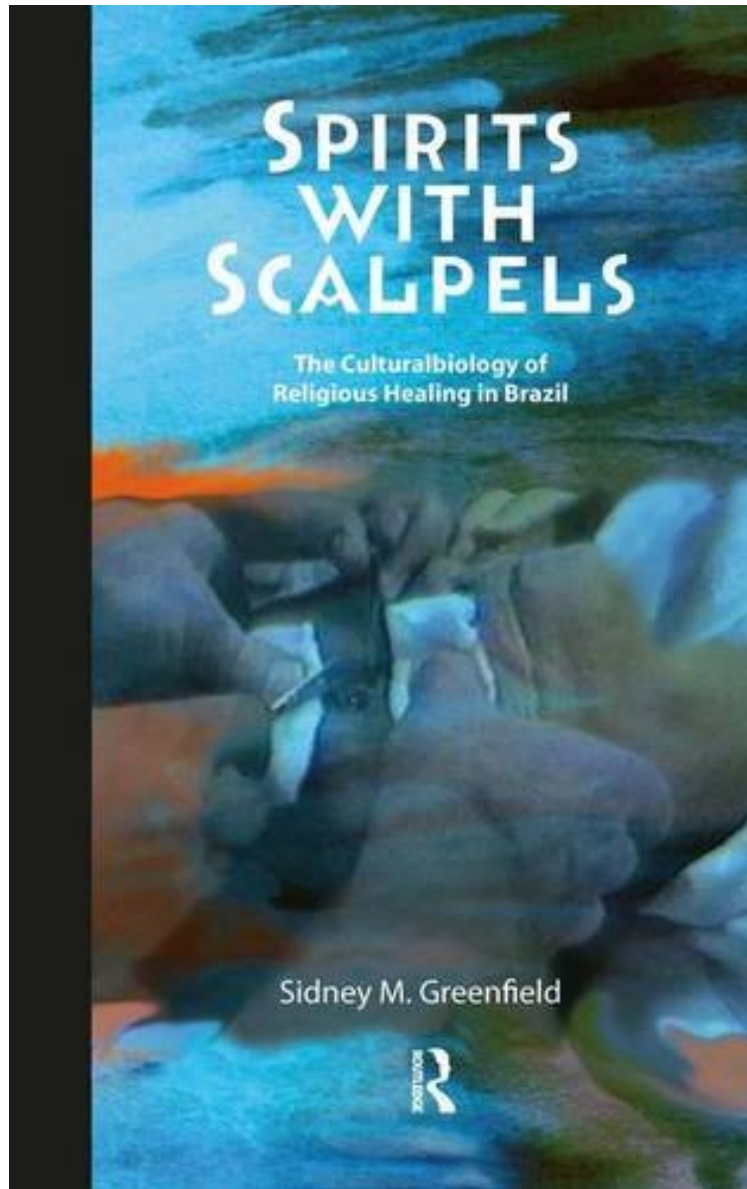


(Mobile book) *Spirits with Scalpels: The Cultural Biology of Religious Healing in Brazil*

