



Reckoning with Spirit in the Paradigm of Performance

Donnalee Dox

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Performance has become a paradigm for analyzing contemporary culture, a pattern that structures a particular view of human interaction and experience. Performance is also widely used to better understand how we express values and ideas, including religious beliefs. *Reckoning with Spirit in the Paradigm of Performance* asks how the sensibilities of religious experience, which many people call spirituality, shape people's performance. When we observe people performing words, dances, music, and rituals they consider sacred, what (if any) conclusions can we draw about their experiences from what we see, read, and hear? By analyzing performances of spirituality and what people experience as "spirit," this book adds a new dimension to the paradigm of performance.

Rather than reducing the spiritual dimension to either biology or culture, the book asks what such experiences might have to offer a reasoned analysis of vernacular culture. The specific performances presented are meditative dance and shamanic drumming, including descriptions of these practices and exegesis of practitioners' writings on the nature of spiritual experience and performance.

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