinels of orthodoxy. Chiropractic medicine has also made considerable progress toward public esteem and full eligibility for government-funded health care programs. It, too, has in large part abandoned metaphysical terminology in favor of increasingly precise specifications of the physical causes of musculoskeletal distress. Importantly, however, both chiropractic and osteopathy have continued to utilize a healing vocabulary of harmonial metaphors (albeit reduced from the level of metaphysical abstraction to their lowest common denominator of physiology). And both have continued to differentiate their theoretical orientation from regular medicine by affirming the innate sanctity of the human body as well as the therapeutic importance of the "laying on of hands." Chiropractic and osteopathic medicine have thus in many ways attenuated, but without fully severing connections with, enduring elements in

America's unchurched religious thought. Even into the 1970s and 1980s chiropractic and osteopathy in varying degrees have continued to draw upon the harmonial metaphors when expressing their theoretical foundations. As one recent popular tract announces, chiropractic is a New Age philosophy that recognizes "that the universe is perfectly organized and that, as extensions of that universal intelligence, we also have an unlimited potential for life and health. . . . In order to express more of your potential, you need only keep the channels of that expression open."[4]

The Healing Hands of D. D. Palmer

Born in 1845 to a shoemaker and his wife, Daniel David Palmer set out, at the age of twenty, to seek his fortune in the burgeoning Midwest. After brief stops in Illinois, Daniel appeared to be settling into a stable life as a grocer and fish peddler in the town of What Cheer, Iowa. His interest in the philosophical and metaphysical issues of his day, however, destined him for a life quite different from that of the typical Midwestern grocer. Almost wholly lacking in formal education, Palmer is nevertheless reputed to have read widely and seemed particularly drawn to what one biographer refers to as "radical ideas." One of these radical ideas was spiritualism. Daniel associated with a good many spiritualists from whom he picked up a number of metaphysical terms and metaphors for humanity's participation in a higher order of things. Even well into his chiropractic days he simply took for granted that "we are surrounded with an aura" and that we are intimately connected with nonmaterial forces and energies.[5] One of Palmer's spiritualist acquaintances is said to have told him of a vision of a sign that read "Dr. Palmer" and that Daniel would one day become a well-known lecturer on a "revolutionary" method of healing disease.[6]

A major step toward the fulfillment of this prophecy occurred when Daniel David Palmer, by this time styling himself D. D. Palmer, crossed paths with a mesmeric healer by the name of Paul Carter. Carter was operating a successful magnetic healing practice in nearby Ottumwa, Iowa, and gradually tutored the inquisitive grocer in the art of imparting magnetic healing energy to diseased persons. Carter was one of many Midwestern magnetic healers who

went beyond the mesmeric technique of making passes with their hands over the patients' heads and bodies and actually rubbed or even slapped their bodies. He is reported to have told Palmer that "by rubbing and slapping the entire body of a sick patient, I imparted my magnetism. It cured the sick."[7] Palmer's interest was aroused and he procured several books on mesmeric healing that were to remain central texts in his personal library for the rest of his life.[8] He soon after remembered an incident from his past in which he had cured his mother of intense pain by simply placing his hand on her head. He took this not only as confirmation of Carter's theories but also as proof that he, too, was especially gifted at the art of harnessing and transmitting magnetic healing energy.

D. D. first opened his own magnetic healing office in Burlington, Iowa, and subsequently moved to Davenport. He immediately had a sign painted for the outside of his office which read "Dr. Palmer." For the next nine years he engaged in what appears to have been a thriving healing practice. Seeing as many as ninety patients in a day, he was credited with curing tumors, cancers, rheumatism, neuralgia, sprains, heart disease, stomach ailments, and "female weakness."[9] He later added a "magnetic infirmary" that provided room and board to patients who required prolonged magnetic treatments. His income steadily increased until he was earning over $4,000 per year on the average from his medical practice.

Magnetic healing not only proved lucrative for D. D. Palmer, but also fit nicely with his particular religiosity. D. D. had always been an avid reader of the Bible, books on spiritualism, and literature covering a wide variety of esoteric philosophies. He consequently found in magnetic healing a perfect vehicle for advancing his own theory of humanity's moral and spiritual constitution. Magnetic healing provided him with a means of developing (or at least convincing others that he possessed) an array of intuitive or nonrational sensibilities. There are numerous anecdotes of Palmer displaying a remarkable capacity for precognition and clairvoyance. There are also reports that, much in the manner of other successful mesmeric healers such as P. P. Quimby, he was able to enter into an intense sympathetic rapport with his patients and actually take on their exact pains and symptoms.[10] Finally, magnetic healing prompted him to give sustained attention to a comprehensive theory of the cause and treatment of disease. Already

during his magnetic healing days he was speculating that the flow of animal magnetism throughout the body may become blocked by injuries to or other obstructions along the spine. These speculations soon gave rise to a novel healing theory.

Near Palmer's office in Davenport worked a janitor by the name of Harvey Lillard who had been deaf for seventeen years. Although the historical documents do not reveal how Palmer was able to converse at length with Lillard, they do tell us that he asked Lillard what had caused his deafness and thus learned that it dated back to an incident during which he had exerted himself while in a stooped-over position and had felt something give way in his back. Lillard reported that he had instantly become deaf and had never regained his hearing ability. Palmer placed Lillard face-down on a couch and moved his hands up and down Lillard's spine. He felt an unusual lump at one vertebra and applied pressure with his hands. Palmer felt the vertebra move back into place and, lo and behold, Lillard could hear perfectly. Palmer writes that "Shortly after this relief from deafness, I had a case of heart trouble which was not improving. I examined the spine and found a displaced vertebra pressing against the nerves which innervate the heart. I adjusted the vertebra and gave immediate relief."[11]

Palmer recognized that he was on the verge of a significant medical discovery. He reasoned that the vital energy flowing from the brain to the various organs of the body is occasionally blocked by misaligned spinal vertebrae, and concluded that this blockage is the direct cause of disease. Healing consists in exerting manual pressure on the misplaced vertebrae and forcing them back into their proper places, thereby restoring the flow of vital force throughout the body. Palmer began sharing his discovery with neighbors and friends. An ordained Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Samuel Weed, suggested that he call his new medical philosophy "chiropractic" from the Greek words *cheiro* ('hand') and *prakitos* ('done or performed'). By the late 1890s, possibly at the suggestion of his son B. J., D. D. Palmer transformed his magnetic infirmary into The Palmer Infirmary and Chiropractic School and soon graduated its first class of students, who began spreading the newly discovered philosophy of healing.

It was not until 1910 that D. D. Palmer issued a full-length exposition of the philosophy of chiropractic. By this date, however,

schools of chiropractic medicine had already proliferated throughout the country and many chiropractors were being trained in chiropractic technique with little heed to the founder's philosophical vision.[12] And, too, by this time D. D.'s son had taken over management of the Palmer School and its publications, including B. J.'s own 1906 volume *The Philosophy of Chiropractic.* It is D. D.'s book, *The Chiropractor's Adjuster,* however, that most fully expounds the world view and conceptions of causality that distinguished the chiropractic system in its early years. According to the elder Palmer, the fundamental principle of chiropractic was the acknowledgement that physical life is an expression of a divine or metaphysical reality. The concepts of cause and effect used in allopathic medicine fall short of accounting for the power that has brought life into existence. A truly scientific approach to the human system must therefore begin with an understanding of the ultimate cause of health and well-being.

> What is that which is present in the living body and absent in the dead? It is not inherent; it is not in any of the organs which are essential to life. An intelligent force which I saw fit to name *Innate,* usually known as Spirit, creates and continues life when vital organs are in a condition to be acted upon by it. That intelligent life-force uses the material of the universe just in proportion as it is in condition to be utilized.[13]

Pushing this line of reasoning one step further, D. D. wished to make it clear that Innate, as exists within the individual human being, is in fact "a segment of that Intelligence which fills the universe." He wrote, "Innate is a part of the Creator. Innate spirit is a part of Universal Intelligence, individualized and personified."[14] The concept of Innate permitted Palmer to fuse his spiritualist and mesmerist background with something along the lines of a philosophy of vitalism.[15] In his view Universal Intelligence, the god of the various world religions, is the fundamental force that has brought the physical universe into existence. The purpose of creation is to enable Universal Intelligence to express itself through the processes of evolution and development. It is worth quoting Palmer at length:

> Life is evolutionary in its development. The mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms are looking forward and upward, seeking a more refined

> and better method of expression. Growth, unfoldment is seen everywhere. Each individualized portion of matter is but an epitome of the universe, each growing and developing toward a higher sphere of action; intelligence expressing itself thru matter. . . . The Universal Intelligence collectively or individualized, desires to express itself in the best manner possible. It has been struggling for countless ages to improve upon itself—to express itself intelligently and physically higher in the scale of evolution. Man's aspirations should be to advance to a superior level, to make himself better, physically, mentally and spiritually.[16]

Palmer was envisioning an immanent divine force progressively actualizing itself through the evolutionary process. This monistic and emanationist cosmology was not unique to Palmer or to chiropractic; it also appeared in much of the mesmerist, spiritualist, and Theosophical literature with which Palmer was familiar and from which he self-consciously borrowed.[17] Palmer's claim to originality lies in his interest in discovering the precise physiological routes through which the individualized segment of divine spirit, Innate, directs the life process within the individual. Palmer asserted that Innate generates life impulses through the medium of the brain, which in turn transmits them along nerve pathways to their different peripheral endings. Contemporary chiropractors have largely abandoned Palmer's metaphysical theories for a material-cause explanation of chiropractic adjusting practices. Palmer, however, insisted that nerve impulses have neither a physical nature nor a physical origin. "The apparent origin is in the brain . . . the real origin is back of and behind the brain. . . . 'Life force.' "[18]

Palmer deduced that the nervous system is the key to the proper flow of Innate through the body and that, for this reason, the correct alignment of vertebrae along the spinal column is so critical to physical health. Displacements of the vertebrae, called subluxations by Palmer, pinch the flow of the Innate-generated nerve impulses and sever various bodily organs from the ultimate source of healthful activity. As the Palmer School of Chiropractic Medicine's official publication, *The Chiropractor,* put it, "We are well when Innate Intelligence has unhindered freedom to act thru the physical brain, nerves and tissues. . . . Diseases are caused by a LACK OF CURRENT OF INNATE MENTAL IMPULSES."[19] It follows that chiropractic medicine "is defined as being the science of adjusting, by

hand, any or all luxations of the 300 articular joints of the human body, more especially the 52 articulations of the spinal column, for the purpose of freeing any or all impinged nerves, which cause deranged functions."[20]

The beauty of Palmer's chiropractic philosophy was that, much like Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism, it educed but a single cause of all disease. "All diseases," he asserted, "are but the result of deranged nerves. Ninety-five percent of those are caused by vertebral luxations which impinge the nerves."[21] Palmer's emphasis upon a single cause of all human illness defined what was soon referred to as the "straight" chiropractic philosophy. The single-cause theory of disease became the touchstone of chiropractic orthodoxy and marked the line of dissent for those chiropractors who broke with Palmer and became known as "mixers" for their postulation of multiple causes of disease and their applications of therapeutic practices other than manual adjustment of the spine. The sheer simplicity of Palmer's single-cause theory of disease served another important function for the spread of chiropractic philosophy. It created the aura of the "one-ideaism" that Whitney Cross has observed in the ultraist religious temperament.[22] American religious history is rife with examples of individuals whose progressive-minded approach to spirituality caused them to become attached to ideas well outside the confines of orthodox Christianity. Much like the homoeopaths, hydropathists, mesmerists, and Swedenborgians before him, D. D. Palmer saw in his metaphysical system an all-embracing key to understanding humanity's relationship to God. The doctrine of Innate reduced the abstract theological notion that God had entered into a covenant with humanity to precise physiological laws of cause and effect. The enduring American belief that God has established lawful means whereby humanity might assume its proper role in the providential workings of both nature and history could now be expressed in terms of manual adjustments to the spine.

Palmer and many of the early converts to the chiropractic cause understood the movement's potential for explaining humanity's physical, moral, and spiritual components as a tightly woven unity. To account for our all-too-obvious failure to achieve this unity in our day-to-day lives, Palmer posited a specific—potentially correctable—duality in the human condition. He taught that Innate Intelli-

gence itself is unerring and consists of an eternal spiritual nature that continues to grow and develop even after it sheds the physical body. The Innate is also known as nature, intuition, instinct, and subconscious mind, and is to be contrasted with what Palmer called Educated Intelligence. Educated Intelligence consists of physical life as perceived by the five senses. Educated Intelligence is the identity bestowed upon the self through socialization processes; it consequently gives its allegiance to the world of sense and reason rather than that of intuition and inner guidance. Educated Intelligence is thus responsible for our tragic tendency to live out of harmony with the guiding resources of Innate. As Palmer put it, "Innate would run functions physiologically, while Educated with a perverted mind would make them pathological."[23]

Chiropractic philosophy and techniques were perfectly suited to the total regeneration of the human condition as Palmer understood it. The basic teachings and spinal adjustments were embraced as scientific principles for realigning our moral and intellectual natures with the indwelling Innate. Palmer displayed an understandably messianic zeal for the role he believed chiropractic was destined to play in humanity's spiritual evolution:

> Knowing that our physical health and the intellectual progress of Innate (the personified portion of Universal Intelligence) depend upon the proper alignment of the skeletal frame, prenatal as well as postnatal, we feel it is our right and bounden duty to replace any displaced bones, so that the physical and spiritual may enjoy health, happiness and the full fruition of earthly lives.[24]

To D. D. Palmer, then, chiropractic was a systematic philosophy designed to make "this stage of existence much more efficient in its preparation for the next step—the life beyond."[25]

B. J. Palmer and the Subsequent Growth of Chiropractic

Few father-and-son relationships exhibit the drama and intrigue rivaling that between D. D. and B. J. Palmer. B. J. (1881–1961) claimed that his father denied him love and affection throughout his childhood, citing such cruelties as forbidding him to eat desserts,

making him eat with the hired help rather than at the family dinner table, and beating him for sneaking food out of the icebox. D. D. was no less willing to denounce his kin and on one occasion filed legal charges against his son for deliberately running into him with a car. Despite their personal differences, however, they were of a single mind in their basic understandings of chiropractic philosophy. By 1906, D. D. had run up a sizable debt, and B. J. agreed to buy the Palmer School of Chiropractic Medicine from his father for $2,196.79 and a few odd books and spinal fragments. Thus, although D. D. was responsible for the discovery of chiropractic medicine, it was B. J. who developed it into a major force in the American medical marketplace.

B. J. Palmer is perhaps best remembered for his flamboyant personality and somewhat vulgar approach toward turning chiropractic into a profitable profession. His entrepreneurial style struck many as downright tawdry and has prompted contemporary leaders of chiropractic medicine to distance themselves and their profession from his memory. During his career B. J. sanctioned the awarding of mail order degrees, was uninterested in the educational backgrounds of his students and faculty, and was quoted as making crass remarks to the effect that a principal reason for entering the chiropractic profession was to garner high fees from the consumer public. He died a multimillionaire and in fact fully succeeded in bootstrapping chiropractic medicine into a position of widespread public acceptance, even if it remained an object of scorn for the majority of physicians.

B. J. was adamant that chiropractic medicine should not stray from its philosophical foundations.[26] He continually reiterated the philosophy of Innate and for over fifty years imparted to his students and faculty the view that the universe is governed by Universal Intelligence. B. J. taught that what chiropractic calls Universal Intelligence has been known, albeit less scientifically, by the world's great religions and given such names as God, Jehovah, Buddha, and the Great Spirit. He expanded on his father's view that divine spirit is present within every human being in the form of Innate Intelligence. It is, of course, Innate that directs the brain to generate the vital energy needed to enable the body to participate fully and healthfully in the evolutionary scheme of life. It follows that there exists a single cause of disease: the impediment of the free flow of vital force along the spinal column.

> Disease per se, from the medical point of view, is a multiplicity of things. The latest Dungleson's Medical Dictionary lists approximately 25,000 diseases. If it is true that there are 25,000 diseases, then ultimately we would have to have 25,000 specifics, because the disease becomes an entity. But disease is not an entity. Disease is not a thing. Now, dis-ease—hyphenating the word to put a new interpretation upon it—. . . is a condition that matter finds itself in. . . . It is interference with the supply of mental impulse that is back of every dis-ease, behind every condition of any and every kind, matter, quantity, character, type, classification or diagnosis.[27]

B. J.'s insistence on a single cause of disease disposed him to deny the need for medical terminology, diagnoses, or etiological explanations of disease. The "one-ideaism" of chiropractic's discoverer and its developer fated the movement to internal schisms and eventual dissolution into irreconcilable factions of "straights" and "mixers." Julius Dintenfass, in his *Chiropractic: A Modern Way to Health,* undoubtedly speaks for the majority of contemporary chiropractors when he says, "Today's chiropractor is well aware that there is no single cause of disease. . . . Modern chiropractic recognizes that although the nervous system participates in numerous disease mechanisms, it never assumes that this is the only source of disease."[28] Even among contemporary "straights" there is pronounced indifference to the movement's founding philosophy. The vast majority of modern chiropractors are instead committed to defining their profession's distinctive medical outlook in terms of the interaction of muscular and skeletal systems and the scientific mechanisms of motion. The metaphysical terminology used by the Palmers is regarded as an embarrassing anachronism that hinders the full integration of chiropractic into the modern health care system.[29] Yet many chiropractors still adhere to the distinctive causal claim advanced by the Palmers, as is evident in A. E. Homewood's chiropractic textbook published in 1962, which states, "The doctor of chiropractic is well aware of the presence of bacteria and concedes that these minute organisms play a role in many diseases. He would, however, emphatically deny that micro-organisms are THE cause of the diseases with which they are associated."[30]

B. J. Palmer was just as relentless in pushing to their logical conclusion the religious claims implicit in chiropractic's founding

vision as he was regarding its scientific claims. Several of his publications, most notably *The Bigness of the Fellow Within, Reincarnation,* and *Do Chiropractor's Pray?,* attempt to convince his readers that acceptance of chiropractic's extra-Christian elements is itself an act of spiritual heroics. The spirituality to which Palmer exhorts us repeats chapter and verse the "alternative" religious voice that Robert Ellwood and others have detected in American metaphysical tradition.[31] First, B. J. displays a tendency to discover in Eastern religious thought an authenticity ostensibly lacking in the biblical tradition of the West. Second, he calls on us to abandon our allegiances to institutions, historic traditions, and devotional objects in favor of inner reliance. He informs us that an objective survey of history reveals that "the great men of all times, the men who have done things, have been either rank theological-Biblical-infidels or agnostics."[32] Chiropractic philosophy proves the irrelevance of the Bible and traditional forms of prayer and worship. The "higher power" attested to by the world's religions resides within, not without. Hence there is no necessity for prayer. "Everything that man could ask or pray for he has within. . . . The Chiropractor removes the obstruction, adjusts the cause, and there are going to be effects."[33] True spirituality consists in coming into conscious alignment with the omniscient and omnipotent causal energies of Innate. The esoteric lens of chiropractic insight reveals that it was Jesus's inner reliance on Innate that supplied him with the power to perform healing miracles.[34] It was B. J.'s ambition that greater things than these, chiropractors shall do also.

The emergence and dissemination of chiropractic philosophy represents a structural replay of the sectarian patterns so prominent in American religious history. Although its spirituality is drawn from noninstitutional sources chiropractic nonetheless evidences many features traditionally associated with such native-born American sectarian religious groups as Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, the Mormons, Pentecostalism, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Historians and sociologists have discerned at least four recurring themes or patterns that distinguish the formation of groups whose spiritual commitments place them outside the mainstream of American Protestantism. First, sectarian movements typically tend to emphasize one or two doctrines which they feel are neglected or ignored by orthodoxy. Consider, for example, how Christian Scien-

tists emphasize the healing power of Christian commitment and Seventh Day Adventists emphasize the imminent return of Christ in ways that make these doctrines the key to "true" Christianity. Exclusive emphasis upon one or two elements of a larger body of doctrine alters the nature of belief so drastically that adherents finally find themselves outside the larger tradition from which they have emerged. The Palmers' adherence to the "single-cause" theory of disease played a similarly instrumental role in relegating chiropractic to the fringes of both medical and religious orthodoxy. Second, American sectarian movements tend to emerge around the charismatic leadership of an individual recognized as in some way blessed with an inner spiritual authority. D. D. Palmer, no less than Joseph Smith, Ellen White, or Mary Baker Eddy, was understood to embody a higher spiritual power. He and his son attracted adulatory disciples eager to be enlightened about the path one must follow to achieve inner reconciliation with Innate.[35]

A third characteristic of sect formation is that, unlike established denominations whose members are generally born into and raised with their doctrinal convictions, sects must at least initially rely upon the conversion of adult members. Empirical data indicate that chiropractors make their career choices later than physicians, dentists, or nurses; almost half are unaware of chiropractic medicine until the age of twenty.[36] Those who make their career choice early in life are likely to have experienced a "critical incident" in which chiropractic treatment "miraculously" cured a relative or family friend after medical and osteopathic treatment had failed. Their career choice, then, seems to stem from a convictional experience in which the "higher" truths of chiropractic medicine have demonstrated themselves in such a way as to conquer any previous indifference or skepticism. The relatively higher proportion of "conversion experiences" appears to account for the fact that chiropractors list humanitarian concerns and a belief in the efficacy of their distinctive medical practices as chief reasons for their career choice.[37]

A fourth and somewhat controversial dimension of sect formation is a sect's tendency to draw its constituency from among those who are in some respect at the margins of mainstream society. Christian Science, for example, drew the majority of its members from women, who were unlikely to have had access to positions of

cultural power or prestige in late nineteenth-century America; additionally, it appears that women suffered first and worst from the stresses of modern civilization and were thus predisposed to find something of existential relevance in Mary Baker Eddy's healing message. Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals draw heavily from the lower economic classes, who find in their promise of an imminent perfect world a rejuvenating religious commitment. It is possible that chiropractic too draws a disproportionate share of its constituency from the lower half of the socioeconomic stratum.[38] Its male patients may include more laborers, farmers, and salesmen, who would be prone to the musculoskeletal problems for which chiropractic techniques appear best suited. And, too, the comparatively lower fees charged by chiropractors could make them an attractive alternative to M.D.s among the economically disadvantaged. What is more certain is that many of the patients who utilize chiropractic services understand themselves to be at the margins of the concern and interest of M.D.s. Medical doctors are notoriously untrained for, and consequently unsympathetic to, many human ailments of muscoloskeletal origin. They often make light of their patients' pain and simply attempt to reassure them by telling them that "nothing is wrong" or that it is "just their nerves." Patients experiencing real pain naturally feel disenfranchised from a medical community whose underlying conceptual framework is blind to the reality of their situation. Gregory Firman and Michael Goldstein perceptively observe:

