



# Sites of the Unconscious: Hypnosis and the Emergence of the Psychoanalytic Setting

*Andreas Mayer*

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**Sites of the Unconscious: Hypnosis and the Emergence of the Psychoanalytic Setting** Andreas Mayer  
In the late nineteenth century, scientists, psychiatrists, and medical practitioners began employing a new experimental technique for the study of neuroses: hypnosis. Though the efforts of the famous French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot to transform hypnosis into a laboratory science failed, his Viennese translator and disciple Sigmund Freud took up the challenge and invented psychoanalysis. Previous scholarship has viewed hypnosis and psychoanalysis in sharp opposition or claimed that both were ultimately grounded in the phenomenon of suggestion and thus equally flawed. In this groundbreaking study, Andreas Mayer reexamines the relationship between hypnosis and psychoanalysis, revealing that the emergence of the familiar Freudian psychoanalytic setting cannot be understood without a detailed analysis of the sites, material and social practices, and controversies within the checkered scientific and medical landscape of hypnosis.

*Sites of the Unconscious* analyzes the major controversies between competing French schools of hypnosis that emerged at this time, stressing their different views on the production of viable evidence and their different ways of deploying hypnosis. Mayer then reconstructs in detail the reception of French hypnosis in German-speaking countries, arguing that the distinctive features of Freud's psychoanalytic setting of the couch emerged out of the clinical laboratories and private consulting rooms of the practitioners of hypnosis.

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