

# Mary Douglas: Social Structure and Powers

**Social structure:** Manifest in particular situations (social dramas), NOT total, diff. degrees of awareness, substructures

**Society consists of different configurations of:**

**Form/structure/order**

**Formless/margins/disorder/non-structure  
(both danger and power)**

**Well-articulated  
Strong, secular authority**

**Ill-articulated, ambiguous roles  
no formal authority**

**Interstructural roles (MB in  
patriline, wife=witches)**

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## 3 Kinds of Social/Spiritual Powers:

**Formal authority**

via Symbols (external)  
Controlled  
Conscious  
on behalf of sociey  
white magic  
approved of  
assumed in office

**Formless Person**

in Psyche (internal)  
Uncontrolled  
Unconscious  
against sociey  
black magic  
disapproved of  
post hoc efficacy

**Pollution**

Inherent in structure  
intention irrelevant  
on behalf of sociey  
unleashed in action

## 2 Kinds of Spiritual Powers:

Biased to Failure (checks a person's authority/status)

Biased to Success (enhances a person's power, can be contagious)

### Formal authority

via Symbols (external)

Controlled

Conscious

on behalf of society

white magic

approved of

assumed in office

### Formless Person

in Psyche (internal)

Uncontrolled

Unconscious

against society

black magic

disapproved of

post hoc efficacy

### Pollution

Inherent in structure

intention irrelevant

on behalf of society

unleashed in action

### Sorcery (biased to failure)

Conscious

Open to all, but mostly formal authorities

### Witchcraft (biased to failure)

Unconscious

Interstitial person

### Baraka, Mana, Luck (biased to success)

Uncontrolled