

# **Tension of Two Worlds**

*Man & nature*  
*religion, rights, economics & accountability*

Further thinking after interviews in Mtwara, Tanzania  
First developed, July 2002

B.J. Heinzen

*These notes were made in the process of writing chapter 7 of the book titled,*  
***Feeling for Stones: learning & invention when facing the unknown,***  
*with some later additions.*

# Seduction of modernity



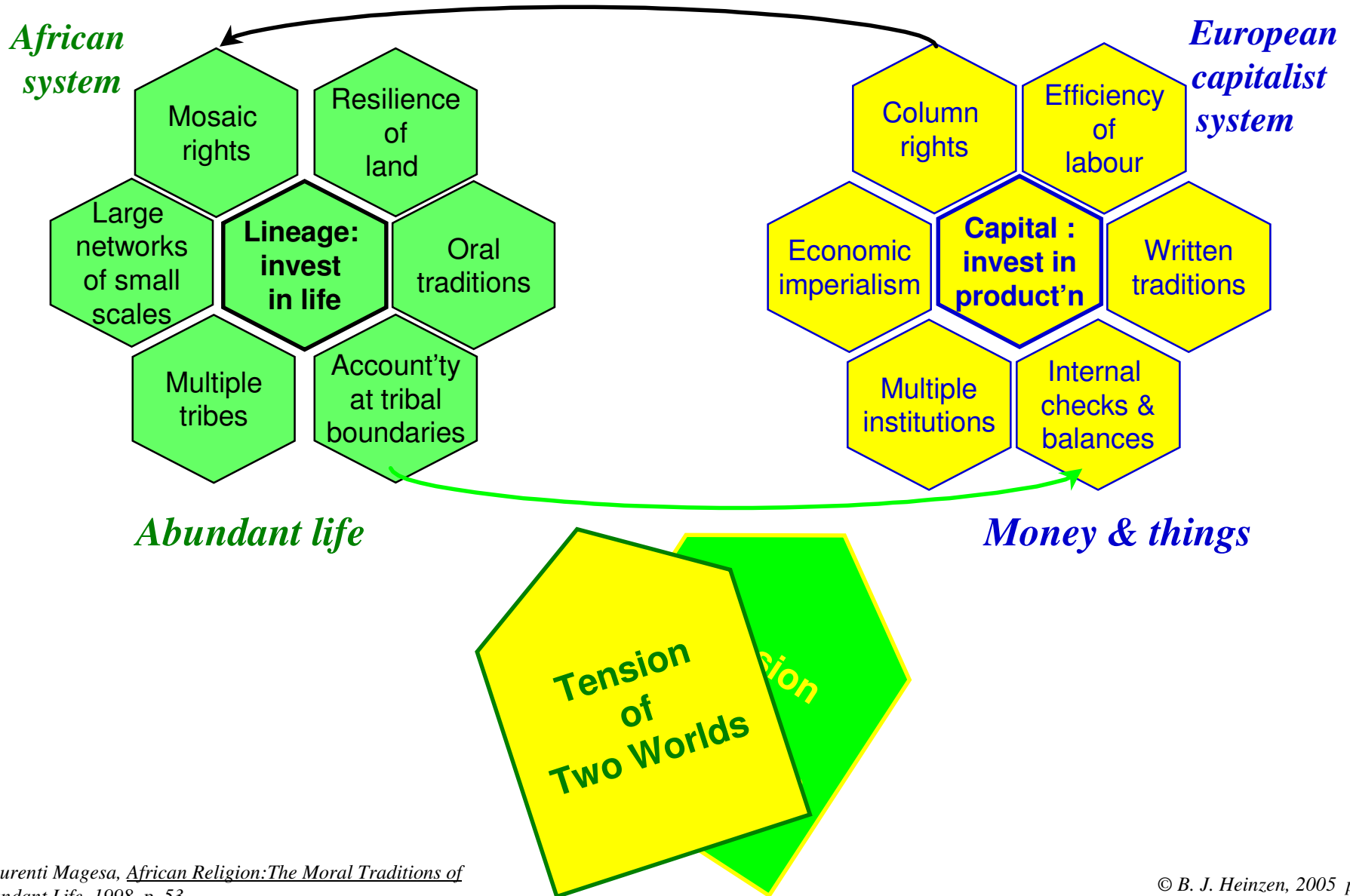
# Longevity of tradition



*NB: landscapes from Uganda – Jinja & Mbale; people from Mtwarra*

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# Different systems, different goals

