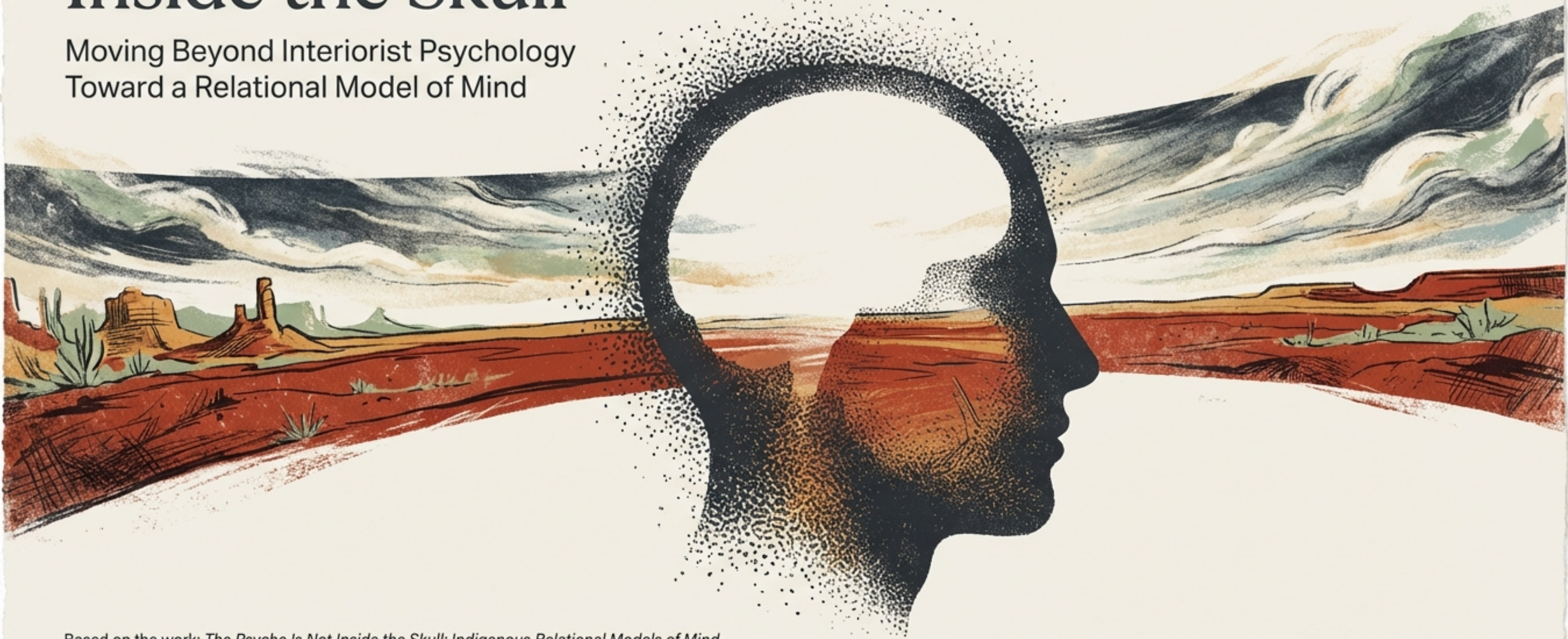
