

MARY DOUGLAS

1921-

1. Introduction

1.1 Educated at Sacred Heart Convent in London and Oxford University, Ph.d 1951 under Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard. 1981 Avalon Professor of the Humanities at Northwestern

1.2. Focus on the Lele of Zaire and Hebrews

1.3. Douglas represents a bridge between the structural functional school of anthropology and the symbolic school (Geertz, et. al). The concept of "grid and group" which she introduces in Natural Symbols overlays the symbolic, cultural "grid" of a society on its social, "group" controls. Douglas attempts to characterize societies on the basis of both their level of social control ("group") and their level of cultural orientation ("grid").

Grid: Rules, Order,

Group: Individual/Group

1.4. In Taboo and Danger (1966) she maintains that what a culture considers to be unclean reflects the ordered patterning which that society is seeking to establish (illus. is the Hebrew dietary restrictions in Leviticus and Deuteronomy). Thiselton argues that Douglas' interpretation includes both a "structuralist" and a "socio-semiotic point of view" (or symbolic) (1992, 427).

1.5. Douglas "widens" the thinking of Durkheim, who felt that "the study of religion then is a study of the social reality that it expresses" (Malefijit 1974, 187). She also reflects the thinking of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown one of the founders of British structural functionalism, who maintained that anthropologists should concentrate their study on "the social functions of religion, that is, the contribution that it makes to the formation and maintenance of a social order" (Morris 1987, 127).

2. Influences

2.1) Durkheim 1858-1917 (see Geertz 1973:87)

2.1.1. Social Structure --> Economic --> Ideology
Max Weber- Protestant work ethic
Ideological --> Social --> Economic Systems
Karl Marx:
Economic/political --> Social --> Ideological

2.1.2. Phenomenological concern

2.1.3. Mission concern is to plant churches.

Religion is a useful institution "it is better adapted than any other institution...to show us an essential and permanent aspect of humanity" (1961:13).

MAGIC DOES NOT
 → COMMUNITIES
 ... little interest
 in it

"A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden--beliefs and practices which unite, into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them." (Durkheim 1915).

"For Freud God is the father, for Durkheim God is society" (Evans-Pritchard 1966:63).

2.2. Sir Edward E. Evans-Pritchard:

2.2.1. All the leading sociologists and anthropologists contemporaneous with, or since, Frazer were agnostics and positivists....Almost all the leading anthropologists of my own generation would, I believe, hold that religious faith is illusion, a curious phenomenon soon to become extinct and to be explained in such terms as 'compensation' and 'projection' or by some sociological interpretation on the lines of maintenance of social solidarity (1962:162).

3. RITUALS

3.1. Douglas' foundation for her model is established by her discussion of natural symbols and ritual. Since "each symbolic system develops autonomously according to its own rules" in its own society, then "a cross-cultural, pan-human pattern of symbols must be an impossibility" (1973:11).

old
 founded cultures

3.2. Instead of looking for symbols universal to all human societies, her goal is to find "natural systems of symbolizing. We will look for tendencies and correlations between the character of the symbolic and that of the social system" (1973:12). The key to finding these correlations between the symbolic and the social system (which will form the basis the model of grid and group) is through a study of the society's ritual.

M.D
 natural systems

3.3. Douglas defines ritual as a "routinized act, diverted from its normal function," in order to communicate (1973:20). Douglas argues "that the perception of symbols in general, as well as their interpretation, is socially determined" (1973:27-28), displaying the functionalist underpinning of her system.

3.3.1. Where ritualism is strong, sin is external; where it's weak, sin is internal. Where ritualism is strong, sacraments bring grace (1973:26-27).

3.3.2. In religious history, anti-ritualism periodically breaks out. These attacks on ritual do not come from deprivation in the society (1973:20). Furthermore, "rites are prior and myths are secondary in the study of religion;" i.e. people fall into ritualistic patterns

and theology is developed to justify them (1973:30). Instead, "I argue that the perception of symbols in general, as well as their interpretation, is socially determined" (1973:27-28). Navaho taboos illustrate that "when the social group grips its members in tight communal bonds, the religion is ritualist; when this grip is relaxed, ritualism declines" (1973:32). This contrasts with the Ituri pygmies, who have little ritual and a fluid, band social structure, underscoring "that the most important determinant of ritualism is the experience of closed social groups" (1973:33).