> The chiropractor, in such situations, fills the patient's needs by validating the patient's beliefs that some definable organic pathosis exists, by empathizing with the patient's idea of how serious, painful, or disabling the condition is, and by impressing upon the patient that the chiropractor will cure the disease by direct intervention.[39]

It appears, then, that chiropractic emerged out of a metaphysical milieu distinctive to nineteenth-century American religious culture and has developed in ways that display at least some of the prototypical characteristics of the nation's sectarian heritage. It is important to remember, however, that chiropractic from the outset aspired to public recognition on the grounds of scientific, not scriptural, authority. The continued disputation and schismatic

confrontations endèmic to sectarian movements embroiled chiropractic more in matters of practice than in philosophy or doctrine. The concept of Innate has time and again been singled out by chiropractic's detractors as an untestable, and therefore unscientific, theory. Chiropractic physicians have consequently tended to relegate the Palmers' writings to dusty archives and have instead concentrated on demonstrating the therapeutic effectiveness of their techniques. For their part, chiropractic patients are understandably concerned with the relief of pain, not metaphysical abstractions. It is hard to escape the conclusion that chiropractic's public acceptance, professional recognition, and access to government-funded programs has been in direct proportion to the muting of its metaphysical origins.[40]

This gradual secularization of chiropractic, however, has been far from complete. Never has chiropractic lost sight of its major philosophical difference from the allopathic model of medicine: belief in the body's own health-bestowing powers. This, of course, implicitly invokes belief in the causal efficacy of natural forces that are in some fundamental way ontologically "higher" than medicines or surgical techniques. Thorp McClusky's *Your Health and Chiropractic* and Julius Dintenfass's *Chiropractic: A Modern Way to Health* are among the popular works that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s seeking to convince Americans of chiropractic's scientific respectability. Although both texts minimize references to Palmer's Innate, they nonetheless herald the profound healing powers of which chiropractic techniques can avail us.[41] McClusky deftly aligns Palmer's discovery of Innate Intelligence with the benefits of positive thinking. Calling Palmer "ahead of his time," McClusky quotes a Dr. Frank Crane to impress upon his readers the higher power energized by chiropractic technique:

> The smartest man in the world is the Man Inside. By the Man Inside I mean that Other Man within each of us that does most of the things we give ourselves credit for doing. You may refer to him as Nature or the Subconscious Self, or think of him as merely a Force or a Natural Law or, if you are religiously inclined, you may use the term God.[42]

A chiropractic journal entitled *Abundant Living* proclaimed that chiropractic philosophy can open people to a more vibrant mental

and emotional existence. Dr. John Stoke edited this journal from 1923 to 1976 to provide "chiropractic educational material distributed in the interest of public health." Filled with short articles extolling the benefits of positive thinking and expanded awareness of "inner space," *Abundant Living* disseminated the conviction that "Chiropractic opens the door to health and a more Abundant Life because its basic principle is the key that turns the lock to the source of supply—the Kingdom Within."[43]

Although chiropractic philosophy has deliberately been muted by its practitioners in their quest for enhanced professional status, for many Americans it continues to be a source of understanding of their relationship to the ultimate agent of health and well-being. Chiropractic physician and former Dean of Philosophy of Sherman College of Chiropractic G. F. Riekman perfectly summarizes chiropractic's continued presence as a "New Age philosophy, science, and art":

> The chiropractic philosophy is based on the deductive principle that the Universe is perfectly organized, and that we are all extensions of this principle, designed to express life (health) and the universal laws. Since vertebral subluxations (spinal-nerve interference) are the grossest interference with the expression of life, the practice of chiropractic is designed to analyze and correct these subluxations, so that the organism will be free to evolve and express life to its fullest natural potential.[44]

Andrew Taylor Still and the Discovery of Osteopathy

Andrew Taylor Still (1828–1917) was born in Virginia, the son of a Methodist minister. His family eventually migrated in order to bring the gospel to the developing Midwest, and as a consequence he grew up knowing many of the hardships of frontier life. Still's formal education was mainly restricted to intermittent tutoring. He did, however, learn a great deal from his father, who, like many clergy in early America, supplemented his ministry by practicing as a self-taught physician. This combination of gospel-preaching and healing may have played a role in determining Andrew's own eventual medical path. As Norman Gevitz points out, Still grew up in a religious milieu of frequent revival meetings during which the Holy

Spirit was thought to descend and, in the twinkling of an eye, wholly transform the physical and spiritual lives of those in attendance.[45] On numerous occasions Andrew would have witnessed the spontaneous eruption of frenzied states during which the flow of Holy Spirit caused a person's whole frame to twist, jerk, and contort en route to a state of peace and well-being. At the very least this must have provided an explicit model for envisioning the causal role a nonmaterial agent plays in healing body and soul.

While helping his father treat local Indian tribes for various diseases, including pneumonia and cholera, Andrew Taylor Still resolved upon a career in medicine and began an apprenticeship under his father. He learned rudimentary physiology and diagnosis, was trained to compound and administer drugs, and was taught to perform minor surgical procedures. Still's early medical practice was more or less that of the regular physicians and he relied upon the common therapeutic arsenal of purgatives and emetics such as castor oil, calomel, quinine, and lobelia.

Andrew soon became dissatisfied with the capricious and unreliable benefits to be had from the tools of materia medica. Forced to sit helplessly by as three of his own children died of spinal meningitis, Andrew resolved to penetrate nature's secrets to discover the key to physical health. In his autobiography he writes that his anguish led him to the conviction that "God was not a guessing God, but a God of truth. . . . And all His works, spiritual and material, are harmonious."[46] We do not know all of the sources from which Still learned the lawful harmonies of divine action. It is certain, however, that spiritualism and the healing philosophies of individuals such as Andrew Jackson Davis figured heavily in Still's developing metaphysic. It is not entirely clear how fully Still absorbed spiritualist doctrines. We do know that he read and was conversant with the spiritualist journal *The Banner of Light* and its numerous articles concerning both spiritualist and mesmerist healing.

In 1874 Still made clear to the citizens of Baldwin, Kansas, that he had abandoned the theories and drug-reliant techniques of regular medicine. Up to this point Still was apparently an upstanding member of the community, as is evidenced by the fact that he was elected to the Kansas state legislature. Still reports, however, that "when I said, 'God has no use for drugs in disease and I can prove it by his works'; when I said I could twist a man one way and cure

flux, fever, colds, and the diseases of the climate; shake a child and stop scarlet fever . . . and cure whooping-cough in three days by a wring of its neck, and so on, all my good character was gone at once."[47] His new theory of twisting, shaking, and wringing was met with such scorn and derision that he finally moved away to Kirksville, Missouri, a city of about 1800 people. In Kirksville, Still set up a medical practice and advertised himself as "A. T. STILL, MAGNETIC HEALER." For the next few years he made his living as a mesmerist healer traveling about the small towns of northeastern Missouri and plying his new trade of drugless medicine. Not a great deal is known of his magnetic-healing years, but the mesmeric model was to figure significantly in the final version of his medical philosophy—osteopathy. Among the convictions which were to carry over from his magnetic-healing career into osteopathy were the belief that health represents the harmonious and undisturbed flow of fluid; that manual manipulation can remove any blockage, restoring the free flow of this fluid; and that behind the various apparent physical causes of disease lies the one true ultimate cause, the impeded flow of what Still later called "the highest known order of force (electricity)."

Still developed an interest in bonesetting during the late 1870s, while working as a magnetic healer. Traditionally low in the hierarchy of American medical practitioners, bonesetters were nonetheless an established part of the nation's medical system and performed many of the functions we now associate with orthopedics. Bonesetting in the nineteenth century also extended to the art of exerting manual pressure upon painful areas of the back. Understanding these techniques as a logical extension of his magnetic gestures, Still was soon touting himself as both a magnetic doctor and a "lightning bonesetter." His autobiography tells the story of an Irish woman who came to him with pain under her shoulder blade. Diagnosing her problem as asthma, Still "found she had a section of the upper vertebrae out of line, and stopping the pain I set the spine and a few ribs."[48] This manipulation of the vertebrae proved effective in other patients, too. Soon the "lightning bonesetter" claimed successful cure of heart disease, rheumatism, headaches, and lumbago. Still successfully healed the son of a U.S. senator whose heart ailment had been deemed by regular physicians as beyond hope of cure. Word of Still's remarkable healing practice

spread, and its founder dignified his discovery by combining the Greek words *osteon* ('bone') and *pathos* ('suffering') into the newly termed science of osteopathy.

According to Still, osteopathy "is God's law." It is the only science "that analyzes man and finds that he partakes of Divine intelligence. . . . [since] God manifests Himself in matter, motion, and mind."[49] While Still did not envision the kind of influx that American Transcendentalists, Swedenborgians, and most American mesmerists did, throughout his life he referred to a nonmaterial agency, or electricity, in the human system whereby God grants to His creation the capacity for life. As he put it, "All must have, and cannot act without the highest known order of force (electricity), which submits to the voluntary the involuntary commands of life and mind, by which worlds are driven and beings move."[50] From this religious principle he extrapolated his theory of disease causation and, by further inference, his therapeutic doctrine.

> Think of yourself as an electric battery. Electricity seems to have the power to explode or distribute oxygen, from which we receive the vitalizing benefits. When it plays freely all through your system, you feel well. Shut it off in one place and congestion may result; in this case a medical doctor, by dosing you with drugs, would increase this congestion until it resulted in decay. . . . Not so with an Osteopath. He removes the obstruction, lets the life-giving current have full play, and the man is restored to health.[51]

For Still there was but one cause of disease. The many diseases known by regular physicians "are only effects." "All diseases," he wrote, "are mere effects, the cause being a partial or complete failure of the nerves to properly conduct the fluids of life."[52] The osteopath heals not by intervening in natural processes, but by releasing the divine intelligence that is manifest within the physical order. The therapeutic role of the osteopathic physician, according to Still, is that he "keeps life in motion."[53]

By 1892 Still's formulation of the philosophy and techniques of osteopathy was sufficiently advanced to enable him to open the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville. Charging $500 for a seven-month course of instruction, Still was poised to disseminate his healing discovery.

The "Materialization" of Osteopathy

For Still, studying osteopathy was tantamount to initiation into a mystical sect. The human system, he averred, is the expression of divine principle. "Ten thousand rooms of this temple have never been explored by any human intelligence; neither can it be [explored] without a perfect knowledge of anatomy and an acquaintance of the machinery of life."[54] Physiology was for Still what states of consciousness would be for holistic healers in the 1970s and 1980s; the conduit through which a higher order of life might enter, and subsequently express itself in, the human system. In Still's words, "The human body is a machine run by the unseen force called life, and that it may be run harmoniously it is necessary that there be liberty of blood, nerves, and arteries from the generating-point to its destination."[55] Osteopathy was a kind of practical handmaiden to theology. Small wonder Still was less interested in teaching dry anatomy lessons than in waxing eloquent about how "every advance step taken in Osteopathy leads one to greater veneration of the divine Ruler of the Universe."[56] One of Still's followers observed:

> He rose to the lofty heights of his conceptions of life, health, disease and medicine by the purest of intuition. He wiped the slate of knowledge, as it were, of much if not most of the accepted, accredited teachings of the day, not only in the field of medicine, but also in science, religion, ethics, politics, and endeavored to begin his thinking upon any and every subject with the new data of pure forms, built out of his imagination, with little regard or discomfort if his excursions took him sheer in the face of every accepted belief and profession.[57]

Obviously Still's doctrinal intuitions could not by themselves have established the scientific foundations upon which osteopathy was to build. It was by fortunate chance that a Scottish physician by the name of Dr. William Smith happened to be traveling through Kirksville and hear of the fledgling osteopathic system. Smith called upon Still and became convinced that osteopathy had considerable merit. He agreed to become an instructor in the newly founded American School of Osteopathy and soon began to exert a great deal of influence upon the hiring of faculty, development of curriculum, and evolution of osteopathic theory. Under Smith's leadership, the Kirksville faculty soon came to include a number of professors

highly trained in basic science and medical practice. Still objected to the increasing "medicalization" of his osteopathic system, but he never seriously intervened in the new directions that osteopathy was taking. One reason was that Still had attempted to get a bill passed in the Missouri legislature granting osteopathy full licensing privileges, only to have it vetoed by the governor on the grounds that the American School of Osteopathy did not teach the full range of courses found in established medical schools. The Kirksville faculty responded by developing an array of courses in anatomy and physiology. Shortly thereafter, a bill was passed granting licensure for osteopathic physicians.

From the first proposal to include surgery and obstetrics in the osteopathic curriculum, it was evident to all that osteopathy was fated to leave its founder's religiously charged philosophy behind and enter the mainstream of twentieth-century medical and pharmaceutic practice. Still, who had denounced the use of drugs with all the theological vehemence of a Samuel Thompson, at first resisted. But reports of committees of osteopathic physicians concluding that surgery and pharmaceutics can more swiftly accomplish osteopathy's therapeutic goals, coupled with the pressures to earn full licensing privileges in the various state legislatures, made osteopathy's acceptance of allopathic techniques inevitable. A compromise was soon reached which enabled the germ theory of disease, something still not unequivocally accepted by chiropractic, to be seen as compatible with osteopathy's vision of the "electric" force of life. Germs, it was reasoned, are doubtless the precipitating cause of disease and as such ought to be therapeutically combatted. However, spinal displacements, or "lesions," as they were called, are the *predisposing* cause of germ susceptibility. In this way osteopathy's distinctive (or at least historic) interest in spinal manipulation was reaffirmed as an important aspect of preventive medicine even as it was subordinated as a characteristic mode of treatment.

In all of this, Still's original theory of the ontological source of healthful functioning was progressively abandoned in favor of the material-cause explanations underlying medical orthodoxy. Thus, when a meaningful rapprochement between the American Medical Association and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) began in the 1950s, the AMA's study committee was able to conclude that "modern osteopathic education teaches the acceptance and

recognition of all etiological factors and all pathological manifestations of disease as well as the utilization of all diagnostic and therapeutic procedures taught in schools of medicine."[58] The AMA and AOA now cooperate in almost all matters of access to hospital resources, residency programs, internships, and the like. In fact, the "materialization" of osteopathy has gone so far that one of its current principal difficulties is "an identity problem" in differentiating itself from practices traditionally associated with the AMA.[59]

The origins and subsequent history of osteopathy naturally invite comparison with chiropractic. There is, for example, strong evidence suggesting that Palmer borrowed freely from Still's teachings in the development of his own system. Palmer lived near Kirksville, and several Missouri chiropractors reported seeing Palmer's name written in Still's guest book in the early 1890s.[60] Osteopathic historian E. R. Booth has produced evidence that a trained osteopathic physician by the name of Obie Struther personally taught Palmer the techniques of spinal manipulation developed by Still.[61] Beyond these direct connections, both Still and Palmer were well acquainted with spiritualist and mesmerist healing philosophies. Unlike Palmer, however, Still never defined the "electrical energy" underlying physical health in as explicitly metaphysical terms as did Palmer with his theory of Innate. Still's Methodist background seems to have prevented him from finally disposing of a transcendent God in favor of the overtly pantheistic imagery Palmer's Universal Intelligence and Innate. Still's religious discourse was also a bit more rambling and inconsistent, which allowed his followers to read increasingly material meanings into his theories of medical etiology. And whereas D. D. and B. J. Palmer were adamant about their rightful roles as preservers of chiropractic doctrine, Still appeared content to turn over the instruction of osteopathy to a university-educated faculty.

Yet osteopathy, no less than chiropractic, is a fascinating chapter in the "sectarian" meanderings of Americans' unchurched religious thought. Osteopathy, too, has found in nature the workings of an infinite force and provided Americans with an array of manipulative sacraments for availing themselves of its guiding powers. For all his physiological references to nerve forces and bodily fluids, Still never equivocated concerning the "ultimate" causal force operative in the human system. "To obtain good results," he wrote, "we must blend ourselves with and travel in harmony with Nature's truths."[62]

> We must arrange our bodies in such true lines that ample Nature can select and associate, by its definite measures and weights and its keen power of choice of kinds, that which can make all the fluids needed for our bodily uses, from the crude blood to the active flames of life, as they are seen when marshalled for duty, obeying the edicts of the mind of the Infinite.[63]

It is clear that many have found in Still's philosophy the "aesthetic Spirituality" that envisions an indwelling divinity as forming humanity's higher self. Early editions of the *Journal of Osteopathy* referred repeatedly to osteopathy's discovery of the interconnection between the human physiological system and the activity of divine spirit; often, the human mind was identified as the agent of interconnection in a manner not unlike that described by P. P. Quimby or Mary Baker Eddy. According to one essay, "God and man are one and yet two: one in possessing the same nature. Man is infinite in his nature but finite in expressing it."[64] The implication, of course, was that this "finite" barrier is largely psychological and self-imposed, and that through the study of osteopathy we can more completely connect ourselves to the healthful currents emanating from their divine source.[65] Osteopaths insisted time and again that they healed no one; it was nature that provided the causal forces for healing. In the very first issue of the *Journal of Osteopathy* Still admonished his readers to "Remember that all power is powerless except the unerring Deity of your being, to whose unchangeable laws you must conform if you hope to win the battle of your life."[66] Still's disciples for the most part interpreted this "Deity of your being" in ways that need not entail belief in the influx of higher energies into the human system. Others, however, picked up on the mesmeric imagery Still was wont to use and reached more daring metaphysical conclusions. An unsigned 1897 article from the *Journal of Osteopathy* suggested that the healing property unleashed by osteopathic techniques "may be the working of a divine presiding mind set in closest vicinage to nature, by which the tides of life, as they ebb and flow within the body, are vivified and purified, even as the tides of the ocean are made periodically fluent and confluent by the invisible attraction of the moon."[67]

Osteopathy could not help but flame the visionary powers of many who sought to encompass the whole of humanity's being

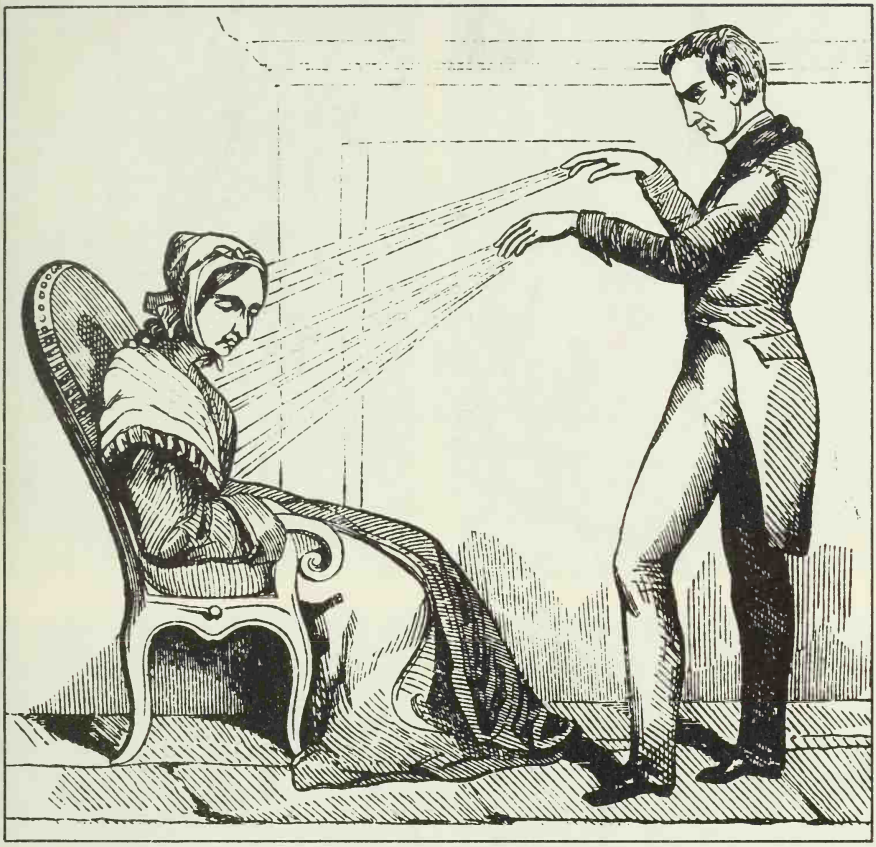
within a single theoretical system. An ordained Presbyterian minister from Hamilton, Ohio, by the name of Mason Pressley became enamored of Still's holistic philosophical scheme and abandoned his pulpit for what he called "the ministries of Osteopathy." Having completed the course work at Kirksville, he soon became a regular contributor to the movement's principal publications. Pressley's new gospel came straight from the teachings of Andrew Taylor Still, whom he credited with having built a philosophy that "shall embrace the entire world of thought and of things."

> For man is the embodyment [*sic*] of the contents of universal life. From the lowest element of the inorganic, to the highest of the organic—yes not even excepting God Himself as an infinite and pure spirit, man ranges; and this great trinity of elements is so related and correlated, that it is impossible to separate them in clear and logical thought; and, therefore, you have had the courage to embrace them all in your scheme.[68]

Not everyone acquainted with osteopathic philosophy has been moved to embrace a theology predicated upon humanity's embodiment of divine spirit. Even in the early years, when Still kept the religious underpinnings of osteopathy prominent, the movement's general spiritual tone was closer to Thomsonianism or to the Christian health philosophies of an Ellen White or Sylvester Graham. An ascetic spirituality was invoked whereby humanity's religious duty is to be obedient to lawful structures imparted to nature by a transcendent deity at the time of creation. In this way a drugless reliance upon God's ways could be considered a form of religious piety while not asking persons to abandon their commonsense "materialism" concerning the physical world. Belief in a God who transcends the world of matter makes it easier to view nature scientifically. The practical consequence was that osteopathy could progressively embrace the therapeutic techniques of materia medica without painful struggles of conscience. This is in sharp constrast to chiropractic, which for two generations had to wrestle with the Palmers' sacred texts and unambiguous attribution of causal power to Innate. The Palmers' writings forced those chiropractors who were more scientifically minded to identify themselves as sectarian (i.e., "mixers"). Andrew Still, on the other hand, conveniently refrained from interfering significantly with the therapeutic directions taken by the first

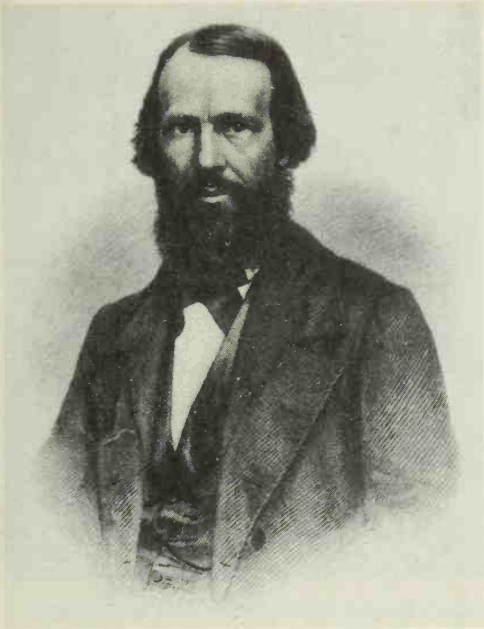
generation of osteopaths. And, for their part, Still's disciples were very well aware that their paying clientele were interested in relief from material pains, not in metaphysical insights at variance with their midwestern Christian heritage. Osteopaths went to considerable lengths to disassociate themselves from the spiritualist and mesmerist philosophies that had been so congenial to the movement's founder.[69]

Chiropractic and osteopathic healing are remarkable instances of the intersection of American religious and medical thought. The unorthodox visions of the founders have for the most part been relegated to the pages of history and are pointedly neglected by the newest generation of practitioners who are content to trade earlier philosophical distinctions for contemporary professional recognition within the ranks of orthodoxy. All sects face the problem of instilling in successive generations the ardent conviction of those who were part of the movement's charismatic beginnings. For institutionalized religions, sacred writings and the role model supplied by the founder ordinarily provide both a sense of tradition and the seeds from which conservatism and reactionary attitudes will sprout. Chiropractic and osteopathy, however, were launched into cultural waters where authority derived from empirical (i.e., clinical and scientific) rather than revealed forms of knowledge. Financial support was to come from clients paying for material relief, not from the donations of persons wishing to dabble in metaphysical theory. These two movements were thus almost fated to be assimilated by modern secular culture rather than remaining its loyal opposition. This is not to suggest that the commitment to nonmaterial views of disease causation have ever wholly been lost in these traditions. And, in fact, a modest revival of their distinctive roots occurred in the 1960s and 1970s as American consumers of medical systems once again began to voice their enthusiasm for "holistic" approaches to the healing enterprise.