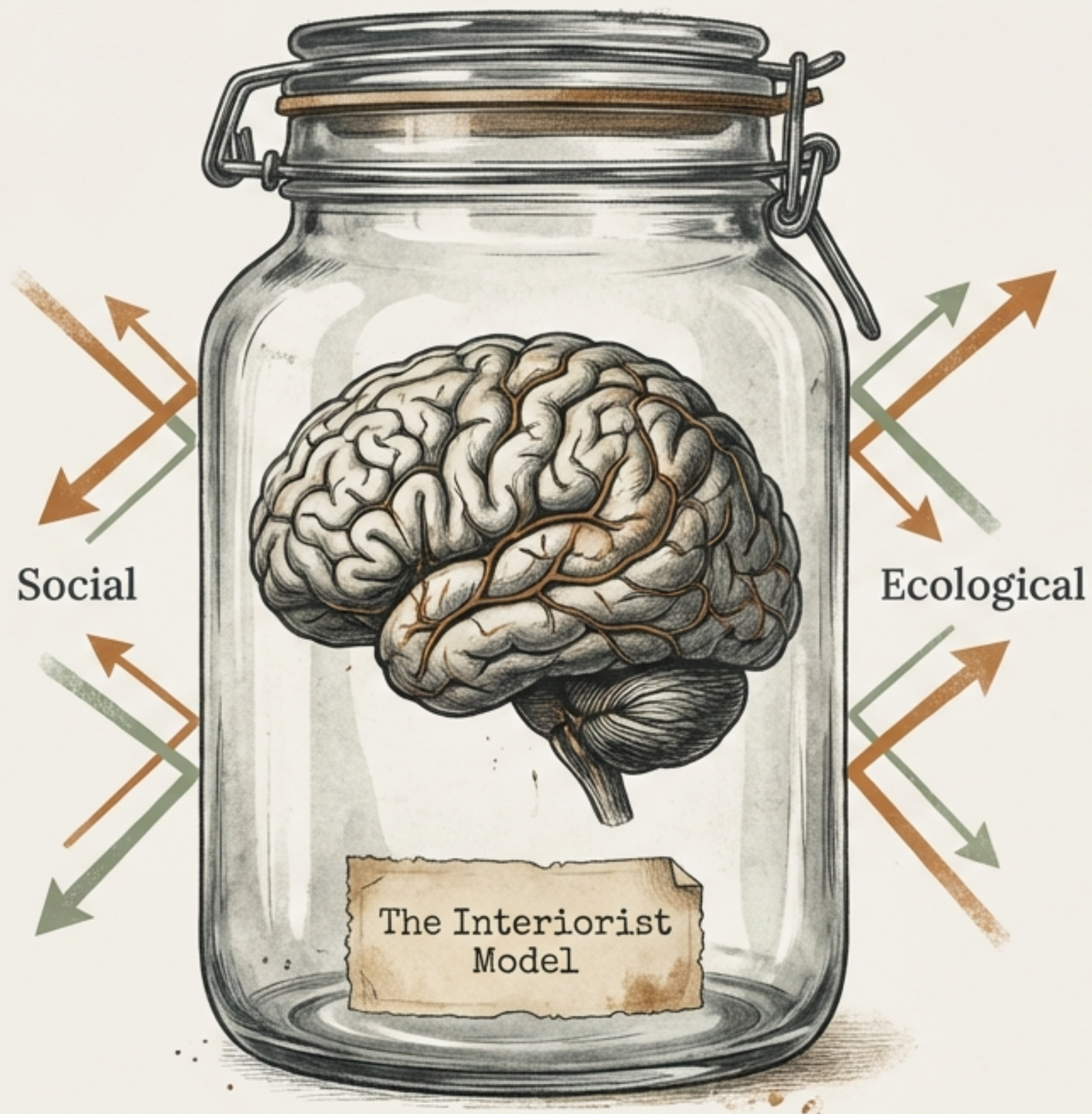


