

= New Age =

The New Age is a term applied to a range of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices that developed in Western nations during the 1970s . Precise scholarly definitions of the movement differ in their emphasis , largely as a result of its highly eclectic structure . Although analytically often considered to be religious , those involved in it typically prefer the designation of " spiritual " and rarely use the term " New Age " themselves . Many scholars of the subject refer to it as the New Age movement , although others contest this term , believing that it gives a false sense of homogeneity to the phenomenon .

As a form of Western esotericism , the New Age movement drew heavily upon a number of older esoteric traditions , in particular those that emerged from the occultist current that developed in the eighteenth century . Such prominent occult influences include the work of Emanuel Swedenborg and Franz Mesmer , as well as the ideas of Spiritualism , New Thought , and the Theosophical Society . A number of mid @-@ twentieth century influences , such as the UFO religions of the 1950s , the Counterculture of the 1960s , and the Human Potential Movement , also exerted a strong influence on the early development of the New Age movement . Although the exact origins of the movement remain contested , it is agreed that it developed in the 1970s , at which time it was centred largely in the United Kingdom . It expanded and grew largely in the 1980s and 1990s , in particular within the United States .

Despite its highly eclectic nature , a number of beliefs commonly found within the New Age movement have been identified . Theologically , the movement typically adopts a belief in a holistic form of divinity which imbues all of the universe , including human beings themselves . There is thus a strong emphasis on the spiritual authority of the self . This is accompanied by a common belief in a wide variety of semi @-@ divine non @-@ human entities , such as angels and masters , with whom humans can communicate , particularly through the form of channeling . Typically viewing human history as being divided into a series of distinct ages , a common New Age belief is that whereas once humanity lived in an age of great technological advancement and spiritual wisdom , it has entered a period of spiritual degeneracy , which will be remedied through the establishment of a coming Age of Aquarius , from which the movement gets its name . There is also a strong focus on healing , particularly using forms of alternative medicine , and an emphasis on a " New Age science " which seeks to unite science and spirituality .

Those involved in the New Age movement have been primarily from middle and upper @-@ middle @-@ class backgrounds . The degree to which New Agers are involved in the movement varied considerably , from those who adopted a number of New Age ideas and practices to those who fully embraced and dedicated their lives to it . The movement has generated criticism from established Christian organisations as well as contemporary Pagan and indigenous communities . From the 1990s onward , the movement became the subject of research by academic scholars of religious studies .

= = Definition = =

The New Age phenomenon has proved difficult to define , with much scholarly disagreement as to how this can be done . Religious studies scholar Paul Heelas characterised the New Age movement as " an eclectic hotch @-@ potch of beliefs , practices , and ways of life " which can be identified as a singular phenomenon through their use of " the same (or very similar) lingua franca to do with the human (and planetary) condition and how it can be transformed " . Similarly , historian of religion Olav Hammer termed it " a common denominator for a variety of quite divergent contemporary popular practices and beliefs " which have emerged since the late 1970s and which are " largely united by historical links , a shared discourse and an air de famille " . Sociologist of religion Michael York described the New Age movement as " an umbrella term that includes a great variety of groups and identities " but which are united by their " expectation of a major and universal change being primarily founded on the individual and collective development of human potential " .

The religious studies scholar Wouter Hanegraaff adopted a different approach by asserting that "

New Age " was " a label attached indiscriminately to whatever seems to fit it " and that as a result it " means very different things to different people " . He thus argued against the idea that the New Age movement could be considered " a unified ideology or Weltanschauung " , although believed that it could be considered a " more or less unified " movement " " . Conversely , while echoing the view that the " New Age " phenomenon was not " even a homogenous entity at all " , the religious studies scholar Steven J. Sutcliffe rejected the idea of a " New Age movement " , deeming it to be " a false etic category " .

Many of those groups and individuals who could analytically be categorised as part of the New Age movement reject the term " New Age " when in reference to themselves . Rather than term themselves " New Agers " , those involved in this milieu commonly describe themselves as spiritual " seekers " . In 2003 , Sutcliffe observed that the use of the term was " optional , episodic and declining overall " , adding that among the very few individuals who did use it , they usually did so with qualification , for instance by placing it in inverted commas . Hence , although the religious studies scholar James R. Lewis acknowledged that " New Age " was a problematic term , he asserted that " there exists no comparable term which covers all aspects of the movement " and that thus it remained a useful etic category for scholars to use .

Those involved in the movement rarely consider it to be " religion " ? negatively associating the latter solely with organized religion ? and instead describe their practices as " spirituality " . Religious studies scholars however have repeatedly referred to the movement as a " religion " . The New Age movement is a form of Western esotericism . Hanegraaff considered the New Age to be a form of " popular culture criticism " , in that it represented a reaction against the dominant Western values of Judeo @-@ Christian religion and rationalism , adding that " New Age religion formulates such criticism not at random , but falls back on " the ideas of earlier Western esoteric groups .

York described the New Age movement as a new religious movement (NRM) . Conversely , both Heelas and Sutcliffe rejected this categorisation ; he believed that while elements of the New Age movement represented NRMs , this was not applicable to every New Age group . Hammer identified much of the New Age movement as corresponding to the concept of " folk religions " in that it seeks to deal with existential questions regarding subjects like death and disease in " an unsystematic fashion , often through a process of bricolage from already available narratives and rituals " . York also heuristically divides the New Age movement into three broad trends . The first , the " social camp " , represents groups which primarily seek to bring about social change , while the second , " occult camp " , instead focus on contact with spirit entities and channeling . York 's third group , the " spiritual camp " , represents a middle ground between these two camps , and which focuses largely on individual development .

= = = Terminology of the " New Age " = = =

The term " new age " , along with related terms like " new era " and " new world " , long predate the emergence of the New Age movement , and have widely been used to assert that a better way of life for humanity is dawning . It has , for instance , widely been used in political contexts ; the Great Seal of the United States , designed in 1782 , proclaims a " new order of ages " , while in the 1980s the Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed that " all mankind is entering a new age " . The term has also appeared within Western esoteric schools of thought , having a scattered use from the mid @-@ nineteenth century onward . In 1864 the American Swedenborgian Warren Felt Evans published *The New Age and its Message* , while in 1907 Alfred Orage and Holbrook Jackson began editing a weekly journal of Christian liberalism and socialism titled *The New Age* . The concept of a coming " new age " that would be inaugurated by the return to Earth of Jesus Christ was a theme in the poetry of Wellesley Tudor Pole and Johanna Brandt , and then also appeared in the work of the American Theosophist Alice Bailey , who used the term prominently in such titles as *Discipleship in the New Age* (1944) and *Education in the New Age* (1954) .