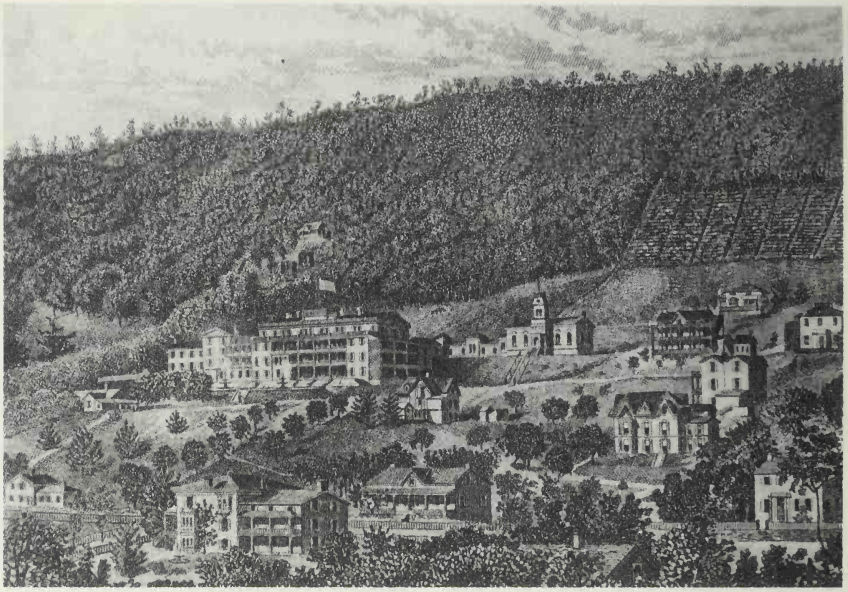
Woodcut of a mesmeric healer, about 1840. Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute.

Establishing the mesmeric trance state. Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute.



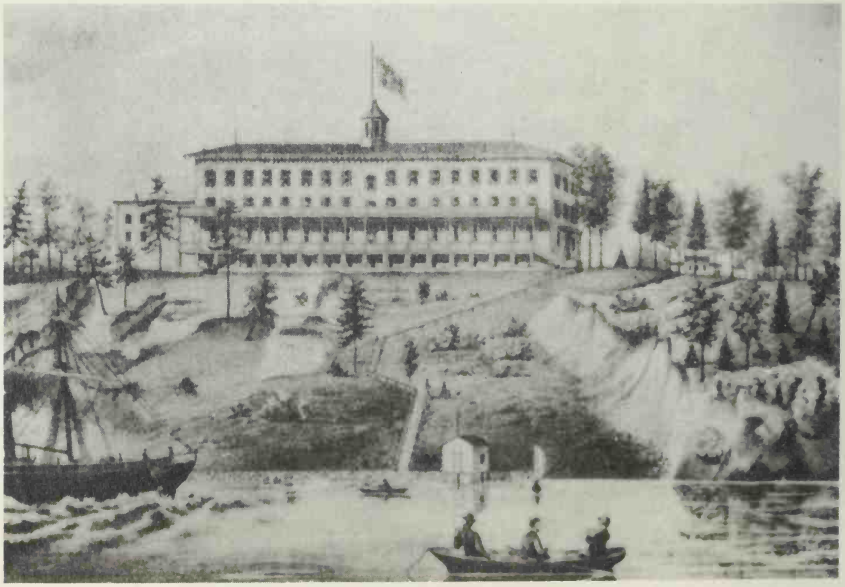
Dr. Russell Trall. From Trall, *The Pathology of the Reproductive Organs* (Boston: B. Leverett Emerson, 1862).

Dr. James Caleb Jackson. From Jackson, *The Sexual Organism* (Boston: B. Leverett Emerson, 1982).



Dr. James Caleb Jackson's famed health retreat, "Our Home on the Hillside," Dansville, New York, as it appeared in the 1860s.

Russell Trall's Hygeian Home and Hygeio-Therapeutic College at Florence Heights, New Jersey. From J. D. Scott, *Historical Atlas of Burlington County, New Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1876).



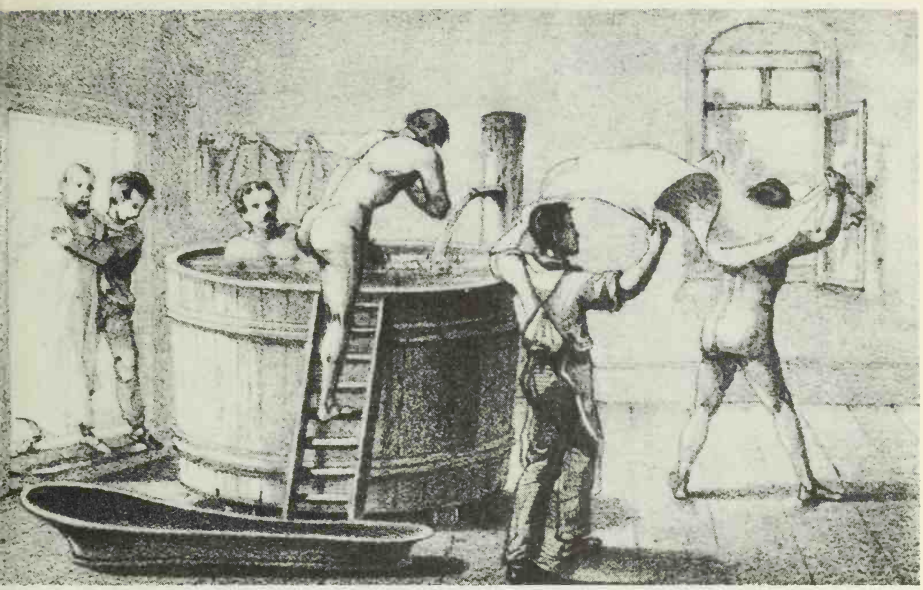
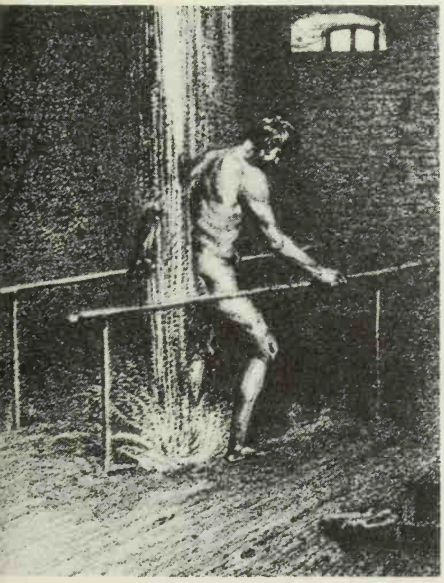


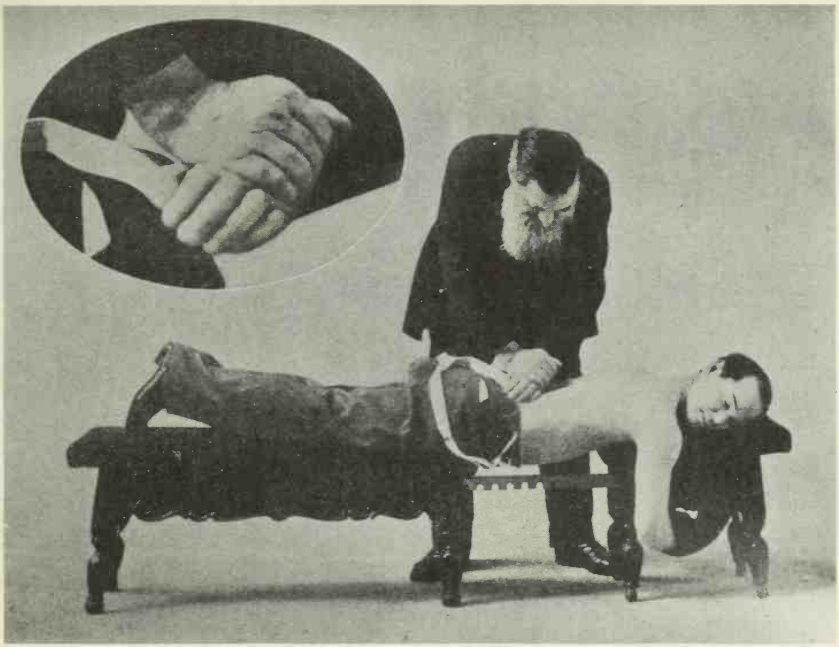
Illustration of the full-bath and air-bath hydropathic techniques. Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute.

Illustration of the shower and body-binding hydropathic techniques. Courtesy of the Wellcome Institute.



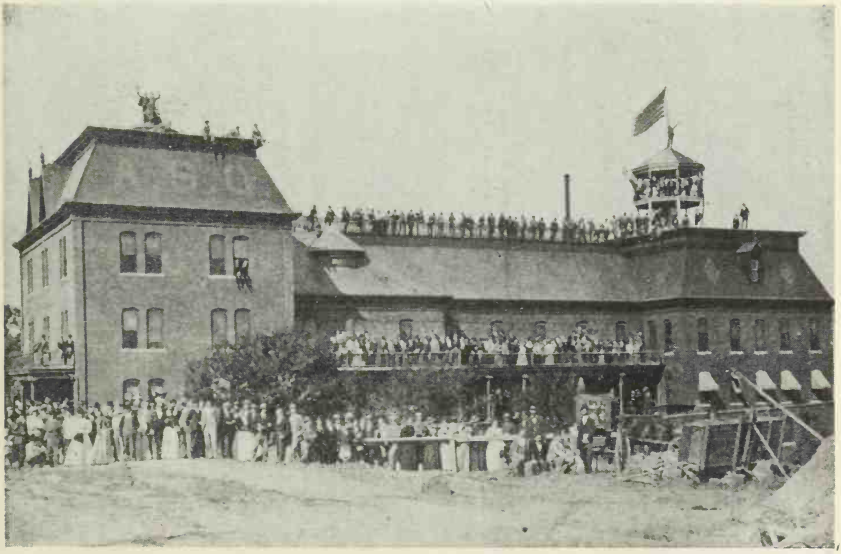
Sylvester Graham. From Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1858).

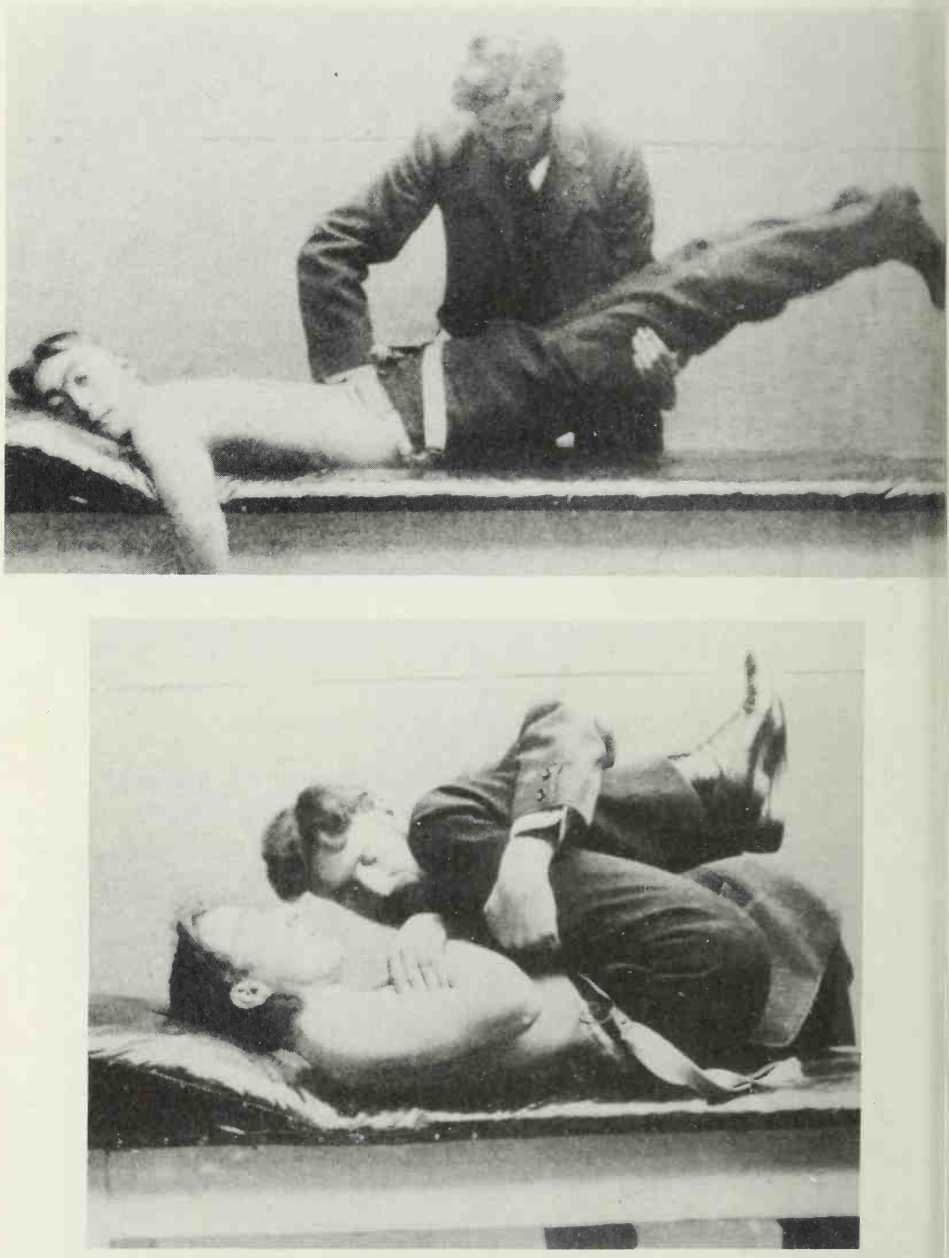
J. H. Kellogg. From Kellogg, *Plain Facts for Old and Young* (Burlington, Iowa: I. F. Segner, 1882).



D. D. Palmer demonstrating chiropractic technique. Courtesy of David D. Palmer Health Sciences Library, Palmer College of Chiropractic.

The American School of Osteopathy, Kirksville, Missouri, 1898. Courtesy of A. T. Still Memorial Library, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.





An early osteopathic physician demonstrating manipulative techniques. From Dr. Dain Tasker, *Principles of Osteopathy* (Los Angeles: Baumhgardt, 1919). Courtesy of A. T. Still Memorial Library, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine.

5

The Contemporary Scene: Images of the "Higher Self" in Holistic and Psychic Healing Movements

UNORTHODOX HEALING SYSTEMS have proven remarkably suggestive to the American religious imagination. This is not simply a quirk of history, a sort of prescientific gullibility that disappeared under the pressures of modernity. The 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s have witnessed an astonishing resurgence of healing systems that overtly embrace a metaphysical notion of causality. And while the continued presence of these metaphysical healing systems may reflect a certain credulity characteristic of American culture, it should more properly be called extra-, rather than pre-, scientific. What strikes even the casual observer is the extent to which these movements draw their adherents from the ranks of the middle and upper classes, precisely those who must be counted among the culturally and educationally "sophisticated." These alternative healing systems appear to be expressions of an unsatisfied spiritual hunger rather than signs of desperation among the poor or ill-educated. It is for this reason that these nontraditional healing groups are such promising candidates for a study of Americans' unchurched religious life.

The Holistic Health Movement

The holistic healing movement that gathered momentum throughout the late 1970s is rife with symbols evoking an explicitly reli-

gious interpretation of the healing process. The basic premise of holistic approaches to healing is relatively straightforward and at first glance appears to be little more than the rhetoric of a generation of Americans eager to rehumanize their technological society: "Every human being is a unique, wholistic, interdependent relationship of body, mind, emotions and spirit."[1] This is, however, far from an innocuous truism. The introduction of the term "spirit" alongside "body," "mind," and "emotions" carries with it a bold metaphysical interpretation of reality. It entails commitment to a belief in the interpenetration of physical and nonphysical spheres of causality to a degree that is inherently incompatible with the naturalistic framework of our modern scientific heritage.

A helpful introduction to the general principles underlying holistic conceptions of medicine is Herbert Otto's and James Knight's edited volume *Dimensions in Wholistic Healing: New Frontiers in the Treatment of the Whole Person.* This introductory text explains that holistic healing places "reliance on treatment modalities that foster the self-regenerative and self-reparative processes of natural healing."[2] Implicit in this description is confidence in the beneficence of nature and respect for the fundamental dignity and sovereignty of the individual, both core conceptions of unorthodox American medicine. The holistic variation on these themes, however, emphasizes the psychological components of cure. Increased awareness of psychosomatic illness, as well as the general "psychologizing" of American culture, has disposed the popular reading public toward acceptance of attitudinal/psychological factors in the healing process. Otto and Knight all but neglect the curative role played by material-cause modalities such as pharmaceutics and surgery. Instead, they tout the value of teaching the patient to accept responsibility for his or her own well-being. The ill, they note, generally have difficulty coping with their condition and are in desperate need of love, care, and understanding. It is therefore imperative that healing personnel give "abundantly of their warmth, empathy and understanding and [furnish] the type of emotional nurturance particularly needed at a time of illness."[3]

Knight and Otto draw attention to the interpersonal environment and its effect upon healing and health. They counsel that a holistic understanding of healing makes optimum use of the "dynamic and therapeutic forces inherent in group interaction." Their

medical advice centers on how healers can relate to individuals in ways that enhance the patient's self-image and mobilize natural self-regenerative tendencies. But Knight's and Otto's conception of healing becomes most differentiated from orthodox medical practice in their insistence that the "larger environment" that humans inhabit includes an inner continuity with energies that are spiritual and divine. Like most holistic healers, they set forth this claim rather cautiously. Echoing the aesthetic spiritual tradition of Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James, they describe holistic medicine as predicated upon the recognition that every human being has vast untapped potential, resources, and powers. Significantly, however, these resources and powers are not self-contained within the physical or psychological system. Rather, "everyone is part of a larger system." Holistic healing must utilize the patient's spiritual resources to help "open the pathways or flows and harmonics necessary to unfold the channels of the self within the body and the self within the world, the Universe, and God."[4] What began as a rather mild acknowledgment of the body's self-recuperative potential slides imperceptibly into a metaphysical doctrine in which the physical system is seen as receptive to the sanative energies flowing into it from without.

Kenneth Pelletier's *Holistic Medicine* is another text representative of the world view promulgated under the banner of holistic healing. Like nearly all of the movement's spokespersons, Pelletier introduces holistic concepts as an outgrowth of recent research in the field of psychosomatic illness. The discovery that an individual's mental and emotional states can directly affect physiological processes has convinced Pelletier and others that reliance on "material" factors is inadequate. He writes, "A fundamental philosophical revision is taking place in our paradigm of medicine. Central to this revision is the concept that all stages of disease are psychosomatic in etiology, direction, and the healing process."[5] At first glance, Pelletier appears to be introducing the causal role played by psychological and attitudinal factors in physical healing. On closer examination, however, it becomes evident that psychosomatic interaction alone hardly requires the fundamental revision in concepts of causation that he has in mind. His further elucidation of the direction he believes the revisions in medical science ought to take reveals the degree to which the holistic movement is guided by religious faith,

not medical fact. His "new paradigm" is clearly less concerned with introducing the concept of the causal role of mind in our perception of matter than with infusing the notion of spirit into both. Pelletier points us toward the Chinese yin/yang philosophy, which asserts that all physiological processes are governed by a spiritual agency that emanates from the divine (Tao). He also endorses the general drift of Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*. Capra's book is cited by many advocates of holistic healing because it argues that the only philosophical frameworks compatible with post-Einsteinian physics are the Eastern mystical traditions, which deny any sharp distinction between spirit and matter and portray God as a spiritual energy continuously exerting causal influences within the physical universe. Especially revealing in this regard is Pelletier's anecdotal illustration of this new view of healing. He tells how a Zen practitioner healed herself of diabetes and cardiac irregularities by tuning within and opening "a tiny hole of light" through which spirit entered and enveloped her whole being with light.[6]

The holistic emphasis on viewing humans in terms of body, mind, and spirit has fostered what often appear to be deliberately vague references to nonphysical energies. Consider, for example, the writing of Norman Cousins. A former editor of and frequent contributor to the *Saturday Review,* Cousins confronted a serious illness for which medical physicans had given him a rather bleak prognosis. His best-selling book, *Anatomy of an Illness,* has become a classic indictment of the medical profession and its needlessly materialistic views of the healing process. Cousins recounts his own decision to will himself back to health through a deliberate regimen of optimistic and cheerful thinking. His account of his remarkable recovery brought a great deal of popular attention to the role of attitudinal factors in both creating and curing physical disease. Yet lurking in Cousins's descriptions of the curative powers of the mind are oblique references to a "higher" force. In *Anatomy of an Illness* he writes:

> I have learned never to underestimate the capacity of the human mind and body to regenerate—even when the prospects seem most wretched. The life-force may be the least understood force on earth. William James said that human beings tend to live too far within self-imposed limits. It is possible that these limits recede when we respect more fully the natural drive of the human mind and body toward perfectibility and regeneration.[7]

The invocation of William James is especially revealing in light of James's unquestioned role as the legitimator of all things metaphysical in American religious and intellectual thought. In both his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *A Pluralistic Universe* James clearly locates the source of humanity's "higher" energies in a metaphysical dimension of experience just beyond that detected by the rational intellect.[8] James's major legacy to American religious thought is his emphatic belief in humanity's capacity to open up to a higher spiritual power that enters our lives through the deep recesses of our unconscious minds. Cousins makes this implication more explicit in a later text entitled *Human Options*, when he writes that "the human brain is a mirror to infinity. . . . no one knows what great leaps of achievement may be within the reach of the species once the full potentiality of the mind is developed. As we create an ever-higher sense of our cosmic consciousness, we become aware of our ever-higher possibilities and challenges."[9]

Consider, too, a journal for nursing and community health professionals entitled *Health Values: Achieving High-Level Wellness*. The inaugural issue defined the concept of "high-level wellness" as "the integration of the whole being of the total individual—his body, mind, and spirit."[10] Striving to make it clear that spirit was to be understood as something over and beyond mental attitudes, the journal states that the highest levels of human well-being require the activation of an "energy force field" emanating from our "inner world." Thus, although psychological variables such as our general disposition or commitment to sound values affect the degree to which this energy flows from the "inner world" into our psychological system, high-level wellness in the final analysis depends upon an extrapsychological activating energy. The journal advises us to learn to open up to this inner world so that we may have "communion with the universal."[11] We are further told that making this inner connection with the universal awakens an unerring source of moral guidance and personal creativity.