The Psyche Is Not Inside the Skull

Moving Beyond Interiorist Psychology
Toward a Relational Model of Mind



Based on the work: *The Psyche Is Not Inside the Skull: Indigenous Relational Models of Mind*



The Myth of the Private Mind

Psychology is built on a silent premise: the Interiorist Ontology. We assume the psyche is generated by the brain, bounded by the skull, and fundamentally separate from the world.

Even when we acknowledge social factors, we treat them as external influences acting upon an isolated, internal space.



Why the Container Model Breaks

The skull-bound model fails to explain anomalies that resist localization:

- Fragmentation: Dividing mind and world is an 'ontological distortion' (Bohm, 1980).
- Neurocentrism: The brain conditions experience but does not necessarily produce it.
- Collective Affect: Shared trauma and symbolic contagion exceed individual explanation.

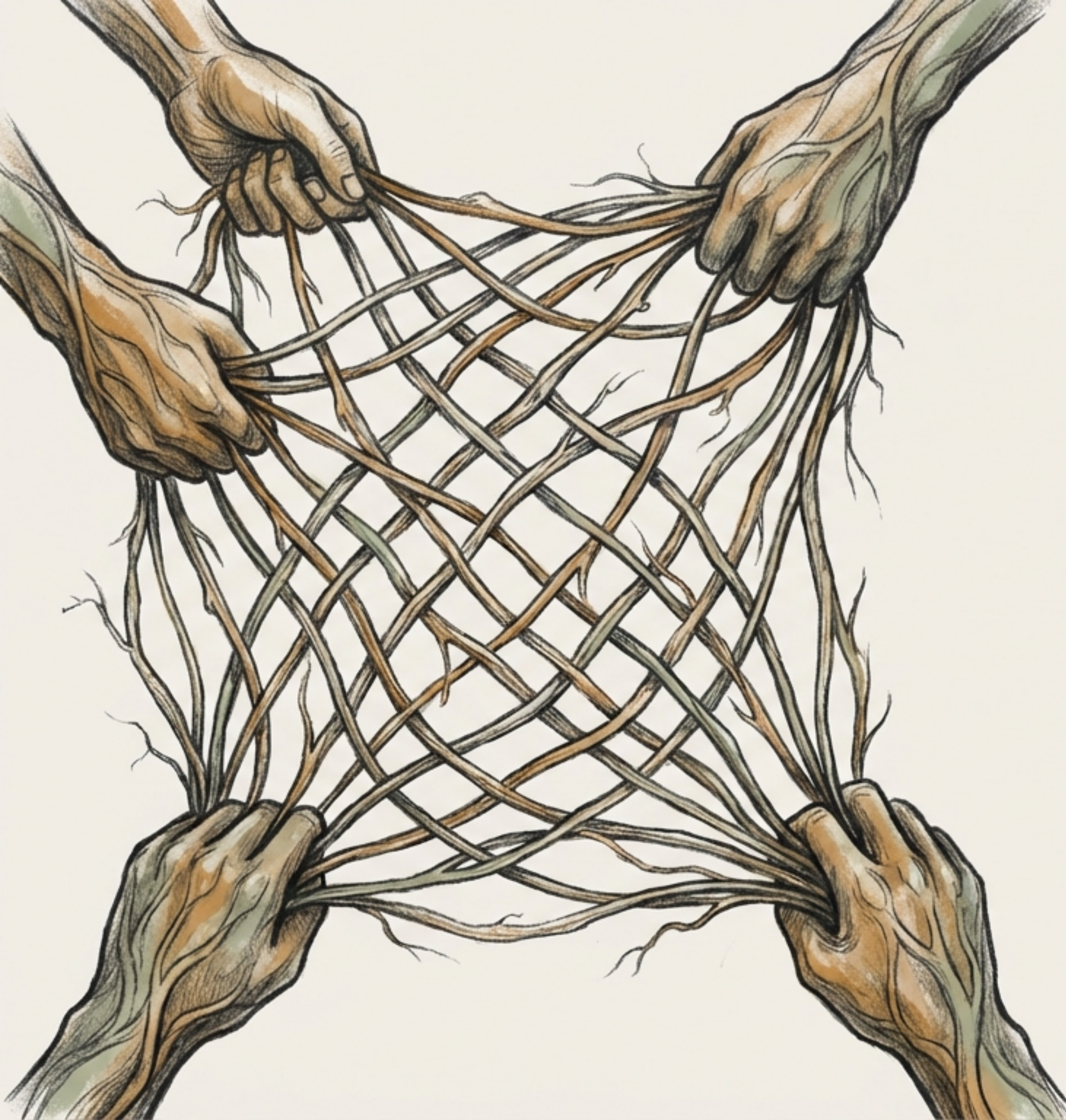
A Different Ontology

Vitality Through Relationship

In Anangu thought, the psyche is not an internal faculty. It is a vitality sustained through lawful relationship with land, kin, and continuity. Mind, body, land, and Law are expressions of a single relational continuity.



“You don’t belong to the land. The land belongs to you, and you belong to it.” — Elder Bob Randall



Kanyini: The Law of Belonging

Kanyini is often translated as “responsibility and unconditional love,” but it is not an emotion. It is a Law of physics for the psyche.

