

# Sense Symmetry

A method for tuning consciousness' scope

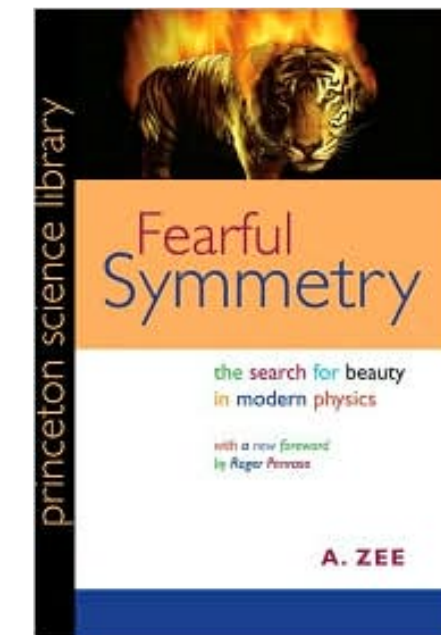
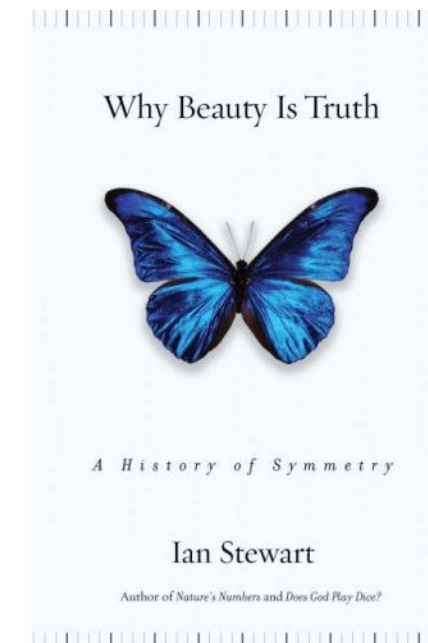
Prospects are invariant across the senses

Prospects branch and intertwine

Language is among them, prospectively auditioned

There is no other “talk in mind”

# Symmetries



The work of math and physics has been accomplished from two directions: those who work from evidence to find patterns to form theories from, and those who work from patterns — particularly symmetries — to form theories to find evidence for

Einstein is a prime example of the latter sort, and his “relativity” was, he insisted, better understood as a theory of symmetric invariance (e.g. the constancy of the speed of light in all reference frames)

Consciousness is part of a larger dynamical system, largely unconscious

A standard tuning in which we receive and compose ourselves in our culture harbors an asymmetry

We might suspect, from the successes of symmetry in physics and math, that a symmetric tuning might be, if less endorsed by culture, more endorsed by nature

# Asymmetry

- There is an asymmetry in how our culture tunes consciousness
- For centuries vital advances in math and physics have come through recognizing symmetries in nature
- By recognizing and implementing a symmetric tuning for consciousness, we might better explore and exploit our own nature
- Since the asymmetric tuning has been general and widespread for centuries, mistakes that follow from assuming it natural cut across many regions: philosophy, religion, psychology, consciousness studies ...
- Similarly insights into and efforts at corrective tuning can be found all across these areas (Chuang Tzu, Gautama, Aristotle, Dogen, Hutcheson, Emerson, James, Grice, Gendlin, Arnheim, Velmans ...)
- Before we can assess those contributions — how they succeed, fall short, or fit together — we need to establish what the central issue, the foundational mistake, the mistuning, is
- Then we need to establish how to correct it, shift to a symmetric tuning, and make the new tuning stick long enough to do some real work with, and observation of it
- Since we have a particular grasp of ourselves, not just in the abstract, but in our present, pragmatic practice, a change in tuning may require shifting that grip, and a different style of play
- We might need an epistemological bootstrapping to bring up a different dynamic arrangement

# Terms of Art

The common, rough breakdown of consciousness to three senses

Common English	Psychology	Senses	“Faculties”	Organs	Cognitive Theory	To Understand	Forward Sense
seeing	visualizing	vision	foresight	eyes	visuo-spatial	see	prospect(ing)
thinking	inner speech self talk	hearing audition	logic	ears	verbal	hear	predict(ing)
feeling	emotion	touch proprioception	empathy	skin body		grasp	presentiment