3.3.3. "In its extreme forms anti-ritualism is an attempt to abolish communication by means of complex symbolic systems" in favor of inner meaning alone (1973:40). Even anti-ritualists find a need for a "coherent system of expression. Then ritualism reasserts itself around the new context of social relations" (40).

3.3.4. The non-ritualist's "contempt both for magic and rules of impurity is based on ignorance. The drawing of symbolic lines and boundaries is a way of bringing order into experience. Such non-verbal symbols are capable of creating a structure of meaning in which individuals can relate to one another and realize their own ultimate purposes" (1973:73). "These very people [such as the teacher who sits in a different seat to preserve equality, or the boss who makes the tea at work], who prefer unstructured intimacy in their social relations, defeat their wish for communication without words. For only a ritual structure makes possible a wordless channel of communication that is not entirely incoherent" (1963:76). Ritual is absolutely necessary to fulfill humankind's idealized desire for intimate, non-verbal communication.

4. Bernstein's Model

4.1. Douglas uses a model proposed by Basil Bernstein to develop her grid and group (two social dimensions) based upon Bernstein sees societies developing with two types of linguistic codes:

4.1.1. elaborated code - wide range of syntactical alternatives, organizes fresh thought and expresses fresh ideas,

4.1.2. restricted code - narrower range of syntactical alternatives, reinforce the social system (44).

4.2. He also sees two types of family control

4.2.1. Personal family - the autonomy and unique value of the individual is celebrated and children are controlled through "person oriented appeals" focusing on the feelings of themselves and others;

4.2.2. Positional family - children are controlled

through status oriented appeals focusing on the grid or structure they are in (e.g., "because you're a boy, the oldest").

- (i) cardinal virtues
- (ii) cardinal sins
- (iii) the idea of self
- (iv) art form

Speech Socially Restricted

<p>A</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>obedience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) piety, honor (respect for roles) (ii) formal transgressions against social structure (iii) self, passive, undifferentiated element in a structured environ. (iv) primitive: structural elaborat. upon social categories, humans as cardboard allegor. figures 	<p>B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) sincerity, authenticity (ii) sins against the self, hypocrisy, cruelty, acceptance of frustration (iii) internally, differentiated agent, attempting to control unstructured environment.
<p>C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Truth, duty (ii) Cardinal sin is failure to respond to demands of social structure. (iii) Active agent, internally differentiated, responding to roles. (iv) Classical: triumph of structure over individual. 	<p>D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Personal success, doing good to humanity. (ii) Generalized guilt, individual and collective. (iii) Subject roles. (iv) Professionalism: overriding concern with techniques and materials of creative process.s