Between the 1930s and 1960s a small number of groups and individuals became preoccupied with the concept of a coming " New Age " and prominently used the term accordingly . The term had thus become a recurring motif in the esoteric spirituality milieu . Sutcliffe therefore expressed the view

that while the term " New Age " had originally been an " apocalyptic emblem " , it would only be later that it became " a tag or codeword for a ' spiritual ' idiom " .

= = History = =

= = = Antecedents = = =

According to scholar Nevill Drury , the New Age has a " tangible history " , although Hanegraaff expressed the view that most New Agers were " surprisingly ignorant about the actual historical roots of their beliefs " . As a form of Western esotericism , the New Age has antecedents that stretch back to southern Europe in Late Antiquity . Following the Age of Enlightenment in 18th century Europe , new esoteric ideas developed in response to the development of scientific rationality . This new esoteric trend is termed occultism by scholars , and it was this occultism which would be a key factor in the development of the worldview from which the New Age emerged .

One of the earliest influences on the New Age was the Swedish 18th century Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg , who professed the ability to communicate with angels , demons , and spirits . Swedenborg 's attempt to unite science and religion and his prediction of a coming era in particular have been cited as ways in which he prefigured the New Age movement . Another early influence was the late 17th and early 18th century German physician and hypnotist Franz Mesmer , who claimed the existence of a force known as " animal magnetism " running through the human body . The establishment of Spiritualism , an occult religion influenced by both Swedenborgianism and Mesmerism , in the U.S. during the 1840s has also been identified as a precursor to the New Age movement , in particular through its rejection of established Christianity , its claims to representing a scientific approach to religion , and its emphasis on channeling spirit entities .

A further major influence on the New Age was the Theosophical Society , an occult group co @-@ founded by the Russian Helena Blavatsky in the late 19th century . In her books *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) , Blavatsky claimed that her Society was conveying the essence of all world religions , and it thus emphasized a focus on comparative religion . Another was New Thought , which developed in late nineteenth century New England as a Christian @-@ oriented healing movement before spreading throughout the United States . Drury also identified as an important influence upon the New Age movement the Indian Swami Vivekananda , an adherent of the philosophy of Vedanta who first brought Hinduism to the West in the late 19th century .

Popularisation behind these ideas has roots in the work of early 20th century writers such as D. H. Lawrence and William Butler Yeats . In the early- to mid @-@ 1900s , American mystic , theologian , and founder of the Association for Research and Enlightenment Edgar Cayce was a seminal influence on what later would be termed the New Age movement ; he was known in particular for the practice some refer to as channeling . Another prominent influence was the psychologist Carl Jung , who was a proponent of the concept of the Age of Aquarius .

Hanegraaff believed that the New Age movement 's direct antecedents could be found in the UFO religions of the 1950s , which he termed a " proto @-@ New Age movement " . Many of these new religious movements had strong apocalyptic beliefs regarding a coming new age , which they typically asserted would be brought about by contact with extraterrestrials . Examples of such groups included the Aetherius Society , founded in the UK in 1955 , and the Heralds of the New Age , established in New Zealand in 1956 .

From a historical perspective , the New Age phenomenon is rooted in the counterculture of the 1960s . Although not common throughout the counterculture , usage of the terms " New Age " and " Age of Aquarius " ? used in reference to a coming era ? were found within it , for instance appearing on adverts for the Woodstock festival of 1969 , and in the lyrics of " Aquarius " , the opening song of the 1967 musical *Hair : The American Tribal Love @-@ Rock Musical* . This decade also witnessed the emergence of a variety of new religious movements and newly established religions in the United States , creating a spiritual milieu from which the New Age drew upon ; these included the San Francisco Zen Center , Transcendental Meditation , Soka Gakkai , the Inner Peace Movement ,

the Church of All Worlds , and the Church of Satan . Although there had been an established interest in Asian religious ideas in the U.S. from at least the eighteenth @-@ century , many of these new developments were variants of Hinduism , Buddhism , and Sufism which had been imported to the West from Asia following the U.S. government 's decision to rescind the Asian Exclusion Act in 1965 . In 1962 the Esalen Institute was established in Big Sur , California . It was from Esalen and other similar personal growth centers which had developed links to humanistic psychology that the human potential movement emerged , which would also come to exert a strong influence on the New Age movement .

In Britain , a number of small religious groups that came to be identified as the " light " movement had begun declaring the existence of a coming new age , influenced strongly by the Theosophical ideas of Blavatsky and Bailey . The most prominent of these groups was the Findhorn Foundation which founded the Findhorn Ecovillage in the Scottish area of Findhorn , Moray in 1962 . Although its founders were from an older generation , Findhorn attracted increasing numbers of countercultural baby boomers during the 1960s , to the extent that its population had grown sixfold to circa 120 residents by 1972 . In October 1965 , the founder of Findhorn , Peter Caddy , attended a meeting of various prominent figures within Britain 's esoteric milieu ; titled " The Significance of the Group in the New Age " , it was held at Attingham Park over the course of a weekend .

All of these groups would create the backdrop from which the New Age movement emerged ; as James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton point out , the New Age phenomenon represents " a synthesis of many different preexisting movements and strands of thought " . Nevertheless , York asserted that while the New Age bore many similarities with both earlier forms of Western esotericism and Asian religion , it remained " distinct from its predecessors in its own self @-@ consciousness as a new way of thinking " .

= = = Emergence and development : c . 1970 ? 2000 = = =

Sutcliffe argued that between circa 1967 and 1974 , the " emblem " of the " New Age " came to be passed from the " subcultural pioneers " of alternative spirituality groups such as that at Findhorn to the wider array of " countercultural baby boomers " , and that as that happened , there was a " fundamental transformation in meaning " of the term " New Age " ; whereas it had once referred specifically to a coming era , at this point it came to be used in a wider sense to refer to a variety of humanistic activities and practices . The counterculture of the 1960s had rapidly declined by the start of the 1970s , in large part due to the collapse of the commune movement , but it would be many former members of the counter @-@ culture and hippy subculture who subsequently became early adherents of the New Age movement . The exact origins of the New Age movement remain an issue of debate ; Melton asserted that it emerged in the early 1970s , whereas Hanegraaff instead traced its emergence to the latter 1970s , adding that it then entered its full development in the 1980s . This early form of the movement was based largely in Britain and exhibited a strong influence from Theosophy and Anthroposophy . Hanegraaff termed this early core of the movement the New Age *sensu stricto* , or " New Age in the strict sense " .