Implicit in the holistic healing movement's faith in the sanative power of extraphysical and extrapsychological energies is its reverence for altered states of consciousness. The well-known physician Bernard Siegel is fairly typical in this regard. Incorporating the holistic approach into his medical practice, Siegel has cancer patients read books on meditation and psychic phenomena so that they can learn practical techniques for tapping into higher healing

energies. Describing the "theophysics" he believes will emerge in the scientific world in the near future, Siegel states:

> If you consider God, and you can use this label scientifically as an intelligent, loving light, then that energy is available to all of us. We are part of it, we have a collective unconscious. . . . if you get people to open to this energy, anything can be healed.[12]

The Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine in San Francisco published a volume intended to introduce medical professionals to the fundamental postulates of the holistic approach to medicine. The institute's central message is that all interaction between a physician and a patient should be based upon the premise that "a person is more than his body."[13] To activate the therapeutic properties of the "more than body" aspects of a patient, the institute advises physicians to utilize empathic listening, massage, and guided daydreaming. The rationale for these procedures is not explicit, but there are many references to the writings of such psychologists as Carl Jung, Rollo May, Erich Fromm, Viktor Frankl, Carl Rogers, Roberto Assagioli, and Abraham Maslow. These psychologists hold in common a belief that the unconscious mind is capable of channeling extramundane energies into the human system; all extol such things as empathic interpersonal relationships and altered states of consciousness as the royal road to higher spiritual realms.[14] The fact is that these so-called humanistic methods and techniques are not really humanistic at all, but frankly religious.

A final theme of the holistic health movement is its fascination with Eastern religious thought. What Eastern philosophies provide adherents of sundry American healing systems is legitimation of their belief in the existence of "subtle energies" and the efficacy of certain meditational states of consciousness in opening individuals to wide ranges of experience unattainable through reason or sensory awareness alone. Particularly intriguing to advocates of the holistic movement is the Hindu doctrine of the ultimate unity of the Atman (individual psyche) and Brahman (god or divine energy). The idea that, at its deepest levels, the human self has a point of continuous interconnection with divine spirit suggests that "miraculous" changes in our inner life are in fact explainable by the higher

laws of our being. The many volumes that appeared in the late 1970s to inform Americans about the various systems of holistic healing all included encyclopedic descriptions of Eastern systems for meditation and inner purification. *The Holistic Health Handbook, A Visual Encyclopedia of Unconventional Medicine,* and *Wholistic Dimensions in Healing* all sought to acquaint their readers with "a variety of representative systems for healing the whole person and awakening the spirit within."[15] Among those Eastern religio-medical systems described in these volumes are Tai Chi, Yoga, Ayurvedic literature, Shiatsu, and Chinese acupuncture (including background information on the concept of the Tao).

Too much attention to the historical and theological accuracy of these uses of Eastern religious thought can become a hindrance to comprehension of their American manifestations. In his study of unconventional American spirituality, Robert Ellwood cautions that Americans' use of Eastern symbols is better approached through what he calls "the American emergent and excursus heritage from Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, the Shakers and Spiritualists, to the cults of the depression era, or to the 'beatniks' and the 'hippies.' "[16] At the popular level, Eastern religious thought is invariably interpreted as consonant with a number of convictions endemic to America's unchurched metaphysical tradition: an emanationist view of creation, coinherence of the physical and spiritual realms of life, the progressive or evolutionary character of an immanent divine force, and the primacy of certain altered states of consciousness for attuning humans to this divinely guided evolutionary flow. In fact, the holistic healing literature generally does not distinguish among these diverse Eastern traditions and tends to assume that their primary teachings are essentially identical with the parapsychological beliefs associated with Kirlian photography or out-of-the-body experiences. As one text phrases it, the common thread running through these various metaphysical systems is thought to be the belief that "we are all affected by the universal Life Energy."[17]

Therapeutic Touch and Alcoholics Anonymous

Two striking examples of Americans' involvement with holistically oriented healing movements can be seen in the more than five thou-

sand nurses who have studied Dolores Krieger's Therapeutic Touch and the millions of citizens from every walk of life whose lives have been regenerated through Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dolores Krieger, a nursing instructor at New York University, developed a healing technique predicated upon the existence of a universal energy underlying all life processes. Saying that the Western scientific tradition in which she was trained "does not understand energy within the same context as does the Eastern world," Krieger has described her healing discovery using terminology borrowed from Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist religious traditions.[18] Her study of the healing techniques employed in yoga, Tibetan mysticism, and Chinese acupuncture has led her to identify the subtle energy that permeates the universe with what the Hindu tradition calls *prana*. Krieger states that *prana* is the metaphysical agent responsible for all life processes and is thus the ultimate power behind every form of healing regardless of the particular rationale or techniques a physician might employ. Every living organism, she writes, is an open system and has continuous access to *prana*. So long as an individual retains contact with this vital energy he or she remains healthy; illness ensues when some area of the body develops a deficit of *prana*. "The act of healing, then, would entail the channeling of this energy flow by the healer for the well-being of the sick individual."[19]

Recapitulating Franz Anton Mesmer's science of animal magnetism in nearly every detail, Krieger has devised a system of practices for nurses to use in their efforts to "channel" *prana* into patients. She explains that in order to heal someone, we must first become inwardly receptive to the flow of this spiritual energy into our own system before it can be transmitted to the patient. Healers must learn to purify and open up their own internal *chakras*, or spiritual energy centers, through which *prana* enters into the human nervous system. To do this we must acquire a whole new set of mental and spiritual habits, which will facilitate our entry into meditative, receptive states of consciousness. Once nurses learn to increase their ability to capacitate this life-enhancing power, they are then in a position to channel it to their patients through an elaborate ritual of touching. Much as mesmerists made their passes and D. D. Palmer and Andrew Taylor Still made their adjustments, nurses trained in Therapeutic Touch restore the free flow of vital force within a pa-

tient's system. According to Krieger, during the healing process both patient and healer experience tingling sensations, pulsations of energy, and a radiation of heat—all tangible evidence of the activation of *prana*.

Krieger is not simply introducing nurses to new techniques that will supplement the impersonal and overly materialistic therapies associated with medical science. She is promulgating a new world view in which the physical is understood to be enveloped by a metaphysical agent undetected by the senses. Instruction in Therapeutic Touch, she says, "is an experience in interiority. . . . [It] presents you with a rich lode of circumstances through which you can explore and grapple with the farther reaches of the psyche."[20] Opening oneself to the nonmaterial energy underlying physical existence is a "symbolic experience" and initiates an "archetypal journey" that will initiate newcomers to the metaphorical language of the psyche.[21]

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is one of the most interesting examples of Americans' faith in the power of spiritual factors to cure disorders of the mind and body. Founded in the 1930s, Alcoholics Anonymous now has well over one million members with about 35,000 groups meeting weekly in over ninety different countries. Any group that helps individuals mend their broken lives and discover the secrets of personal happiness has natural affinities with religion. In the case of Alcoholics Anonymous this transformative experience is overtly attributed to a supernatural cause. The group's standard reference manual reports that members typically discover that "in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming 'God-consciousness' followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook."[22] This belief in the therapeutic efficacy of "God-consciousness" is couched in terms that disassociate AA from America's churched traditions and link it with the metaphysical currents set loose in American cultural thought by William James.

In his history of Alcoholics Anonymous, entitled *Not-God,* Ernest Kurtz convincingly argues that AA represents a paradigmatic instance of twentieth-century American spirituality.[23] The principal founder of the movement, Bill Wilson (or simply Bill W., as he is customarily referred to within the movement), was himself an alcoholic who became acutely aware of his inability to overcome his addiction. Finally, in a moment of desperation, Bill W. found him-

self crying out, "If there is a God, let Him show Himself! I am ready to do anything, anything!"

> Suddenly the room lit up with a great white light. I was caught up into an ecstasy which there are no words to describe. It seemed to me, in the mind's eye, that I was on a mountain and that a wind not of air but of spirit was blowing. And then it burst upon me that I was a free man. Slowly the ecstasy subsided. I lay on the bed, but now for a time I was in another world, a new world of consciousness. All about me and through me there was a wonderful feeling of Presence, and I thought to myself, "So this is the God of the preachers!" A great peace stole over me and I thought, "No matter how wrong things seem to be, they are all right. Things are all right with God and His world."[24]

Alcoholics Anonymous drew both substance and style from the evangelical piety of America's Puritan origins. Recovery from addiction, like salvation, must begin with our personal recognition that we are not in control of our lives. Wholeness is something that is received, not commanded. Improvements of any kind can proceed only upon our prior recognition that we are not-God, but are rather limited in both power and significance. Yet it is this very acknowledgment of our limitation as not-God that makes possible our connection with the Fulfilling Other. Bill W. borrowed further from the evangelical tradition when he organized AA into small groups centered on the weekly rituals of new converts personally describing their previous unworthiness and consequent discovery of a higher power. Moreover, the mutual edification and fraternal correction so characteristic of Protestant pietism played a significant role in Bill W.'s fundamental conception of AA as a group of drunks talking over a cup of coffee.

Despite AA's appropriation of evangelical themes, Bill W. was extremely wary of religion per se. He was particularly suspicious of the moralism associated with biblical religion. Knowing that many alcoholics were painfully aware of their inability to live up to moral absolutes, he rejected traditional religious dogma and transplanted the dynamics of personal regeneration to a metaphysical basis more in keeping with the liberal and pragmatic tendencies in modern American intellectual thought.

A major influence on early AA thinking was the psychologist Carl

Gustav Jung. Jung had treated Rowland H., another pioneer of AA, for alcoholism and in the process profoundly impressed upon him the impossibility of recovery by either medical or psychological treatment. According to Jung, the alcoholic suffered from personality disorders so profound as to be curable only through a spiritual or religious experience. Jung had rejected his Christian heritage because he believed it had become lifeless and no longer spoke to our inner experience. He instead spoke of God as an inwardly available power or impulse toward self-unification. It was from Jung that AA borrowed its religious insight that the self must first give way or become deflated before the regenerative process can begin. Jung's argument was not so much theological as practical. For him it was simply the case that the personality structures that compose the primary identity or persona of most individuals are too rationalistic and egocentric to permit higher influences to enter into and spiritualize the entire personality. Thus, although AA insisted upon the alcoholic's "deflation at depth," it was motivated not by belief in human depravity before a transcendent deity but by an insight into the individual's own role in making "God-consciousness" possible.

The real inspiration behind Bill W.'s emergent spirituality, however, was William James. It was from James that AA inherited a mode of religiosity that was at once uniquely American and uniquely modern. Shortly after his recovery, Bill W. came upon James's monumental *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and found in it just the formulation of the spiritual life that would enable AA to attract the nonreligious while preserving the founder's original insight:

> Spiritual experiences, James thought, could have objective reality; almost like gifts from the blue, they could transform people. Some were sudden brilliant illuminations; others came on very gradually. Some flowed out of religious channels; others did not. But nearly all had the great common denominators of pain, suffering, calamity. Complete hopelessness and deflation at depth were almost always required to make the recipient ready. The significance of all this burst upon me. *Deflation at depth*—yes, that was *it*. Exactly that had happened to me.[25]

James never used the phrase "deflation at depth." Nor indeed did he say that the self must first become hopeless before it could be

transformed through contact with a higher power. Yet James's psychological investigations of religious experience were significant for the realization of Bill W.'s ambition to espouse a nondoctrinal spirituality. James had accumulated a wealth of evidence to support his claim that, under certain conditions, transmundane energies can enter into human consciousness and exert regenerative influences available in no other way. This psychological "fact" allowed James to retain belief in religious or supernatural events while repudiating biblical religion as a form of mythological expression no longer tenable in an age of science. James called his own system of beliefs a piecemeal or crass form of supernaturalism. By this he meant that a fully empirical examination of human experience can establish the fact that higher energies do occasionally enter into and become an actual force in our world.

William James believed that his psychological investigation of religious experience established solid empirical foundation lacking in traditional theology. Because he believed that the "truth" of religion lies in experience and not in abstract doctrine, he maintained that all religious beliefs must be tentatively held and continuously revised in light of one's own and others' experiences. James imparted to modern religious thought its characteristic open-mindedness and acceptance of the culturally conditioned character of all religious doctrine. Religion of this kind can make allowances for personal differences. It can also be co-scientific because it is anchored in personal experience rather than ancient scriptural texts or rationalistic theology. In this way, James provided Bill W. and other modern Americans with a mode of spirituality that was at once deeply personal, optimistic, progressivist, and couched in the essentially therapeutic language of self-transcendence and self-actualization.

Bill W.'s suggestion that William James was "a founder of Alcoholics Anonymous" is thus not entirely an exaggeration. For it was James who gave to AA a language and metaphysical rationale that would give it a right to the typical claim of being "spiritual rather than religious." Although AA has over the years moved from what Ernest Kurtz calls "the possibly mysterious to the sheerly vivid," it has nevertheless retained a distinctively spiritual flavor. For example, the group's self-help manual *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* continues to warn against relying on willpower or one's own natural resources. The key to personal regeneration is attainment of

the "feeling of being at one with God and man."[26] The unique blend of mysticism and pragmatism found in such prototypically American religious thinkers as William James and Ralph Waldo Emerson is carried on in AA's insistence that true self-reliance is possible only once we have experientially connected ourselves with the Other: "The more we become willing to depend upon a higher power, the more independent we actually are."[27] AA's mystical, nonscriptural approach to spiritual regeneration makes its doctrines anathema to most of America's religious establishment; its denunciation of both material and psychological/attitudinal factors in favor of an overtly metaphysical view of healing makes it anathema to the American medical establishment. But its open-minded and eclectic sense of the presence of spiritual forces in the determination of human well-being makes it one of the most powerful mediators of wholeness in America today.

Psychic Healing

Another wing of contemporary American metaphysical healing is "psychic healing." The term covers a vast array of practices in which the healer employs some kind of parapsychological faculty to initiate the healing process. Psychic healing thus belongs to the category of what are called "psi phenomena." Psi phenomena are defined as events that defy explanation according to the canons of scientific theory, such as alleged instances of telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, or the transmission of nonphysical energies from a healer to a patient. Nearly every form of unorthodox medicine espousing a metaphysical concept of healing has at least some psychic overtone (e.g., Therapeutic Touch's transmission of *prana* or Alcoholics Anonymous's advocacy of meditation so as to enable a higher power to enter into the finite personality). Ultimately, the difference between psychic healing and some of the metaphysically oriented holistic healing groups is only a matter of tone or emphasis. While holistic healing groups are trying to broaden conventional medical theory to include a role for spiritual factors, psychic healing groups are primarily concerned with establishing the lawful activity of an extrasensory reality.

Perhaps the most studied of recent American psychic healers are

Olga and Ambrosé Worrall. The Worralls have treated thousands of patients in a manner strongly resembling that of the nineteenth-century mesmeric healers. Like most psychic healers, the Worralls believe that all illness is "functional" rather than "organic" in that it is the result of persons having fallen out of harmony with the wider, nonphysical environment that surrounds them. Ambrose explains:

> I believe there exists a field of energy, akin to life itself, around and about us. We draw our daily supply of energy from this inexhaustible storehouse. When we insulate ourselves by wrong thinking or wrong living from this source of supply we become sick. . . . We are like batteries that need recharging.[28]

The Worralls explain that the spiritual healer "is a person who is spiritually, psychically, and biologically adaptable as a conductor between the source of supply and the patient. Under the proper conditions, healing energy will flow from the source through the healer to the patient."[29] Patients who receive the Worralls' laying-on-of-hands treatment report sensations of heat, tingling, and vibratory motion. Their testimonies thus corroborate the contention that the Worralls are capable of imparting a mysterious spiritual energy into their systems. Importantly, the Worralls also claim that their ability to diagnose and treat diseases is augmented by clairvoyant vision as well as the ability to communicate with departed spirits. Psi phenomena, they say, are lawful processes within a properly scientific world view.

The Worralls insist that their healing and parapsychological activities are compatible with Christianity and are, in fact, the means whereby Jesus engaged in his healing work. The energy they channel into a patient stems from God, the universal source of all intelligence and power.[30] Although religious belief on the part of the patient is not necessary for healing to take place, the healing process is said to bring the microparticles of the patient's body back into a harmonious relationship with the "universal field of energy." This, it would seem, is the psi equivalent of a personal reconciliation with God.

Other works on psychic healing also insist that paranormal healing does not require the patient's adherence to credal religion. The majority nevertheless believe that psi phenomena are expressions of

divine law. For example, in his *A Complete Course in Parapsychology*, Paul Krafchik says that psychic healing "is spiritual, but not in a religious sense." He believes that the divine is omnipresent in the universe in the form of "auric radiations" that surround every living thing and provide the medium through which all psi phenomena—including healing—transpire.[31] Defining God as an impersonal energy enables psychic researchers such as Krafchik and the Worralls to maintain a loosely Christian faith despite their rejection of the need for a scripturally based religious philosophy. And, significantly, they fervently contend that their "discovery" of the lawful activity of auric radiations is perfectly compatible with modern science. Occasional references to scientific theory and the use of scientific-sounding neologisms give the impression that although psychic healing is perhaps not yet a part of science, it is nonetheless a logical extrapolation of known laws and principles.

What often draws practitioners of unorthodox medicine to the defense of psi phenomena is their concern to explicate a theory of reality that gives credence to the transpersonal states of consciousness in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated. A good example of this can be seen in the saga of Irving Oyle, who left his Long Island medical practice for California, where he blossomed into one of the preeminent spokespersons for New Age medicine. Oyle's metaphysical pilgrimage began with his repudiation of "orthodox Cartesian materialists" and their tendency to view healing "as nothing but mindless behavior of insensate atoms."[32] His own experiences with holistic healing led him to embrace a world view in which atoms themselves in some way participate in a higher order of things. He reasoned that "our new medical model must be built on a firm foundation. The theories of Einstein, Teilhard de Chardin and Jung seem like sturdy pillars. In Einstein's cosmos, matter dissolves into energy, energy into shifting configurations of something unknown. Is this something a complementary aspect of the body?"[33]

Oyle's conviction that matter dissolves into energy and energy into the unknown led him to espouse a medical theory grounded on metaphysical eclecticism. His writings draw on Tibetan-Buddhist lore, C. G. Jung, Alan Watts, and the so-called new physics, to buttress his belief that the human body is an "energy packet consisting of wave phenomena."[34] Oyle reasons that disease reflects a disorganization of the body's energy waves. The task of the healer

is to help patients open their unconscious minds so that they can draw upon a higher energy (which he variously refers to as *ch'i* or *prana*) capable of restoring order to the bodily system. Our unconscious minds, Oyle notes, are directly connected to the psi field. It therefore follows that insofar as we can learn to shift our consciousness away from the overly rational ego state, "all the energy in the universe which is not in our consciousness can communicate with us."[35]

Yet another example of how the psychic aspect of unorthodox healing stimulates Americans' metaphysical imaginations is found in the career of Edgar Cayce.[36] Cayce gained nationwide renown in the early part of this century by both diagnosing illness and prescribing dietary remedies while in a deep hypnoticlike trance. Cayce explained that while in the entranced condition his subconscious mind could utilize the powers of telepathy and clairvoyance to glean information from the subconscious minds of individuals who had turned to him for medical help. Ill-educated and with no medical training whatsoever, Cayce nonetheless succeeded in healing hundreds of individuals suffering from a wide variety of physical ailments. Upon his death, his son Hugh Linn Cayce helped organize the Association for Research and Enlightenment (ARE), which to this day serves as a clearinghouse for a wide variety of metaphysical and occult interests. Organized into study groups and exposed to volumes of Cayce's trance-bound messages from the universal mind, the 160,000 annual subscribers to ARE literature are instructed in dietary practices, karmic laws governing reincarnation, metaphysical dream interpretation, and spiritual secrets known in ancient Egypt and the lost civilization of Atlantis.[37]

Those who become involved in psychic healing do so out of a sense of religious calling. Their healing powers come to them as gifts and beckon them to become emissaries for a higher spiritual reality. Stanley Krippner and Alberto Villoldo studied three North American psychic healers and noted how all three use their healing powers to convince people of the reality of higher worlds. Dona Pachita of Mexico City, for example, one night dreamed about

> a "spirit guide." This "spirit" told her that she would develop as an instrument of the Divine Will. Different "spirits" would come to her, in her dreams as well as when she was awake, to teach her about medicinal

plants and herbs, about "spiritual purification," and about "magnetic passes" used in healing.[38]

Dona Pachita's healing activities thus become a testimonial to the world of spirits and the fact that these spirits take an active interest in human affairs. Rolling Thunder, a Native American healer also studied by Krippner and Villoldo, is likewise an ambassador for the spirit realm and a vocal advocate of such related psi phenomena as spirit mediumship and astral projection. Rolling Thunder subordinates psychic phenomena to the importance of surrendering our ego and thereby discovering our rightful place in the greater scheme of things. Rolling Thunder teaches those who come to him for healing that "each of us has a mission to fulfill in life. People should find out what work is meant for them."[39] Much as Jesus's ministry employed healing miracles to demonstrate the reality of his claims concerning the divine, American psychic healers appear at least as interested in spiritual edification as they are in physical healing.[40]