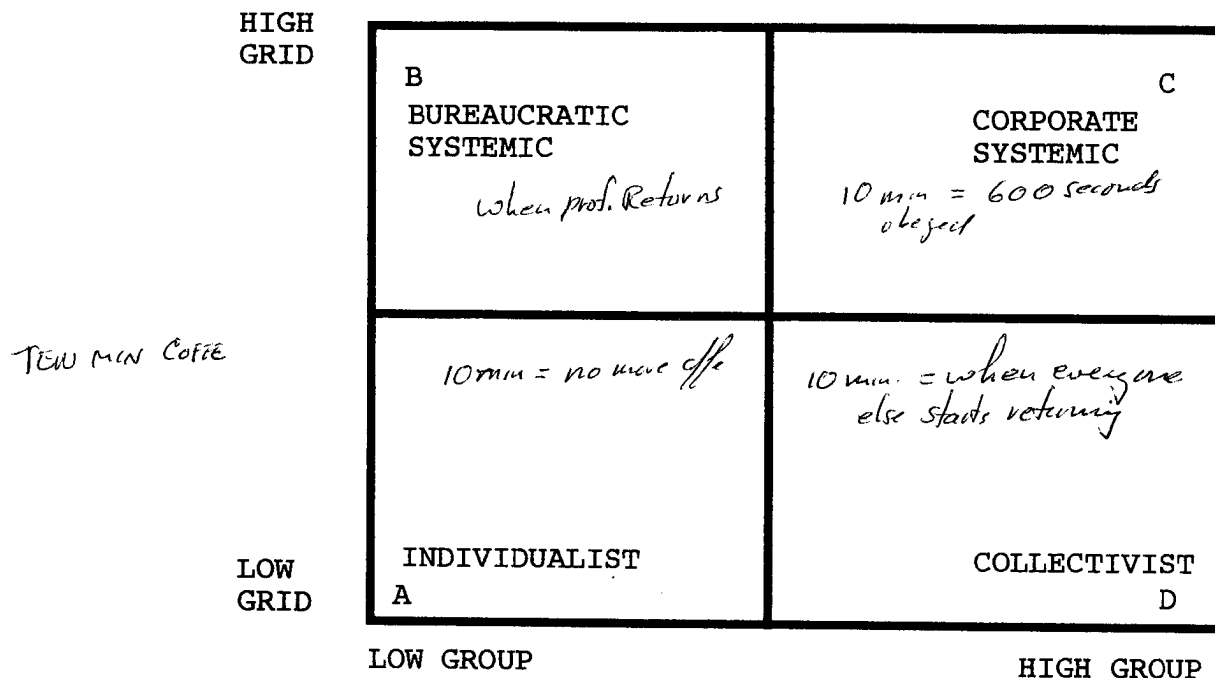
Speech Elaborated

5. Grid and Group *TWO TYPES OF SOCIAL GLUE*

5.1. Social groups can be categorized based on the nature of their "restricted code"/i.e. rituals and symbols. "The restricted code...is a system of control as well as a system of communication" (79).

5.2. Grid represents a society's level of adherence to the system of social symbols & classification (vertical axis). A society that adheres to its own system of social symbols, which has a culture that is internally coherent and to which individuals are well oriented, would rank high on the axis. A society which violates its own system of social symbols or in which individuals are not well oriented to the cultural symbols would rank low on the axis.

5.3. Group represents a society's level of pressure to adapt to social norms (horizontal axis). A society that puts a great deal of pressure on individuals to conform to its standards would be charted on the right side of the axis. A society with few social pressures and which allows people to "do their own thing" would be charted on the left side of the axis.



5.4. Grid and Group as a way of Analyzing Societies

5.4.1. Strong grid, strong group - "high classification"

Respect towards authority and its symbols. Social categories are taken as "God given eternal truths....No other alternative view of reality seems possible. A small shift of definitions is anathema and worth protecting with bloodshed. Anomaly is abhorrent" (1973:174).

"Any bureaucratic system which is sufficiently secure and insulated from criticism will tend to think the same way. This is the monastic life, or the "Belief in a punishing, moral universe." There is a just universe, suffering is either proper punishment, or will be all balanced out in the end. "All moral failings are at once sins against religion and community" (1973:91).

5.4.2. Weak grid, strong group - "small group"

"Small groups broadens the category of potential rejects

Grid: Rules, rigid categories

*Dominant
Culture*

Corporate world

to include the whole range of acquaintance, male, female, kinsman and unrelated" (88). These are small, disrupted societies, with the contradictory goals of loyalty/obedience to leaders and ambition/accusation to advance oneself. E.g. East African tribes immediately after Arab slaving days. "Less confidence in the power of God to protect the faithful, a dualist cosmology reckons with the power of demons and their allies; justice is not seen to prevail" (91). The universe is divided between good and evil, roles are ambiguous, leadership is precarious, evil is from the outside in the person of deviants. Frequent accusations of witchcraft.

5.4.3. Strong grid, weak group - "strong grid"

Corporate Culture

Individualistic, competitive social systems. In principle, an egalitarian social system but in fact, favoring a minority. "Strong grid tends to a pragmatic world view, sin is less understood than shame for loss of personal honour, face or solvency...; strong grid focuses on the honour of the individual, the number of supporters he can summon up, the control he has over his women folk" (91).

