



Totem and Taboo (Dover Thrift Editions)

Sigmund Freud

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In this landmark collection of essays, published as *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics* in 1918, the father of psychoanalysis explores the conflict between primitive feelings and the demands of civilization, i.e., the struggle to reconcile unconscious desires with socially acceptable behavior.

Totemism, a concept found in societies around the world, involves the belief in a sacred relationship between an object (totem) and a human kinship group. Men and women bearing the same totem are prohibited from marrying each other, this being a form of incest taboo. Freud identifies a strong unconscious inclination as the basis of taboo, and he attempts to define its source by tracing the earliest appearance in childhood development of totemism. After an examination of the incest taboo in primitive societies around the world, Freud discusses taboo and the ambivalence of emotions; animism, magic, and the omnipotence of thought; and the infantile recurrence of totemism.

An important work by one of the twentieth century's most influential thinkers, *Totem and Taboo* is essential reading for teachers and students of psychology as well as those with an interest in ethnology and folklore. This inexpensive edition offers all readers access to one of Freud's most penetrating attempts to decipher the mysteries of human behavior.

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