

Mary Douglas: An Intellectual Biography

By Richard Fardon

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This is the first full length account of the life and ideas of Mary Douglas, the British social anthropologist whose publications span the second half of the twentieth century.
Richard Fardon covers Douglas' family background, and the pervasive influence of her catholic faith on her writings before providing an analysis of two of her most influential works; *Purity and Danger* (1966) and *Natural Symbols* (1970). The final section deals with Douglas' more controversial writings in the fields of economics, consumption, religion and risk analysis in contemporary societies. Throughout, Fardon highlights the centrality of Douglas' role in the history of anthropology and the discipline's struggle to achieve relevance to contemporary, western societies.

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Review

' This is a fine book, analysing the owrk of a wonerful person, the conservative rebel prophesying rampageously against the more staid orthodoxies of her contemporaries. If it was a subject worth giving ten years of study to complete , Mary Douglas is fortunate indeed to have been provided with so sensative an intellectual biographer'

' ... it is a necessity for every undergraduate student of anthropology to read the book, at a time when a clear political position and idiosyncratic ways of thinking are still controversial.' - *Cambridge Anthropology*

About the Author
Richard Fardon is Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

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