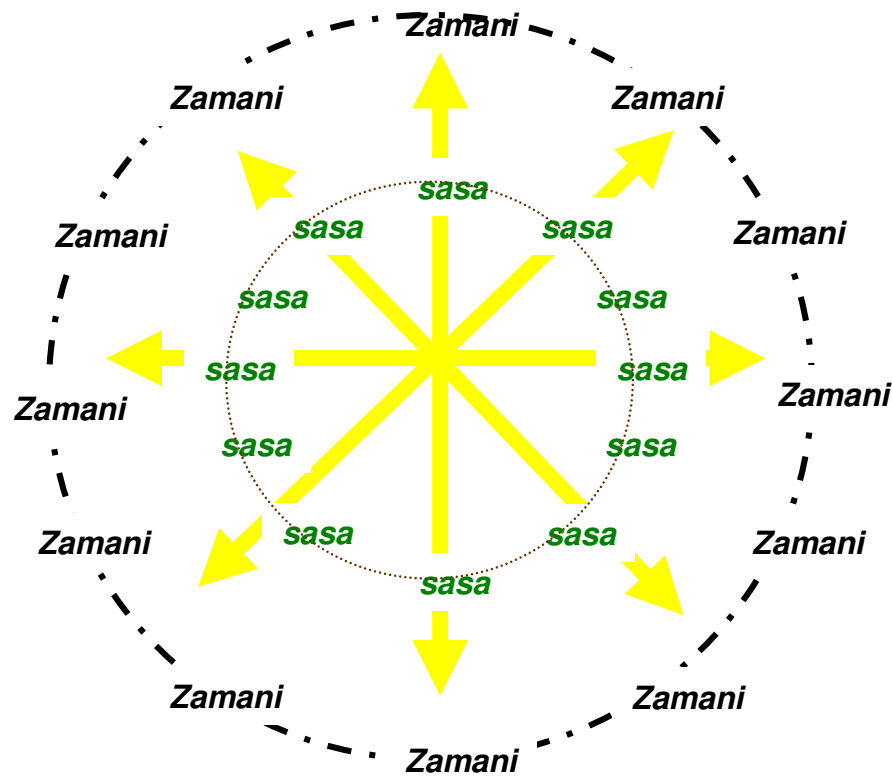


\*Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 1998, p. 53

# Different assumptions re time & the future

## Overlapping time

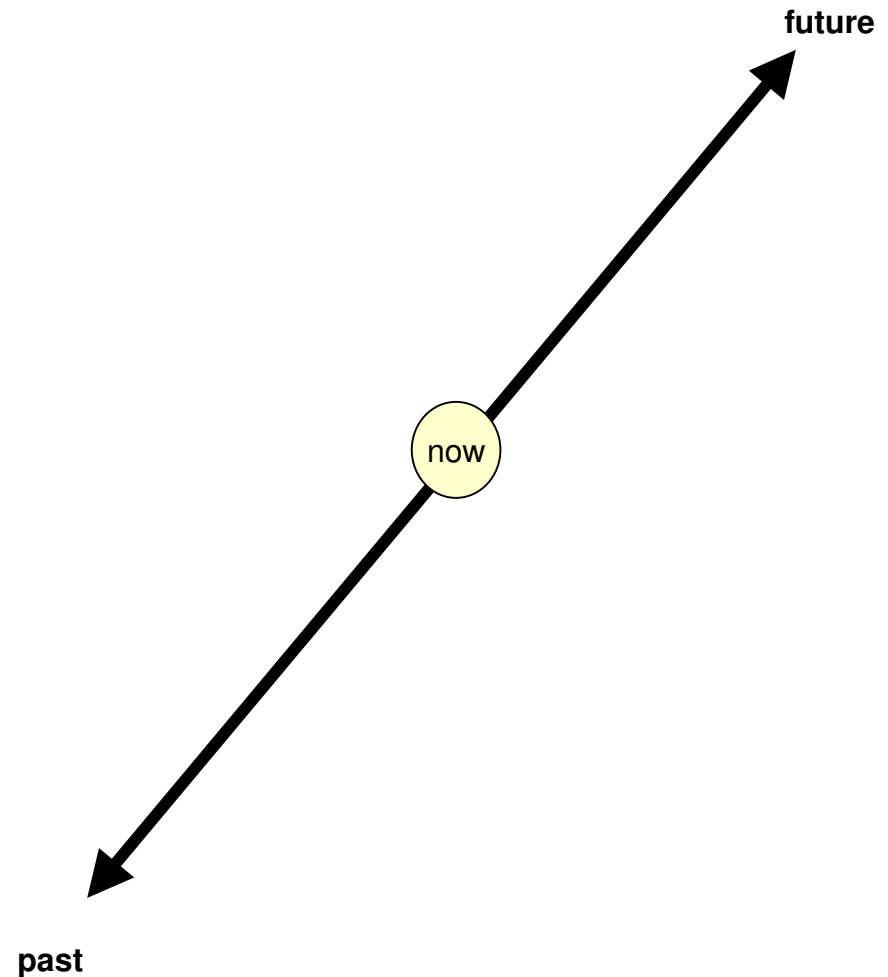
Nowness feeds into deep time where past, present and future exist.



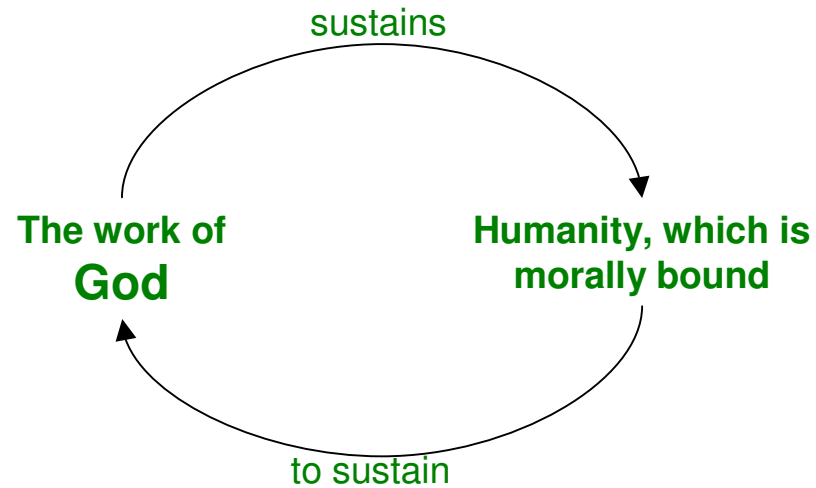
Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani.

## Progressive time

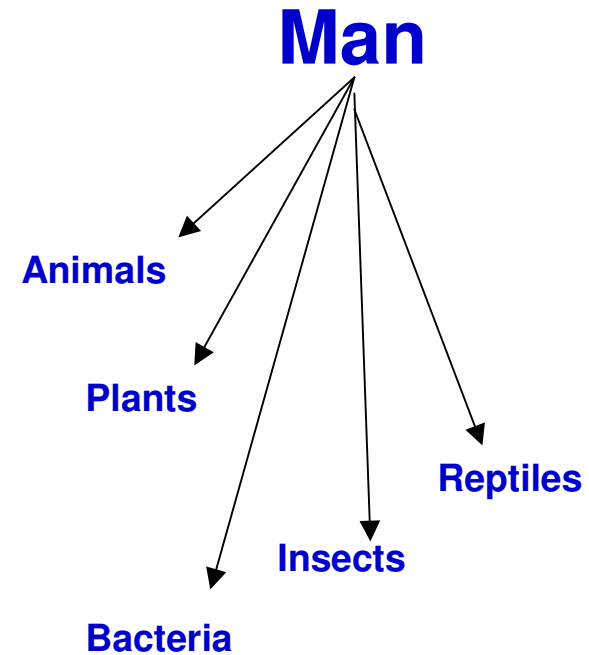
The past has created the present where we now create a better future.



# Different assumptions re: man & nature

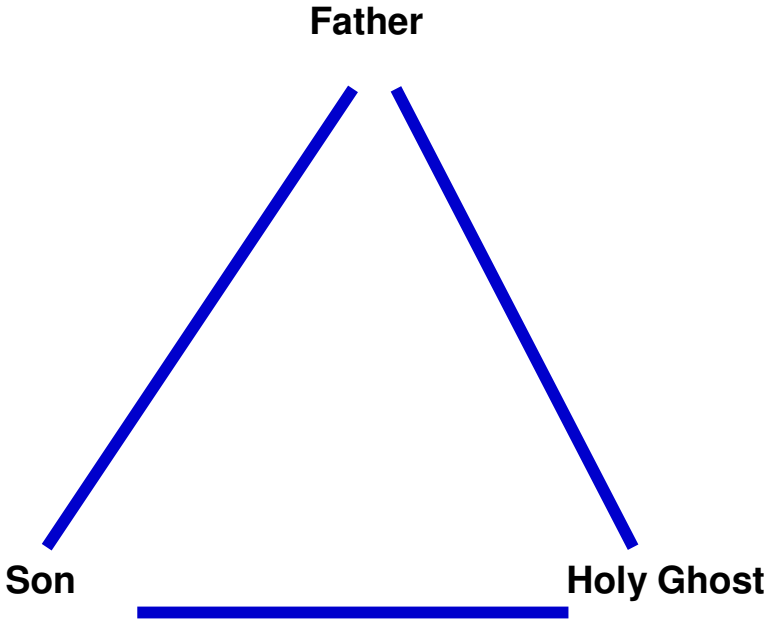
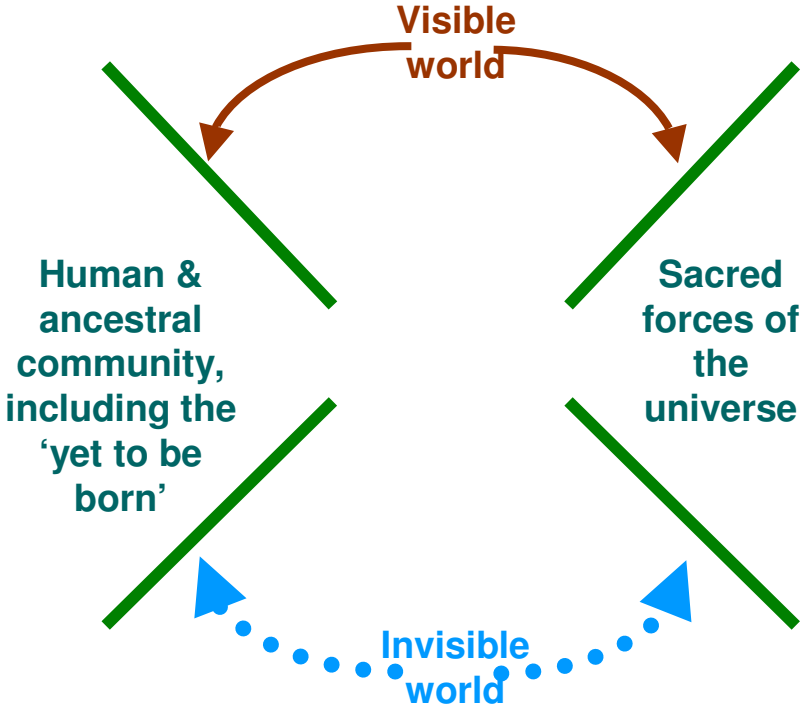