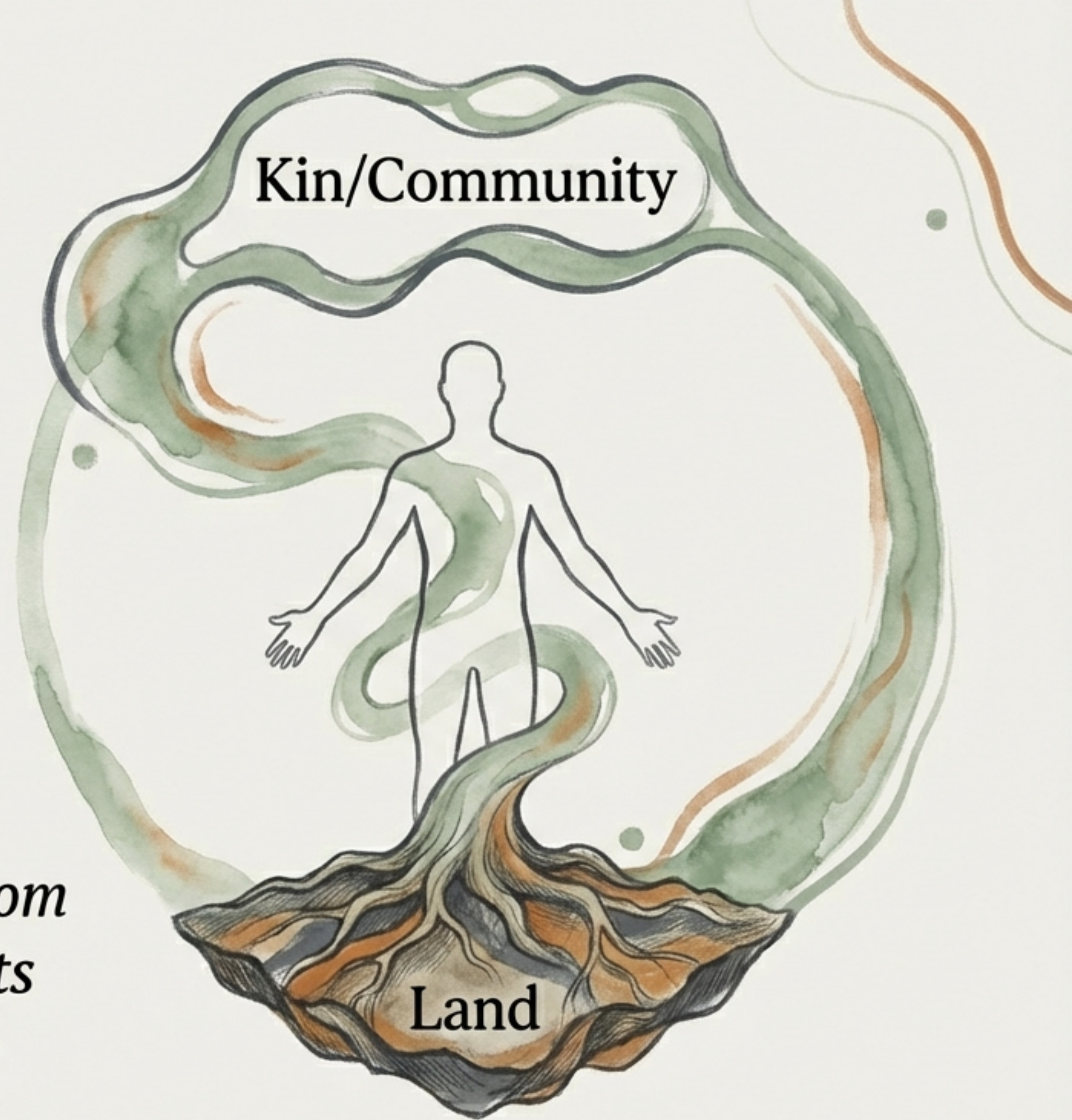
- It is the binding condition that holds people, land, and ancestors together.
- It is not an ethical preference; it is a structural necessity for mental health.

In this model, separation is not just sad; it is a sickness.

Kurunpa: Vitality Flows Through, Not From

Kurunpa (Spirit/Vitality) is not a soul trapped in a body. It flows from the land through the person. Psychological life is not self-generated; it is received.

“When people are taken away from their country, their kurunpa gets weak.” — Bob Randall (2003)



