

Folk Religions and the Essentialists' Dilemmas

Caveat / Disclaimer
 Anything I may say about folk religions is:

- Real (somewhere),
- And Not Real (but not everywhere),
- And both Real and Not Real (depending on your current frame of reference),
- And neither Real nor Not Real (your current frame of reference doesn't apply).

"real"
 what someone's prepared to act on

"Religion"
 Until they run into an essentialist religion, most folk "religions" don't even have a word to identify them; even the word "religion" may be missing. If they think of it at all, it is thought of as a set of identifying practices — this is who we are[†]; often these practices are not considered religion.

[†] Of course, as territorial entities, there are always boundaries, but they tend to be rather permeable, allowing for the ready exchange of materials, ideas and even people.

guide / apprentice

1)
 • paganisms
 • Ethnic religions
 • Neopaganisms

(*) Folk Religions — on a spectrum between
 1) "Small, local forms which do not adhere to the norms of large systems." and
 2) "An appropriation of large system religious beliefs and practices at a popular level."

2)
 • Judaism
 • Christianity
 • Islam
 • Buddhism
 • Hinduism
 • Taoism

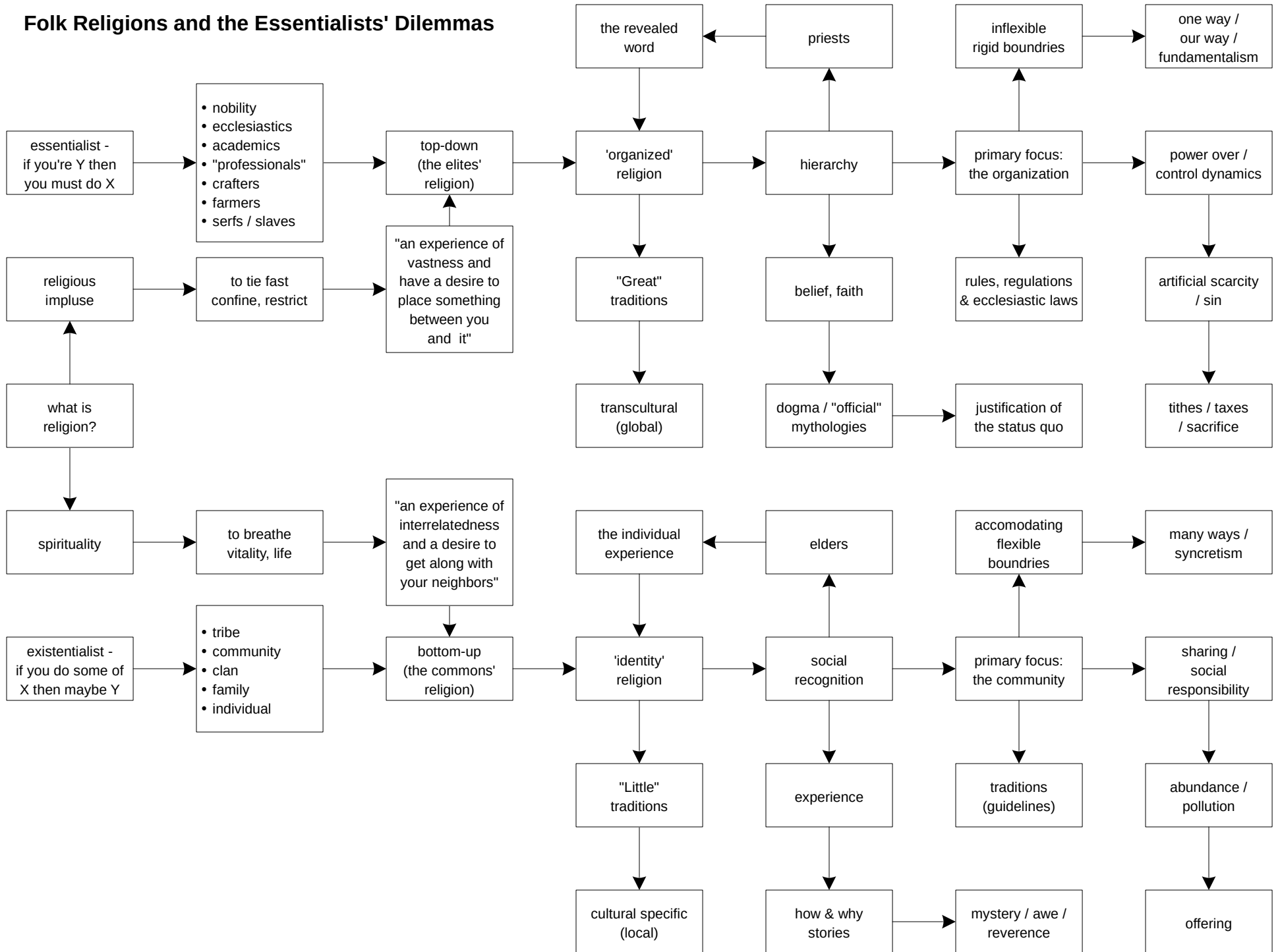
master / disciple

What Are Unifying Practices of Folk Religion?

