Alternative therapy, Dianetics, and Scientology

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ABSTRACT

Since orthodox medicine sets the standard for what is acceptable within the medical arena, some alternative medicines integrate into medicine while others remain separate or face too much scrutiny to continue practicing. In the 1970s, Morely and Wallis (1976) recognized Dianetics and Scientology as a “marginal medicine,” and from the 1960s to 1970s several government organizations worldwide investigated the group. Consequently, Scientology retreated from the medical arena, claiming that it was a religion and establishing boundaries to insulate itself from regulation. Despite Scientology’s attempted retreat, Dianetics and Scientology doctrines and practices continue to reflect concerns and actions that belong to what Tovey and Adams (2001) identify as the social world of alternative medicine. In this article, I outline Scientology’s position within the medical arena, how that position has transformed over time, and Scientology’s isolation from the dominant social world within that arena (specifically scientific medicine).

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Dianetics (from Greek dia, meaning "through", and nous, meaning "mind") is a set of ideas and practices regarding the metaphysical relationship between the mind and body created by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard. Dianetics is practiced by followers of Scientology, the Nation of Islam (as of 2010), and independent Dianeticist groups. Dianetics divides the mind into three parts: the conscious "analytical mind", the subconscious "reactive mind", and the somatic mind. The goal of Dianetics is to