

The Language of Mediums and Psychics: The Social Organization of Everyday Miracles

Robin Wooffitt



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Every week thousands of people in Europe and the USA consult psychic practitioners. Communication is crucial to the performance of psychic powers in a range of settings. Psychic practitioners use language to demonstrate their powers, whether they are reporting the words of their spirit contacts or interpreting the spread of Tarot cards. Their clients also accept or reject this information through talk. This book presents the first sustained study of the verbal interaction between the various kinds of psychic practitioners and their clients. Using conversation analysis, Robin Wooffitt examines the structure of the interaction, focusing on the ways in which psychic practitioners and their clients establish the authenticity of the claimed paranormal powers. Adopting a neutral standpoint towards the status of the claims of psychic practitioners, the book raises important issues about the role of social science in understanding the activities of psychic practitioners and scholars of discourse studies, and to sociologists interested in conversation analysis. It is written in a style accessible to non-specialists, and will also interest parapsychologists and social scientists studying psychic phenomena and the paranormal.

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