LAW

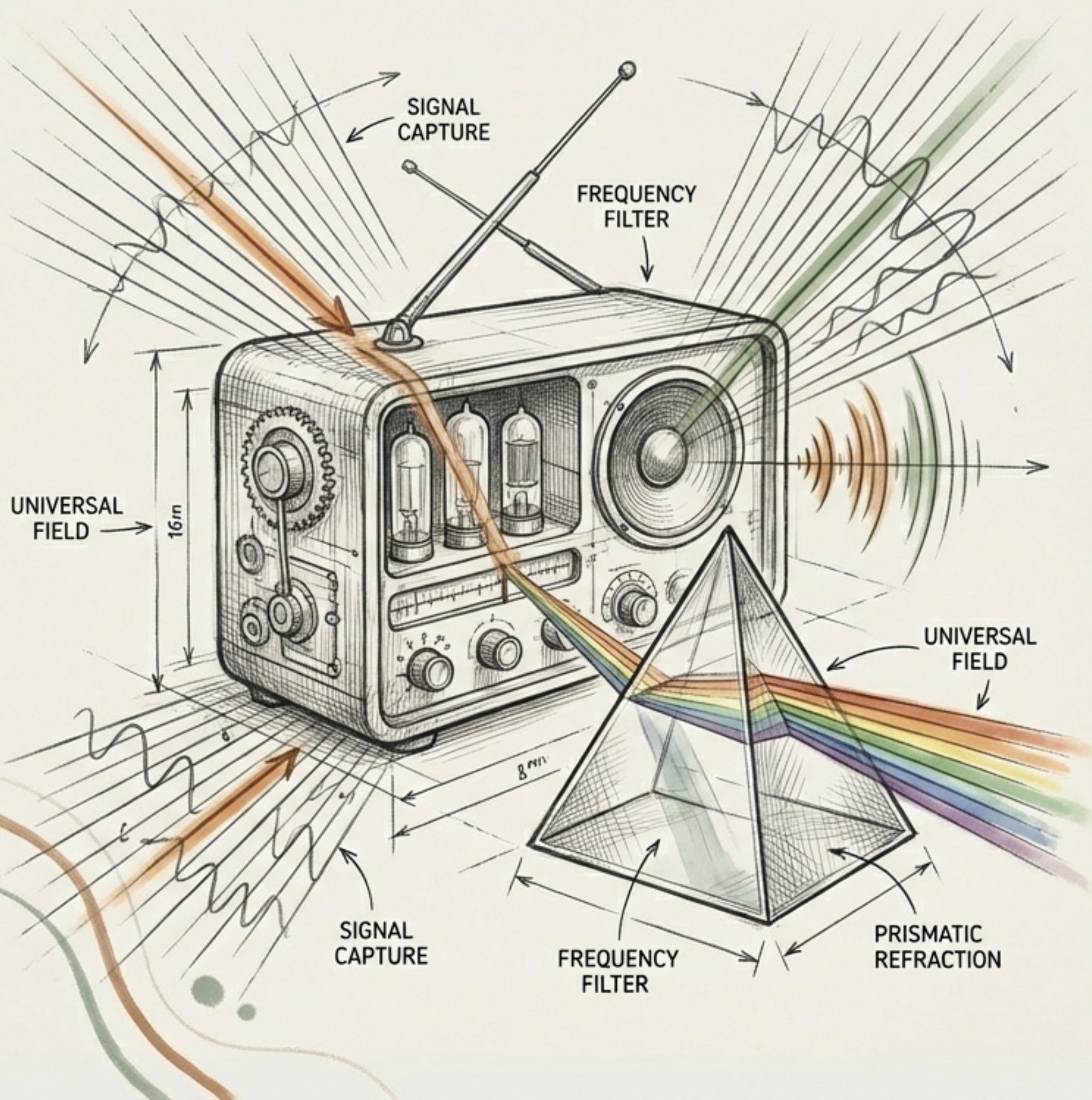


METAPHOR

Not Folk Wisdom

Kanyini and Kurunpa are not symbolic beliefs or cultural narratives. They are coherent psychological theories grounded in the observation of reality.

- Western Psychology = Psychology of the contained unit.
- Indigenous Law = Psychology of the relational field.