In the latter part of the 1970s , the New Age movement expanded to cover a wide variety of alternative spiritual and religious beliefs and practices , not all of which explicitly held to the belief in the Age of Aquarius , but which were nevertheless widely recognised as being broadly similar in their search for " alternatives " to mainstream society . In doing so , the " New Age " became a banner under which to bring together the wider " cultic milieu " of American society . Hanegraaff terms this development the New Age *sensu lato* , or " New Age in the wider sense " . Stores that came to be known as " New Age shops " opened up , selling related books , magazines , jewellery , and crystals , and they were typified by the playing of New Age music and the smell of incense. This probably influenced several thousand small metaphysical book- and gift @-@ stores that increasingly defined themselves as " New Age bookstores " , while New Age titles came to be increasingly available from mainstream bookstores and then websites like Amazon.com.

Not everyone who came to be associated with the New Age phenomenon openly embraced the term " New Age " , although it was popularised in books like David Spangler 's 1977 work *Revelation*

: The Birth of a New Age and Mark Satin 's 1979 book New Age Politics : Healing Self and Society . Other terms that were employed synonymously with " New Age " in this milieu included " Green " , " Holistic " , " Alternative " , and " Spiritual " .

1971 witnessed the foundation of est by Werner H. Erhard , a transformational training course which became a prominent part of the early movement . Melton suggested that the 1970s witnessed the growth of a relationship between the New Age movement and the older New Thought movement , as evidenced by the widespread use of Helen Schucman 's A Course in Miracles (1975) , New Age music , and crystal healing in New Thought churches . Some figures in the New Thought movement were sceptical , challenging the compatibility of New Age and New Thought perspectives . During these decades , Findhorn had become a site of pilgrimage for many New Agers , and greatly expanded in size as people joined the community , with workshops and conferences being held there that brought together New Age thinkers from across the world .

Several key events occurred , which raised public awareness of the New Age subculture : publication of Linda Goodman 's best @-@ selling astrology books Sun Signs (1968) and Love Signs (1978) ; the release of Shirley MacLaine 's book Out on a Limb (1983) , later adapted into a television mini @-@ series with the same name (1987) ; and the " Harmonic Convergence " planetary alignment on August 16 and 17 , 1987 , organized by José Argüelles in Sedona , Arizona . The Convergence attracted more people to the movement than any other single event . Heelas suggested that the movement was influenced by the " enterprise culture " encouraged by the U.S. and U.K. governments during the 1980s onward , with its emphasis on initiative and self @-@ reliance resonating with any New Age ideas .

The claims of channelers Jane Roberts (Seth Material) , Helen Schucman (A Course in Miracles) , J. Z. Knight (Ramtha) , Neale Donald Walsch (Conversations with God) (note that Walsch denies being a " channeler " and his books make it obvious that he is not one , though the text emerged through a dialogue with a deeper part of himself in a process comparable to automatic writing) contributed to the movement 's growth . The first significant exponent of the New Age movement in the U.S. has been cited as Ram Dass . Core works in the propagating New Age ideas included Jane Roberts 's Seth series , published from 1972 onward , Helen Schucman 's 1975 publication A Course in Miracles , and James Redfield 's 1993 work The Celestine Prophecy . A variety of these books were best sellers , with the Seth book series for instance selling over a million copies . Supplementing these books were videos , audiotapes , compact discs and websites . The development of the internet in particular further popularized New Age ideas and made them more widely accessible .

New Age ideas influenced the development of rave culture in the late 1980s and 1990s . In Britain during the 1980s , the term " New Age Travellers " came into use , while the term " New Age " came to be used increasingly widely by the popular media in the 1990s .

= = Beliefs and practices = =

Although there is great diversity among the beliefs and practices found within the New Age movement , according to York it is united by a shared " vision of radical mystical transformation on both the personal and collective levels " . The movement aims to create " a spirituality without borders or confining dogmas " that is inclusive and pluralistic .

The eclecticism of the New Age has resulted in the common jibe that it represents " supermarket spirituality " .

= = = Theology , cosmogony , and cosmology = = =

Hanegraaff noted that the existence of divinity was " mostly an integral and necessary part of New Age ideas " . However , he added that within the movement , such ideas regarding the nature of divinity " reflect a marked aversion to rigid , doctrinal definitions " , with New Age theology exhibiting an inclusivist and universalistic approach which accepts all personal perspectives on the divine as being equally valid . This intentional vagueness as to the nature of divinity also reflects the New Age

idea that divinity cannot be comprehended by the human mind or language . There are nevertheless a number of traits that are repeatedly associated with divinity in New Age literature , the first of which is the idea that it is holistic , thus frequently being described with such terms as an " Ocean of Oneness " , " Infinite Spirit " , " Primal Stream " , " One Essence " , and " Universal Principle " . A second common trait is the characterisation of divinity as " Mind " , " Consciousness " , and " Intelligence " , while a third is the description of divinity as a form of " energy " . A fourth trait is the characterisation of divinity as a " life force " , the essence of which is creativity , while a fifth is the concept that divinity consists of love .

Most New Age groups subscribe to the view that there is an Ultimate Source from which all things originate , which is usually conflated with the divine . Various creation myths have been articulated in New Age publications outlining how this Ultimate Source came to create the universe and everything in it . In contrast , some other New Agers have emphasised the idea of a universal inter @-@ relatedness that is not always emanating from a single source . The New Age worldview emphasises holism and the idea that everything in existence is intricately connected as part of a single whole , in doing so rejecting both the dualism of Judeo @-@ Christian thought and the reductionism of Cartesian science . A number of New Agers have linked this holistic interpretation of the universe to the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock . The idea of holistic divinity results in a common New Age belief that humans themselves are divine in essence , a concept described using such terms as " droplet of divinity " , " inner Godhead " , and " divine self " . Influenced by Theosophical and Anthroposophical ideas regarding ' subtle bodies ' , a common New Age idea holds to the existence of a " Higher Self " which is a part of the human but which connects with the divine essence of the universe , and which can advise the human mind through intuition .