*“Every creature has been endowed by God with its own force of life, its own power to sustain life.”\**



*“And man shall have dominion And naming the animals, etc....”*

# Different relationship with invisible spirits



\*Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 1998, p. 62

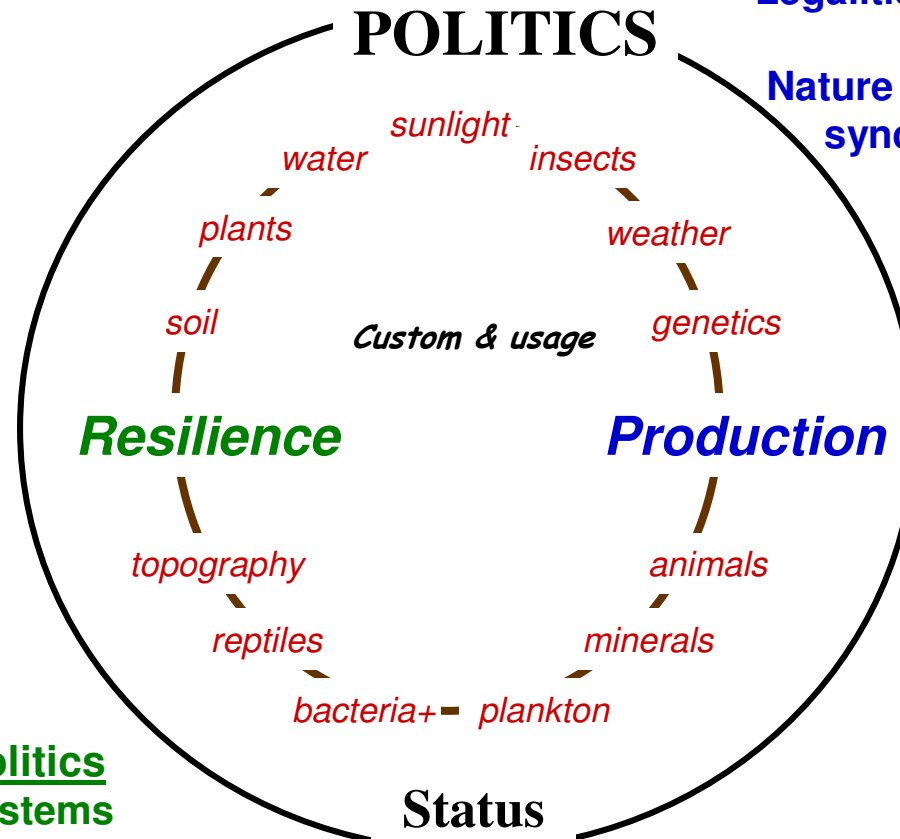
# Different position of nature in politics

Nation-state politics  
asynchronous systems

*shaped by*

Legalities & cultures of production  
*in which*

Nature is un-represented & out of  
synch with human systems



Molecular politics  
integrating systems  
*shaped by*

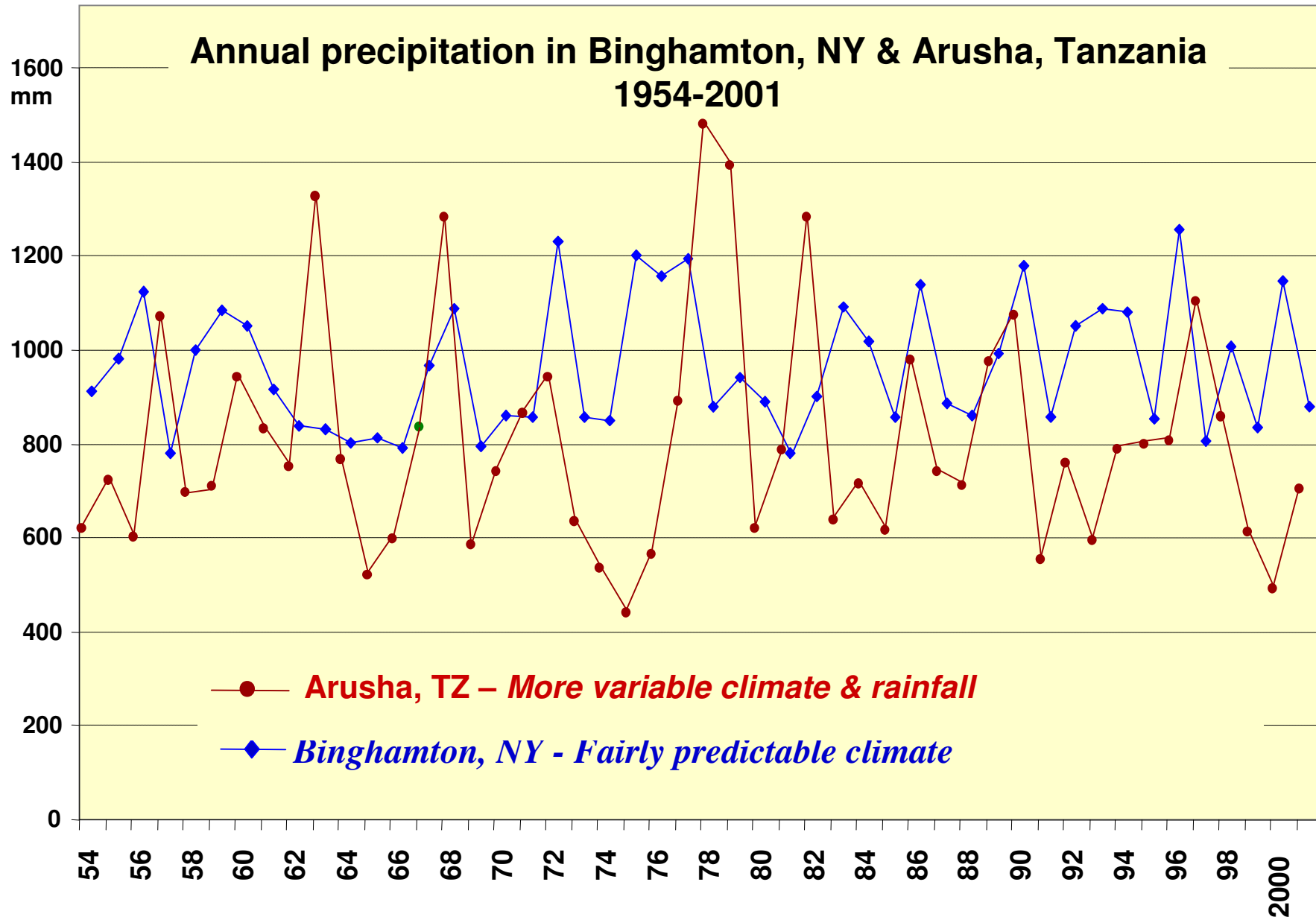
Relationships & cultures of magic  
*in which*

