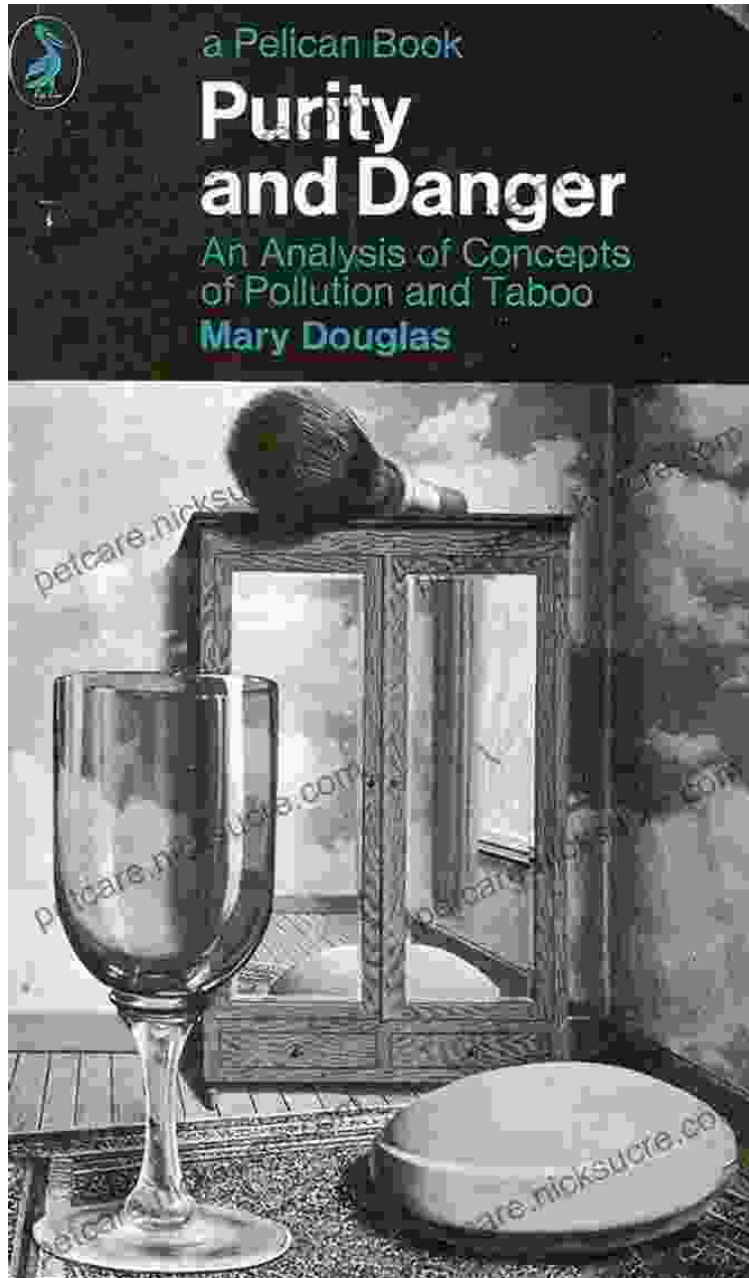


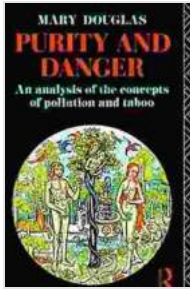
An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo: Routledge Classics



Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (Routledge Classics) by Mary Douglas

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English



File size : 3425 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 272 pages



Mary Douglas's classic work, *An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, explores the concepts of pollution and taboo from an anthropological perspective. The book examines how these concepts are defined and understood in different cultures and societies, and how they shape human behaviour and social organization.

Douglas argues that pollution and taboo are not simply irrational beliefs or superstitions, but rather are expressions of deep-seated human needs and anxieties. She identifies four main types of pollution:

1. **Bodily pollution:** This includes anything that is considered to be dirty or disgusting, such as bodily fluids, excrement, and corpses.
2. **Environmental pollution:** This includes anything that is considered to be harmful or dangerous to the environment, such as pollution caused by industrial activities.
3. **Social pollution:** This includes anything that is considered to be morally wrong or shameful, such as crime, incest, and adultery.
4. **Ritual pollution:** This includes anything that is considered to be sacred or holy, such as temples, altars, and religious objects.

Douglas argues that these four types of pollution are all related to each other, and that they all share a common theme of being something that is out of place or disruptive to the social order. She suggests that pollution is a way of categorizing and dealing with things that threaten our sense of order and security.

Taboo, on the other hand, is a prohibition against certain actions or behaviours. Douglas argues that taboos are often associated with pollution, and that they serve to reinforce the boundaries between different categories of things. For example, many cultures have taboos against eating certain foods, such as pork or beef. These taboos help to maintain the distinction between humans and animals, and they also help to protect the environment.

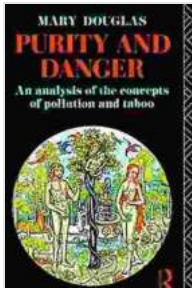
Douglas's work on pollution and taboo has been highly influential in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Her insights into the nature of these concepts have helped us to better understand how human societies function and how they relate to the environment.

Key Concepts

- **Pollution:** Anything that is considered to be dirty, disgusting, or dangerous.
- **Taboo:** A prohibition against certain actions or behaviours.
- **Category:** A group of things that share similar characteristics.
- **Social order:** The way in which a society is organized and functions.
- **Anxiety:** A feeling of worry or fear.

Further Reading

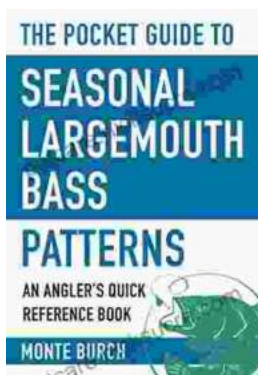
- An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo by Mary Douglas
- Pollution and Taboo by Mary Douglas
- Pollution and Taboo in Anthropology by Mary Douglas



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