Cosmogonical creation stories are common in New Age sources , with these accounts reflecting the movement 's holistic framework by describing an original , primal oneness from which all things in the universe emanated . An additional common theme is that human souls ? once living in a spiritual world ? then descended into a world of matter . The New Age movement typically views the material universe as a meaningful illusion , which humans should try to use constructively rather than focus on escaping into other spiritual realms . This physical world is hence seen as " a domain for learning and growth " after which the human soul might pass on to higher levels of existence . There is thus a widespread belief that reality is engaged in an ongoing process of evolution ; rather than Darwinian evolution , this is typically seen as either a teleological evolution which assumes a process headed to a specific goal , or an open @-@ ended , creative evolution .

Within the New Age movement , it is often unclear how divine beings are divided from those entities which are believed to exist between divinity and humanity . In the literature , there is much talk of non @-@ human beings who are benevolently interested in the spiritual development of humanity , and which are variously referred to under such names as angels , guardian angels , personal guides , masters , teachers , and contacts . New Age angelology is nevertheless unsystematic , reflecting the idiosyncrasies of individual authors . The figure of Jesus Christ is often mentioned within New Age literature as a mediating principle between divinity and humanity , as well as an exemplar of a spiritually advanced human being .

= = = Self @-@ spirituality and channeling = = =

The New Age movement exhibits a strong emphasis on the idea that the individual and their own experiences are the primary source of authority on spiritual matters . Thus , it exhibits what Heelas termed " unmediated individualism " , and reflects a world @-@ view which is " radically democratic " . As a result , there is a strong emphasis on the freedom of the individual in the movement . This emphasis has led to some ethical disagreements ; while some New Age participants stress the need to help others because all are part of the unitary holistic universe , others have disagreed , refusing to aid others because it is believed that it will result in their dependency on others and thus conflicts with the self @-@ as @-@ authority ethic . Nevertheless , within the movement , there are differences in the role accorded to voices of authority outside of the self .

Although not present in every New Age group , a core belief of the movement is in channeling . This

is the idea that humans beings , sometimes (although not always) in a state of trance , can act " as a channel of information from sources other than their normal selves " . These sources are varyingly described as being God , gods and goddesses , ascended masters , spirit guides , extraterrestrials , angels , devas , historical figures , the collective unconscious , elementals , or nature spirits . Hanegraaff described channeling as a form of " articulated revelation " , and identified four forms : trance channeling , automatism , clairaudient channeling , and open channeling .

Prominent examples of channeling in the New Age movement include Jane Roberts ' claims that she was contacted by an entity called Seth , and Helen Schucman 's claims to have channeled Jesus Christ . The academic Suzanne Riordan examined a variety of these New Age channeled messages , and noted that they typically " echoed each other in tone and content " , offering an analysis of the human condition and giving instructions or advice for how humanity can discover its true destiny .

For many New Agers , these channeled messages rival the scriptures of the main world religions as sources of spiritual authority , although often New Agers describe historical religious revelations as forms of " channeling " as well , thus attempting to legitimate and authenticate their own contemporary practices . Although the concept of channeling from discarnate spirit entities has links to Spiritualism and psychical research , in the New Age movement the Spiritualist emphasis on proving the existence of life after death is absent , as is the psychical research focus of testing mediums for consistency .

= = = Astrological cycles and the Age of Aquarius = = =

New Age thought typically envisions the world as developing through a series of large astronomical cycles which can be identified astrologically . Although the concept of distinct ages has older roots in Western esoteric thought , the New Age movement adopted it from Theosophy , despite the fact that such New Age conceptions of ages are often looser and more eclectic than those in Theosophical doctrine . New Age literature often claims that humanity once lived in an age of spiritual wisdom . In the writings of New Agers like Edgar Cayce , the ancient period of spiritual wisdom is associated with concepts of supremely @-@ advanced societies living on lost continents such as Atlantis , Lemuria , and Mu , as well as the idea that ancient societies like those of Ancient Egypt were far more technologically advanced than modern scholarship accepts . New Age literature often posits that the ancient period of spiritual wisdom ultimately gave way to an age of spiritual decline , sometimes termed the Age of Pisces . Although characterised as being a negative period for humanity , New Age literature views the Age of Pisces as an important learning experience for the species . Hanegraaff stated that New Age perceptions of history were " extremely sketchy " in their use of description , reflecting little interest in historiography and conflating history with myth . He also noted that they were highly ethnocentric in placing Western civilization at the centre of historical development .

A common belief among the New Age movement is that humanity has entered , or is coming to enter , a new age known as the Age of Aquarius , which Melton has characterised as a " New Age of love , joy , peace , abundance , and harmony [...] the Golden Age heretofore only dreamed about " . In accepting this belief in a coming new age , the movement has been described as " highly positive , celebratory , [and] utopian " , and has also been cited as an apocalyptic movement . Opinions about the nature of the coming New Age differ among New Agers . There are for instance differences in belief about its commencement , with New Age author David Spangler claiming that it began in 1967 , while various practitioners placed its beginning with the Harmonic Convergence of 1987 , with others claiming that it will not begin until several centuries into the third millennium .

There are also differences in how this new age is envisioned . Those adhering to what Hanegraaff termed the " moderate " perspective believed that it would be marked by an improvement to current society , which affected both New Age concerns ? through the convergence of science and mysticism and the global embrace of alternative medicine ? to more general concerns , including an end to violence , crime and war , a healthier environment , and international co @-@ operation . Other New Agers adopt a fully utopian vision , believing that the world will be wholly transformed into

an " Age of Light " , with humans evolving into totally spiritual beings and experiencing unlimited love , bliss , and happiness .

The Age of Aquarius is not viewed as eternal , but it is instead believed that it will last for around two thousand years , before being replaced by a further age . There are various beliefs within the movement as to how this new age will come about , but most emphasise the idea that it will be established through human agency ; others assert that it will be established with the aid of non @-@ human forces such as spirits or extraterrestrials . Participants in the movement typically express the view that their own spiritual actions are helping to bring about the Age of Aquarius , with a common belief also being that there are higher powers in the universe that are helping to birth the new age .

= = = Healing and alternative medicine = = =

Another core factor of the New Age movement is its emphasis on healing and the use of alternative medicine . The general ethos within the movement is that health is the natural state for the human being and that illness is a disruption of that natural balance . Hence , New Age therapies seek to heal " illness " as a general concept which includes physical , mental , and spiritual aspects ; in doing so it critiques mainstream Western medicine for simply attempting to cure disease , and thus has an affinity with most forms of traditional medicine found around the world . The concept of " personal growth " is also greatly emphasised within the healing aspects of the New Age movement . The movement 's focus of self @-@ spirituality has led to the emphasis of self @-@ healing , although also present in the movement are ideas that focus on both healing others and healing the Earth itself .