## Goal

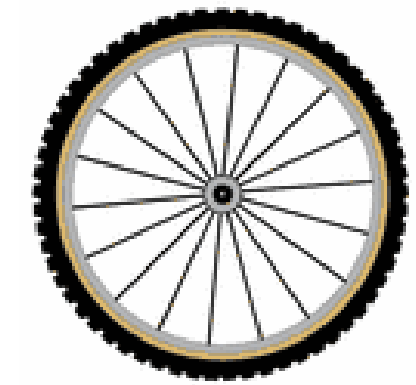
- capture the difference between present sight and foresight, between present attention and prospective imagination, between seeing what's in front of us and seeing what can be
- apply that basic difference symmetrically across these three commonly-specified senses

- for a good set of equivalent terms of art for prospective imagination's symmetry across the senses, let visual terms serve as template
- visual terms most easily capture the difference: see, foresee; vision, envision; sight, foresight; spectate, expect; inspect, prospect

Close	Best Fit*
foresee	envision
forehear	enaudit
forefeel	enfeel

\* “envision” is more neutral than “foresee,” which implies a judgment of likeliness

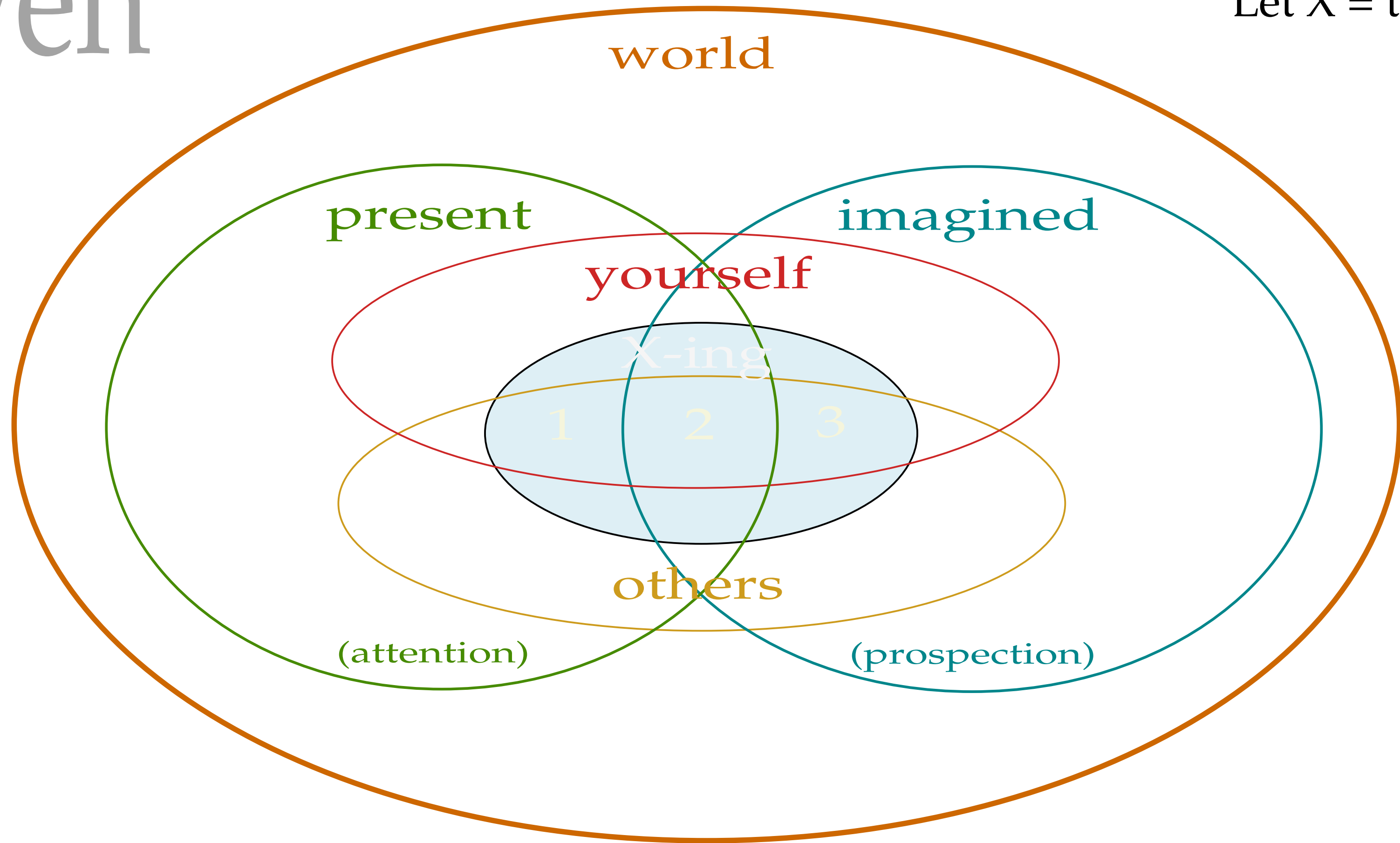
# “Inner Speech”