Spirits with Scalpels: The Cultural Biology of Religious Healing in Brazil

Sidney M Greenfield

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Sidney M Greenfield : Spirits with Scalpels: The Cultural Biology of Religious Healing in Brazil before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Spirits with Scalpels: The Cultural Biology of Religious Healing in Brazil*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Brad E. Interesting!! 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Compelling Ideas about Culture and HealingBy Helen S. LueyI came to this book with no background in anthropology, but with interest in the effects of culture on health care delivery. I found the book fascinating and thought provoking. *Spirits with Scalpels* is clearly the culmination of years of study, research (armchair and adventurous), personal reflection, and attentiveness to readers' needs for clarity and relevance. The stories ("data" to academics) are fascinating and disturbing. As a person rooted in Western European culture, I don't want to believe them; they challenge everything I think I've learned about how the world works. Greenfield seems to have fought the evidence also, but ended up with no way to deny what he saw. Greenfield's theoretical hypothesis is compelling, although difficult for a lay person to grasp fully. The aspect that struck me as completely fresh was about the role of culture. The mind/body connection is in mainstream thinking now, but Greenfield's contention that the concept of "mind" is typically limited to individual thought and experience, as opposed to culturally transmitted knowledge, struck me as a fresh insight. The idea is so obviously true that one wonders why no one has spoken of it in this context before. Greenfield makes a powerful case for including culture in the search for explanations of experience and the development of healing techniques. The value of the healing practices described is so evident that I wish we could all learn how to utilize them. But Greenfield is clear that they are rooted in the cultures that created them and difficult to export. Perhaps further research will find ways. Greenfield offers a carefully documented, plausible theory that expands mainstream thinking about mind/body interaction. I hope the medical and academic communities contribute further testing and analysis. Meanwhile, I think other lay readers will find this book absorbing and important.

The first time I witnessed a Spiritist surgery, a young man named Jose Carlos Ribeiro inserted a used scalpel taken from a tray that I was holding, and plunged it into the eye of an elderly man. The patient did not move. Decades of fieldwork later, Sidney Greenfield presents a riveting ethnography of the complex world of religious healing in Brazil that challenges readers to grapple with the most fundamental concepts of anthropology and cross-cultural experience. In a major contribution to cultural biology, he analyses the complex social, economic, and political landscape of Brazil to understand dramatic healing practices that seem to defy medical explanation. This engrossing and provocative book will put students and scholars alike on the edge of their seats.

This engagingly written book is a must-read for anthropologists working and teaching in the fields of religion, anthropological theory, medical anthropology, and alternative medicine. It will also appeal to a wide audience outside of academe because it provides ethnographic descriptions of little known but fascinating ritual healing practices. Robert Anderson, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Department Head, Sociology and Anthropology, Mills College "Greenfield's ethnographic descriptions are captivating. *Spirits with Scalpels* will make an excellent textbook for courses in medical anthropology/sociology and for students in the medical field who are interested in issues at the intersection of culture and health. I will definitely use it for my classes, because through his analysis of spirit healing and cultural biology Greenfield clearly addresses anthropology's fundamental concepts, methods, and approaches." Alexander Rdlach, Creighton University " *Spirits with Scalpels* is the culmination of a lifetime of pioneering research integrating fascinating insights about mind-body healing on all levels. He tells us the inside stories documenting healers in many of Brazil's diverse religious traditions. He updates it with the leading edge of the most recent laboratory research on the molecular-genomic foundations of mind and matter. This volume is a classic of field research that would no longer be possible to carry out today. " - Ernest L. Rossi, PhD, author of *A Discourse with our Genes and The Psychobiology of Gene Expression* " *Spirits with Scalpels* is a breakthrough book that takes the social and biological sciences to a level of understanding and experimentation that is both provocative and profound. Students of Brazil and scholars interested in the interface of religion and healing also will enjoy Dr. Greenfield's fascinating descriptions of ritual practices and the art of healing as performed by folk healers with and without scalpels. " - Stanley Krippner, Saybrook Graduate School, author of *Varieties of Anomalous Experience and Haunted by Combat* " From the very first page, *Spirits with Scalpels* is very hard to put down. The reader is led on an adventure greater than any that NASA has promised. Author Sidney M. Greenfield, a widely trained and careful anthropologist, takes you step by step into the precisely documented, witnessed and filmed worlds of Spiritist surgery and other religious therapies in Brazil. If you do not want your mind expanded and new possibilities added to your belief system, do not read this book. The converse is also true. " - Lawrence LeShan, PhD, author of *The Dilemma of Psychology and The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist: Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal* From the Inside Flap Sidney Greenfield presents a riveting ethnography of the complex world of religious practitioners in Brazil that challenges readers to grapple with the dramatic healing practices that seem to defy medical explanation. About the Author Sidney M. Greenfield is professor of anthropology emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is author or editor of seven books and is producer, director, and author of five video documentaries.