The healing elements of the movement are difficult to classify given that a variety of terms are used , with some New Age authors using different terms to refer to the same trends , while others use the same term to refer to different things . However , Hanegraaff developed a set of categories into which the forms of New Age healing could be roughly categorised . The first of these was the Human Potential Movement , which argues that contemporary Western society suppresses much human potential , and which accordingly professes to offer a path through which individuals can access those parts of themselves that they have alienated and suppressed , thus enabling them to reach their full potential and live a meaningful life . Hanegraaff described transpersonal psychology as the " theoretical wing " of this Human Potential Movement ; in contrast to other schools of psychological thought , transpersonal psychology takes religious and mystical experiences seriously by exploring the uses of altered states of consciousness . Closely connected to this is the shamanic consciousness current , which argues that the shaman was a specialist in altered states of consciousness and which seeks to adopt and imitate traditional shamanic techniques as a form of personal healing and growth .

Hanegraaff identified the second main healing current in the New Age movement as being holistic health . This emerged in the 1970s out of the free clinic movement of the 1960s , and has various connections with the Human Potential Movement . It emphasises the idea that the human individual is a holistic , interdependent relationship between mind , body , and spirit , and that healing is a process in which an individual becomes whole by integrating with the powers of the universe . A very wide array of methods are utilised within the holistic health movement , with some of the most common including acupuncture , biofeedback , chiropractic , yoga , kinesiology , homeopathy , iridology , massage and other forms of bodywork , meditation and visualisation , nutritional therapy , psychic healing , herbal medicine , healing using crystals , metals , music , chromotherapy , and reincarnation therapy . The use of crystal healing has become a particularly prominent visual trope in the movement . The mainstreaming of the Holistic Health movement in the UK is discussed by Maria Tighe . The inter @-@ relation of holistic health with the New Age movement is illustrated in Jenny Butler 's ethnographic description of " Angel therapy " in Ireland .

= = = " New Age science " = = =

According to Drury , the New Age movement attempts to create " a worldview that includes both

science and spirituality " . Although it typically rejects rationalism , the scientific method , and the academic establishment , at times those active in the movement employ terminology and concepts borrowed from science and particularly from the New Physics . Moreover , a number of prominent influences on New Age movement , such as David Bohm and Ilya Prigogine , came from backgrounds as professional scientists . Instead it typically expresses the view that its own understandings of the universe will come to replace those of the academic establishment in a paradigm shift .

However , most of the academic and scientific establishments dismiss " New Age science " as pseudo @-@ science , or at best existing in part on the fringes of genuine scientific research . Hanegraaff identified " New Age science " as a form of Naturphilosophie . In this , the movement is interested in developing unified world views to discover the nature of the divine and establish a scientific basis for religious belief . Richard H. Jones has presented strong arguments challenging New Age thinkers ' treatment of both science and mysticism .

Figures in the New Age movement ? most notably Fritjof Capra in his *The Tao of Physics* (1975) ? have drawn parallels between theories in the New Physics and traditional forms of mysticism , thus arguing that ancient religious ideas are now being proven by contemporary science . Many New Agers have adopted James Lovelock 's Gaia hypothesis that the Earth acts akin to a single living organism , although have expanded this idea to include the idea that the Earth has consciousness and intelligence .

= = = Ethics and afterlife = = =

There is no ethical cohesion within the New Age phenomenon , although Hanegraaff argued that the central ethical tenet of the New Age movement is to cultivate one 's own divine potential . Given that the movement 's holistic interpretation of the universe prohibits a belief in a dualistic good and evil , negative events that happen are interpreted not as the result of evil but as lessons designed to teach an individual and enable them to advance spiritually . It rejects the Christian emphasis on sin and guilt , believing that these generate fear and thus negativity , which then hinder spiritual evolution . It also typically criticises the blaming and judging of others for their actions , believing that if an individual adopts these negative attitudes it harms their own spiritual evolution . Instead the movement emphasizes positive thinking , although beliefs regarding the power behind such thoughts vary within New Age literature . Common New Age examples of how to generate such positive thinking include the repeated recitation of mantras and statements carrying positive messages , and the visualisation of a white light .

According to Hanegraaff , the question of death and afterlife is not a " pressing problem requiring an answer " in the New Age movement . A belief in reincarnation is very common , being viewed as part of humanity 's " progressive spiritual evolution " . In New Age literature the reality of reincarnation is usually treated as self @-@ evident , with no explanation as to why practitioners embrace this afterlife belief over others , although New Agers endorse it in the belief that it ensures cosmic justice . Many New Agers adopt a belief in karma , treating it as a law of cause and effect which assures cosmic balance , although in some cases they stress that it is not a system that enforces punishment for past actions . In much New Age literature discussing reincarnation , there is the claim that part of the human soul , that which carries the personality , perishes with the death of the body , while the Higher Self ? that which connects with divinity ? survives in order to be reborn into another body . It is believed that the Higher Self chooses the body and circumstances into which it will be born , in order to use it as a vessel through which to learn new lessons and thus advance its own spiritual evolution . Some prominent New Age writers such as Shakti Gawain and Louise Hay have thus expressed the view that humans are therefore totally responsible for the events that happen to them during their life , an idea that many New Agers characterise as empowering . At times , past life regression are employed within the New Age movement in order to reveal a Higher Soul 's previous incarnations , usually with an explicit healing purpose .

= = Lifestyle = =

New Age spirituality has led to a wide array of literature on the subject and an active niche market , with books , music , crafts , and services in alternative medicine available at New Age stores , fairs , and festivals . New Age fairs ? sometimes known as " Mind , Body , Spirit fairs " , " psychic fairs " , or " alternative health fairs " ? are spaces in which a variety of goods and services are displayed by different vendors , including forms of alternative medicine and esoteric practices such as palmistry or tarot card reading . A prominent example is the Mind Body Spirit Festival , held annually in the United Kingdom , at which ? the religious studies scholar Christopher Partridge noted ? one could encounter " a wide range of beliefs and practices from crystal healing to ... Kirlian photography to psychic art , from angels to past @-@ life therapy , from Theosophy to UFO religion , and from New Age music to the vegetarianism of Suma Chign Hai . "

A number of New Age proponents have emphasised the use of spiritual techniques as a tool for attaining financial prosperity , thus moving the movement away from its counter @-@ cultural origins . Embracing this attitude , various books have been published espousing such an ethos , established New Age centres have held spiritual retreats and classes aimed specifically at business people , and New Age groups have developed specialised training for businesses . During the 1980s , many prominent U.S. corporations ? among them IBM , AT & T , and General Motors ? embraced New Age seminars , hoping that they could increase productivity and efficiency among their work force , although in several cases this resulted in employees bringing legal action against their employers , claiming that such seminars had infringed on their religious beliefs or damaged their psychological health . However , the use of spiritual techniques as a method for attaining profit has been an issue of major dispute within the wider New Age movement , with prominent New Agers such as Spangler and Michael Fox criticising what they see as trends within the community that are narcissistic and lack a social conscience . In particular , the movement 's commercial elements have caused problems given that they often conflict with its general economically @-@ egalitarian ethos ; as York highlighted , " a tension exists in New Age between socialistic egalitarianism and capitalistic private enterprise " .

