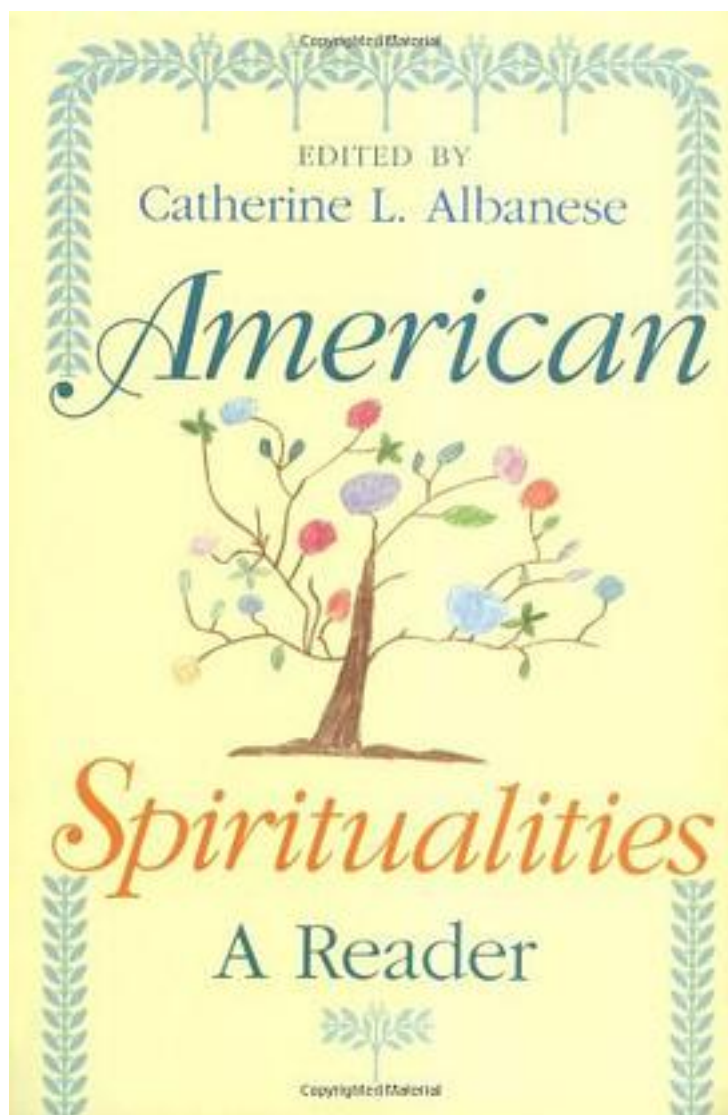


American Spiritualities



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Spirituality has been called the depth dimension of life or the values at one's core centre. It has been linked to artistic creativity and to feelings of transcendence and/or connection with others. Spirituality has been associated with a quiet mind and a sense of harmony and, alternately, with high rising energy and being in the "zone." It has been called the vehicle for meeting the sacred and is recognised by some as the personal element in religion. "American Spiritualities" is a reader designed to explore current interest in spirituality in the United States. It aims to trace the concept and presence of spirituality in the nation's past and to explain the strong attraction to spiritual themes in the present, with attention to questions of definition, historical usage, and connection to religion. Twenty-seven selections pursue the difference and diversity among Americans in terms of their spiritual styles, here understood as modes of experiential knowledge. These styles reflect a typology gleaned from American religious history and from a modified faculty psychology; knowing through the body, or ritual-based spiritualities; knowing through the will, or prophetic and social-action spiritualities; and knowing through the mind, or metaphysically oriented spiritualities. Taken together, the reader's introductory tour adds up to an argument that the spiritual is human-made, essentially religious, and surely not the same at all American times and places.

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目录:

[American Spiritualities_ 下载链接1](#)

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[American Spiritualities_ 下载链接1](#)

书评

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