Of final note is the fact that transpersonal psychologist Lawrence LeShan made psychic healing the capstone of his widely read *The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist,* a theoretical work on the paranormal. In this book LeShan argues that mediums, mystics, and post-Einsteinian physicists all maintain that there is much more to our universe than the space-time "reality" traditionally acknowledged by our sciences. LeShan takes all of this as testimony to the existence of a "Clairvoyant Reality" that in some way coinheres with—even as it transcends—the world of physical causation. In this Clairvoyant Reality such phenomena as telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance are fully lawful events. LeShan maintains that psychic healing is empirical proof of the existence and usefulness of this Clairvoyant Reality. He set about studying the various types and forms of psychic healing and eventually concluded that they all fall into one of two basic types. In "Type 1" healing, the healer enters an altered state of consciousness in which he or she feels him/herself and the patient merging into a single entity. Essential to this type of psychic healing is the healer's ability to use some technique (prayer, meditation, drugs, etc.) to enter personally into the Clairvoyant Reality and at the same time establish an empathic bond with the patient. According to LeShan, this creates a psychic field in which the patient is "completely enfolded and included in

the cosmos with his 'being,' his 'uniqueness,' his 'individuality' enhanced."[41] By incorporating the patient psychically into the Clairvoyant Reality the healer creates an "ideal organismic situation" in which self-repair and self-recuperation systems operate at a level close to their maximum potential. Psychic healing is thus a by-product of the patient's participation in Clairvoyant Reality. LeShan's "Type 2" healing is essentially the mesmeric model, in which the healer attempts to transmit some kind of healing energy to the patient. Type 2 healing entails the healer's active efforts first to capacitate and then transmit a subtle energy to a patient, who is otherwise unaffected by the process. Whichever the healing type, LeShan suggests that psychic healing brings to the most vivid of realizations the dictum of all great religions that "God is Love":

> The recurring theme "God is Love" appears to mean exactly what it says; that there is a force, an energy, that binds the cosmos together and moves always in the direction of its harmonious action and the fruition of the separate connected parts. In man, this force emerges and expresses itself as love, and this is the "spark of the divine" in all of us. . . . It seems to me that the challenge to science, to man, to the human experiment is, finally and irrevocably, whether or not man can accept that he is a part of the energy of the universe and can only function harmoniously within it through his capacity to love—infinitely.[42]

New Age and Crystal Healing

The cultural climate that favored holistic and psychic healing has also proved to be hospitable to the blossoming of a number of New Age religious movements. "New Age religion" is a convenient term for the newly resurfacing metaphysical currents set loose a century ago by the mesmerists, Swedenborgians, and spiritualists. It embraces everything from organized movements such as Unity, Divine Science, or Eckankar to popular interest in Richard Bach's best-seller *Jonathan Livingston Seagull.* Contemporary Americans, it seems, are still fascinated by descriptions of the existence of a suprafine ether that pervades the universe, our possession of a subtle etheric or astral body, and the imminent possibility of connecting with higher cosmic planes. No less attractive is the claim—made popular in the nineteenth century by Madame Blavatsky, Annie

Besant, and other Theosophists—that a host of ascended master teachers exist in the spirit world and are transmitting revelations to the human race through persons who can enter into a mediumistic trance. Part and parcel of these occult supernaturalisms is the prototypically American confidence in the practical benefits to be had from religious experience. Steeped in the New Thought's rhetoric of the power of positive thinking, New Age piety thrives on the avowedly therapeutic and self-actualizing nature of the spiritual power available through our unconscious minds. The New Age of which they speak is not to be inaugurated by the physical return of Christ from beyond. It is, rather, the utopian state even now taking shape in the progressive unfolding of the "Christ consciousness" within.

Interest in trance mediumship and the channeling of metaphysical teachings ostensibly sent to us from ascended masters seems to have mushroomed in recent years. Throughout the 1960s New Age devotees found inspiration in the works of Edgar Cayce and Stewart Edward White's recordings from the spirit world, entitled *The Betty Book* and *The Unobstructed Universe*. In the 1970s Elizabeth Clare Prophet channeled messages from ascended masters and disseminated them through her Church Universal and Triumphant, while Jane Roberts' *The Seth Materials* introduced thousands to the language of astral bodies and the human capacity to become receptive to nonphysical energies.[43] So-called trance channelers proliferated throughout the 1980s and have gained a measure of acceptance among middle- and upper-class Americans. The prototype of this phenomenon is the housewife J. Z. Knight's ministry on behalf of a spirit named Ramtha. Ramtha is said to be a member of an unseen brotherhood of spirit teachers (a group to which Jesus belongs) who are "now preparing mankind for a grand project":

> It is time for man to realize his divinity and immortality. . . . There is coming a day very soon when great knowledge will be brought to this plane by wonderful entities who are your beloved brothers. No longer will there be the aging and death of the body, but continuous life.[44]

Delivered by the voice of the entranced Mrs. Knight, Ramtha tells those preparing for the New Age to discover the "God within you." The "God within" is a far cry from the remote Being depicted by the majority of America's churches. It is to be thought of as "the isness

of All That Is" and exhibits a decidedly Buddhist and Taoist coloring. Such a god, we are told, is available to us for personal development and self-healing.

One of those attracted to Ramtha's message of the "God within" and its implications for spiritual healing, as described in her much-publicized book and TV miniseries *Out on a Limb*, is actress Shirley MacLaine, who started under the tutelage of trance channeler Kevin Ryerson. Ryerson himself is a longtime disciple of the American occult tradition who studied at the Edgar Cayce Institute in Virginia Beach. Ryerson discovered while meditating that entities from the astral plane could take hold of his physical body and use it to send messages to humanity. The spirit who channels messages through Ryerson's vocal chords has apparently selected Shirley MacLaine as his special publicity agent. MacLaine's celebrity status has enabled her to reach millions with her new-found faith in such things as reincarnation, the lost civilization of Atlantis, and the spiritual ecstasy to be had in out-of-the-body experiences. The consciousness-expanding techniques taught to MacLaine by Ryerson and others enabled her to see "the most beautiful white light above me. I can't describe how that light felt. It was warm and loving and real. It was real and it was God or something."[45] Having felt herself "vibrating with a strange magnetic energy," MacLaine is convinced that we possess a higher spiritual nature:

> The higher unlimited superconsciousness can best be defined as one's eternal soul—the soul that is the real "you.". . . It is also the energy that interfaces with the energy which we refer to as God. It knows and resonates to God because it is a part of God. . . . The great spiritual masters such as Christ and Buddha were totally in touch with their higher unlimited selves and were therefore capable of accomplishing whatever they desired.[46]

Shirley MacLaine's personal spiritual quest has prompted her to travel across the country conducting weekend seminars and teaching Americans to make inner contact with their higher selves. The focus of her efforts in recent years has been on the healing powers such spiritual advancement makes possible. She now teaches that we can all learn to heal ourselves simply by visualizing colors. Each color has the power to set loose higher vibrations in our conscious-

ness that can heal ailments of various parts of the body: blue for problems in the throat, orange for the liver, green for the heart, yellow for the solar plexus, and so on.

"Color healing" goes to the very heart of New Age faith in the multidimensional nature of the universe. According to New Age theology, the entire cosmos is but a manifestation of the "pure white light" of divine spirit. Every plane of reality—mineral, vegetable, animal, mental, astral, among others—expresses this same source of light at a different rate of vibration. As for humans, the white light of divine spirit "enters the consciousness of the soul through the aura, and is diffused into seven component colors. Each color infuses the appropriate soul center (*chakra*) with power and vitality."[47]

> When white light flows harmoniously into the interior centers (the *chakras*), our condition becomes healthy and more harmonious. When there is some obstruction in the *chakra*, blocks are formed, and these blocks prevent energy from flowing freely, and the body is unable to heal itself.[48]

The "science of color" reflects the New Age appropriation of Eastern metaphysical beliefs concerning the existence of seven distinct spiritual centers, or *chakras,* in the human body. Each *chakra* receives and transmits throughout the body one of the seven color rays into which white light is refracted as it enters the human plane. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet thus correspond to the seven *chakras* located along the spinal column. Any technique that can aid us in activating the proper flow of light through our various *chakras* can thereby stimulate the healing process.

The principles of New Age color healing also apply to the healing uses of rock crystals and other precious gems. Belief in the healing properties of crystals can be found in nearly all shamanic traditions, including those of Native Americans. Western interest in the occult powers of crystals, however, dates back to Baron Charles von Reichenbach's studies in the 1840s and 1850s. Reichenbach took up the scientific study of Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism and refined it into his own concept of "odic force." Early in his investigations he noted that crystals seemed to activate this vital force just as effectively as magnets had for Mesmer. His experiments convinced

him that when passed over a patient's body, quartz crystals had an "exciting power on nerves" and were capable of restoring the free flow of odic force throughout the body.[49]

Crystal healing has become something of a rite of passage through which many modern Americans have entered into the spiritual path charted by New Age principles. Enthusiasts claim that because rock crystal is almost entirely devoid of color, it is an almost perfect capacitator and refractor of divine "white light." A healer known as Daya Sarai Chocron explains:

> The quartz crystal acts as a catalyst, a conductor of energy. It is both a receiver (or receptor) and a transmitter. It is a protective ally that balances and harmonizes the aura, giving it equilibrium. Crystals attune themselves automatically to human vibrations because of their affinity with the human spirit, creating spiritual links when they are worn or held.[50]

Although uniform in their praise for the healing power of rock crystals, healers often equivocate about the reason for their therapeutic potency. Korra Deaver observes on the one hand that "crystal is able to tap the energies of the universe."[51] Yet in other contexts she notes that "the healing qualities of the crystal seem to be mainly an amplification of the energies of the one working with the stone."[52] The confusion as to whether these energies are personal or extrapersonal in origin is possibly due only to semantic difficulties in the New Age lexicon. Crystal healers employ a fairly intricate vocabulary—largely of Theosophical and mesmeric parentage—which describes the interpenetration of the different bodies we inhabit. The metaphysical world view underlying crystal healing takes it for granted that we exist simultaneously in the physical, etheric, and astral planes. The healing power of crystals is due to their unique ability to harmonize the physical body with the etheric fields from which spiritual energy ultimately emanates.

> Crystals act as transformers and harmonizers of energy. Illness in the physical body is a reflection of disruption or disharmony of energies in the etheric bodies, and healing takes place when harmony is restored to the subtler bodies. The crystal acts as a focus of healing energy and healing intent, and thereby produces the appropriate energy.[53]

Crystal healing is undertaken with the same kind of reverence and mystery as a shamanic ritual.[54] Meticulous attention is given to every stage of preparation. This begins with careful selection of the precise gemstone or crystal that would most enhance one's own personal "vibrations." Introductory manuals in the art of crystal healing are explicit about the importance of selecting a stone with the appropriate psychic qualities:

> Kirlian photographs of various crystals show that the energy emanations are all different. Individual crystals produce identical patterns each time they are photographed—but each crystal has its own energy signature. The best results are obtained when your own energies and that of the crystal are harmonious.[55]

After an appropriate stone has been selected, the healer must intensify her or his commitment to self-purification. Healers must learn to center themselves inwardly and to purify their psyches of "lower" desires and emotions. Breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, meditation, and the repetition of spiritual affirmations are all recommended as techniques for properly centering oneself. American crystal healers call attention to the affinity of their use of crystals with the ancient art of using crystal balls for divination. "Crystal gazing," as it is called, is described as "the science of inhibiting normal outward consciousness by intense concentration on a polished sphere. When the five senses are thus drastically subdued, the psychic receptors can function without interference."[56] The usefulness of crystals as an aid in developing inner receptivity contributes further to their importance in New Age spirituality. Chocron confidently proclaims that "We are now living in an era of great cleansing and purifying for everyone. . . . The crystals and stones are the catalysts that bring about the purification."[57] Many books describe the use of crystals as a tool for amplifying the transformations of consciousness sought in meditation. We are told to hold a crystal in our hand, close our eyes, and repeat over and over such phrases as "I am the Light of God," "I am filled with the Light of the Christ," and "I am a radiant Being of Light temporarily using a physical body."[58] The crystal is said to amplify the energies these affirmations set in motion and help strengthen these qualities within us.

As crystal healer Katrina Raphael writes:

> Crystal healings are designed to allow the recipient to consciously access depths of being previously unavailable, and draw upon personal resources to answer all questions and heal any wound. . . . The person who is receiving the crystal healing has the unique opportunity to contact the very essence of being.[59]

Kora Deaver emphasizes the healer's need to put the ego aside in order to become a purer channel and cautions that "the strong energy vibrations which emanate from [the crown *chakra*] could be of a disruptive nature if one has not overcome the personal will, for when this chakra is opened, it must be made available to that which comes from the Highest Self, or the Soul, with the will quiescent and waiting to follow the Higher Guidance."[60] Crystal healing, then, is both a spiritual path and a spiritual discipline in its own right. Hence Deaver counsels that "even if the breakthrough is only in your own understanding of yourself-as-a-soul, as a Cosmic Being, your efforts will not have been in vain."[61]

Metaphysical Healing and Contemporary American Religous Thought

The survey of unorthodox healing groups in this chapter barely scratches the surface of contemporary American interest in nonmedical systems of healing and health. There are, for example, a number of herbal or vitamin therapies that closely mirror Thomsonianism in their translation of ascetic Protestantism's concern for righteous living into a kind of hygienic piety. Understanding that God has imparted to nature a design of perfection, herbal and vitamin therapies provide specific instructions concerning our covenantal obligation to accord ourselves with nature's "higher law."[62] And, too, a number of Afro-American healing traditions have emerged, both in Florida and in major urban areas in the North, introducing a host of supernaturalisms into their followers' conceptions of human well-being. The use of amulets, Voodoo rituals, curses, exorcism, and psychopompic excursions to the spirit realm all find their way into discrete American subcultures, particularly those whose members have recently immigrated from the Caribbean.[63]

Although the groups examined here do not illustrate the whole of

Americans' interest in alternative methods of cure, they nonetheless focus attention on an enduring mode of American spirituality. Unlike herbal or vitamin therapies, these metaphysical groups adhere to a decidedly supernaturalist view of reality. They are not simply referring to a different set of material factors dismissed as ephemeral by the medical establishment, but rather are witnessing to the existential significance of religious receptivity. And, unlike the Afro-American traditions that flourish largely among the recently immigrated and educationally impoverished, they represent not cultural disenfranchisement from scientific and religious orthodoxy in this country but self-conscious repudiation of orthodoxy's fundamental premises. What is most significant about the healing groups we have been considering is the fact that they flourish among those for whom bold Enlightenment rationalism and Judeo-Christian faith are viable hypotheses in the quest for physical and mental wholeness. Their members have, however, found the positivism born of our Enlightenment heritage too confining. Scientific rationality has failed to sustain their optimism or to further their capacity to experience life's ecstasies. Intellectual sophistication has made biblical religion even more problematic. Scriptural doctrine stikes many as hopelessly premodern, eroded by the progressive onslaught of discoveries made in evolutionary science, the study of comparative religion, the higher criticism of biblical texts, and social-scientific critiques of religion's role in fostering psychological and sociocultural stagnancy.

Contemporary interest in holistic and psychic healing can be traced to more sources than just the historical legacy of nineteenth-century metaphysical movements. One must also acknowledge the role of what historian William McLoughlin calls the "Fourth Great Awakening" in American cultural life.[64] McLoughlin draws our attention to the ways in which social, political, and even environmental events during the 1960s sent millions of Americans searching for more relevant or more functionally useful ways of understanding their world. Jarring disjunctions appeared between norms and experience, between old beliefs and new realities, and between dying and emerging patterns of personal behavior. The earliest hints of these cultural rumblings can be seen in the appearance of the so-called Beat Generation in the late 1950s. Writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Alan Watts, Gary Snyder, and Jack Kerouac focused atten-

tion on the alienation Americans experienced with regard to scientific and religious authority. Their call for a counterculture echoed a widespread dissatisfaction with the narrow-mindedness of biblical religion and the spiritual bankruptcy of scientific positivism. In the late 1960s and 1970s Americans in increasing numbers seriously experimented with Oriental philosophies, psychedelic drugs, and sundry transpersonal psychologies, all in an attempt to find for themselves what Emerson once described as "an original relationship to the Universe." And while their quest for attunement to nature's higher reaches sometimes smacked of narcissism and hedonism it far more often bespoke a spiritual hunger for wholeness and union with a transcendent Other.

In periods of cultural renewal, the pendulum of religious belief almost invariably swings away from God's transcendence to notions of divine immanence. In the urgency of "wholeness hunger," the spiritual and physical worlds seem to intermingle, making it possible to locate God as easily in a rock crystal or subtle bodily energy as in a church. A commitment to theological immanence adds excitement to the religious quest; it implies that the only barrier between us and a higher power is self-imposed and accidental and can be obliterated by a single chiropractic adjustment, the wave of a crystal, or a nurse's therapeutic touch. It is striking how closely these healing groups resemble McLoughlin's description of the theological reorientation emerging in those who, while deeply religious, are irretrievably outside the churched traditions. This reorientation, he writes, is still taking shape but will most likely include

> a new sense of the mystical unity of all mankind and of the vital power of harmony between man and nature. The godhead will be defined in less dualistic terms, and its power will be understood less in terms of an absolutist, sin-hating, death-dealing "Almighty Father in Heaven" and more in terms of a life-supporting, nurturing, empathetic, easygoing parental (Motherly as well as Fatherly) image.[65]

The healing groups we have been examining are in their own right significant manifestations of contemporary American religious thought. The fact that they rarely identify themselves as religious should not blind us to their full complicity in proselytizing for an alternative theological vision. As Robert Ellwood has pointed out,

unconventional spirituality rarely assumes forms that compete directly with established religious institutions. What Ellwood calls "emergent and excursus religion" avoids such competition by taking either more diffuse (e.g., offering little more than workshops, pamphlets, or ad hoc appointments) or more intensive (e.g., communes, radical reprogramming efforts) forms than the normative. An emergent mode of spirituality, Ellwood writes,

> does not set up altar against altar, or doctrine against doctrine, in opposition to the Judeo-Christian establishment, so much as present itself as *dealing with aspects of life* other than established religion, and with teachings which, rightly understood, only complement the received confessions. These movements are ostensibly noncompetitive with the great denominations, even as they survive on religious interests and needs aroused—but perhaps not met—by them.[66]

A final understanding of metaphysically oriented healing systems thus requires examination of how they "deal with aspects of life other than" those addressed by either established medicine or established religions. We must therefore turn to an assessment of how these groups function as therapeutic agents and, in the process, initiate Americans into the experiential foundations of religion.

6

Healing as an Initiatory Rite

THE VERY PRESENCE of metaphysical healing groups in contemporary American culture raises a number of questions about the relationship between religion and healing in an age whose conceptions of medicine have undergone considerable secularization. It remains for us to consider just how these unorthodox systems turn healing into a religious ritual and thereby set a curative process in motion. We shall do so by examining how these metaphysical healing groups utilize the resources of religion to stimulate their adherents' psychosomatic well-being. Insofar as these groups succeed in their task of making religion relevant to the salvation (i.e., healing or making whole) of multiple aspects of human existence, it may be argued that they provide a form of spirituality that successfully addresses the needs of many contemporary Americans.

The persistence of metaphysical healing groups in American society appears at first glance to run contrary to widely accepted theories concerning the gradual secularization of Western culture. The term "secularization" refers to the gradual decline of religion as a consequence of the growth of scientific knowledge and the continued diversification of social and ethnic groups in the Occident. There are at least four different ways in which the secularization process is thought to have altered both the nature and function of religion in modern life.[1] The first of these is the overall decline of religious institutions; that is, religious institutions and doctrines

that previously exercised great authority over Western culture have over time lost a great deal of their prestige and sociopolitical influence. The second aspect of secularization is reflected in modern religion's tendency to focus more on the enhancement of everyday life than on matters pertaining to the afterlife. Third, and perhaps most important for our study, the term "secularization" draws attention to the increasing privatization of religion. As religion has become disengaged from the public domain, it has become increasingly associated with the personal sphere of life. A fourth significance of secularization discussed in social-scientific literature is the gradual desacralization of Western world views. Secularization theory tells us that as the natural and social sciences have become increasingly sophisticated in their delineation of the causal forces that govern human well-being, religious beliefs have been relegated to the margins of cultural respectability.

The first three implications of secularization—the decline of religion's influence on the public domain, the conformity of religion with worldly pursuits, and the privatization of religion—are straightforward and relatively uncontroversial descriptions of historical trends. However, the alleged desacralization of the Western perception of the world may be more a reflection of the ideological stance of certain modern intellectuals than an actual social reality. As evidenced by the groups we have been exploring, the general process of secularization has not so much eradicated as relocated humanity's attestations to the causal presence of an extramundane reality in our lives. It is helpful in this context to remind ourselves that experiences of the sacred may be, but equally as well may not be, connected with institutions, scripture, or remembered tradition. The point here is that although the secularization process has indeed served to privatize religion and divorce the doctrines of institutional religion from the realm of public life (including, of course, from the activities of the AMA), it has by no means eliminated the human capacity or tendency to confront the sacred. Robert Ellwood has noted that secularization, by divorcing religious expression from major social structures, simultaneously "liberates religion to exist principally, possibly even to prosper unprecedentedly, within subjectivity and in small groups."[2] As we shall see, metaphysical healing systems are almost perfectly suited to the secular character of our age in that they provide experiential access to the sacred while neatly sidestepping mod-

ern disquietude concerning traditional religious authority. In this way they initiate individuals otherwise quite at home in the modern world into a distinctively religious vision of the forces upon which health and happiness depend.