Given that it encourages individuals to choose spiritual practices on the grounds of personal preference and thus encourages them to behave as a consumer , the New Age has been considered to be well suited to modern society .

= = = Demographics = = =

Sociological studies of the demographics of New Age practitioners have established that certain sectors of society are more likely to get involved in the movement than others . Sutcliffe noted that although most of the influential New Age figureheads were male , approximately two thirds of its participants were female . The movement is strongly gendered ; sociologist Ciara O 'Connor argues that it shows a tension between commodification and women 's empowerment . It also a primarily middle @-@ class phenomenon .

In the mid @-@ 1990s , it was asserted that the New Age movement was primarily found in the United States and Canada , Western Europe , and Australia and New Zealand . It is problematic ascertaining the number of New Agers because many individuals involved in the movement don 't explicitly identify themselves as such . While some individuals self @-@ identify as a New Ager , others who participate in New Age practices instead may identify as Jewish , Christian , Buddhist or atheist . Heelas highlighted the range of attempts to establish the number of New Age participants in the U.S. during this period , noting that estimates ranged from 20 @,@ 000 to 6 million ; he believed that the higher ranges of these estimates were greatly inflated by , for instance , an erroneous assumption that all Americans who believed in reincarnation were part of the movement . He nevertheless suggested that over 10 million people in the U.S. had had some contact with New Age practices or ideas .

Sutcliffe described the " typical " participant in the New Age milieu as being " a religious individualist , mixing and matching cultural resources in an animated spiritual quest " . Susan Lee Brown noted that in the U.S. , the movement was first embraced by the baby boomer generation (those born

between 1946 and 1964) , " through which it was incubated and transmitted to other parts of American society " . Heelas asserted that the movement was " strongly associated " with members of the middle and upper @-@ middle classes of Western society . He added that within that broad demographic , the movement had nevertheless attracted a diverse clientele . He typified the typical New Ager as someone who was well @-@ educated yet disenchanted with mainstream society , thus arguing that the movement catered to those who believe that modernity is in crisis . He suggested that the movement appealed to many former practitioners of the 1960s counter @-@ culture because while they came to feel that they were unable to change society , they were nonetheless interested in changing the self . He believed that many individuals had been " culturally primed for what the New Age has to offer " , with the New Age attracting " expressive " people who were already comfortable with the ideals and outlooks of the movement 's self @-@ spirituality focus . It could be particularly appealing because the New Age suited the needs of the individual , whereas traditional religious options that are available primarily catered for the needs of a community . He believed that although the adoption of New Age beliefs and practices by some fitted the model of religious conversion , others who adopted some of its practices could not easily be considered to have converted to the religion .

He highlighted that those involved in the movement did so to varying degrees . Heelas argued that those involved in the movement could be divided into three broad groups ; the first comprised those who were completely dedicated to it and its ideals , often working in professions that furthered those goals . The second consisted of " serious part @-@ timers " who worked in unrelated fields but who nevertheless spent much of their free time involved in movement activities . The third was that of " casual part @-@ timers " who occasionally involved themselves in New Age activities but for whom the movement was not a central aspect of their life . Many New Age practices have filtered into wider Western society , with a 2000 poll for instance revealing that 39 % of the UK population had tried alternative therapies .

People who practice New Age spirituality or who embrace its lifestyle are included in the Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) demographic market segment , figures rising , related to sustainable living , green ecological initiatives , and generally composed of a relatively affluent and well @-@ educated segment . The LOHAS market segment in 2006 was estimated at USD \$ 300 billion , approximately 30 percent of the United States consumer market . According to The New York Times , a study by the Natural Marketing Institute showed that in 2000 , 68 million Americans were included within the LOHAS demographic . The sociologist Paul H. Ray , who coined the term cultural creatives in his book The Cultural Creatives : How 50 Million People Are Changing the World (2000) , states , " What you 're seeing is a demand for products of equal quality that are also virtuous . "

= = = Community = = =

Some New Agers advocate living in a simple and sustainable manner to reduce humanity 's impact on the natural resources of Earth ; and they shun consumerism . The New Age movement has been centered around rebuilding a sense of community to counter social disintegration ; this has been attempted through the formation of intentional communities , where individuals come together to live and work in a communal lifestyle .

New Age centres have been set up in various parts of the world , representing an institutionalised form of the movement . Notable examples include the Naropa Institute in Boulder , Colorado , Holly Hock Farm near to Vancouver , the Wrekin Trust in West Malvern , Worcestershire , and the Skyros Centre in Skyros .

Criticising mainstream Western education as counterproductive to the ethos of the movement , many New Age groups have established their own schools for the education of children , although in other cases such groups have sought to introduce New Age spiritual techniques into pre @-@ existing establishments .

= = = Music = = =

The term " New @-@ age music " is applied , often in a derogative manner , to forms of ambient music , a genre which developed in the 1960s and was popularised in the 1970s , particularly with the work of Brian Eno . The genre 's relaxing nature resulted in it becoming popular within New Age circles , with some forms of the genre having a specifically New Age orientation . Studies have determined that new @-@ age music can be an effective component of stress management .

The style began in the 1970s with the works of free @-@ form jazz groups recording on the ECM label ; such as Oregon , the Paul Winter Consort , and other pre @-@ ambient bands ; as well as ambient music performer Brian Eno and classical avant @-@ garde musician Daniel Kobialka . In the early 1970s , it was mostly instrumental with both acoustic and electronic styles . New @-@ age music evolved to include a wide range of styles from electronic space music using synthesizers and acoustic instrumentals using Native American flutes and drums , singing bowls , Australian didgeridoos and world music sounds to spiritual chanting from other cultures .