"The system of strong grid is such that only the few can achieve success....For the majority of others it may never be clear that the path is blocked for themselves" (164). Big men emerge through patronage and a drive to be successful. Success brings self-esteem. The successful leaders "feel no need for symbolic action other than triumphal feasts for symbolizing the control of society by the self" (165). This social system "cannot continually sustain the commitment of all its members to an egalitarian principle that favours a minority" it can swing "between the glorification of successful leaders and the celebration of the right of the masses to enjoy success" (168) in student revolt and violent millennialism (i.e. antiritualism). Nature is morally neutral and exploitable. "Persons are treated as things, instruments, pawns in a game" (175).

5.4.4. Weak grid, weak group

"The individual left alone with himself develops a distinctive cosmology, benign and unritualistic" (91-92). People could care less about the opinions of others.

"The cosmos is not anthropomorphic. There is less call for articulate forms of social intercourse and no need for a set of symbols with which to send and receive specific communication." Hence, "less regard for ritual." The farther to the lower left, "the greater the faith in the inner purity and goodness of the human heart; the need for ritual forms is weakened, also the sense of sin." "Alienation from society will be expressed by desacralizing its image....God, dethroned from the centres of power, will be set up again in the small, interpersonal group which is aliented. Thus the image of God

loses its majesty and becomes intimate, a personal friend who speaks directly, heart to heart, without any truck with instituted forms" (195).

6. Implications on Religion of Grid/Group:

6.1. Trances

"I would expect more highly specialized trance roles, more sense of danger in trances, more specific, narrowly defined benefits attributed to trance where social control by grid and group is more intense....Where trance is not regarded as at all dangerous, but as a benign source of power and guidance for the community at large, I would expect to find a very loosely structured community, group boundaries unimportant, social categories undefined, or distant control but impersonal rules strong" (108-109).

6.2. "Effervescence" and Spirit Possession

"The lack of strong social articulation, the slackening of group and grid" are the cause of "effervescent religious revivalism" (114).

"The weaker the social constraints, the more bodily dissociation is approved and treated as a central ritual adjunct for channeling benign power to the community. The stronger the social pressures, the more magicality in ritual and in the definition of sin" (130).

6.3. Sin

"Along the series from maximum formality and control in symbolic behaviour to maximum informality and uncontrol there is a corresponding series in attitudes to wrong-doing. At the pole of maximum formality, the idea of wrong-doing takes no account of internal motive, or of the state of mind of the actor. Wrong-doing is bad in itself, its dangers are automatically unleashed,....At the pole of maximum informality the idea of wrong-doing is entirely concerned with internal states of mind. The actual consequences of the act are of less concern than the wishes and intentions of the actor. Responsibility ends with the securing of right motives" (131-132).

6.4. The Problem of Evil

"It takes a certain kind of social experience to start to worry about the problem of evil" (145). Pain and injustice are less of a problem to societies located to the left of the vertical line (Low Group).

Strong grid and group - "use the incidence of misfortune to uphold the moral law. Disease and accident are either attributed to moral failure or invested with nobility in a general metaphysical scheme which embraces suffering as part of the order of being" (136).

Strong group, weak grid - Dualistic. Fear of witchcraft

by small, threatened communities. The witch is outside of and against normal human society. Human wickedness is on a cosmic scale.

6.5. The Cosmos

"To the right (High Group) the cosmos is more punishing, the left more benign" (172).

To the left (Low Group), the cosmos is dominated by impersonal powers and principles, weak anthropomorphism, little moral regulation with no system of rewards and punishment.

High Grid: the principles which control the universe "act as multipliers of human success of failure." The system gives success to the strong, failure to the weak. "The self is valued uniquely for its own sake, not for any contribution it can make to the whole" (176).

High Group: the cosmos controlled by powers "modeled on human figures": ancestors, creator god, or real human beings. Social control is based on moral situations; punishment and reward. "The idea of self is surrounded with prickly moral contexts."

High grid: Value of the material, including society and organizations

Low grid: Value of the spiritual.

High Group, Low Grid: asceticism.