Healing as a Rite of Initiation

As noted above, secularization theory would have us believe that Americans—particularly the educated, book-reading public from whose ranks these healing groups largely draw their clientele—have for the most part a desacralized understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships operating in the physical world. Yet it seems that it is precisely the sacralizing aspects of these systems that are most responsible for their popular appeal. So prominent are the religious overtones of the healing movements that it is tempting to think that they function only secondarily as purveyors of therapeutic techniques; their primary function, in this view, is to enable individuals to achieve what William James called a "firsthand" religious faith. That is, they give to individuals for whom religion has consisted of dull habits and lifeless doctrines handed to them by others both experiences and concepts that turn it into a personally meaningful way of life. And, in fact, the literature produced by metaphysical healing groups is more widespread and more avidly consumed than are their actual healing practices. The ideas they promulgate are apparently perceived as being at least as life-enhancing as their physical techniques. The introductory section of *The Holistic Health Handbook* actually suggests, "Perhaps more important than the techniques is the expansion of consciousness they foster."[3] Studying the principles of holistic health, we are told, can open up a "relationship to inner worlds" and thereby "awaken the spirit within."[4] Similarly, Dolores Krieger informs students of Therapeutic Touch that they have commenced an "archetypal journey." By learning to center themselves through meditation and the reading of Eastern metaphysical texts such as the *I Ching* they will learn that "the feed-back from one's unconscious contents can become a life-long friend and teacher."[5] A couple whose *cat* had been cured by the Worralls could hardly find words to express their gratitude for "the past several years. The most priceless of all, the

beautiful spiritual life to which you have led us, and a glorious happiness we never deemed possible."[6]

It is evident that newcomers to unorthodox medicine go through cognitive and experiential transformations similar to those Mircea Eliade attributes to participants in the initiatory rites of primitive religions. A member of an American metaphysical healing group is likely to be introduced to doctrines and practices which by their very nature "involve his entire life" and restructure his consciousness so that he becomes "a being open to the life of the spirit."[7] Eliade has shown that nearly all initiatory rites utilize some form of death/rebirth symbolism to help structure a process through which individuals are induced to discard a no longer functional identity and discover a new, "higher" self. The therapeutic context of American metaphysical healing practices supports this same death/rebirth, or regenerative, structure of personal renewal. Metaphysical healers encourage their clients to abandon former identities and world views that have proved literally self-destructive and invite them to inhabit a new world of seemingly unlimited energy and power. And, too, the sensations of heat and tingling vibrations that routinely accompany metaphysical healing are classic features of initiation into religious mysteries.[8] Whether it is called *ch'i,* animal magnetism, *kundalini, num,* ectoplasm, or *prana,* experiential contact with a psychic energy appears to be a cross-cultural rite of initiation into esoteric knowledge of reality's higher laws and forces. Believing that one has become directly connected with the primal reality upon which life is dependent evokes vivid sensations of wonder, ecstasy, and self-transcendence.

Initiation into unorthodox healing systems tends to transform individuals' lives in ways not sanctioned by either conventional science or conventional theology. For example, an early student of chiropractic was moved by her direct communion with Innate to jettison her former religious belief that humans have a soul. Chiropractic had brought her to appreciate the vital difference between believing that one *has* a soul and believing that one *is* a soul. As she put it, it is "not that I have an Innate Intelligence, but that I am Innate Intelligence in this physical shell."[9] An even clearer illustration of unorthodox medicine's capacity to initiate individuals into esoteric belief systems can be found in the case of professional nurses introduced to Therapeutic Touch. No longer agents of a

pharmaceutical technology, these nurses instead learn to understand themselves as "channels." Consider the self-descriptions provided by two of Krieger's students:

> A channel, definitely, for the universal power of wholeness. I am certain it is not "I" who do it. . . . see myself as. . .a vehicle through which energy can go to the patient in whatever way he or she can use it.[10]

The notion of serving as a channel or vehicle is not without cultural significance; Krieger was herself introduced to metaphysical healing by well-known spiritualists and Theosophists. And, too, the decidedly gnostic allusion to the "not-I" (but a higher power that works through me) expresses a highly mystical religious commitment not unlike that described by Paul in the early days of Christianity.

As one of Krieger's students expressed it, "using Therapeutic Touch has changed and continues to change me. . . . [It] requires a certain philosophy, and this philosophy permeates one's total existence."[11] This "certain philosophy" redefines these nurses' definitions of the conditions affecting human health and well-being. Understanding a nonphysical energy to be the primary source of human vitality, these nurses now identify introspective exercises like meditation as the royal road to abundance of every kind. The benefits they attribute to their newly acquired philosophy read like a page from Abraham Maslow's studies of peak experiences: increased independence from the approval of others, increased self-reliance; the ability to view things in their totality; a more caring (Bodhisattva-like) attitude toward others; the sense of being an integral part of the universe; and the abandonment of the "scientific method" as the sole approach to the nature of life. Individuals trained in nursing science now avidly read books on Yoga meditation, Tibetan mysticism, and the relationship between the "new physics" and Eastern religious traditions.[12]

The continuing presence of metaphysically charged healing systems in American culture is in no small part due to their ritual power to lift individuals beyond the everyday world enabling them to temporarily experience numinous forces and powers. Whether centered on the act of mesmeric passes or the waving of crystal rocks, American metaphysical healing systems have made creative use of ritualistic activity to structure personal encounter with a

higher spiritual power. In this they recapitulate what Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner have identified as the threefold process whereby rituals assist individuals in regenerating their lives through contact with the sacred.[13] Metaphysical healing, like revitalization rituals generally, (1) removes individuals from their accustomed identities and modes of experience, (2) temporarily induces an altered state of consciousness understood to impart a vivid insight into ontological truths otherwise beyond human comprehension, and (3) returns these experientially reinvigorated persons to everyday reality armed with new insights into the nature of life.

This structural affinity between metaphysical healing activities and religious rituals is without question a crucial factor in their therapeutic success. It is also responsible for their remarkable ability to promulgate religious beliefs that are at considerable variance with those of the established churches. Almost all healing activities, including those of conventional medicine, take place in settings removed from the hustle and bustle of daily existence. The unorthodox systems we have been examining amplify this separation by encouraging specific attitudes or inward dispositions that help destructure the ego-dominated rationality of modern Western life. Patients are encouraged to become silent and receptive in the company of a healer who is understood to be in special rapport with higher cosmic powers. The healer, furthermore, establishes a highly empathetic rapport with the patient and helps break down typical defense systems and "higher order" rational processes that often serve as a barrier against awareness of emotions and other preverbal sensations.

Through this ritualized "death" of the socially defined ego, patients are temporarily freed from the stress of communal life. They are also particularly receptive to a range of emotions and sensations rarely experienced in their normal waking state. In this receptive state adherents of these groups claim to feel an infusion of extramundane energies. In this connection, we might note Victor Turner's observation that religious healing is marked by the presence of powers that are felt "in rituals all over the world to be more than human powers, though they are invoked and channeled by the representatives of the community."[14] Turner further explains that this experience of power, or what he refers to as the experience of spontaneous communitas, "is richly charged with affects, mainly pleasur-

able ones. . . . Spontaneous communitas has something 'magical' about it. Subjectively there is in it the feeling of endless power."[15]

While in this euphoric condition, initiates believe themselves to be reestablishing inner harmony with the very source of physical and emotional wholeness. The techniques and beliefs to which they have been introduced impress upon them that disease and even moral confusion are but the unfortunate consequence of falling out of rapport with the invisible spiritual workings of the universe. Conversely, health and personal virtue are the automatic reward of living in accordance with the cosmic order. Hence, when individuals return from the therapeutic setting to again take up their social roles and responsibilities, they feel that they have attained a higher level of participation in the divine scheme of things. They are, for this reason, not only healed but raised to a new plane of spiritual awareness. This new perspective on the meaning and purpose of health is, as William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle have shown, the principal characteristic that distinguishes religious from secular healing.[16] It also accounts for the compelling attraction that the cosmological aspects of these healing systems have for their adherents. Proponents of metaphysical healing systems appear particularly drawn to what might be described as evolutionary or emanationist cosmologies; in these cosmologies the very purpose of creation is to enable an immanent divine spirit to manifest itself progressively through the continuous evolution of our personal and collective consciousness. In this world view, the healer becomes a kind of role model or symbol of humanity's capacity to draw upon a higher energy and help channel it toward the amelioration of life on earth. Adherents of these groups are thus enabled to conceptualize a higher meaning and purpose for their individual lives. As channels of an ever-progressive divine spirit, they can now affirm that they participate directly in the unfolding of God's providential powers.

Religion and Healing—The Role of Suggestion

It is not surprising that the scientific and medical communities tend to dismiss unorthodox medicine's alleged successes as either utterly coincidental or caused by some other factor such as suggestion. For example, it can be demonstrated that there is a natural variability in

all diseases. Every illness, acute or chronic, goes through periods of escalation and remission. All but the most serious ailments go through a brief series of "ups" and "downs" before the body's natural recuperative powers eventually restore health. Assuming that the practices used by unorthodox medical systems are absolutely harmless, the natural variability of disease alone will prompt patients to credit the unorthodox healers with having caused improvements. After all, if B follows A, it is natural to assume that A and B are linked in some fundamental way. Karl Sabbagh has argued that if a fringe medical practitioner provides treatment of any sort whatsoever to a sick patient, four possible outcomes are possible:

> First, the patient could start to improve. Natural variability will ensure that this possibility is always present. If it happens, it immediately "proves" that the treatment is effective. The second thing that could happen is that the disease remains stable. This *also* "proves" that the treatment is working because it has arrested the disease. . . . A third possibility is that the patient continues to get worse. However, the practitioner need not be at all put out by this, even if the patient is, because this can be taken to mean that the dosage was inadequate and must be stepped up, or that the treatment hasn't been taken long enough. The fourth, and saddest, outcome is that the patient dies. Even in this case, the good fringe-practitioner need not accept defeat. The death is an indication that the treatment was delayed too long and applied too late.[17]

Typical of the scientific and medical communities' attitude toward religious or metaphysical healers is William Nolen's *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle.* Nolen studied several unorthodox healers and conducted follow-up interviews with the patients they had allegedly cured. He was unable to find any compelling evidence that these individuals had been healed in any way. In Nolen's professional judgment, the few cases where the patient had made slight recovery could be explained by making a distinction between "organic" and "functional" disease. Whereas the former is wholly physiological in origin, the latter has to do with psychosomatic interaction and could therefore conceivably be alleviated through nonmedical—but perfectly understandable—means. Thus, although unequivocally dismissing even the slightest possibility of the influence of an extramundane healing agent, Nolen none-

theless conceded the possibility that "suggestion" (e.g., aroused hope, confidence in the healer, increased adrenaline flow) may have been of some help to these patients:

> Let me repeat: a charismatic individual—a healer—can sometimes influence a patient and cure symptoms of a functional disease by suggestion, with or without a laying on of hands. Physicians can do the same thing. These cures are not miraculous; they result from corrections by the patient in the function of his autonomic system.[18]

The most noted authorities in the field of transcultural psychiatry likewise imply that the reputed effectiveness of nonmedical healing systems can be reduced to the common denominator of suggestion. Studies by Ari Kiev, Jerome Frank, and E. Fuller Torrey are typical of those social-scientific studies that interpret unorthodox medical systems as inadvertent psychotherapies.[19] And while they grant metaphysical healers a higher success rate than does Nolen, they are no less incredulous concerning the presence of spiritual energies or the ability of these healers to successfully treat organic illness. All three emphasize the healer's ability to "name" the patient's illness in a way that evokes deeply rooted cultural beliefs about the nature and meaning of illness. The healer's seeming expertise concerning the origins of the illness has a natural tendency to elicit the patient's confidence and hope of recovery. As Frank explains:

> The ideology and ritual supply the patient with a conceptual framework for organizing his chaotic, mysterious and vague distress and give him a plan of action, helping him to regain a sense of direction and mastery and to resolve his inner conflicts. . . . Methods of religious healing also have aspects that heighten the patient's sense of self-worth. Performance of the ritual is usually regarded as meritorious in itself.[20]

Meredith McGuire is one of the few scholars to have applied this kind of social-scientific analysis to American metaphysical healing groups.[21] Her studies have focused upon what she calls the "personal empowerment" attested to again and again by the adherents of these movements. She concludes that American unorthodox healing systems employ a "ritual language" that represents and objectifies a higher power believed to be capable of augmenting the individual's

internal resources. The ritual language that nonmedical healers use to describe their practices is, McGuire contends, therapeutic in and of itself. It transforms "hope in hope itself" to hope in the efficacy of a strong transcendent power. The ritual language employed by these healers is thereby capable of fostering a vivid sense of hope in an imminent cure. McGuire reasons:

> Increasing evidence in Western medical terms suggests that illnesses previously thought to be biogenic are related to social and psychological states such as stress, conflict, sense of "threat," rapid social change, and sense of powerlessness. . . . If this is the case, it is plausible that non-"scientific" healing methods, such as we are studying, may be able to address problems as well as, if not better than, the dominant scientific medical system. *Believing oneself* to be in touch with a greater power may very well *literally empower* the individual believer to be more effective in daily life or at least to cope more adequately.[22]

Implicit in McGuire's remarks is the assumption that these groups are therapeutic *not* because of the actual existence of the metaphysical agents they invoke, but because of the power of suggestion. She does make an important distinction between simple belief *in* a greater power and belief that one has *experienced* this power ("believing oneself to be in touch with a greater power"), but her analysis does not really make use of this distinction and falls back upon the role of suggestion or sheer credulity. In other words, it is assumed that insofar as a given illness is psychosomatic in origin—and studies reveal that up to eighty percent of all illnesses are—metaphysical healers stand as good a chance of helping their patients as M.D.s.

It should be pointed out that this kind of reasoning amounts to little more than substituting one ideology for another. The academic community's commitment to a world view that recognizes only physiological, environmental, and psychological causes of disease/healing is deftly allowed to subsume the metaphysical healing community's belief in supernatural causes. The implication is that these metaphysical systems ought to be tolerated because their spiritual mumbo jumbo acts as a kind of harmless placebo and seems to help certain nonscientific sorts of persons. Dismissed in this analysis is any consideration of the type of interaction individuals feel themselves to be

having with a sacred reality, much less the possibility that this experience—symbolic or otherwise—might have a beneficial effect upon the healing process.

Religion and Healing—The Experience of a Higher Power

Surely the continued presence of metaphysical healing groups among educated, middle-class Americans merits a less reductionistic assessment. More careful consideration should be given to the ways in which felt experiences of the sacred might indeed have the therapeutic value attested to by their enthusiastic adherents. The point I want to pursue is whether religious experience of the sort associated with these groups can be argued to have a therapeutic value distinct from that of other, nonreligious types of suggestion. Academic investigation is unlikely to either prove or disprove the reality of the spiritual agents acclaimed by these groups. It can, however, support an argument for a uniquely and distinctively religious dimension to the healing process. The link between religious experience and healing can, I think, be demonstrated in three steps: (1) by using psychosomatic medical theory to establish the relationship between physical health/illness and distinct psychological conditions; (2) showing how these psychological conditions are related to general personality structures that are uniquely affected by the experience of relationship with a higher power; and (3) demonstrating how metaphysical healing groups make this relationship with a higher power available to modern Americans in ways that can most effectively "heal" the psychological structures underlying health/illness. This argument concerning the therapeutic efficacy of certain types of religious experience makes no attempt to establish the truth of these beliefs. It does, however, lend credence to the notion that these metaphysical healing movements mobilize therapeutic resources that are unlikely to be tapped in nonreligious ways.

Contemporary medical theories recognize stress as an etiological factor in disease.[23] Stress has been implicated in the etiology of gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, duodenal ulcer, and even cancer. We know, furthermore, that a variety of psychological conditions are particularly associated with the onset of illness and overall personal disintegration. Among

those most relevant to our study are the experience of meaninglessness, major sociocultural change, poorly channeled aggression, loss of hope, and the emotional impoverishment that comes from the lack of reciprocity or depth in interpersonal relationships.[24]

This is not to say that the exact meaning of the word "stress," much less the neurophysiological mechanisms that translate activities in the social environment into physical disorders, are at all understood. Recent criticisms of the concept of stress as a causal explanation of illness have noted that there is a great deal of confusion about what makes a particular event stressful for a given individual.[25] David Barnard has reviewed these criticisms and shown that, in general, they recommend that the attempt to identify stress-producing characteristics of external events be abandoned in favor of a new focus upon the intrapersonal processes through which individuals respond to such events.[26] Stress is thus to be understood in terms of cognitive activities or psychological dispositions that adversely affect a person's ability to function within his or her environment. We must therefore look to those psychological activities that prevent an individual from maintaining a vigorous relationship with his or her environment and thereby produce the meaninglessness, emotional impoverishment, aggression, and overall sense of futility that medical literature recognizes as associated with the origins of despair and disintegration.

It is precisely here, in the individual's psychological structures for preserving a vigorous orientation to life, that we can discover the therapeutic value of the beliefs and practices of the groups we have been examining. To this end, we must determine the relationship between those psychological structures that promote positive rather than negative psychosomatic interaction and an experience of a higher power. To do this we will turn to a brand of psychoanalytic thought known as object relations theory and its cousin movement, "self psychology." Object relations theory and self psychology are especially helpful tools for elucidating the psychological processes that underly psychosomatic vulnerability (e.g., the conditions of meaninglessness, emotional impoverishment, and poorly channeled aggression) and are effectively addressed by metaphysical healing movements. Both of these psychoanalytic theories are based upon Freud's insight that our early relationships with objects and persons in our immediate environment have lasting psychological influence.

The work of theorists such as Melanie Klein, Otto Kernberg, D. W. Winnicott, and Heinz Kohut has subordinated the importance of instinctual dynamics in favor of the structures whereby an individual relates to others in the context of personal relationships. Beginning with our earliest encounters with a nurturing parent, we are caught between two compelling and to some extent conflicting psychological needs. On the one hand we need to stand out, be separate, and express individuality. On the other hand we have an equally compelling need for merger, for uniting with an idealized image or parent from which we will receive security and a sense of meaningfulness. Throughout the entire course of life we need to address and balance these conflicting needs for a sense of autonomy and for alliance with a higher power.

The way in which we balance these two psychological needs is a function of our development within the medium of personal relationships. Optimal psychological development requires a responsive social environment in which individuals have continuous access to a nurturing parent or suitable culturally valued power in terms of which they can feel their personal worth mirrored. As the psychoanalytic theorist Henry Guntrip has observed, "For good or ill, the universe has begotten us with an absolute need to be able to relate in fully personal terms to an environment that we feel beneficially relates to us."[27] The newborn finds such an environment supplied by the nurturing parent. In the world of the infant, moreover, there is no clear-cut demarcation between the I and the you. The self is merged with the "higher" being of the parent and finds its worth mirrored in his or her affirming presence. This mirrored sense of worth gives rise to a healthy narcissism—that is, the earliest psychological ability to maintain a sense of a prized, cohesive self.

It is inevitable that the child's need for recognition and admiration eventually fails to be met by the valued and esteemed parent upon whom he or she has placed unrealistic demands. The blow to self-esteem produced by the unmet need for recognition and admiration creates frustration and internalized rage and aggression. This blow to self-esteem and the accompanying sense of rage become the core of the pathological distortions of the individual's narcissistic structures. In stark contrast to popular conceptions of narcissism as a condition marked by excessive self-love, it is now understood to be the psychological consequence of an individual's inability to

form relationships that will provide recognition and a sense of self-worth. (In other words, narcissism is characterized by too little, not too much, self-esteem.) The core of the narcissistic condition is the formation of psychological barriers to protect the self from further emotional hurt. The individual becomes increasingly incapable of genuine reciprocity in relationships with others. Psychological narcissism is thus characterized by a shallow emotional life and almost total lack of empathy. The narcissistic personality is incapable of intimacy or openness with others. He or she is closed off from the give and take of interpersonal relationships and consequently unable to recognize the needs of others, identify with any consistent set of moral values, or have a realistic sense of his or her own finitude. Importantly, the precarious self-image and self-esteem associated with narcissism create continuous frustration, rage, and aggression that is ordinarily internalized and directed against oneself (circumstances which we have already related to the etiology of psychosomatic illness).

As psychoanalyst Heniz Kohut and cultural theorist Christopher Lasch have pointed out, a fairly large percentage of those living in modern Western societies have at some point in the course of their development suffered a crisis of self-esteem sufficient to make them susceptible to at least some degree of narcissistic disorder.[28] It is important to remember that narcissism is a reflection of the precariousness of sustaining wholesome self-esteem and is thus to some extent characteristic of the human condition. Narcissism (i.e., the need to be acknowledged and prized by an idealized Other) is only a "negative" phenomenon in its pathological distortions. Kohut has emphasized that the narcissistic structures of personality as they develop in our ability to see ourselves mirrored and esteemed by the nurturing parent constitute the developmental foundations of a strong, cohesive self. Because these narcissistic structures underly our ability to view the world in relation to ourselves, they contain the seeds of the "highest" developmental achievements of adult life. Creativity, humor, empathy, genuine object love, and wisdom all require the capacity to engage life in ways that undercut the rigid demarcations between the self and the world and allow a felt sense of continuity with the world. *If* our narcissistic needs are adequately met and channeled, they provide the foundation for the most mature and fulfilling engagements with life based upon what Kohut

describes as a felt "sense of supraindividual participation in the world."[29]

This link between the narcissistic structures of personality and a range of emotional conditions associated with health and illness helps to clarify how metaphysical healing groups "literally empower" (to use Meredith McGuire's phrase) their adherents. It would seem that the success and continued popularity of these unorthodox healing systems rest in large part in their ability to engage and transform the narcissistic self. They do this in at least three distinct ways: (1) by helping to heal the psychological conditions that cause many psychosomatic ailments; (2) by alleviating the blow to self-esteem that accompanies nearly all forms of illness; and (3) by addressing the need for wholesome self-esteem even in those who are not ill.