= = Reception = =

= = = Academia = = =

The earliest academic studies of the New Age movement were performed by specialists in the study of new religious movements , such as Robert Ellwood . However , this research was often scanty because many scholars of alternative spirituality thought of the New Age movement as an insignificant cultural fad . Alternately , much of it was largely negative and critical of New Age groups , as it was influenced by the U.S. anti @-@ cult movement . In 1996 , Wouter Hanegraaff published *New Age Religion and Western Culture* , a historical analysis of New Age texts . That same year , Paul Heelas published a study of the movement which focused on its manifestation in Britain . Most of these early studies were based on a textual analysis of New Age publications , rather than on an ethnographic analysis of its practitioners .

In the 2003 book *A Culture of Conspiracy : Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* written by Michael Barkun , professor emeritus of political science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Barkun argues New Age beliefs have been greatly facilitated by the advent of the internet which has exposed people to beliefs once consigned to the outermost fringe of political and religious life . He identifies two trends which he terms , " the rise of improvisational millennialism " and " the popularity of stigmatized knowledge " . He voices concern that these trends could lead to mass hysteria and could have a devastating effect on American political life .

= = = Christian perspectives = = =

The majority of published criticism of the New Age movement has come from Christians , in particular those on the religion 's fundamentalist wing . In the United States , the New Age movement became a major concern of evangelical Christian groups in the 1980s , an attitude that gradually also influenced British evangelical groups . During that decade , evangelical writers such as Constance Cumbey , Dave Hunt , Gary North , and Douglas Groothuis published books criticising the New Age movement from their Christian perspective ; a number of them have been characterised as propagating conspiracy theories regarding the origin and purpose of the movement . The most successful such publication however was Frank E. Peretti 's 1986 novel *This Present Darkness* , which sold over a million copies ; it depicted the New Age movement as being in league with feminism and secular education to overthrow Christianity . This criticism has been sustained since ; in 2003 Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention stated that there 's " widespread agreement " by Baptists who regard New Age ideas as contrary to Christian tradition and doctrine .

In his 1989 book , *Le Nouvel Age* , French scholar and Catholic priest Jean Vernet criticised the New Age movement , which he described as an Anglo Saxon movement which was beginning to invade France . He asked if it represented the coming of the Anti @-@ Christ , a Jewish conspiracy ,

or a project for a global government . He also noted its parallels with Nazism and said that Christians should be discerning towards it .

The Roman Catholic Church published A Christian reflection on the New Age in 2003 , following a six @-@ year study ; the 90 @-@ page document criticizes New Age practices such as yoga , meditation , feng shui , and crystal healing . According to the Vatican , euphoric states attained through New Age practices should not be confused with prayer or viewed as signs of God 's presence . Cardinal Paul Poupard , then @-@ president of the Pontifical Council for Culture , said the " New Age is a misleading answer to the oldest hopes of man " . Monsignor Michael Fitzgerald , then @-@ president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue , stated at the Vatican conference on the document : the " Church avoids any concept that is close to those of the New Age " . The report also advised Christians to respect the sincerity of New Age persons ' spiritual searches , and to witness to them about the Gospel

= = = Contemporary Pagan perspectives = = =

An issue of academic debate has been regarding the connection between the New Age movement and contemporary Paganism , or Neo @-@ Paganism , with the two often being confused . Religious studies scholar Sarah Pike asserted that that there was a " significant overlap " between the two religious movements , while Aidan A. Kelly stated that Paganism " parallels the New Age movement in some ways , differs sharply from it in others , and overlaps it in some minor ways " . Ethan Doyle White stated that while the Pagan and New Age movements " do share commonalities and overlap " , they were nevertheless " largely distinct phenomena . " Hanegraaff suggested that whereas various forms of contemporary Paganism were not part of the New Age movement ? particularly those who pre @-@ dated the movement ? other Pagan religions and practices could be identified as New Age . Partridge portrayed both Paganism and the New Age as different streams of occulture that merge at points .

Various differences between the two movements have been highlighted ; the New Age movement focuses on an improved future , whereas the focus of Paganism is on the pre @-@ Christian past . Similarly , the New Age movement typically propounds a universalist message which sees all religions as fundamentally the same , whereas Paganism stresses the difference between monotheistic religions and those embracing a polytheistic or animistic theology . While the New Age emphasises a light @-@ centred image , Paganism acknowledges both light and dark , life and death , and recognises the savage side of the natural world . Further , the New Age movement shows little interest in magic and witchcraft , which are conversely core interests of many Pagan religions , such as Wicca . Many Pagans have sought to distance themselves from the New Age movement , even using " New Age " as an insult within their community , while conversely many involved in the New Age have expressed criticism of Paganism for emphasizing the material world over the spiritual . Many Pagans have expressed criticism of the high fees charged by New Age teachers , something not typically present in the Pagan movement , which some Pagans pronouncing the word " newage " to rhyme with " sewage " .

= = = Native American and other indigenous responses = = =

The New Age movement has also been accused of cultural imperialism , misappropriating the sacred ceremonies , intellectual and cultural property of indigenous peoples . Indigenous American spiritual leaders , such as Elders councils of the Lakota , Cheyenne , Navajo , Creek , Hopi , Chippewa , and Haudenosaunee have denounced New Age misappropriation of their sacred ceremonies and other intellectual property , stating that " [t] he value of these instructions and ceremonies [when led by unauthorized people] are questionable , maybe meaningless , and hurtful to the individual carrying false messages " . Traditional leaders of the Lakota , Dakota , and Nakota peoples have reached consensus to reject " the expropriation of [their] ceremonial ways by non @-@ Indians " . They see the New Age movement as either not fully understanding , deliberately trivializing , or distorting their way of life , and have declared war on all such " plastic medicine

people " who are appropriating their spiritual ways . The United Nations General Assembly has issued a declaration protecting ceremonies as part of the cultural and intellectual property of their respective Indigenous nations :

Article 31 1 . " Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain , control , protect and develop their cultural heritage , traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions , as well as the manifestations of their sciences , technologies and cultures , including human and genetic resources , seeds , medicines , knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora , oral traditions , literatures , designs , sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts . They also have the right to maintain , control , protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage , traditional knowledge , and traditional cultural expressions . " ? Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous leaders have spoken out against individuals from within their own communities who may go out into the world to become a " white man 's shaman , " and any " who are prostituting our spiritual ways for their own selfish gain , with no regard for the spiritual well @-@ being of the people as a whole " . The term " plastic shaman " or " plastic medicine people " has been applied to outsiders who identify themselves as shamans , holy people , or other traditional spiritual leaders , but who have no genuine connection to the traditions or cultures they claim to represent .

