



# Feminism's New Age: Gender, Appropriation, and the Afterlife of Essentialism

By Karlyn Crowley



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## Feminism's New Age: Gender, Appropriation, and the Afterlife of Essentialism By Karlyn Crowley

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*Explores the relationship between feminism and New Age culture.*

Crystals, Reiki, Tarot, goddess worship—why do these New Age tokens and practices capture the imagination of so many women? How has New Age culture become even more appealing than feminism? And are the two mutually exclusive? By examining New Age practices from macrobiotics to goddess worship to Native rituals, *Feminism's New Age* seeks to answer these questions by examining white women's participation in this hugely popular spiritual movement. While most feminist approaches to the New Age phenomenon have simply dismissed its adherents for their politically problematic racial appropriation practices, Karlyn Crowley looks honestly at the political shortcomings of New Age beliefs and practices while simultaneously reckoning with the affective, political, and cultural motivations which have prompted New Age women's individual and collective spiritualities. New Age spirituality is in fact the dynamic outgrowth of a long-standing tradition of women's social and political power expressed through religious writings, art, and public discourse, and is key to understanding contemporary women's history and religion's role in modern American culture alike. Crowley offers a new and provocative assessment of the significance of the New Age movement, seen through a feminist and critical race studies lens.

“This is an important, provocative, and timely book. As a feminist theorist particularly concerned about continued white hegemony, I found myself often simultaneously annoyed and fascinated by this book. I think that my own response to it is a measure of both the significance of the topic and the author's success at her chosen project.” — Agnes B. Curry, coeditor of *Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy*



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## **Feminism's New Age: Gender, Appropriation, and the Afterlife of Essentialism** By Karlyn Crowley **Bibliography**

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#### Review

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#### About the Author

**Karlyn Crowley** is Director of Women's and Gender Studies and Associate Professor of English at St. Norbert College.

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