First, it is reasonable to infer that the rage, frustration, and internally directed aggression created by our unmet narcissistic needs are prime causal factors in the etiology of psychosomatic illness and that these illnesses are thus potentially resolvable through the beliefs and techniques of these movements. As Kohut has pointed out, the internalized rage, hostility, aggression, and precarious self-esteem associated with narcissism are all potentially modifiable through empathy in interpersonal relationships. Through relationships that substantiate an individual's self-worth, narcissism can be transformed into the foundations of a self capable of relating to the world in a deep and meaningful way. The healing groups we have examined provide precisely such empathic experiences. Healers in these traditions typically give generously of themselves, providing patients with a significant Other through whom they find their self-worth substantiated. From the early mesmerists through Phineas P. Quimby to contemporary practitioners of Therapeutic Touch, the unorthodox healing tradition has strongly emphasized the importance of an interpersonal environment in which individuals can feel themselves to be prized and cared for as well as sufficiently free of inhibitions to express parts of themselves ordinarily stifled or repressed. To take one contemporary example, Herbert Otto's and James Knight's *Dimensions in Wholistic Healing* reads like a manual for proper parental nurturing of "healthy" narcissism. Holistic healing is said to require the provision of empathy and abundant warmth. The fundamental premise of the healing process is that

every human being is part of a larger cosmic energy system and thus has his or her own untapped reservoir of creative potential providing that the proper "pathway" is established to enable harmony or reciprocity between the self and the world without. The interpersonal environment between the healer and patient must be structured in such a way as to create "greater harmony between the person, the self within, and God or the universe without."[30]

The alternative healing groups we have been studying encourage individuals to expand their ontological or metaphysical imaginations. The beliefs and practices of these groups are designed to foster experiential awareness of unseen spiritual agencies. In this way they enable individuals to create a zone of ontological safety serving a purpose very similar to that of what D. W. Winnicott describes as the "transitional objects," with which young children learn to engage life creatively and without feeling continuously threatened. One of the major contributions of object relations theory has been its emphasis upon the fact that psychological health depends not only upon the development of strong, ego-dominated rationality, but also upon an ongoing ability to engage life in nonrational ways such as fantasy and imagination. Fantasy and imagination (as well as those states associated with religious practices of meditation, introspection, prayer, etc.) blur the sharp distinction between internal and external reality and in so doing create a "safety zone" into which an individual may venture, protected from potential psychological wounds. Winnicott has drawn attention to the way in which children respond to the initial crisis of selfhood created by the increasingly absent mother by forming relations with a transitional object such as a teddy bear or imaginary friend. This transitional object permits the child to interact with, and contribute to, an independent reality. The important point here is that this relationship to a nonphysical Other helps the child to avoid the emotional turmoils of a damaged self even while he or she ventures actively into the world. Winnicott further notes that this transitional zone of fantasy and play can continue throughout life and make possible our engagement with the "arts and . . . religion and . . . imaginative living and . . . creative scientific work."[31]

Marie Rizutto has continued this line of thinking and directly connected it to the ongoing psychological importance of God as a transitional object. She has observed how the mental image of God

emerges alongside those of imaginary playmates and favorite stuffed animals at a critical juncture in childhood. The formation of a relationship with God, as with other transitional objects, makes it possible to tolerate feelings of inadequacy, shame, frustration, and isolation. Yet, as other transitional objects gradually lose their power to sustain a realistic experience of being related to a valued "higher being," the concept of God continues to maintain what Rizzuto calls its "superior status." The concept of God is psychologically unique. It is experienced as having an ontological reality that can provide the sense of being related to a higher power even amidst the most precarious experiences. For this reason, Rizutto argues, the experienced relationship to God "is not an illusion. It is an integral part of being human, truly human in our capacity to create nonvisible but meaningful realities capable of containing our potential for imaginative expansion beyond the boundaries of our senses."[32] It seems to follow that by providing experiences of relationship with a spiritual agent such as *ch'i* or *prana,* metaphysical healing groups help individuals overcome their destructive narcissistic rage and release this psychological capacity for restoration and expansion.

Second, the onset of illness itself provokes narcissistic rage that subsequently serves as an impediment to recovery until adequately transformed. Illness presents individuals with a severe challenge to their ability to affirm their own significance within the cosmos. As Eisenberg has written (and should apply as equally to women as to his generic male):

> The patient who consults a doctor because he has experienced discomfort or dysfunction seeks more than remission of his symptoms; his quest is for relief from the fears aroused by the disruption in the continuity of his accustomed self. Beset by distress, he searches for an interpretation of the meaning of the misfortune which has befallen him.[33]

Thus, from the outset, the healing relationship is a process in reconstructing a meaning system in which the individual can know him/herself as existing in harmony with those causal forces promoting harmony and well-being. The human experience of disease—as distinct from the disease itself—is fraught with an overriding sense of being out of harmony with the ultimate powers upon which life and well-being depend. It would appear that a renewed sense of accessi-

bility to these ultimate powers could be a necessary, even if not sufficient, cause of healing.

An excellent example of the capacity of metaphysical healers to regenerate their patients' sense of being prized and cohesive individuals is the recovery of actress Jill Ireland from breast cancer. Ireland was severely traumatized by her condition and found her life increasingly chaotic, senseless, and terrifying. She was introduced to a "holistic health practitioner" who taught her to meditate. She also learned to make use of what she describes as the "healing properties of quartz crystals for focusing and energizing my mind and body." Her discovery of nonmaterial healing energies and her newfound interest in meditational practices designed to attune the self to this metaphysical power gradually enabled her to regenerate herself psychologically and to overcome the damaged self-image, sense of meaninglessness, vulnerability, isolation, and internalized aggression born of her illness. Interestingly, among the "gifts" which she attributes to her cure from cancer are: "More confidence"; "More at ease with myself"; "It has helped me to be myself"; "It has brought meditation to my life"; and "It has enriched my relationships with my children and the people close to me."[34]

And, third, the unique capacity of these movements to bring the resources of religion to bear upon the transformation of our narcissistic needs makes them highly attractive and, indeed, empowering even for those who are not physically ill. Metaphysical healers provide a felt sense of relationship to an eminently accessible spiritual power and thereby make possible a religious resolution of the dilemma of narcissism. Their doctrines (myth) and practices (ritual) envision God as sufficiently immanent to permit the merger and yet sufficiently transcendent to constitute the idealized object capable of affirming and bestowing meaning upon the self. The language of *prana,* animal magnetism, Innate, and the like depicts God in ways that mobilize an individual's need to feel united with a higher power while encouraging him or her to accept responsibility for permitting this higher power to work "through" their own actions. Without exception, these groups provide either explicit instructions or at least implicit clues about gaining inner accessibility to a higher spiritual power. Their adherents find themselves related to a transitional object (*prana,* the Innate, etc.) that increases their capacity for empathy

and imparts a felt sense of supraindividual participation in the world. Unorthodox healing systems afford individuals the opportunity to ground their self-esteem on the sacred (thereby effecting what Kohut calls the "mirror transference") and develop stronger goals and lifestyles (thereby effecting what Kohut calls the "idealizing transference" whereby the patient internalizes values and goals associated with the prized Other). For many modern individuals, initiation into these metaphysical healing systems can thus quite literally open up new worlds and release inherent tendencies toward creativity, wisdom, and empathy for the needs of others.

Unorthodox Medicine and the Accessibility of God

Unorthodox medical systems, by meeting the individual's need for access to and merger with God, address an important aspect of personal life. The psychologist of religion Peter Homans has drawn attention to the fact that the Protestant denominations that have so influenced American religious life emerged in Western culture precisely because of their ability to meet this fundamental "prerequisite" of psychological, physical, and spiritual vitality. His comments bear directly upon the reasons that unorthodox medical groups can function as a kind of cultural successor to classical Protestantism for some modern Americans.

> [Classical Protestantism] created a unique and highly effective solution to the universal psychological needs for idealization and merger. Protestantism synthesized these needs with viable and appropriate cultural objects through its doctrine of the transcendent existence of God, which met the need of the self for idealization, and through the evangelical doctrine of the believer's oneness with Christ—I am in Christ and Christ in me—which nurtured the believer's associated need for merger with a supreme cultural object. In this way Protestant Christianity articulated with the narcissistic needs of its followers.[35]

Homans observes that the capacity to merge psychologically with "a supreme cultural object" is a necessary precondition of a vital spirituality. Yet many individuals in modern Western culture find it increasingly difficult to "idealize" adequately the God of institu-

tional religion and establish any profound psychological connections. Intellectual assent to the "higher" status of God has become all but impossible for many who have been influenced by such developments as the advent of modern science, historical sophistication concerning the origins of early Church doctrine or scripture, and awareness of the cultural relativity of religious "truth." Moreover, modern society is so pluralized that any one religious tradition is limited in its capacity to socialize individuals into a world view that will provide access to, and merger with, an appropriately idealized image of God. Though it is true that the 1970s and 1980s have witnessed a resurgence in the ability of fundamentalist churches to mobilize and energize their adherents, these groups provide a biblically-depicted God who is unlikely to appeal to those whose cognitive rejection of traditional religious faith makes evangelical commitment impossible.

In this context unorthodox medical systems emerge as fascinating examples of the forms of religious belief and practice that can successfully mediate a sense of the sacred to individuals during a period in which institutional religion exerts increasingly less influence on the public realm. As Donald Capps suggests:

> If religion exerts less influence on the social order but retains its influence on personal life, as various secularization theories suggest, this "privatization" of religion provides a favorable context for an increasingly close association of religion and narcissism. . . . A transformed narcissism may provide the foundation not only for psychological well-being but also for such spiritual well-being as can realistically be expected in a secular world.[36]

In his famous essay "The Will To Believe," William James observed that the scientific character of our age tends to make the hypothesis of religion dead, avoidable, and trivial. Religion—the conviction that there is a higher power from which we might receive healing powers—becomes a genuine option only when its claims confront us in such a way as to be of "the forced, living, and momentous kind."[37] Illness almost invariably makes the religious hypothesis both forced and momentous. It is to the credit of these metaphysical healing systems that they have enabled many Americans to perceive the religious hypothesis as a living one. Insofar as

growing numbers of modern individuals have difficulty maintaining a vital sense of self-love and suffer from emotional impoverishment, questions concerning the psychological accessibility of God are far more fundamental to the emergence of genuine spirituality than are those of instinctual renunciation and moral obedience.

The existence and continued popularity of unorthodox healing systems appear to testify to the fact that secularization has in no way detracted from Americans' capacity to envision their lives as in some way participating in a sacred reality. Through their myths and rituals, these groups have succeeded in relocating many modern Americans' point of access to the sacred in ways that are well tuned to the psychological and sociological structures of our day. Although undoubtedly destined to remain at the fringes of both American medical and religious orthodoxy, these groups have nonetheless reminded us that the sense of personal relatedness to the sacred is a vital component of personal well-being.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Shirley MacLaine, *Dancing in the Light* (New York: Bantam Books, 1985), p. 8.

2. Ibid.

3. Jill Ireland, *Life Wish* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1987), p. 77.

4. See the discussion of healing in Gerhard Kittle, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 3: 194–215; and William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective* (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1975).

5. It should be noted that many massage and breathing therapies utilize Eastern notions of a subtle body energy such as *ch'i* or *prana* and thus implicitly invoke world views in which the physical realm of life is ontologically dependent on either sustaining continuous "harmony" with, or periodically receiving "influxes" from, an ultimate metaphysical reality such as Brahman, the Tao, or the Cosmic Body of the Buddha. Thus, systems such as acupuncture, acupressure, and Shiatsu do utilize what this book defines as supernaturalist-cause explanations of healing even though many adherents emphasize their known physiological properties. A discussion of contemporary unorthodox medicine's tendency to rely upon religiously charged conceptions of "healing energy" can be found in David Hufford's "Contemporary Folk Medicine," in Norman Gevitz, ed., *Other Healers: Unorthodox Medicine in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

6. See the discussion of the formal (as opposed to functional) properties of religious consciousness in Peter Berger, "Some Second Thoughts on Substantive Versus Functional Definitions of Religion," *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 13, no. 2 (June 1974): 125–134; and Giles Gunn, *The Interpretation of Otherness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

7. See Howard Kerr and Charles L. Crow, eds., *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); and Robert Ellwood, *Alternative Altars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

8. Robert Ellwood notes that knowing too much about the historical lineage of these groups might well obscure interpretations of the distinctive style in which Americans appropriate their beliefs and teachings. Observing that the harmonial tradition in American thought (dating back at least to Emerson) has profoundly influenced the ways in which Oriental or occult thought is understood in this country, Ellwood goes so far as to suggest that, because American adherents of these groups share common reading lists, any attempt to make hard and fast differentiations among their separate belief systems may well be misguided. See Ellwood, *Alternative Altars,* p. 168.

9. Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 1019.

10. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: P. F. Collier, Inc., 1961), p. 110.

11. Ibid., p. 399. See also James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), p. 266.

12. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 102.

13. *The Holistic Health Handbook* (Berkeley: And/Or Press, 1978), p. 13.

Chapter 2

1. The medical practices of Native Americans were (and in their modern remnants still are) too complex and varied to be conveniently summarized. In general, we might recognize at least two primary forms: (1) the use of "natural" herbs and vegetation as emetics and purgatives and (2) the use of the supernatural by medicine men or shamans who contact the spirit world both to diagnose and prescribe treatment for disease. John Duffy, in the chapter on "the myth of Indian medicine" in his *The Healers: A History of American Medicine* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), is undoubtedly correct in his assessment that North American Indians made few contribu-

tions to the historical development of medicine. Native American medicine is, nonetheless, fascinating and not without considerable spiritual significance. Interested readers might consult Ake Hultkrantz, *The Religions of the American Indians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); Donald Sandner, *Navaho Symbols of Healing* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979); or Virgil Vogel, *American Indian Medicine* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970).

2. It is difficult to estimate just how much African religious medical heritage has survived sufficiently intact to have a continuing influence on the healing practices of black Americans. Much of the use of potions, herbal remedies, and occult techniques found today among blacks living in cities such as Miami and New York derive from more recent Caribbean immigration rather than from colonial America. Interested readers might wish to consult Jon Butler's "The Dark Ages of American Occultism, 1760–1848," in Howard Kerr and Charles L. Crow, eds., *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); George Eaton Simpson, *Black Religions in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); and Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

3. This discussion of early nineteenth-century medical theory borrows heavily from Charles Rosenberg's essay "The Therapeutic Revolution: Medicine, Meaning, and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America," in Charles Rosenberg and Morris Vogel, eds., *The Therapeutic Revolution: Essays in the Social History of American Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979).

4. Benjamin Rush, cited in Duffy, *The Healers,* p. 99.

5. John Harley Warner, *The Therapeutic Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 4.

6. Duffy, *The Healers,* p. 105. John Warner cautions against crediting sectarian movements with effecting changes in the orthodox profession's therapeutic practices. While these groups undoubtedly did cause regular physicians to lessen their reliance on heroic remedies, they also fostered a "dogmatic adherence to tradition" and moved them to "hold all the tighter to the therapies that represented their own professional tradition." See his "Medical Sectarianism, Therapeutic Conflict, and the Shaping of Orthodox Professional Identity in Antebellum American Medicine," in W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter, eds., *Medical Fringe and Medical Orthodoxy, 1750–1850* (Wolfeboro, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 234–260.

7. Many fine works document the institutionalization of American medicine. Among the most widely recognized are Joseph Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession: The Role of Institutions, 1780–*

1860 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Henry B. Shafer, *The American Medical Profession 1783 to 1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936); Richard Shyrock, *Medical Licensing in America, 1650–1965* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967); and Richard Shyrock, *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967).

8. Cited in William Rothstein's excellent work, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 173.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 287.

11. Samuel Thomson, *New Guide to Health: or, Botanic Family Physician, Containing a Complete System of Practice, on a Plan Entirely New; with a Description of the Vegetables made use of and Directions for Preparing and Administering Them, to Cure Disease, to which is Prefixed a Narrative of the Life and Medical Discoveries of the Author,* 3rd ed. (Boston: 1832), p. 16.

12. Rothstein, *American Physicians,* p. 128.

13. *Boston Thomsonian Manual* 3 (November 15, 1837): 21.

14. *Thomsonian Botanic Watchman* 1 (October 1834): 140.

15. Samuel Thomson, quoted in James Harvey Young's "American Medical Quackery in the Age of the Common Man," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (1961): 581.

16. A helpful discussion of the feminist appeal of Thomsonian is to be found in Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* pp. 117–122.

17. Charles Rosenberg in Rosenberg and Vogel, *The Therapeutic Revolution,* p. 4.

18. William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

19. Ibid., p. 103. I took considerable liberty in reducing this passage.

20. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 236.

21. Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* p. 129.

22. "Remarks of Mr. Scott in the Senate. . . ," *Trans., Med. Soc. State N.Y.,* 6 (1844–46), p. 73, cited in Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* p. 127.

23. *Botanical Medical Record* 12 (1844): 356.

24. *The Boston Thomsonian Medical and Physiological Journal* (April 15, 1846): 219.

25. Samuel Christian Hahnemann, *Organon of the Rational Art of Healing* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1913), p. 5.

26. Ibid., p. 11.

27. A complete account of homoeopathy's development in the United States can be found in Martin Kaufman's *Homoeopathy in America: The Rise and Fall of a Medical Heresy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

28. Rothstein, *American Physicans.*

29. Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* pp. 139 ff., 155.

30. Edward Bayard, *Homoeopathia and Nature and Allopathia and Art* (New York: 1858), p. 3.

31. Hahnemann, *Organon,* p. 102.

32. Hahnemann, *The Chronic Diseases; Their Specific Nature and Homoeopathic Treatment,* cited in Kaufman, *Homoeopathy in America,* p. 26.

33. John F. Gray, *Early Annals of Homoeopathy in New York* (New York, 1863), cited in Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* p. 141.

34. The best works on hydropathy in American are Harry Weiss's and Howard Kimble's *The Great American Water Cure Craze* (Trenton, N.J.: The Past Times Press, 1967) and Marshall Scott Legan's "Hydropathy, or the Water-Cure," in Arthur Wrobel, ed., *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987), pp. 74–99. For additional historical background in American water-cures, see Carl Bridenbaugh, "Baths and Watering Places of Colonial America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3 (1946): 151–181; and Marshall Scott Legan, "Hydropathy in America: A Nineteenth Century Panacea," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 45 (1971): 267–280.

35. Joel Shew, *The Water-Cure Manual* (New York: La Morte Barney, 1847), p. 36.

36. See G. H. Taylor's "Philosophy of Water-Cure," in *Water-Cure Journal* 19 (1855): 2.

37. Henry L. Nichols, "A Review of the 'Pathies,' " *Water-Cure Journal* 12 (1851): 26. See also "The Horrors of Allopathy," *ibid.,* p. 138.

38. Unsigned editorial entitled "The Natural State of Man," in *Water-Cure Journal* 12 (1851): 25.

39. Unsigned article in *Water-Cure World* 1 (April 1860): 5. This citation appears in Catherine Albanese's superb essay "Physic and Metaphysic in Nineteenth-Century America: Medical Sectarians and Religious Healing," *Church History* 55 (1986): 489–502.

40. Russell Trall, *Water-Cure Journal* 11 (1851): 13.

41. James C. Jackson, "Considerations for Common Folks—No. 4," *Water-Cure Journal* 10 (1850): 97.

42. Susan Cayleff, *"Wash and Be Healed": The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

43. Cited in Susan Cayleff's "Gender, Ideology, and the Water-Cure Movement," in Norman Gevitz, ed., *Other Healers: Unorthodox Medicine in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 86.

44. Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. ix.

45. James C. Whorton, *Crusaders For Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 40.

46. Sylvester Graham, *Journal of Health* 2 (1830): 164. Citation found in Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility,* p. 80.

47. Sylvester Graham, *Chastity in a Course of Lectures to Young Men* (New York, 1857), p. v.

48. Sylvester Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life,* 2 vols. (Boston, 1839), 1: vi.

49. Ibid., p. 265.

50. *North American Review* 47 (1838), as cited in Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* p. 123.

51. An excellent study of the health philosophy at the core of Ellen G. White's ministry is to be found in Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

52. Ellen G. White, cited in Gerald Carson, *Cornflake Crusade* (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1957), p. 5.

53. Cited in Numbers, *Prophetess,* p. 105.

54. See Arthur Wrobel's introduction to his *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth-Century America.*

55. Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility,* pp. 136 ff.

56. Albanese, "Physic and Metaphysic."

57. W. O. Woodbury, "Homoeopathy the Only True Medical Practice," cited in Albanese, "Physic and Metaphysic," p. 493.

Chapter 3

1. A more complete account of Poyen's lecture tour can be found in my *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982). This chapter is, in fact, constructed from materials presented in that book. The citation here comes from Poyen's personal account of his efforts on behalf of mesmerism, entitled *Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England* (Boston: Weeks, Jordan, 1837).

2. The best secondary accounts of Mesmer's life and theories are Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Vincent Buranelli, *Franz Anton Mesmer: The Wizard from Vienna* (New York: McCann, Cowan, and Geoghegan, 1975); Margaret Gold-

smith, *Franz Anton Mesmer: The History of an Idea* (London: Barkert, 1934); and Frank Podmore, *From Mesmer to Christian Science* (New York University Books, 1963).

3. Franz Anton Mesmer, quoted in Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious,* p. 62.

4. Poyen, *Progress,* p. 35.

5. William Stone, *Letter to Dr. A. Brigham on Animal Magnetism* (New York: George Dearborn, 1837), p. 81.

6. Poyen, *Progress,* p. 55.

7. A Practical Magnetizer [pseud.], *The History and Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Practical Instructions for the Exercise of Its Power* (Boston: 1843), p. 8.

8. See LaRoy Sunderland, *"Confessions of a Magnetizer" Exposed* (Boston: Redding, 1845), p. 22.

9. A Gentleman of Philadelphia, *The Philosophy of Animal Magnetism Together with the System of Manipulating Adopted to Produce Ecstasy and Somnambulism* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Dunn, 1837).

10. See Chauncy Townshend, *Facts in Mesmerism* (London: Bailliere Press, 1844).

11. Ibid., p. 222.

12. Sunderland, *"Confessions,"* p. 22.

13. George Bush, *Mesmer and Swedenborg* (New York: John Allen, 1847), p. 160.

14. Joseph Buchanan, *Neurological System of Anthropology* (Cincinnati: 1854), p. 195.

15. Ibid., Appendix I.

16. Ibid.

17. Poyen, *Progress,* p. 88.

18. Ibid.

19. A Gentleman of Philadelphia, *The Philosophy of Animal Magnetism,* p. 68.

20. Ibid., p. 71.

21. A Practical Magnetizer, *The History and Philosophy of Animal Magnetism,* p. 19.

22. John Dods, *The Philosophy of Electrical Psychology* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1850), p. 57.

23. Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals,* cited in William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 125.

24. Finney, *Lectures,* cited in William McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), p. 84.

25. Finney, *Lectures,* cited in McLoughlin, *Revivals,* p. 126.

26. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 183.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 175. The quoted material comes from a November 17, 1830, communication to Finney from William Clark, Cooperstown.

29. Theodore Leger, *Animal Magnetism, or Psychodynamy* (New York: D. Appleton, 1846), p. 18.

30. An especially concise account of "the Swedenborgism impulse" can be found in Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 483–488.

31. John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms,* cited in Cross, *Burned-Over District,* p. 343.

32. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History,* p. 1019.

33. Cross, *Burned-Over District,* p. 342.

34. An excellent discussion of Swedenborg's influence upon Emerson is to be found in Kenneth W. Cameron's *Young Emerson's Transcendental Vision* (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1971). Quotation is from p. 297 of this work.

35. Cited in ibid., p. 297.

36. Bush, *Mesmer and Swedenborg,* p. 147.

37. Ibid., p. 69.

38. Ibid., p. 15.

39. Ibid., p. 137.

40. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press, 1974), p. 287.

41. Ibid., p. 288.

42. John H. Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek: Good Health Pub. Co., 1903), p. 40.

43. C. W. Post, *I Am Well!* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1895), p. 4.

44. Ibid., p. 10.

45. *The Magnetic and Cold Water Guide* 1 (June 1846): 8. This citation comes from Catherine Albanese's "Physic and Metaphysic in Nineteenth-Century America: Medical Sectarians and Religious Healing," *Church History 55* (1986): 489–502.

