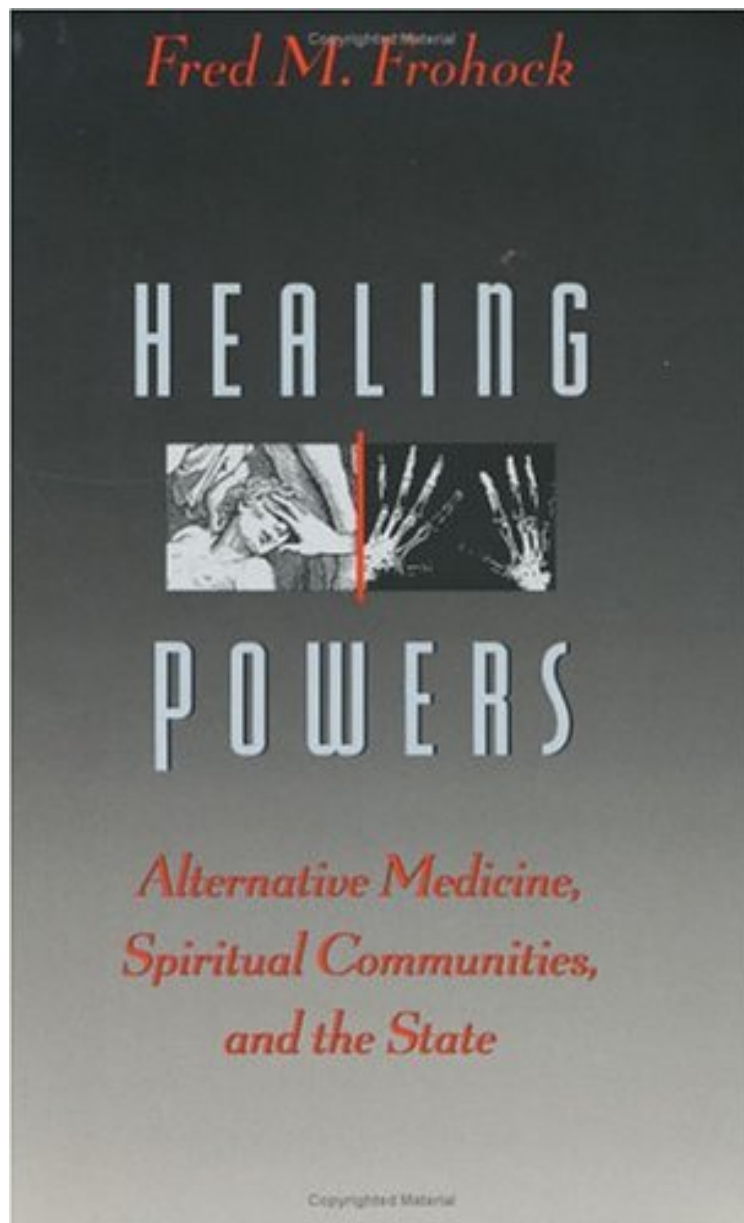


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## Healing Powers: Alternative Medicine, Spiritual Communities, and the State (Morality and Society Series)

*Fred M. Frohock*

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**Fred M. Frohock : Healing Powers: Alternative Medicine, Spiritual Communities, and the State (Morality and Society Series)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised

## Healing Powers: Alternative Medicine, Spiritual Communities, and the State (Morality and Society Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AN INTERESTING LOOK AT SOME SOCIAL/POLITICAL ISSUES ABOUT ALTERNATIVE HEALING By Steven H Propp At the time this book was published in 1992, Fred Frohock was Professor of Political Science at Syracuse University. He has also written books such as *Beyond: On Life After Death*, *Public Reason: Mediated Authority in the Liberal State*, *Lives of the Psychics: The Shared Worlds of Science and Mysticism*, *Special Care: Medical Decisions at the Beginning of Life*, etc. He wrote in the Preface, "'Healing Powers' is a book about a single issue: whether unorthodox beliefs on health and healing ought to be shielded from state regulation when (a) life is at stake and (b) the competence of individuals to select therapies cannot be demonstrated successfully... The goals of this study are easy to state... the book is a study of liberal dilemmas that occur when incompatible ontologies enter public space. But this immediately leads to a second goal: understanding the beliefs that produce the dilemmas... A third goal ... is to suggest practical solutions to the legal and political dilemmas addressed in the work." Here are some additional quotations from the book: "George Washington, afflicted with a severe sore throat on what turned out to be the last day of his life, was bled three times during the single day ... The president died that evening between ten and eleven o'clock. His medical care was at the highest level of quality for the historical period." (Pg. 57) "Christian Science practitioners are not licensed. They are interviewed and officially approved by the church... Christian Science accepts the idea that practitioners should charge for their services approximately what a physician charges." (Pg. 150-151) "The aim of therapeutic touch is to restore the subject's energy field by rebalancing it, removing congestion, repairing breaks and rough edges by smoothing out the troubled areas, replenishing energy levels, and in general stroking and tuning the field until it is a healthy and integrated one. The illness is said to be helped, and sometimes overcome entirely, by bringing the individual to a holistic state of equilibrium." (Pg. 176-177)

The personal testimony of individuals engaged in healing practices and the opposing voices of orthodox and alternative medicines are the center of *Healing Powers*. Focusing on medical norms and practices and on competing philosophies of the mind, the body, reality, and rationality across radically different "belief systems", Fred Frohock clarifies the social and legal dilemmas represented by "scientific medicine" and "alternative care." "Frohock goes beyond the often irreconcilable differences between scientific biomedicine and alternative care by clarifying the social and legal dilemmas they present. . . . A noteworthy contribution forcing us to rethink what medical care is all about." — Jeffrey Michael Clare, *Journal of the American Medical Association* "The book does more and better than simply provide a social-scientific proposal. It also gives not only a hearing but a voice to those who follow alternative therapies. . . . Frohock's accounts of their stories — along with the stories of the medical professionals — are eloquent and fascinating." — Allen Verhey, *Medical Humanities Review* "Contains a storehouse of valuable information about the historical, philosophical, and psychological bases of alternative approaches to healing." — Marshall B. Kapp, *New England Journal of Medicine* "Frohock introduces us to the scientific naturopaths and to physicians who believe in the mind's power to heal, to charismatics who believe in but cannot explain their powers, to those who test God and those who merely accept. He writes so well that I felt I had met these people." — Arthur W. Frank, *Christian Century*

From Kirkus SA sophisticated and sympathetic look at nonconventional healing methods and their place in a pluralistic democracy. Frohock (Political Science/Syracuse Univ.; *Special Care*, 1986) poses two tough questions: What do we make of claims that alternative realities exist and that contact with them can lead to miraculous cures? And should alternative healing be free from state regulation in a liberal democracy? Neither gets a clear answer, but there's much pleasure along the way as Frohock explores the social and spiritual issues involved. His approach is eccentric: "narratives" constructed from interviews with patients and healers (names are changed), interspersed with historical-political analysis and with--this must be a first in a scholarly book--the "wholly imaginative," coldly lucid voice of Luke, a child battling cancer (he's been invented, we are told, "to provide access to interior or subjective levels of experience that linear texts cannot"). The healers whose stories we hear include Pentecostal ministers, Catholic priests, Christian Scientists, homeopaths, an Orthodox Jew who straddles Western and alternative medicines; the patients include drug-addicted doctors, dying children, car-crash victims. More often than not, the cure seems nothing less than a full-fledged miracle. Frohock balances these narratives with clearheaded discussions of some age-old puzzlers: What is health (inner balance, spiritual integrity, freedom from disease)? What is mental competence? How should church and state interact? Usually, Frohock presents the options and lets the reader decide; scholarly distancing, however, cannot hide his sympathy for alternative medicine--or at least its right to be taken seriously. The inaugural volume in the Univ. of Chicago's "Morality and Society" series, which deals with "moral issues from a social science perspective"--and, on every level, a sterling debut. (Two line drawings.) -- Copyright copy; 1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From the Back Cover

If health is an equilibrium of the body, a balance at which the organism

flourishes to its own rhythm, then who is to say that my healer did not have the power to restore this balance?'