



Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology

By Mary Douglas

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Every natural symbol - derived from blood, breath or excrement - carries a social meaning and this work focuses on the ways in which any one culture makes its selections from body symbolism. Each person treats their body as an image of society and the author examines the varieties of ritual and symbolic expression and the patterns of social ritual in which they are embodied. Natural Symbols is a book about religion and it concerns our own society at least as much as any other. It has stimulated new insights into religious and political movements and has provoked re-appraisals of current progressive orthodoxies in many fields. As a classic, it represents a work of anthropology in its widest sense, exploring themes such as the social meaning of natural symbols and the image of the body in society which are now very much in vogue in anthropology, sociology and cultural studies.

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