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“New age”™ healing in the U.S.

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Abstract

This paper provides a conceptual overview of the “New Age”™ phenomenon and of “New age healing”™ concepts which have gone virtually unaddressed in social science research, health-related or otherwise. First, drawing upon diverse sources, the authors attempt to define “New age”™, after which they discuss those medical, spiritual, and sociocultural developments which help account for the rise of new age healing in the U.S. Next, a comprehensive review of over a dozen schemata of healing, healers, and medical systems fails to provide a satisfactory classification of new age healing. Finally, by analyzing data derived from primary and secondary source materials on 81 healing systems or techniques identifying themselves with the new age, a typology of new age healing itself is inductively generated. Three general modes are found: mental or physical self-betterment, esoteric teachings, and contemplative practice. These types of new age healing place primary emphasis, respectively, on body, mind and soul.

Keywords

new age; holistic health; religion and medicine; parapsychology

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