Low Group, Low Grid: individual relationships.

6.6. Anti-ritualism

"Anti-ritualism is...the idiom of revolt" (182). "Thus we should expect that those who have the sense of living without meaningful categories, and who suffer from being treated as an undifferentiated, insignificant mass, will seek to express themselves by inarticulate, undifferentiated symbols" (183).

"Millennial fervour emerges with weakness of classification" (184).

"The tragedy of millennial movements...is that they do not usually lead to a better society....After attacking definition as such, differentiation as such, ritual as such, it is very difficult to turn about and seek the new definitions, differentiations and rituals which will remedy the case" (186).

"Instead of anti-ritualism it would be more practical to experiment with more flexible institutional forms and to seek to develop their ritual expression....The theologians who should be providing for us more precise and original categories of thought are busy demolishing meaningless rituals and employing the theological tool chest to meet the demands of anti-ritualists" (188).

7. Conclusion

"Society and culture are both abstractions, categories

applied to the process which, in the last resort, consists of individuals dealing with other individuals....The argument of this book is that the elaborated [speech, cultural and societal] code challenges its users to turn round on themselves and inspect their values, to reject some of them, and to resolve to cherish positional forms of control and communication wherever these are available. This would seem to be the only way to free ourselves from the power of our own cosmology" (190).

8. Missiological Implications

8.1. We need to be sensitive to how our own society and position on the grid/group scale has shaped our vision and sense of mission.

How much of our message is influenced by the Scripture and how much by our society?

For that matter, to what extent is our interpretation of Scripture influenced by our society?

8.2. We need to be sensitive to the grid/group of societies in which we minister.

8.3. The church needs to tie "this worldly behavior" to the mystical, spiritual aspects of Christianity. We need to develop a healthy respect for ritual and symbol, since we cannot separate the ethical from the ritualistic.

8.4. Be aware and sensitive to body images in seeking to understand a new culture.

Selected References:

Douglas, Mary. 1966. Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. Boston, Mass.: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

_____. 1973. Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology. New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. 1962. Social Anthropology and Other Essays. N.Y.: Free Press.

Malefijt, Annemarie de Waal. 1974. Images of Man: A History of Anthropological Thought. N.Y.: Alfred Knopf.

FIGURE 1. Grid and Group Matrix of Mary Douglas
 (Adapted from Mary Douglas 1973 and from Isenberg and Owen 1977: 7-8)

	HIGH
Weak Group, High Grid	
WEAK GROUP	<p><i>Purity:</i> pragmatic attitude toward purity; pollution is not automatic; bodily exuviae are not threatening and may be recycled</p> <p><i>Rite:</i> used for private as well as public ends when present; the individual remains superior to the rite process; condensed symbols do not delimit reality</p> <p><i>Personal Identity:</i> individualism; pragmatic and adaptable</p> <p><i>Body:</i> viewed instrumentally, as means to some end; self-controlled; treated pragmatically</p> <p><i>Sin:</i> basically caused by ignorance or failure; hence viewed as stupidity or embarrassment with loss of face; the individual is responsible</p> <p><i>Cosmology:</i> the universe is geared to individual success and initiative; the cosmos is benignly amoral; God is a junior partner; adequate causality</p> <p><i>Suffering and Misfortune:</i> an intelligent person ought to be able to avoid them; totally eradicable</p>
Weak Group, Low Grid	LOW

- Group:* refers to the degree of societal pressure at work on a given social unit (individual or group) to conform to societal norms.
- Strong group:* indicates high pressure to conform along with strong corporate identity, clear distinction between ingroup and outgroup, clear sets of boundaries separating the two, and a clear set of normative symbols defining, expressing, and replicating group identity.
 - Weak group:* indicates low pressure to conform along with rather nebulous group identity (individualism), fuzzy distinctions between ingroup and outgroup, highly porous sets of boundaries between interfacing groups, and few or too many non-normative symbols defining, expressing, and replicating group identity.