Nature represented by shamans & seers

**Status**  
**Wealth**  
**Power**

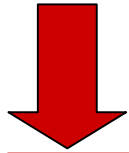


# Different climates → different risks



# Different climates → different legacies

*Chronic uncertainty of rainfall + weak soils*

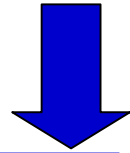


## African legacy

**Resilience** increased via small scale diversity & genetic reserves

**Oral knowledge**  
**Mosaic rights**  
**Molecular politics**

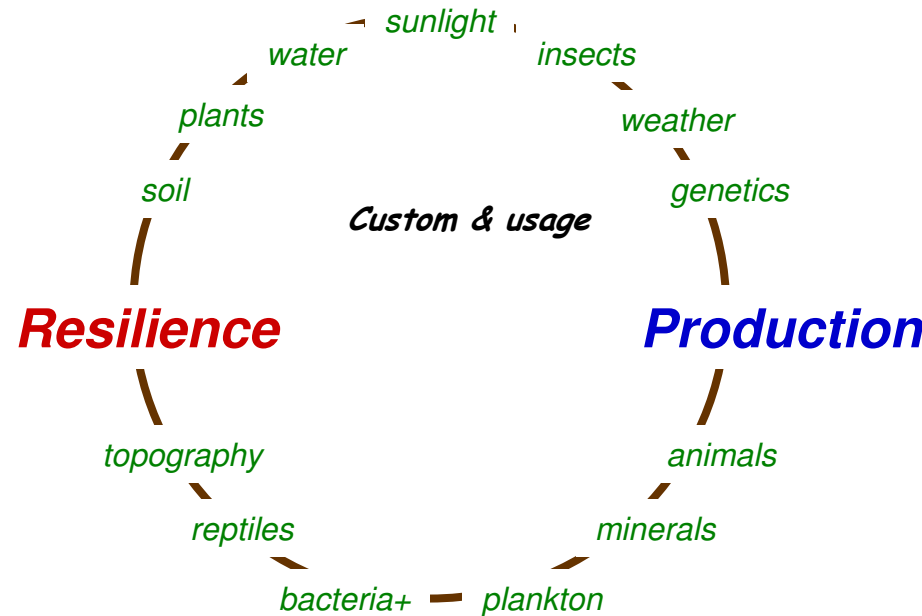
*Punctuated predictability of climate + good soils*



## European legacy

**Production** increased via large scale homogeneity & industrial machines

**Literate knowledge**  
**Column rights**  
**Nation-state politics**



*To survive, human societies need both resilience & production in their relationship with the natural world*

# Different geographies → Different rights



**Mosaic Rights**

Various people temporarily 'own' various things on a given hectare of land.

e.g.:

- Men have rights to tree crops.
- Women have rights to food crops.
- Water rights belong to person who dug the well.
  - Grazing rights belong to pastoralists after food crops are gathered.
- Mineral rights belong to government.



**Column Rights**

One person permanently owns everything on a given hectare of land.

e.g.:

- All property on surface
- Minerals beneath surface
- Water running through land
  - Air rights over land.

# Different rights → different boundaries

## *Fences v footpaths*



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**Column Rights**

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- All property on surface
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# Different assumptions re crises & change

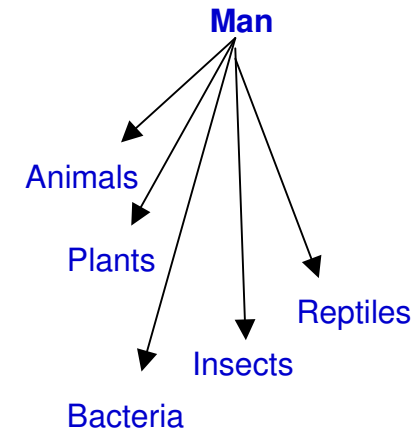
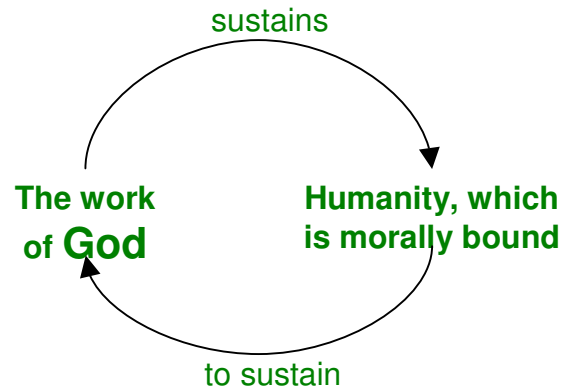


- Extreme events are normal & frequent.
- Human damage is temporary & quickly reversed.
- The world is changeable; we must be ready to adjust.



- Extreme events are abnormal & infrequent.
- Human damage is permanent; losses hard to restore.
- Production can be maintained thru wise mgt.