Western Science Converges on the Field

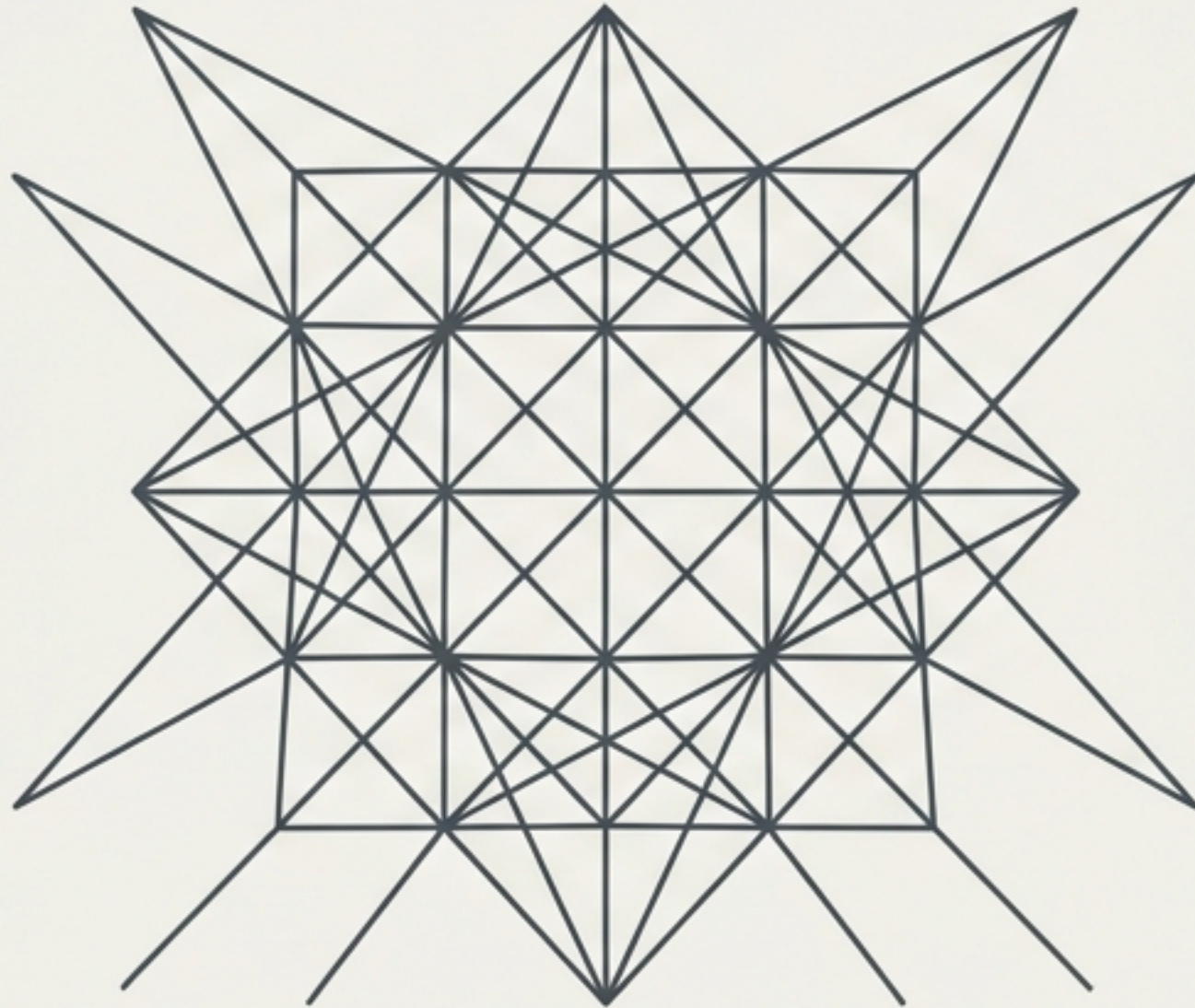
Physics and quantum psychology are finally realizing that fragmentation is an error.

- David Bohm: The 'Implicate Order'—reality is an undivided process.
- Non-Local Mind: The brain functions as a filter or interface (receiver), not a generator (Meijer, 2020).
- Field Theory: Mental states as excitations in a shared field.

The Gap: Description vs. Responsibility

Western field theory describes connection (entanglement), but Indigenous Law mandates care. The Indigenous model is not just about being connected; it is about being responsible for the connection.

Connection (Descriptive)

