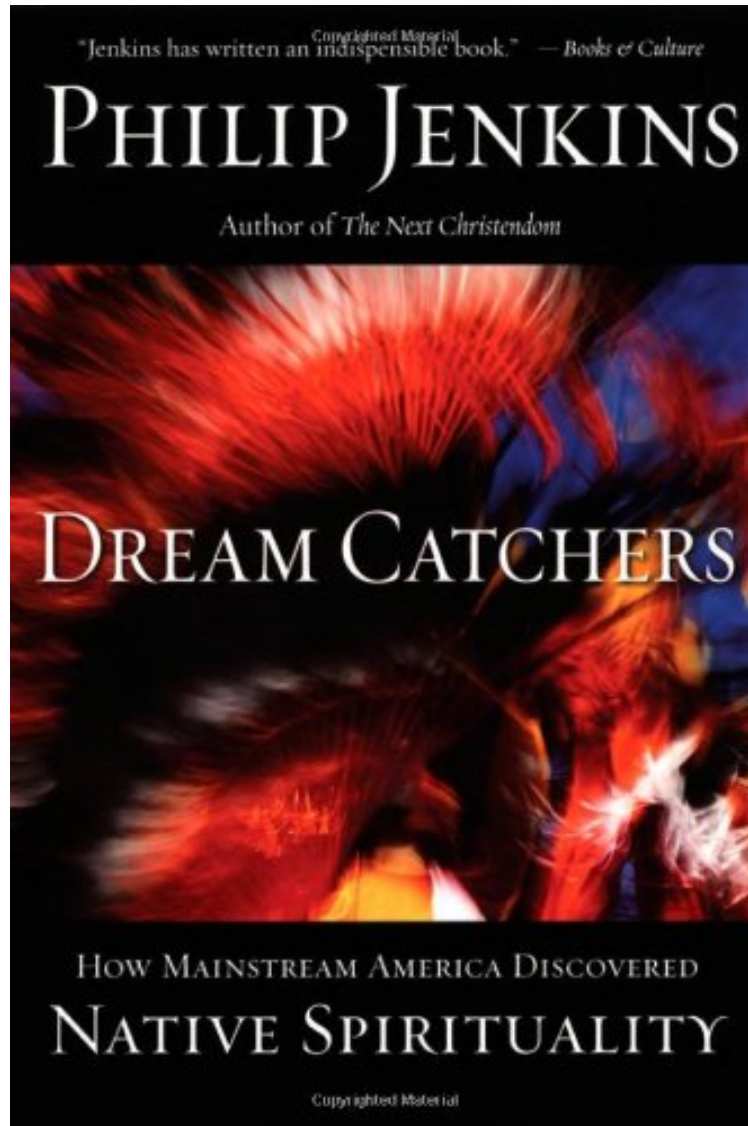


(Download ebook) Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality

Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality

Philip Jenkins

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Philip Jenkins : Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Clarence Snydergood read0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. goodBy Helen Hamiltongood seller it was exactly as described.3 of 19 people found the

following review helpful. A DisappointmentBy Gregory SimkinsI was very disappointed with this book. I expected better as I had greatly enjoyed Jenkins' book *The Lost History of Christianity*. This previous work documented the depressing story of the extermination of Eastern Christianity, primarily by Moslems, but it presented a history of which I was mostly unaware and found quite interesting. At least this earlier book was sympathetic to Christianity.*Dreamcatchers* covers a more recent history and one closer to home. It divides American history into two periods: Prior to 1890 when white settlers were bent on eradicating the Native American population along with their pagan religious practices and after 1890 when whites felt sufficiently secure to study, preserve and appreciate the religious practices of Native Americans. Jenkins creates a caricature of the former period, pretty much ignoring the friendships established by the Quakers, Moravians and others with the native population and their sensitive documentation of Indian life and sincere attempts to accommodate their culture into the more highly structured European Christian culture. In the latter period, Jenkins goes beyond the valuable efforts to document and preserve the memory of the Native American culture and fawns over the high value of these practices. Jenkins seems to repeat these two themes repeatedly like a mantra until after 78 pages, I wearied of continuing and set the book down. I gave up hope of finding something helpful to me.I give the book 2 stars instead of 1 because it does present a point of view that I had not previously considered, yet I cannot give it 3 stars because he fails to convince me of the validity of this point of view.