# Different goals: Resilience & production



## Ecology of resilience

= diversity  
= slowness  
= small scale

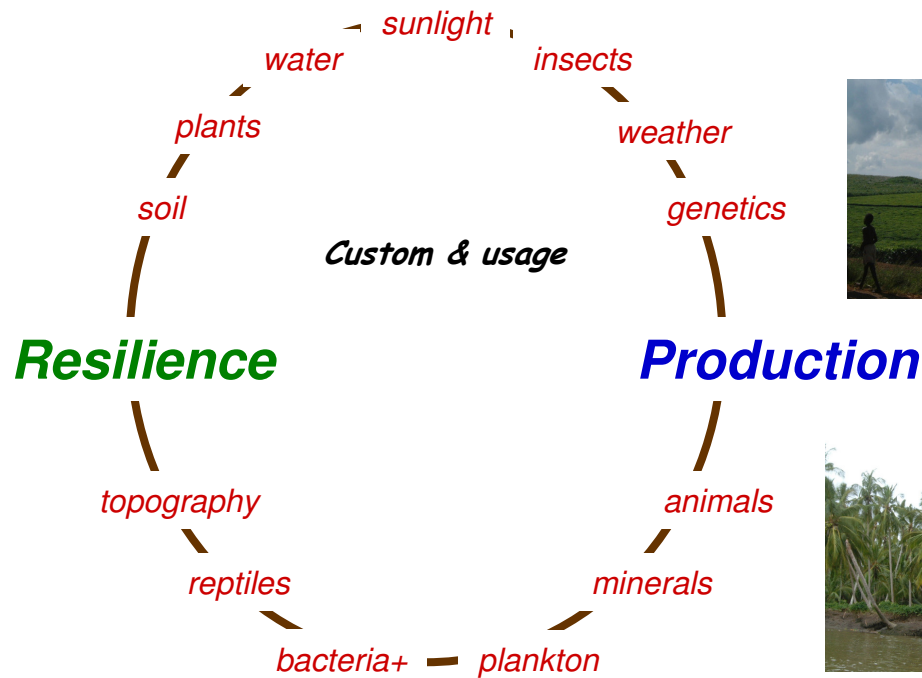
## Ecology of production

= homogeneity  
= speed  
= large scale

# Different goals → different economies

African legacy

European legacy



**Resilience** increased via small scale diversity & genetic reserves

**Production** increased via large scale homogeneity & industrial machines

**Economies of ...**

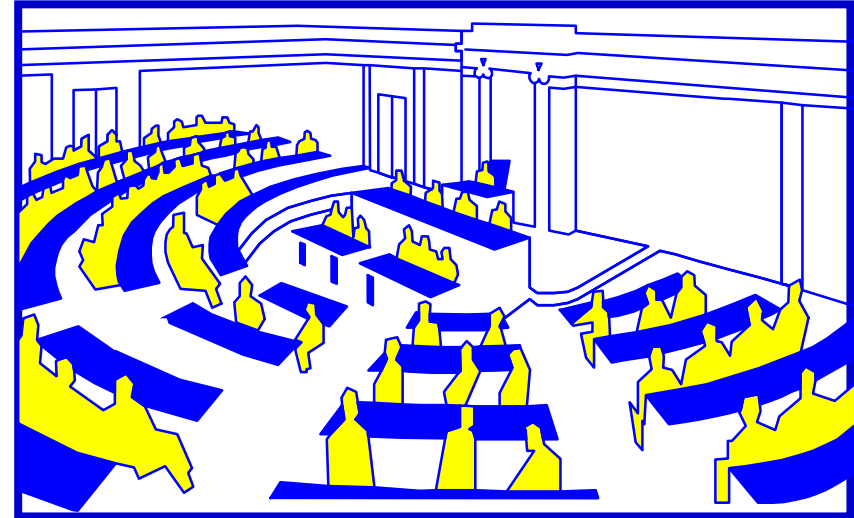
**Exchange & redistribution**

**accumulation & transformation**

# Different political accountability



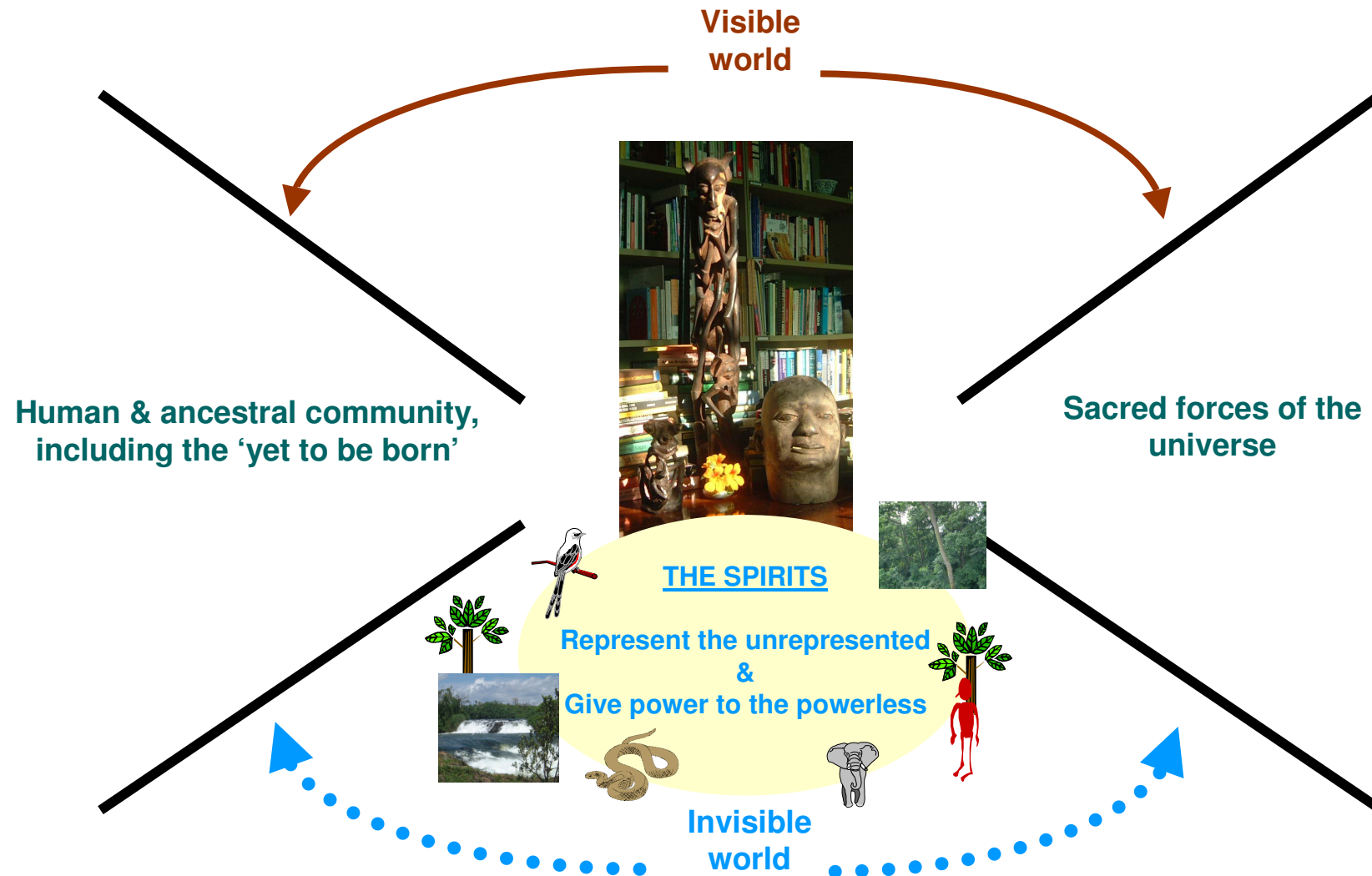
- Networked society of social tribes
- Chiefs accountable to elders, spirits & neighbouring tribes



- Network society of geographical nations
- Chiefs accountable to parliaments, judges & voters