46. John F. Gray, *Early Annals of Homoeopathy in New York* (New York, 1963), cited in Joseph Kett's *The Formation of the American Medical Profession: The Role of Institutions, 1780–1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 141. Kett further documents the connection between mesmerism and homoeopathy on p. 142, n. 24.

47. Kett, *The Formation of the American Medical Profession,* p. 153.

48. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Great Harmonia* (Boston: Mussey, 1852), p. 47. The interested reader might wish to consult Robert W. Delp's

"Andrew Jackson Davis and Spiritualism," in Arthur Wrobel, ed., *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1987), pp. 100–121.

49. Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Harmonial Philosophy* (London: William Rider, 1957), p. 76.

50. R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

51. Phineas P. Quimby, *The Quimby Manuscripts* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1921), p. 30.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., p. 180.

54. Ibid., p. 319.

55. Ibid., p. 62.

56. Ibid., p. 243.

57. Ibid., p. 173.

58. Ibid., p. 210.

59. Mary Baker Eddy's indebtedness to Quimby has been the subject of heated debate. Julius Dresser's *The True History of Mental Science* (Boston: Alfred Budge and Sons, 1887) and his son Horatio's *The History of New Thought* (New York: Crowell Company, 1919) marshaled considerable evidence to show that Mrs. Eddy's writings were little more than garbled distortions of Quimby's unpublished manuscripts. Other detractors of Christian Science's foundress include Richard Daken in his *Mrs. Eddy: The Biography of a Virginal Mind* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929) and Stefan Zweig in his *Mental Healers: Anton Mesmer, Mary Baker Eddy, and Sigmund Freud* (New York: F. Ungar Publishing Co., 1962). Mary Baker Eddy's most able apologists are Stephen Gottschalk in his *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) and Robert Peel in his three-volume biography, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Discovery* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Trial* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), and *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977).

60. Mary Baker Eddy, *Manual of the Mother Church* (Boston: A. V. Stewart, 1916), p. 17.

61. Accounts of Evans's life and works can be found in Charles Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963); and John F. Teahan, "Warren Felt Evans and Mental Healing: Romantic Idealism and Practical Mysticism in Nineteenth-Century America," *Church History* 48 (March 1979): 63–80.

62. Warren Felt Evans, *Mental Medicine: A Treatise on Medical Psychology* (Boston: H. H. Carter, 1886), p. 266.

63. Ralph Waldo Trine, *In Tune with the Infinite* (New York: Crowell, 1897), p. 16.

64. Ibid., from the preface.

65. Evans, *Mental Medicine,* p. 104.

66. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History,* p. 1019.

67. Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), pp. viii, vii.

68. George Beard, *American Nervousness* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1881). The interested reader might wish to consult John L. Greenway's " 'Nervous Disease' and Electric Medicine," in Arthur Wrobel's *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth-Century America.*

69. Arthur Schlesinger, "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875–1900," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 64 (1930–32): 523–528.

Chapter 4

1. Cited in Philip Van Ingen, *The New York Academy of Medicine: Its First Hundred Years* (New York: 1949), p. 13.

2. Statistics for the number of practicing chiropractic physicians vary from 13,000 to over 25,000 while estimates of their annual patient load vary from three to more than six million.

3. See the *1986–87 Yearbook and Directory of Osteopathic Physicians,* published by the American Osteopathic Association, and Norman Gevitz's *The D.O.'s: Osteopathic Medicine In America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

4. G. F. Riekman, D.C., "Chiropractic," in *The Holistic Health Handbook* (Berkeley: And/Or Press, 1978), pp. 171–174.

5. D. D. Palmer, *The Chiropractor's Adjuster* (Portland, Ore.: Portland Printing House, 1910), p. 319. This volume is also known as *Text-Book of the Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic.*

6. See Joseph E. Maynard, *Healing Hands: The Story of the Palmer Family* (Freeport, N.Y.: Jonorm Pub. Co., 1959), p. 10.

7. Ibid., p. 9. It is interesting to note that the renowned mesmerist and mind-curist Warren Felt Evans wrote: "By the friction of the hand along the spinal column an invigorating life-giving influence is imparted to all the organs within the cavity of the trunk." See his *Mental Medicine: A Treatise on Medical Psychology* (Boston: H. H. Carter, 1886), p. 212.

8. The archives of the Palmer College of Chiropractic library contain the collection of books that D. D. had bound together for convenient reference. Among these are J. W. Caldwell's *How to Mesmerize* (Boston,

1883), E. D. Babbit's *Vital Magnetism* (New York, 1801), and James Wilson's *How To Magnetize, or Magnetism and Clairvoyance* (New York, 1886).

9. Vern Gielow, *Old Dad Chiro* (Davenport, Iowa: Bawden Bros., 1981), p. 58.

10. See Maynard, *Healing Hands,* p. 16.

11. D. D. Palmer, *The Chiropractor's Adjuster,* p. 18.

12. Joseph H. Donahue has argued that by 1910, when D. D. Palmer first published an elaborate account of his theory of Innate, he was far removed from the mainstream of chiropractic activity. See his "D. D. Palmer and Innate Intelligence: Development, Division and Derision," *Chiropractic History* 6 (1986): 31–36. Although I think that Donahue, as well as other current historians seeking to show chiropractic's early commitment to scientific research, minimizes the metaphysical dimensions that Palmer had injected into the movement in its early days, he rightly draws attention to the diversity of thought that characterized chiropractic theory from the start.

13. Ibid., p. 35. Emphasis mine.

14. Ibid., p. 491.

15. For a fuller discussion of D. D. Palmer's view of Innate and its roots in both spiritualism and vitalism, see Donahue, "D. D. Palmer and Innate Intelligence"; Joseph Donahue, "D. D. Palmer and the Metaphysical Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *Chiropractic History* 7 (1987): 23–27; and Walter I. Wardwell, "Before the Palmers: An Overview of Chiropractic's Antecedents," *Chiropractic History* 7 (1987): 27–33.

16. D. D. Palmer, *The Chiroractor's Adjustor,* p. 821. Readers interested in the expansionist cosmology and "emergent evolution" themes in early chiropractic might wish to consult A. A. Erz's "The Science of Life and Chiropractic Research," *The Chiropractor* 3 (December 1907): 30–35, and Joy Luban's "Dual Evolution," *The Chiropractor* 5 (March 1909): 67–76.

17. Palmer himself acknowledged, "I saw fit to date the beginning of Chiropractic with the first adjustment (1895), although quite a portion of that which now constitutes Chiropractic I had collected during the previous nine years" (*The Chiropractor's Adjuster,* p. 101).

18. Ibid., p. 52.

19. *The Chiropractor* 5 (1909): Inside front cover. Note: D. D. Palmer severed ties with the Palmer School of Chiropractic medicine and his role as editor of *The Chiropractor* in 1906. This wording is, however, consistent with earlier versions appearing on the inside of the front cover of this journal and more readily lent itself to use in this paragraph.

20. *The Chiropractor* 1 (1905): Inside front cover.

21. Ibid.

22. See Whitney Cross's discussion of ultraism in *The Burned-Over District* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 173, 187, 274–277, 342.

23. D. D. Palmer, *The Chiropractor's Adjuster,* p. 497.

24. Ibid., p. 8.

25. Ibid.

26. A discussion of B. J.'s role in developing chiropractic philosophy can be found in a book by his devoted disiple A. August Dye, entitled *The Evolution of Chiropractic* (Philadelphia; A. August Dye, 1939).

27. B. J. Palmer, quoted in Dye, *The Evolution,* p. 31.

28. Julius Dintenfass, *Chiropractic: A Modern Way to Health* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1975), p. 65.

29. See, for example, Peter Bryner's discussion of this issue entitled "Isn't It Time to Abandon Anachronistic Terminology?" in *Journal of the Australian Chiropractor's Association* 17 (June 1987): 53–59.

30. A. E. Homewood, *The Neurodynamics of the Vertebral Subluxation* (Thornwood, Ont.: Chiropractic Publishing, 1962), p. 174.

31. See Robert Ellwood, *Alternative Altars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

32. B. J. Palmer, *Do Chiropractors Pray?* (Davenport, Iowa: The Palmer School of Chiropractic, 1911), p. 25.

33. Ibid., p. 27.

34. See B. J. Palmer, *The Bigness of the Fellow Within* (Davenport, Iowa: The Palmer School of Chiropractic, 1949), p. 25. See also W. I. Miller's connection of Jesus's healing ministry and chiropractic in his "Chiropractic—Reasons for Its Existence," *The Chiropractor* 4 (August 1908): 11–13.

35. Note, for example, how A. August Dye boasted of having had "the rare fortune of knowing personally the Discoverer" for whom he has a "sincere reverence" (*The Evolution of Chiropractic,* p. 11). Joseph Maynard makes the hagiographic disclaimer that

> B. J. is not a superman. He is not physically "different" from other men. But he is perhaps more practical because he let Innate direct him. . . . He listened to Innate Intelligence. Innate led him to the right action; Innate gave him the right words to say. (*Healing Hands, p. 77*)

36. This literature is surveyed in Gregory Firman and Michael Goldstein, "The Future of Chiropractic: A Psychosocial View," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 293 (September 25, 1975): 639–642. Readers might also wish to consult the responses to this somewhat controversial issue in Volume 294 (February 5, 1976) of the same periodical. Representative studies of chiropractic professional commitment are the Stanford Research Insti-

tute's *Chiropractic in California* (Los Angeles: Haynes Foundation, 1960); Donald Mills, *Study of Chiropractors, Osteopaths and Naturopaths in Canada* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1966); and Marjorie White and James Skipper, "The Chiropractic Physician: A Study of Career Contingencies," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 12 (1971): 300–306.

37. See White and Skipper, "The Chiropractic Physician"; and Walter Wardell, "A Marginal Professional Role: the Chiropractor," in W. Richard Scott and Edmund Volkart, eds., *Medical Care* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 51–67.

38. See Firman and Goldstein, "The Future of Chiropractic," p. 640.

39. Ibid.

40. A helpful review of the tension between "cultism and science" in chiropractic history is Russell W. Gibbons's "Chiropractic in America: The Historical Conflicts of Cultism and Science," *Journal of Popular Culture* 10 (1977): 720–731.

41. Dintenfass, *Chiropractic,* and Thorp McClusky, *Your Health and Chiropractic* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1962).

42. McClusky, *Your Health,* p. 48.

43. *Abundant Living* 49 (1973): Back cover.

44. Riekman, "Chiropractic," p. 174.

45. Gevitz, *The D.O.'s,* p. 2. A good deal of the following narrative of osteopathy draws upon Gevitz's work.

46. Andrew Taylor Still, *Autobiography of Andrew T. Still* (Kirksville, Mo.: Published by the author, 1897), p. 99.

47. Ibid., p. 112.

48. Ibid., pp. 115–116.

49. Ibid., pp. 275 and 226.

50. Ibid., p. 235.

51. Ibid., pp. 289–290.

52. Ibid., p. 108.

53. Ibid., p. 275.

54. Ibid., p. 196.

55. Ibid., p. 221.

56. Ibid., p. 309.

57. Henry S. Bunting, "The Real A. T. Still," cited in Gevitz, *The D.O.'s,* p. 20.

58. "Report of the Committee for the Study of Relations between Osteopathy and Medicine, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 152 (1953): 734–739, cited in Gevitz, *The D.O.'s,* p. 109.

59. See Gevitz's discussions "A Question of Identity," "Osteopathy's Lesion," in *The D.O.'s,* pp. 88–98 and 141–144, respectively.

60. Russell Gibbons, "The Evolution of Chiropractic's Medical and So-

cial Protest in America," in Scott Haldeman, ed., *Modern Developments in the Principles and Practice of Chiropractic* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1979), p. 13. See also James Brantingham's helpful article "Still and Palmer: The Impact of the First Osteopath and the First Chiropractor," in *Journal of Chiropractic History* 6 (1986): 19–22.

61. E. R. Booth, *History of Osteopathy* (Kirkville, Mo.: Privately published, 1924).

62. Andrew Taylor Still, *The Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy* (Kansas City, Mo.: Hudson-Kimberly, Pub., 1902), p. 17.

63. Ibid., p. 13.

64. L.E.W., "Law, Infinite and Finite," *Journal of Osteopathy* (October 1891): 3.

65. See, for example, Lizzie Walker's "Health: What It Is and How Obtained," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (September 1894): 4.

66. *Journal of Osteopathy* (May 1894), p. 1. See also E. E. Tucker's "Osteopathic Campaign," *Journal of Osteopathy* 9 (December 1901): 413–417.

67. "Vis Mediatrix Naturae," *Journal of Osteopathy* 4 (November 1897): 275.

68. *Journal of Osteopathy* 3 (March 1897): 6.

69. In the early years osteopathic physicians were regularly confused with spiritualists, mesmerists, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, and practitioners of Swedish massage. Many took out advertisements in newspapers or printed brochures to distance themselves from their "nonscientific" counterparts at the fringes of medical orthodoxy. Not that these disclaimers always worked. Upon hearing a careful explanation that osteopathy was not identical to Theosophy, a woman from Cleveland, Ohio, is said to have remarked, "Oh, it's all the same thing." See Gevitz, *The D. O.'s*, pp. 35–36.

Chapter 5

1. Mary Belknap, Robert Blau, and Rosaline Grossman, eds., *Case Studies and Methods in Humanistic Medicine* (San Francisco: Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine, 1973, 1975), p. 18.

2. Herbert A. Otto and James W. Knight, eds., *Dimensions in Wholistic Healing: New Frontiers In the Treatment of the Whole Person* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 10.

4. Ibid., p. 13.

5. Kenneth Pelletier, *Holistic Medicine* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1979), p. 93.

6. Ibid., p. 94. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala Press, 1975).

7. Norman Cousins, *Anatomy of an Illness* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), p. 48.

8. See, for example, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: P. F. Collier, Inc., 1961), where James writes:

> The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also; and that although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points, and higher energies filter in. (p. 401)

And in *A Pluralistic Universe* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), James describes the "deeper reaches" of human nature as follows:

> The phenomenon is that of new ranges of life succeeding on our most despairing moments. There are resources in us that naturalism with its literal and legal virtues never recks of, possibilities that take our breath away, of another kind of happiness and power, based on giving up our own will and letting something higher work for us, and these seem to show a world wider than either physics or philistine ethics can imagine. (p. 266)

9. Norman Cousins, *Human Options* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), p. 167.

10. Halbert Dunn, "What High-Level Wellness Means," *Health Values: Achieving High-Level Wellness* 1 (1977): 10.

11. Ibid., p. 11.

12. "Interview with Bernard Siegel," in *ReVISION* 7 (Sering, 1984): 92.

13. Belknap, Blau, and Grossman, *Case Studies,* p. 18.

14. See Robert C. Fuller, *Americans and the Unconscious* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

15. *The Holistic Health Handbook* (Berkeley: And-Or Press, 1978), p. 13. See also *A Visual Encyclopedia of Unconventional Medicine* (New York: Crown Publications, 1978) and Leslie Kaslof, ed., *Wholistic Dimensions in Healing* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1978).

16. Robert S. Ellwood, *Alternative Altars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 168.

17. *The Holistic Health Handbook,* p. 17.

18. Dolores Krieger, *The Therapeutic Touch* (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 11.

19. Ibid., p. 13. Krieger's reference to "channeling" healing energy, or *prana,* clearly indicates that she is speaking of a metaphysical force. What distinguishes gifted healers from other individuals is not their possession of superior amounts of *prana* but their superior "access" to it. Krieger further indi-

cates the extramundane, transpersonal character of *prana* when she states that it is the energy of the medium that makes telepathy possible (p. 70).

20. Ibid., p. 77.

21. Ibid., pp. 77, 80.

22. *Alcoholics Anonymous,* 2d ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous, 1955), p. 569.

23. Ernest Kurtz, *Not-God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (Center City, Mon.: Hazelden Press, 1979).

24. Cited in Kurtz, *Not-God,* pp. 19–20.

25. Ibid., p. 21.

26. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952), p. 63.

27. Ibid., p. 37.

28. Ambrose Worrall and Olga Worrall, *The Miracle Healers* (New York: Signet Books, 1969), p. 141.

29. Ibid.

30. Edwina Cerutli discusses the Worralls' Christian faith in her *Olga Worrall: Mystic with the Healing Hands* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

31. Paul Krafchik, *A Complete Course in Parapsychology,* 10 vols. (Sherman Oaks, Cal.: American Parapsychological Research Foundation, 1971), 9: 3.

32. Irving Oyle, *The Healing Mind* (Millbrae, Cal.: Celestial Arts Pub. Co., 1979), p. 96.

33. Ibid., p. 44.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., p. 83.

36. See Thomas Sugrue, *There Is a River* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1979); and Jess Stearn, *Edgar Cayce—the Sleeping Prophet* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967).

37. A "Fact Sheet" published by the Association for Research and Enlightenment (Virginia Beach, Va.) states that they have 36,000 members worldwide, there are 160,000 persons on their mailing list, their press sells 283,000 books annually, and that more than twelve million books on Edgar Cayce have been sold to date.

38. Stanley Krippner and Alberto Villoldo, *The Realms of Healing* (Millbrae, Cal.: Celestial Arts, 1976), p. 72.

39. Ibid., p. 69.

40. Krippner's and Villoldo's own assessment of psychic healing reveals the great extent to which the movement is motivated by a spiritual and cognitive malaise: "In summary, it is quite possible that research in paranormal healing will eventually result in a paradigm shift and necessitate a revision of our scientific world-view" (p. 48).

41. Lawrence LeShan, *The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 109.

42. Ibid., p. 167.

43. See Stewart Edward White's *The Betty Book* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1937) and *The Unobstructed Universe* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1940); Elizabeth Clare Prophet, *The Great White Brotherhood* (Los Angeles: Summit University Press, 1975); and Jane Roberts, *The Seth Material* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

44. Steven Weinberg, *Ramtha* (Eastbound, Wa.: Sovereignty Press, 1986), p. 2.

45. Shirley MacLaine, *Dancing in the Light* (New York: Bantam Books, 1985), p. 37. See also Shirley MacLaine, *Out on a Limb* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983).

46. MacLaine, *Dancing in the Light,* p. 111.

47. Daya Sarai Chocron, *Healing with Crystals and Gemstones* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1983), p. 3. See also Stephan G. Ouseley, *Power of the Rays* (London: Fowler, 1981); Betty Wood, *Healing Power of Color* (New York: Destiny, 1984); and David Tansley, *Chakras—Rays and Radionics* (London: Saffron Walden, 1984).

48. Chocron, *Healing with Crystals* p. 4.

49. Charles von Reichenbach, *Vital Force: Physico-Physiological Researches on the Dynamics of Magnetism, Electricity, Heat, Light, Crystallization Chemism in their Relations to Vital Force* (New York: Redfield, Clinton-Hall, 1851), p. 81.

50. Chocron, *Healing with Crystals,* p. 34.

51. Korra Deaver, *Rock Crystal: The Magic Stone* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1985), p. 36. Readers might also wish to consult Randall Baer and Vicki Baer, *Windows of Light* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984); Ra Bonewitz, *Cosmic Crystals* (Wellingborough, U.K.: Turnstone Press, 1983); William B. Crow, *Precious Stones: Their Occult Power and Hidden Significance* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1968); Edgar Cayce, *Scientific Properties and Occult Aspects of 22 Gems, Stones and Metals* (Virginia Beach: ARE Press, 1974), Elizabeth Finch, *The Psychic Value of Gemstones* (Cottonwood, Ariz.: Esoteric Publications, 1979); and John Melville, *Crystal Gazing and Clairvoyance* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1974).

52. Deaver, *Rock Crystal,* p. 17.

53. Ibid., p. 40.

54. An intriguing account of an American woman's self-proclaimed status as a shamaness and her psychopompic use of crystals is Lynn Andrews's *Crystal Woman* (New York: Warner Books, 1987).

55. Deaver, *Rock Crystal,* p. 2.

56. Ibid., p. 16.

57. Chocron, *Healing with Crystals,* p. 100.

58. Deaver, *Rock Crystal,* p. 46.

59. Katrina Raphael, *Crystal Healing: The Therapeutic Application of Crystals and Stones* (New York: Aurora Press, 1987), pp. 20–21. This volume complements Ms. Raphael's *Crystal Enlightenment: The Transforming Properties of Crystals and Healing Stones* (New York: Aurora Press, 1985).

60. Deaver, *Rock Crystal,* p. 17.

61. Ibid., p. 7.

62. *Prevention* magazine, for example, proselytizes for obedience to the God-given laws of nutrition and nonmedical healing. As with its companion volumes, *The Prevention Method For Better Health* (Emmaus, Penn.: Rodale Books, 1960) and *The Complete Book of Vitamins* (Emmaus, Penn.: Rodale Books, 1966), *Prevention* urges its readers to discipline their will in accordance with the divinely ordained laws of nature. However, Ronald Deutsch has pointed out that the founder of *Prevention,* Jerome Rodale, was occasionally prone to metaphysical jargon. Deutsch's fascinating *The New Nuts Among the Berries: How Nutrition Nonsense Captured America* (Palo Alto: Bull Publications, 1977) quotes Rodale recommending direct contact with plants because your hands can "drain their health-giving electrical charges into your body" (p. 10).

63. A helpful overview of the contemporary fusion of religion and healing among Afro-American traditions can be found in Albert J. Rabeteau's article, "Afro-American Traditions," in Ronald Numbers and Darrel Amundsen, eds., *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1986). See also Jacquelyne J. Jackson's "Urban Black Americans," in Alan Hardwood, ed., *Ethnicity and Medical Care* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

64. William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

65. Ibid., p. 214.

66. Robert Ellwood, *Alternative Altars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 33. Emphasis mine.

Chapter 6

1. See Larry Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6 (1967): 207–220.

2. Robert Ellwood, *Alternative Altars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 171.

3. *The Holistic Health Handbook* (Berkeley: And/Or Press, 1978), p. 13.

4. Ibid.

5. Dolores Krieger, *Therapeutic Touch* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 108.

6. Ambrose Worrall and Olga Worrall, *The Miracle Healers* (New York: Signet Books, 1968), p. 111. Emphasis mine.

7. Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 3. The masculine gender is Eliade's.

8. Richard Katz's *Boiling Energy: Community Healing Among the Kalahari Kung* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982) is an example of excellent scholarship concerning the role in which belief in a subtle energy (which the Kung call *num*) plays in both healing individuals and creating cultural cohesion.

9. Joy Lubove, "Dual Evolution," *The Chiropractor* 5 (1909): 74.

10. Krieger, *Therapeutic Touch*, p. 108.

11. Janet Quinn, "Therapeutic Touch: One Nurse's Evolution as a Healer," in Marianne Borelli and Patricia Heidt, eds., *Therapeutic Touch: A Book of Readings* (New York: Springer Pub. Co., 1981), p. 62.

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