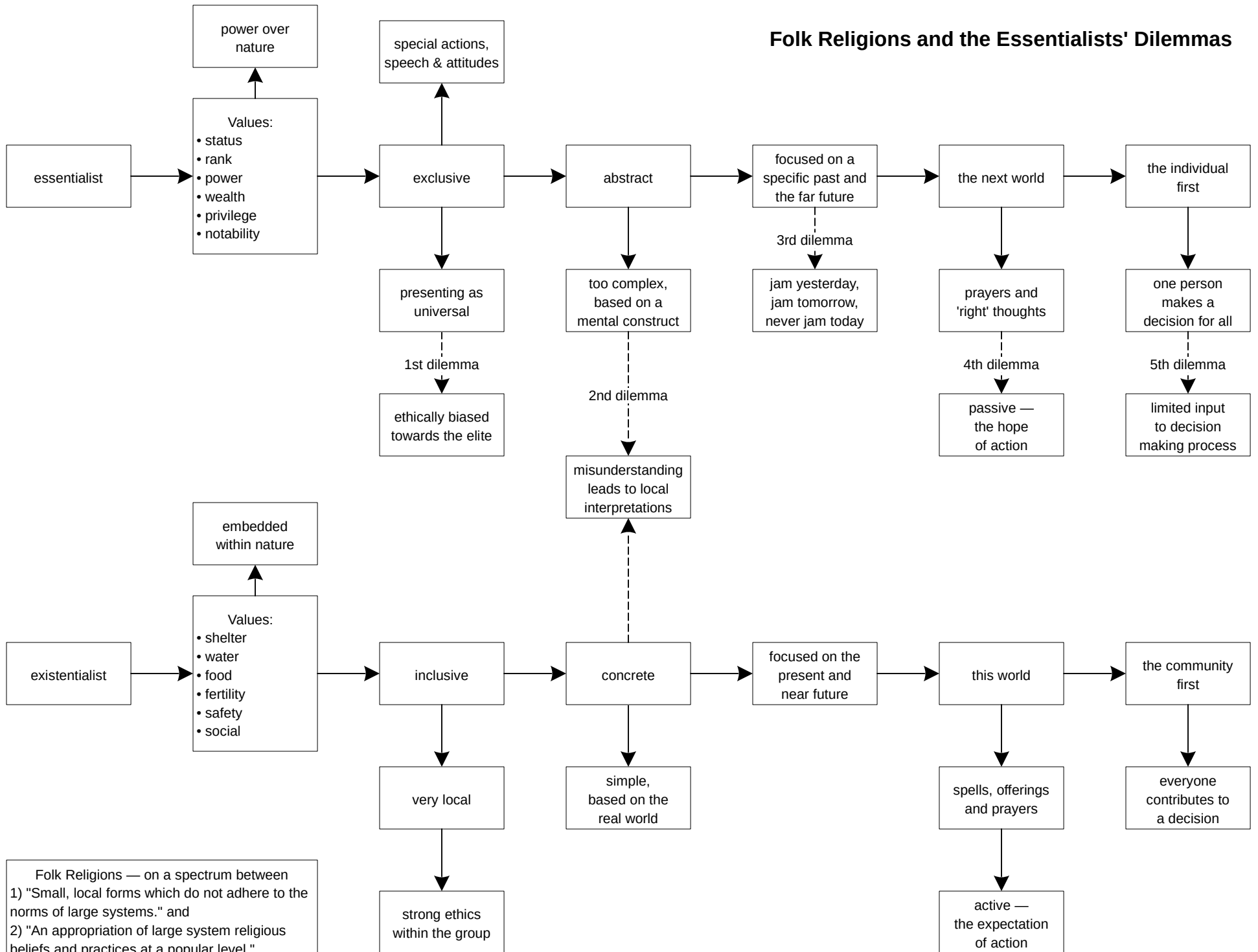
- Typically have no formal creed or sacred text
- Tend to be collaborative and accretive
- Tend to be animistic — the supernatural is present within and affecting the physical realm
- Locations, objects and events have a particular embodied god
- Spiritual forces have power over and impact human affairs
- Often bring external religious practices into another religion
- Often employ divination, magic, or special religious rituals
- Often employ talismans or ascribe spiritual power to particular objects for protection or good luck
- Often employ rituals to keep evil spirits or forces at bay
- Often incorporated ancestor worship/veneration
- Embrace popular divine manifestations that originate within a larger religious tradition.

Before the industrial revolution and planned obsolescence, most people did not throw away anything that was not plentiful and might be reused in one form or another.

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