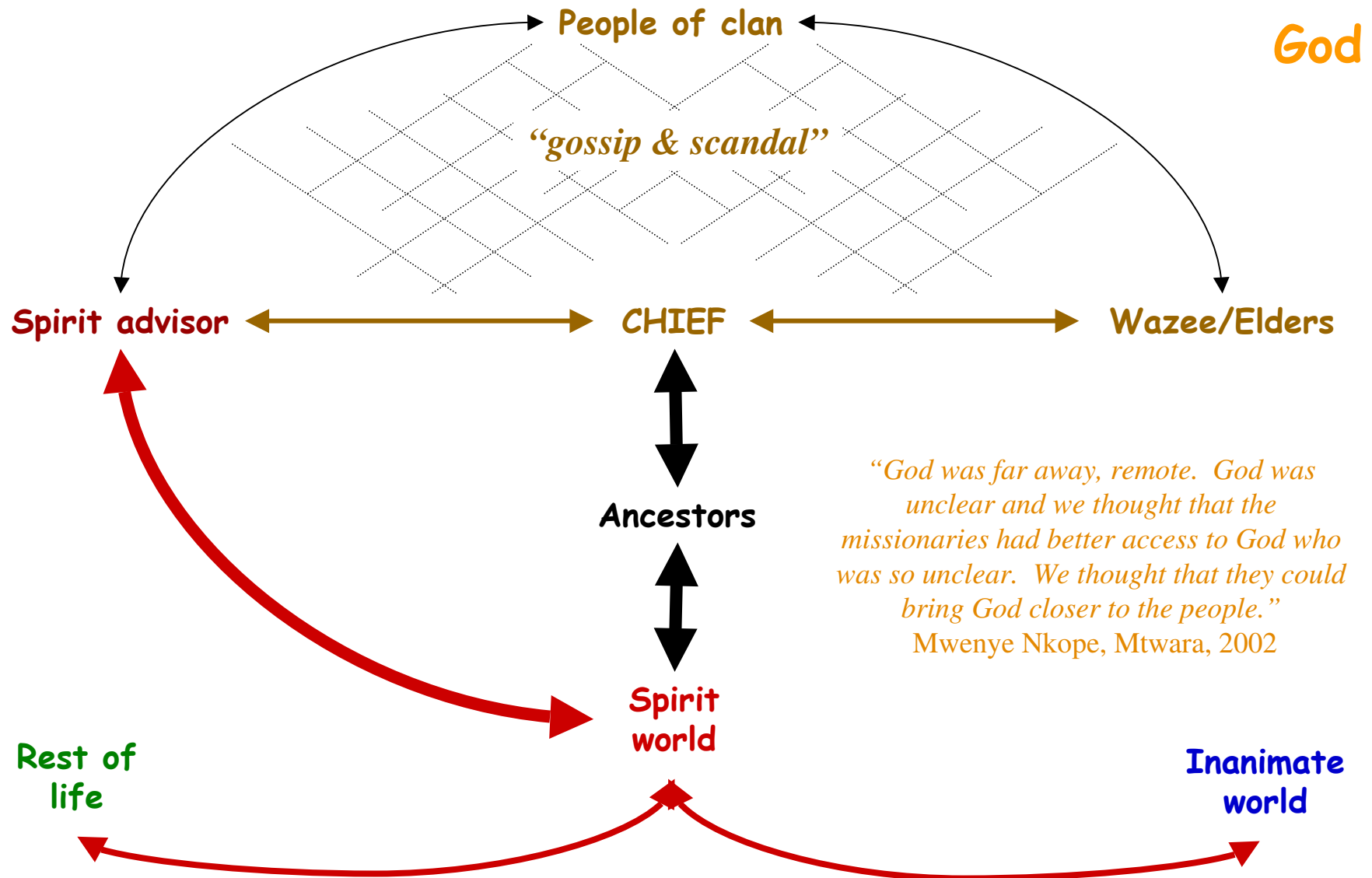


# Spirits represent the un-represented: *Ancestors, nature & the unborn*

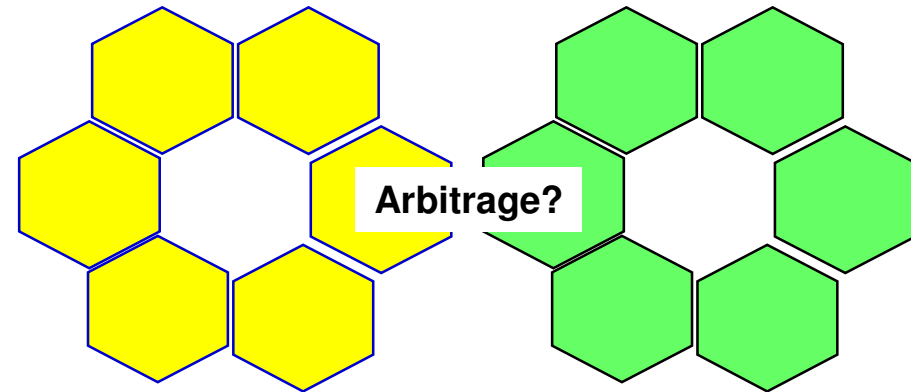
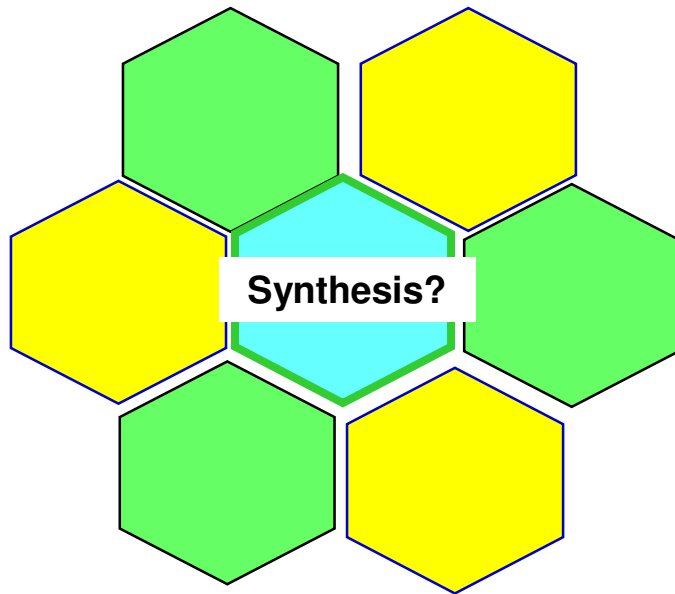