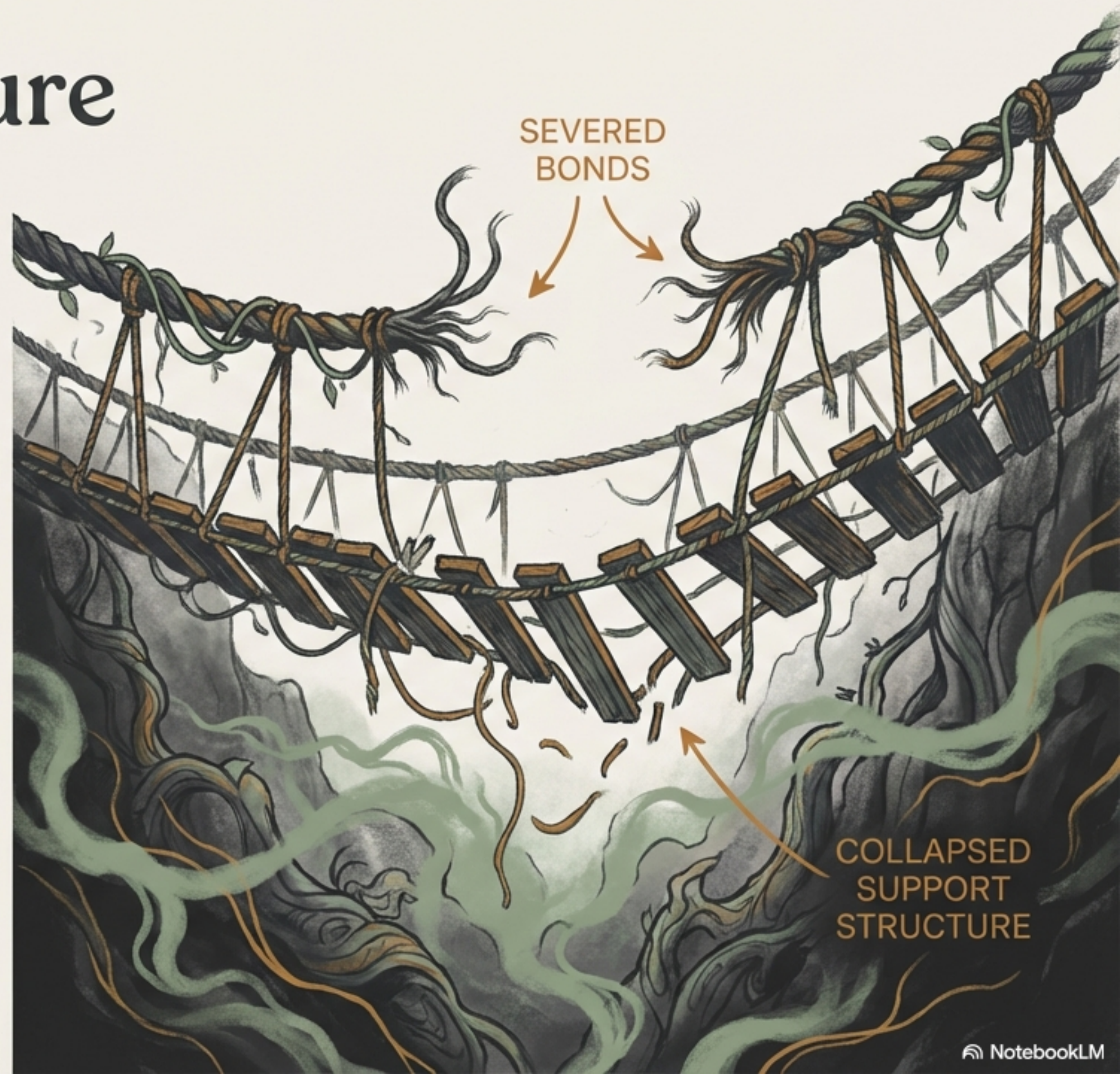


Responsibility (Normative)



Trauma is a Rupture in the Field

If the mind is relational, trauma cannot be solely an “internal malfunction.” It is a break in relational continuity—a severing of the bonds (land, kin, safety) that sustain the psyche. You cannot fix a relational break solely through internal processing; the support structure itself is gone.



The Phe Persistence of Distress

Why does trauma often resist therapy? Distress persists when the conditions of vitality (land, kin, justice) remain broken. Attempts to treat trauma exclusively through intrapsychic techniques risk mislocating the source of suffering.



Healing as Re-Connection

Mental health is the maintenance of responsibility.

- Goal: Move from 'fixing the self' to 'restoring the bond.'
- Action: Re-establishing continuity through land, kinship, and care.

Healing requires the restoration of Kanyini—belonging to the Living World.



RESTORED
BONDS
(KINTSUGI REPAIR)

Implications for a Relational Practice

We must stop individualizing social and ecological harm.

- Clinical Ethics: Environmental degradation and systemic injustice are psychological wounds, not just "context."
- Redistribution: Responsibility for distress is redistributed outward to the social and historical field.



The Ontological Shift



The Error

The psyche is not a private object inside the skull.



The Law

Psyche is vitality sustained by Responsibility (Kanyini)



The Cure

Trauma is Rupture;
Healing is the restoration of Relationship

“People think they are separate.
That’s the sickness.” — Bob Randall

Relinquishing the skull-bound mind is not speculation;
it is a necessary reorientation for a surviving world.