GRID	PERSONAL CAUSALITY	Strong Group, High Grid
		ASCRIBED STATUS
		STRONG GROUP
GRID		Strong Group, Low Grid

- Grid:* refers to the degree of socially constrained adherence normally given to the symbol system—the classifications, patterns of perception and evaluation—through which the society enables its members to bring order and intelligibility to their experiences.
- High grid:* indicates a high degree of fit or match between the individual's experiences and societal patterns of perception and evaluation. The individual will perceive the world as coherent, consistent, and entirely understandable in its broadest reaches. Values consist of distinct sets of priorities.
 - Low grid:* indicates a low degree of fit or match between an individual's experiences and societal patterns of perception and evaluation. The world is largely incomprehensible. Values are scattered in various configurations, hence consist of desiderata.

Mary Douglas

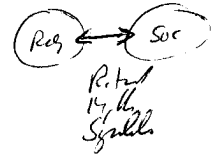
"Mary Douglas was educated in a Catholic convent, and after obtaining a degree in politics and economics at Oxford, she worked for a while at the Colonial Office. Developing an interest in anthropology, she returned to Oxford to study and then undertook fieldwork studies among the Lele of Zaire" (Morris: 204).

1. Ritualism/ Symbolism

(Natural Symbols. "her primary focus is on delineating structural correlation or a concordance between symbolic patterns and social experience.")

2. Dan Shaw

Anti-ritualism: "Ritual has become a bad word signifying empty conformity. We are witnessing a revolt against formalism, even against form."



- 1) Contempt of external ritual forms
- 2) Private internalizing of religious experience
- 3) Move to humanist philanthropy

- "When the third stage is under way, the symbolic life of the spirit is finished."
 - "The causes of anti-ritualism today in middle-class European and American communities would appear to be a predictable result of a process of socialization in which the child never internalizes a pattern of social statues and never experiences authoritative control which exalts the self-evident property of a social system to command obedience. Symbols of solidarity and hierarchy have not been a part of his education."

- "The drawing of symbolic lines and boundaries is a way of bringing order into experience. Such non-verbal symbols are capable of creating a structure of meaning in which individuals can relate to one another and realize their own ultimate purposes."

Cf. Food rules for the Israelites in the Mosaic code. (Deciphering A Meal. In Implicit Meanings.) Three rules about meat are for the holiness of the Israelites.

*11.000 by solidarity
 → meaning, ritual
 → quality - self-imitation
 → and, rituals
 → less power*

2. Grid and Group - Scales for Social Control

Grid: The degree to which a culture's symbolic system is ordered and codified so as to constitute a coherent world view.

Group: The degree to which the individual is controlled by social relationships.

<u>Grid</u>		
(3) strong grid weak group	(2) strong grid strong group	
<u>Group</u>		
(1) weak grid weak group	(4) weak grid strong group	

Two forms of religion

	Conditions for Effervescence (ecstasy)	Conditions for Ritualism (control)
Social Dimension	Weak control by grid and group: Self and society not differentiated	Strong control and high classification: Society differentiated and exalted above self
Symbolic Order	Diffuse symbols: No interest in magic or ritual differentiation; control of consciousness not exalted	Condensed symbolic system: Magical efficacy attributed to symbolic acts; symbols express high value on control of consciousness

3. Missiological Implication to Church in Japan

<Society> -- "Weak grid - strong group"

<Company> -- "Strong grid - strong group"

<Church> -- "Strong/ weak grid - weak group"

- Churches keep losing people, although they are gaining new people. Because inside of the church tends to be more individualistic than the society in general, many people from non-Christian families become

Christians individually but not "socialized" into church.

- Business organization is often more religious than church so that people can receive meaning in it. There are many new and new new religions in Japan. But we don't find many businessmen of major corporations in those religious organizations.

- Because church is more "big man" culture, strong leadership is essential for local church growth. But, in this sense, a local church cannot become very large because growth depend on the "big man."

- Therefore, weakness is lay ministry. Strong leadership is necessary, but to revitalize the church more extensively, various kinds of lay ministry and leadership development are needed. Pastors tend to be "big man" and make more followers than leaders.

- More theologically speaking, since business organizations cannot provide cosmology, Christians need to understand their secular callings as a part of Biblical cosmology.