***“What constitutes misuse of the universe? This question can be answered in one word: greed.”***

# Spirit world holds leaders accountable



# Synthesis or arbitrage?



**We learn from each other.**

**Each system changes.**

**Together, we become something new.**

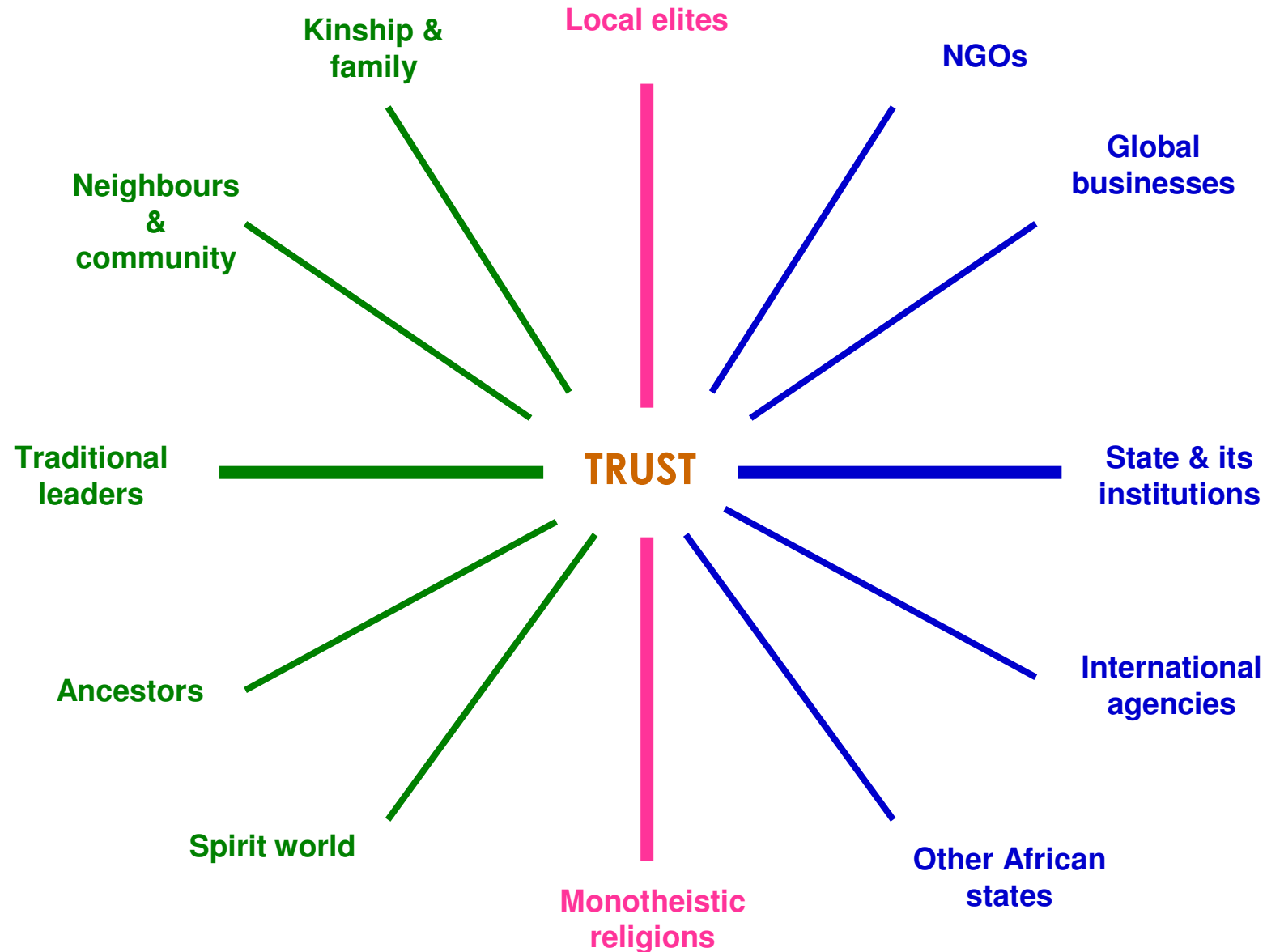
**Systems remain discrete.**

**Case by case, arbitrage advantages are taken.**

**The uses of disorder multiply.**

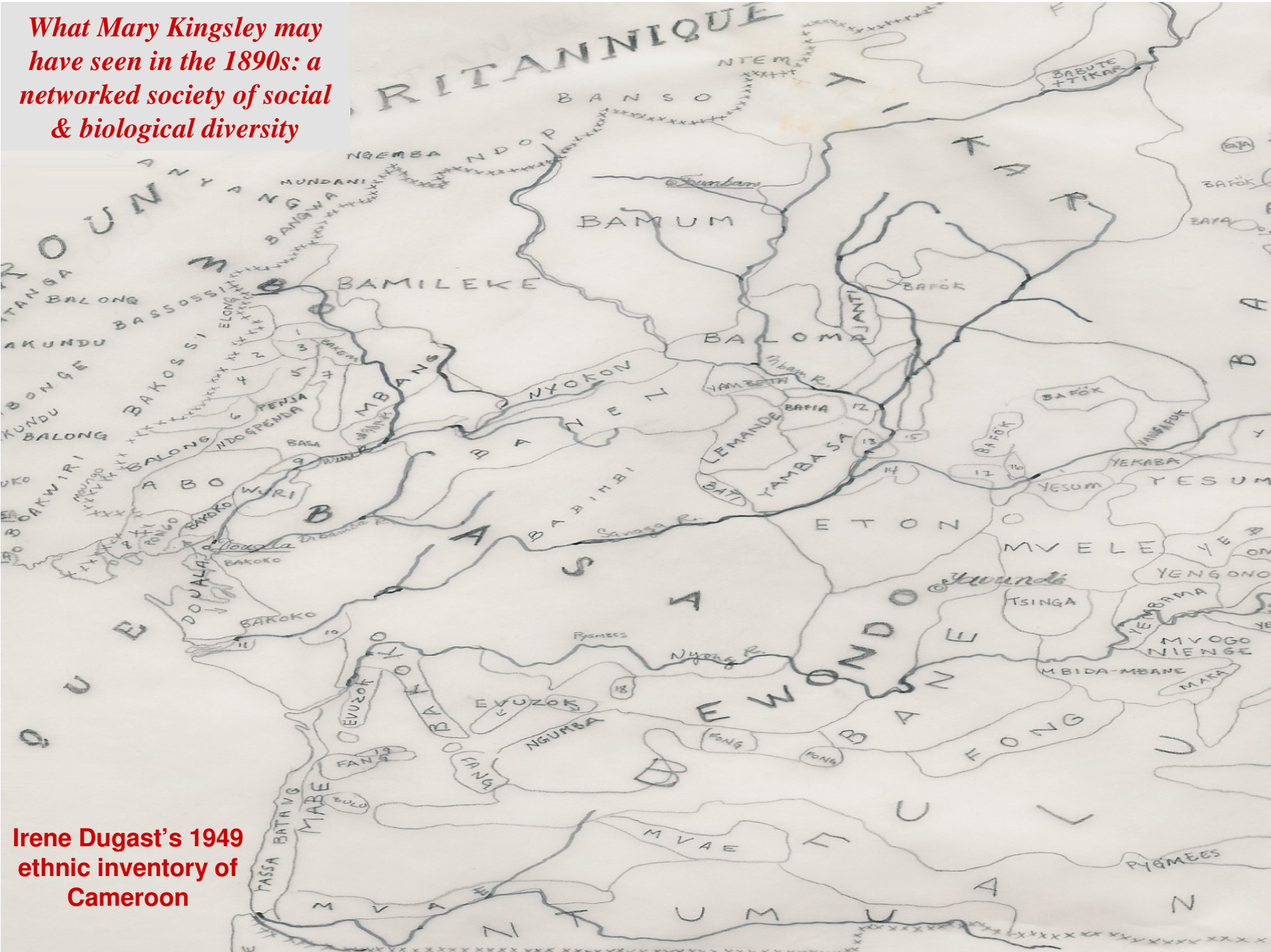
*(Assumption: neither world can ever dominate the other.)*

# Juggling two legacies: synthesis or arbitrage?



*More detailed slides follow*

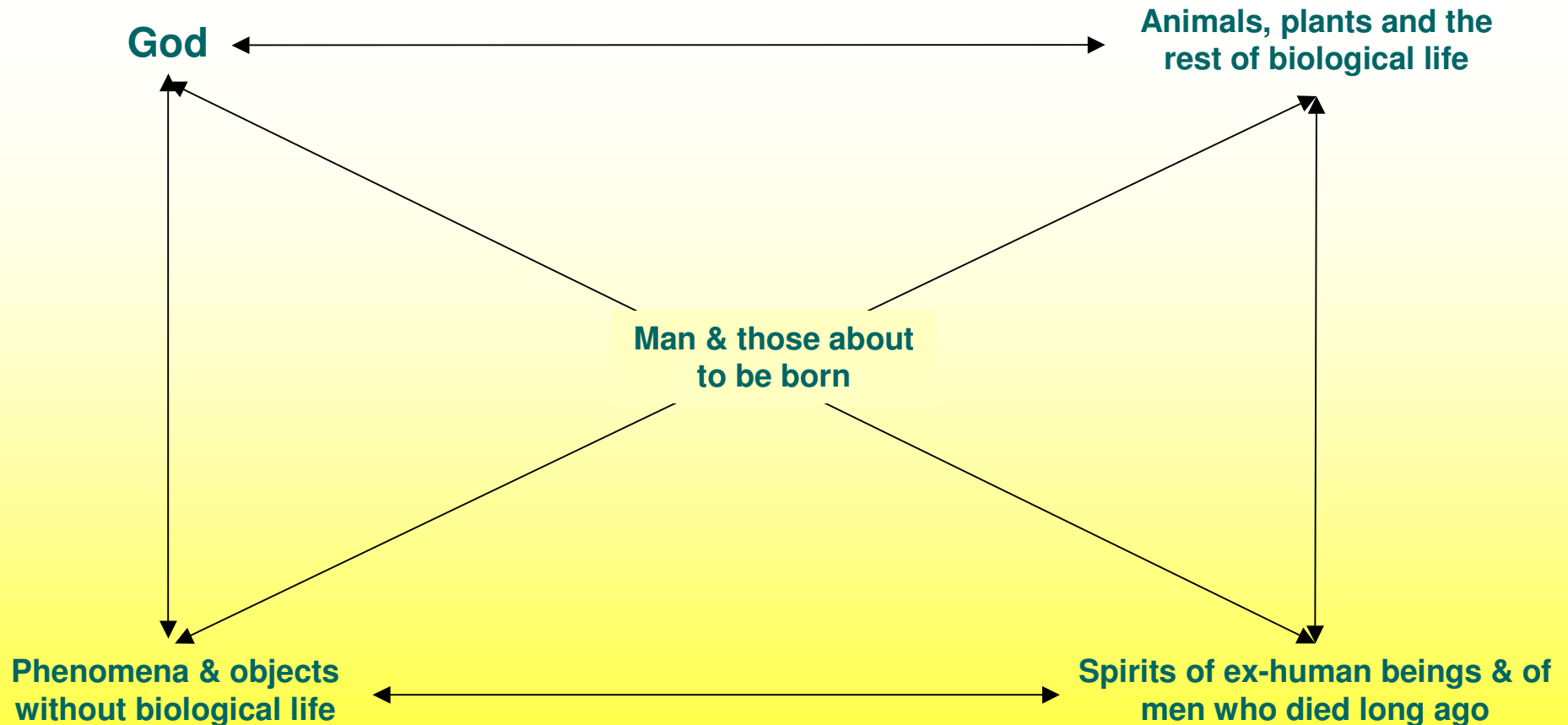
*What Mary Kingsley may  
have seen in the 1890s: a  
networked society of social  
& biological diversity*



**Irene Dugast's 1949  
ethnic inventory of  
Cameroon**

# A unified world of sacred relationships

*“This ...is a complete unity ... which nothing can break up or destroy.  
To destroy or remove one of these categories is to destroy the whole existence ...  
including the Creator, which is impossible.”*