In books such as *Mystics and Messiahs*, *Hidden Gospels*, and *The Next Christendom*, Philip Jenkins has established himself as a leading commentator on religion and society. Now, in *Dream Catchers*, Jenkins offers a brilliant account of the changing mainstream attitudes towards Native American spirituality, once seen as degraded spectacle, now hailed as New Age salvation. While early Americans had nothing but contempt for Indian religions, deploring them as loathsome devil worship and snake dancing, white Americans today respect and admire Native spirituality. In this book, Jenkins charts this remarkable change, highlighting the complex history of white American attitudes towards Native religions from colonial times to the present. Jenkins ranges widely, considering everything from the 19th-century American obsession with "Hebrew Indians" and Lost Tribes, to the early 20th-century cult of the Maya as bearers of the wisdom of ancient Atlantis, to films like *Pocahontas* and *Dances With Wolves*. He looks at the popularity of the Carlos Castaneda books, the writings of Lynn Andrews, and the influential works of Frank Waters, and he explores the New Age paraphernalia found in places like Sedona, Arizona, including dream-catchers, crystals, medicine bags, and Native-themed Tarot cards. Jenkins examines the controversial New Age appropriation of Native sacred places; notes that many "white Indians" see mainstream society as religiously empty; and asks why a government founded on religious freedom tried to eradicate native religions in the last century--and what this says about how we define religion. An engrossing account of our changing attitudes towards Native spirituality, *Dream Catchers* offers a fascinating introduction to one of the more interesting aspects of contemporary American religion.

From Publishers WeeklyJenkins (*The Next Christendom*; *Mystics and Messiahs*), a professor of history and religious studies at Penn State, here trains his keen eye on the appropriation of Native American spirituality by those in the white mainstream. What do liberal white Protestants gain from sitting in sweat lodges, visiting shamans and taking pilgrimages to New Age "hot spots" like Sedona, Ariz.? Plenty, says Jenkins, who posits that interest in Native spirituality peaks when white Americans are dissatisfied with one or more elements of mainstream society. Refreshingly, he doesn't just trace this disenchantment to the 1960s that easy target of a decade isn't even addressed until 150 pages into the book but offers a sweeping overview of American religious history to prove his point. In particular, Jenkins sees the early 20th century as a crucial period of transformation; whereas Victorians were likely to dismiss Native American belief and ritual as godless superstition, the interwar years saw more Americans turning toward indigenous practices and products, with the rise of "native tourism" and the proliferation of crafts (such as the jewelry worn by Grace Coolidge at her husband's 1925 presidential inauguration). Although Jenkins is critical of whites' appropriations of Native American culture and belief, and particularly of their tendency to repackage New Age ideas with a veneer of indigenous authority, his tone is never unfair; he does a masterful job of setting such uses-cum-exploitations in historical context. Anyone wishing to understand the ongoing romanticization of Native American spirituality should read this book. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From Booklist*Starred * The prolific Jenkins follows the attention-grabbing, cogent prognostication of *The Next Christendom* (2001) and the careful though controversial analysis of *The New Anti-Catholicism* [BKL Ap 1 03] with a third magnetically absorbing book, a historical overview of white American attitudes toward Native American religions. Early white conceptions of Native religion generally ranged from devil worship to mere paganism, from which Indians had to be won to Christ, but by the time white military victory was nearly complete, new respect for Native religion had arisen among white intellectuals, especially those also attracted to Buddhism and Hinduism. The sacred dances and ancient structures of the tribes of the Southwest inspired the first great wave of white enthusiasm for native religion, to be largely supplanted by the practices of Plains Indians during later, twentieth-century surges of interest. Since the 1980s, those Indians newly empowered by legal changes in status and by wealth from the

development of Indian-owned gambling businesses have reacted against white entrepreneurial expropriation of Indian religions. Jenkins fills in the major details of the last two centuries of deep white interest in Native religion with his customary thoroughness, and he scrupulously avoids judgments about the validity as well as the theological truth of the many practices and cults he sketches. He relays fascinating history with scholarly care and in prose as clear as it is precise. Ray Olson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Magnetically absorbing.... Jenkins fills in the major details of the last two centuries of deep white interest in Native religion with his customary thoroughness, and he scrupulously avoids judgments about the validity as well as the theological truth of the many practices and cults he sketches. He relays fascinating history with scholarly care and in prose as clear as it is precise."--Booklist (starred review)"With his characteristic eye for nuance and his uncanny ability to master an enormous range of evidence and present it in a clear, compelling, provocative form, Jenkins has written an indispensable book."--Books Culture"Jenkins has acquainted himself with the relevant historical materials and also acquainted himself with more New Age manuals, mantras and sales pitches than any human being should have to endure. This allows him to trace a striking shift in white attitudes, an exchange of one kind of willful stupidity for another."--New York Times Book "Anyone wishing to understand the ongoing romanticization of Native American spirituality should read this book.... Although Jenkins is critical of whites' appropriations of Native American culture and belief, and particularly of their tendency to repackage New Age ideas with a veneer of indigenous authority, his tone is never unfair; he does a masterful job of setting such uses-cum-exploitations in historical context."--Publishers Weekly