



A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion

Catherine L. Albanese

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This path-breaking book tells the story of American metaphysical religion more fully than it has ever been told before, along the way significantly revising the panorama of American religious history. Catherine L. Albanese follows metaphysical traditions from Renaissance Europe to England and then America, where they have flourished from colonial days to the twenty-first century, blending often with African, Native American, and other cultural elements.

The book follows evolving versions of metaphysical religion, including Freemasonry, early Mormonism, Universalism, and Transcendentalism—and such further incarnations as Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought, Christian Science, and reinvented versions of Asian ideas and practices. Continuing into the twentieth century and after, the book shows how the metaphysical mix has broadened to encompass UFO activity, channeling, and chakras in the New Age movement—and a much broader new spirituality in the present. In its own way, Albanese argues, American metaphysical religion has been as vigorous, persuasive, and influential as the evangelical tradition that is more often the focus of religious scholars' attention. She makes the case that because of its combinative nature—its ability to incorporate differing beliefs and practices—metaphysical religion offers key insights into the history of all American religions.

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