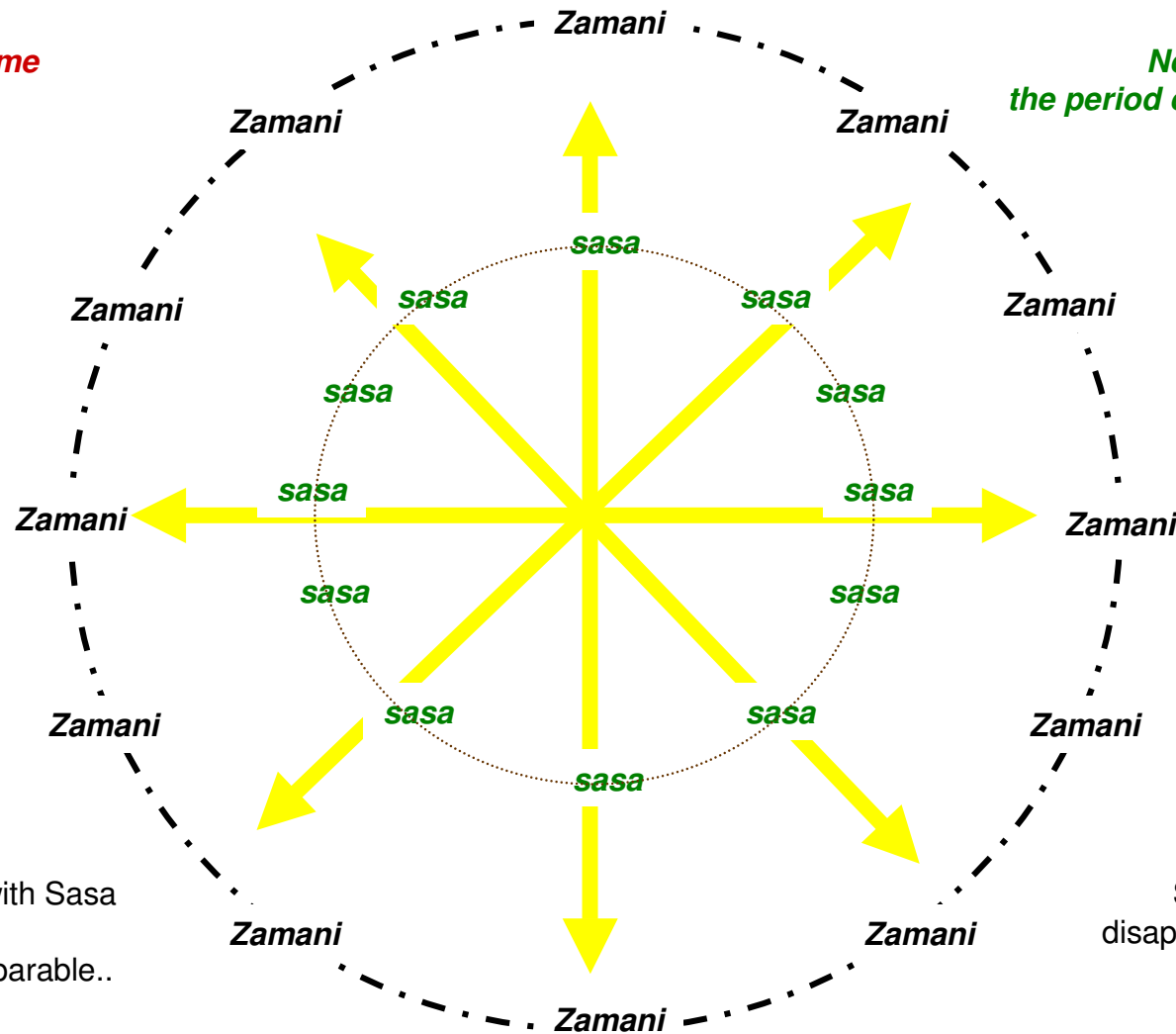


**The force or energy powering the universe**

# African concept of time

Zamani  
Deep time, macro-time

Sasa  
Nowness ...  
the period of conscious living.



“Zamani overlaps with Sasa  
...  
the two are not separable..”

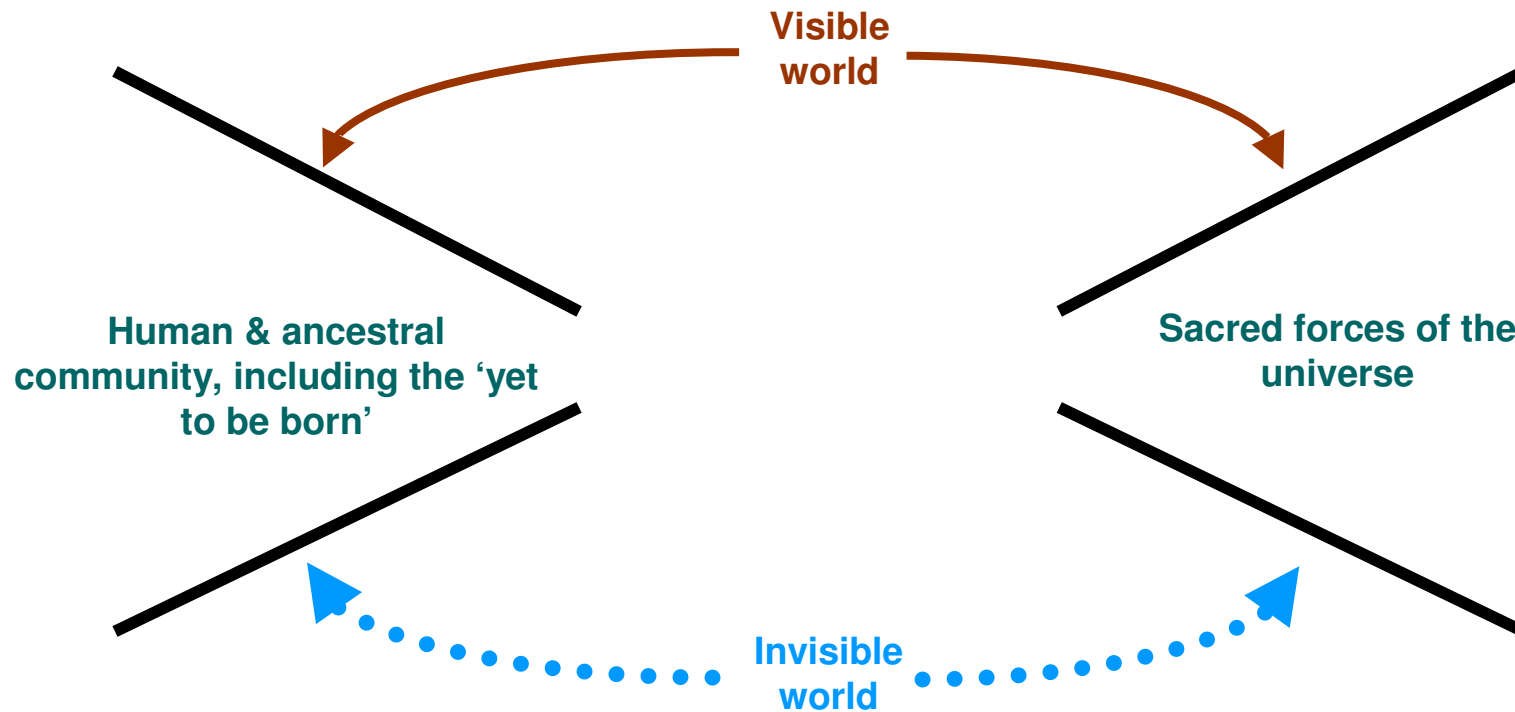
Sasa feeds or  
disappears into Zamani.

... before events become incorporated into the Zamani,  
they have to become realized or actualized within the Sasa dimension.”



# Man and the invisible world

*“...the universe has been lent by God to humanity through the ancestors and the living leaders on condition that it must be kept in good order and used by all for the promotion of life, good relationships and peace, at least within the clan or ethnic group.”*



*“What constitutes misuse of the universe? This question can be answered in one word: greed.”*

# Mankind's responsibility

All other life,  
animals, trees, etc

God

*Mankind's responsibility is  
to manage all relationships*

*in order to maintain the  
abundance of all life,*

*because all life is sacred.*



Ancestors & spirits

Things without life:  
rocks, etc