= = Social and political movement = =

While many commentators have focused on the personal aspects of the New Age movement , it also has a social and political component . The New Age political movement became visible in the 1970s , peaked in the 1980s , and continued into the 1990s . In the 21st century , the political movement evolved in new directions .

= = = Late 20th century = = =

After the political turmoil of the 1960s , many activists in North America and Europe became disillusioned with traditional reformist and revolutionary political ideologies . Some began searching for a new politics that gave special weight to such topics as consciousness , ecology , personal and spiritual development , community empowerment , and global unity . An outpouring of books from New Age thinkers acknowledged that search and attempted to articulate that in politics .

According to some observers , the first was Mark Satin 's New Age Politics (1978) . It originally appeared in Canada in 1976 . Other books that have been described as New Age political include Theodore Roszak 's Person / Planet (1978) , Marilyn Ferguson 's The Aquarian Conspiracy (1980) , Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler 's The Third Wave (1980) , Hazel Henderson 's The Politics of the Solar Age (1981) , Fritjof Capra 's The Turning Point (1982) , Robert Muller 's New Genesis (1982) , John Naisbitt 's Megatrends (1982) , Willis Harman 's Global Mind Change (1988) , James Redfield 's The Celestine Prophecy (1993) , and Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson 's Spiritual Politics (1994) .

All these books were issued by major publishers . Some became international bestsellers . By the 1980s , New Age political ideas were being discussed in big @-@ city newspapers and established political magazines . In addition , some of the New Age 's own periodicals were regularly addressing social and political issues . In the U.S. , observers pointed to Leading Edge Bulletin , New Age Journal , New Options Newsletter , and Utne Reader . Other such periodicals included New Humanity (England) , Alterna (Denmark) , Odyssey (South Africa) , and World Union from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram (India) .

As with any political movement , organizations sprang up to generate popular support for New Age political ideas and policy positions . In the U.S. , commentators identified the New Age Caucus of California , the New World Alliance , Planetary Citizens , and California State legislator John Vasconcellos 's Self @-@ Determination : A Personal / Political Network as New Age political organizations . So , on occasion , did their own spokespeople . There may have been more New Age political organizing outside the U.S. ; writer @-@ activists pointed to the Future in Our Hands

movement in Norway (which claimed 20 @, @ 000 adherents out of a population of four million) , the early European Green movements , and the Values Party of New Zealand .

Although these books , periodicals , and organizations did not speak with one voice , commentators found that many of them sounded common themes :

Our world does not reflect who we at our best can be .

All our most significant social and political problems go back at least 300 years .

The political system therefore needs to be transformed , not just reformed , with the help of a new political theory appropriate to our time .

Holism ? seeing everything as connected ? is the first step on the way to creating that new political theory .

Doing away with the categories of " left " and " right " is another essential part of that task .

Significant social change requires deep changes in consciousness ; institutional change is not enough .

Above all , consciousness needs to become more ecologically aware , more feminist , and more oriented to compassionate global unity .

Desirable values include nonviolence , diversity , a sense of community , and a sense of enoughness .

Human growth and development , not economic growth , should be the overarching goal of New Age society .

Ownership and control of institutions is important . But the size of institutions is at least as important . We must move away from big governments , big corporations , and other large institutions to the extent it enhances our lives .

We can begin this process by interlacing hierarchical structures with horizontal networks .

Global unification is a key goal , but is probably best accomplished by networking at many levels rather than establishing a centralized world state .

The agent of political change is no longer the working class , or any economic class . Instead , it is all those who are developing themselves personally and spiritually ? all who aspire to live lives of dignity and service .

Evolution is to be preferred to revolution . However , the forces of evolutionary change need not be a statistical majority . A " critical mass " of informed , committed , and spiritually aware people can move a nation forward .

Over time , these themes began to cohere . By the 1980s , observers in both North America and Europe were acknowledging the emergence of a New Age political " ideology " .

= = = Political objections at century ? s end = = =

Toward the end of the 20th century , criticisms were being directed at the New Age political project from many quarters , but especially from the liberal left and religious right .

On the left , scholars argued that New Age politics is an oxymoron : that personal growth has little or nothing to do with political change . One political scientist said New Age politics fails to recognize the " realities " of economic and political power ; another faulted it for not being opposed to the capitalist system , or to liberal individualism . Antinuclear activist Harvey Wasserman argued that New Age politics is too averse to social conflict to be effective politically .

On the right , some worried that the drive to come up with a new consciousness and new values would topple time @-@ tested old values . Others worried that the celebration of diversity would leave no strong viewpoint in place to guide society .

Neither left nor right was impressed with the New Age 's ability to organize itself politically . Many explanations were offered for the New Age 's practical political weakness . Some said that the New Age political thinkers and activists of the 1970s and 1980s were simply too far in advance of their time . Others suggested that New Age activists ' commitment to the often frustrating process of consensus decision @-@ making was at fault . After it dissolved , New World Alliance co @-@ founder Marc Sarkady told an interviewer that the Alliance had been too " New Age counter @-@ cultural " to appeal to a broad public .

= = = New political directions in the 21st century = = =

In the 21st century , writers and activists continue to pursue a political project with New Age roots . However , it differs from the project that had come before .

The principal difference was anticipated in texts like New Age Politics author Mark Satin 's essay " Twenty @-@ eight Ways of Looking at Terrorism " (1991) , human potential movement historian Walter Truett Anderson 's essay " Four Different Ways to Be Absolutely Right " (1995) , and mediator Mark Gerzon 's book A House Divided (1996) . In these texts , the New Age political perspective is recognized as legitimate . But it is presented as merely one among many , with strong points and blind spots just like all the rest . The result was to alter the nature of the New Age political project . If every political perspective had unique strengths and significant weaknesses , then it no longer made sense to try to convert everyone to the New Age political perspective , as had been attempted in the 1970s and 1980s . It made more sense to try to construct a higher political synthesis that took every political perspective into account , including that of the New Age .

Another difference between the two eras of political thought is that , in the 21st century , few political actors use the term New Age or post @-@ New Age to describe themselves or their work . Some observers attribute this to the negative connotations that the term " New Age " had acquired . Instead , other terms are employed that connote a similar sense of personal and political development proceeding together over time . For example , according to an anthology from three political scientists , many writers and academics use the term " transformational " as a substitute for such terms as New Age and new paradigm . Ken Wilber has popularized use of the term " integral " , Carter Phipps emphasizes the term " evolutionary " , and both terms can be found in some authors ' book titles .