

Unveiling the Cultural Politics of Hygiene in India: A Literary Journey (1890-1940)

Hygiene, often perceived as a purely scientific concept, holds a profound cultural and political significance. In India, the late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a significant shift in attitudes towards hygiene, influenced by both colonial and indigenous forces. This book delves into the rich literary landscape of that era to explore the complex interplay between hygiene, society, and power structures.

Historical Context

During the British Raj, hygiene became a central concern for the colonial administration. Driven by fears of disease and the desire to maintain control, the British implemented various sanitary measures, often disregarding local customs and beliefs. This led to resistance and negotiation, shaping the cultural dynamics around hygiene in India.



Cultural Politics of Hygiene in India, 1890-1940: Contagions of Feeling (Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 462 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 153 pages

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Literary Analysis

This book analyzes a diverse range of literary works, including novels, short stories, and essays, to provide nuanced insights into the cultural politics of hygiene. From Rabindranath Tagore's exploration of rural sanitation to Mulk Raj Anand's portrayal of urban squalor, these literary texts offer a vivid tapestry of the changing attitudes towards hygiene and its impact on Indian society.

Themes and Insights

National Identity and Hygiene:

Literature played a crucial role in shaping national identity during India's freedom movement. Hygiene became a symbol of progress and modernity, while its absence represented backwardness and colonial oppression. Writers used literary works to critique the colonial discourse on hygiene and assert the dignity of Indian cultural practices.

Gender and Hygiene:

Hygiene was deeply intertwined with gender roles and expectations. Women were often portrayed as the guardians of hygiene, responsible for maintaining cleanliness in the home. However, literary texts also challenged these stereotypes, showcasing women's agency in promoting hygiene and challenging societal norms.

Caste and Hygiene:

Caste played a significant role in shaping access to hygiene and sanitation. Upper-caste communities had better access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and healthcare, while lower-caste communities faced discrimination and neglect. Literature exposed the deep-rooted inequalities in hygiene practices and their impact on social hierarchy.

Urban and Rural Hygiene:

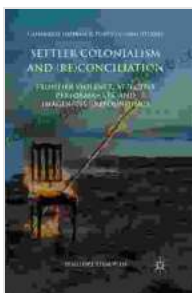
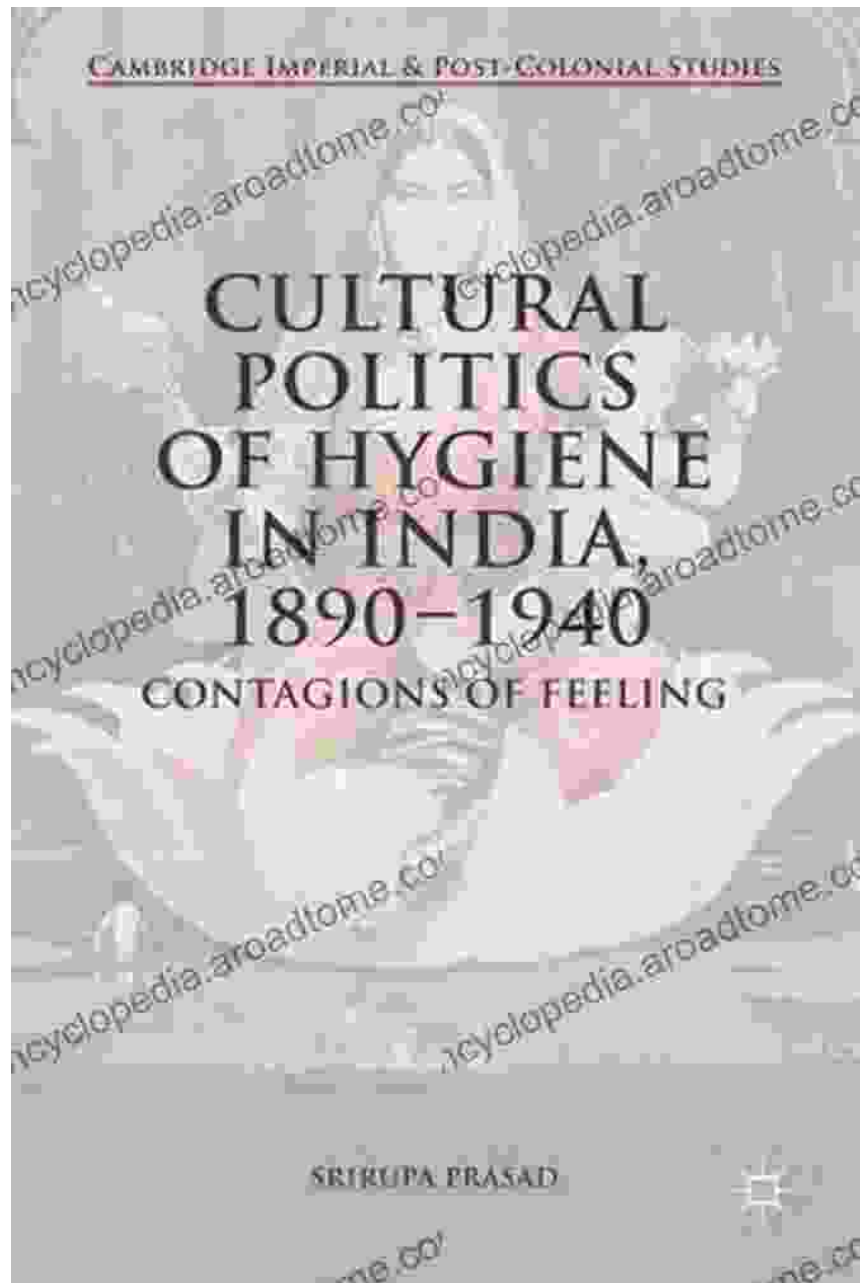
The contrasting experiences of hygiene in urban and rural India are explored through literary works. Novels and short stories depict the challenges of maintaining hygiene in densely populated cities, while also highlighting the importance of access to clean water and sanitation in rural areas.

Hygiene and Disease:

Literature played a crucial role in disseminating knowledge about hygiene and disease prevention. Writers used their works to educate readers about the causes and consequences of diseases, promoting better hygiene practices and challenging prevailing superstitions and misconceptions.

This book offers a comprehensive exploration of the cultural and political dimensions of hygiene in India from 1890 to 1940. Through the analysis of literary works, it sheds light on the complex interplay between hygiene, society, and power structures. It provides valuable insights into the historical roots of contemporary hygiene practices and attitudes, making it an essential read for scholars, students, and anyone interested in the cultural history of India.

Free Download your copy today and embark on a fascinating journey into the cultural politics of hygiene!



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