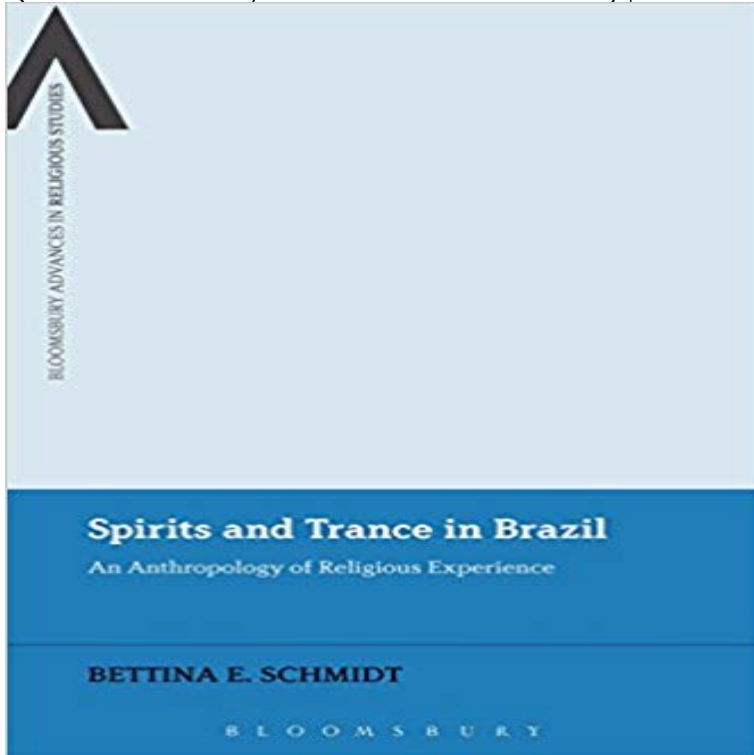


Spirits and Trance in Brazil: An Anthropology of Religious Experience (Bloomsbury Advances in Religious Studies)



Bettina E. Schmidt explores experiences usually labelled as spirit possession, a highly contested and challenged term, using extensive ethnographic research conducted in SA?o Paulo, the largest city in Brazil and home to a range of religions which practice spirit possession. The book is enriched by excerpts from interviews with people about their experiences. It focuses on spirit possession in Afro-Brazilian religions and spiritism, as well as discussing the notion of exorcism in Charismatic Christian communities. Spirits and Trance in Brazil: An Anthropology of Religious Experience is divided into three sections which present the three main areas in the study of spirit possession. The first section looks at the social dimension of spirit possession, in particular gender roles associated with spirit possession in Brazil and racial stratification of the communities. It shows how gender roles and racial composition have adapted alongside changes in society in the last 100 years. The second section focuses on the way people interpret their practice. It shows that the interpretations of this practice depend on the human relationship to the possessing entities. The third section explores a relatively new field of research, the Western discourse of mind/body dualism and the wide field of cognition and embodiment. All sections together confirm the significance of discussing spirit possession within a wider framework that embraces physical elements as well as cultural and social ones. Bringing together sociological, anthropological, phenomenological and religious studies approaches, this book offers a new perspective on the study of spirit possession.

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