- There is no more “inner speech” than there is inner bicycling
- But we can have talk in mind just the same as we can have bicycling in mind
- They are both things that sometimes occur in the world, that we can do, that we can imagine
- Both can be entertained as prospective imagery, enaudited or envisioned as imagined things are
- Inner speech, as we commonly take it, implies a speaker within, whether taken to be self, ego, conscience, will, some sort of self-in-self, speaking module or homunculus
- Inner speech is commonly taken as *talking* in mind, not the prospective object, but the present act
- When we do that, we are receiving auditory imagery totally out of symmetry with how we receive visual and kinesthetic imagery
- Yet we *can* take auditory imagination symmetrically, for example when we imagine having a conversation while bicycling, or a sound we might hear in the woods
- To be able to always take talk in mind in symmetry with other prospective imagery requires a change in ontology — disbelief in a self-in-self that talks or bicycles within
- It also, more challengingly, requires a change in active epistemological practice — how we know and compose ourselves in ongoing consciousness

# Ven

Let X = dance  
Let X = talk

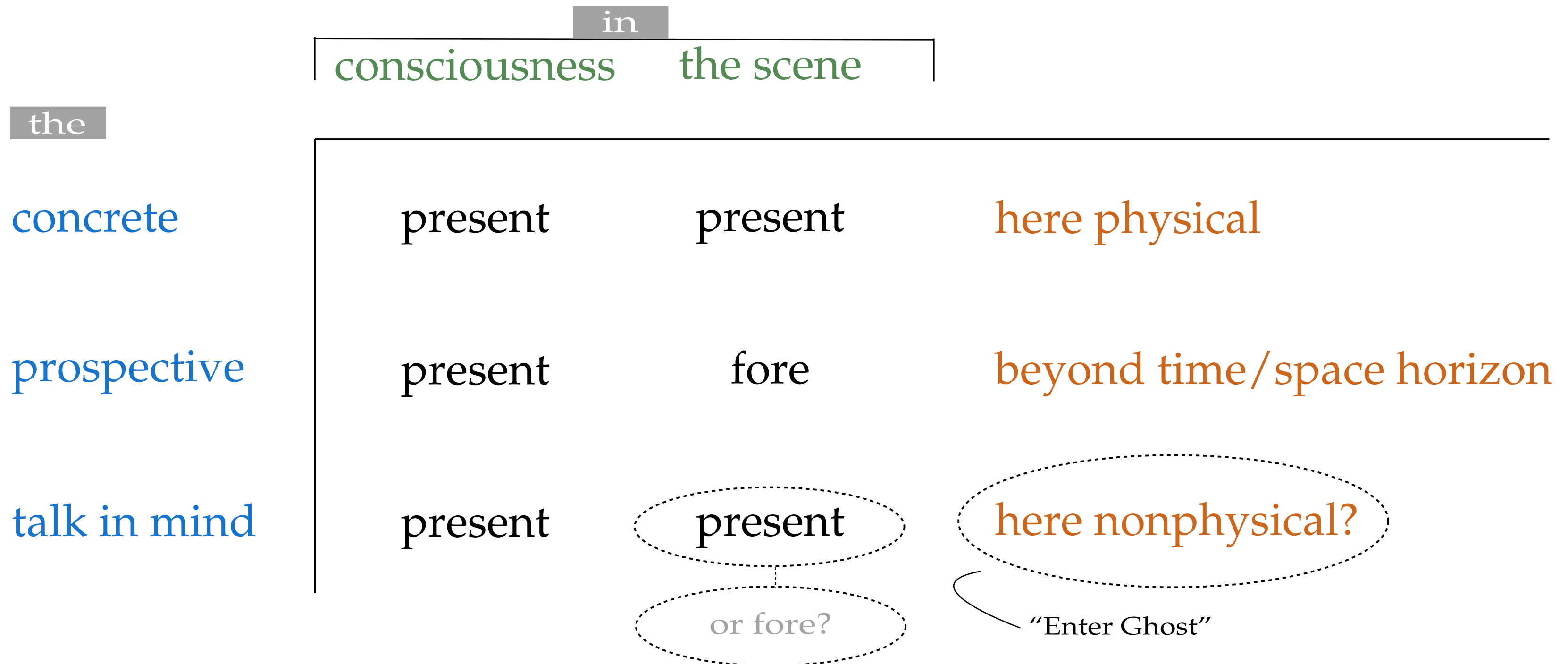


Is dance in mind 1, 2 or 3?

Is talk in mind 1, 2 or 3?

# Define

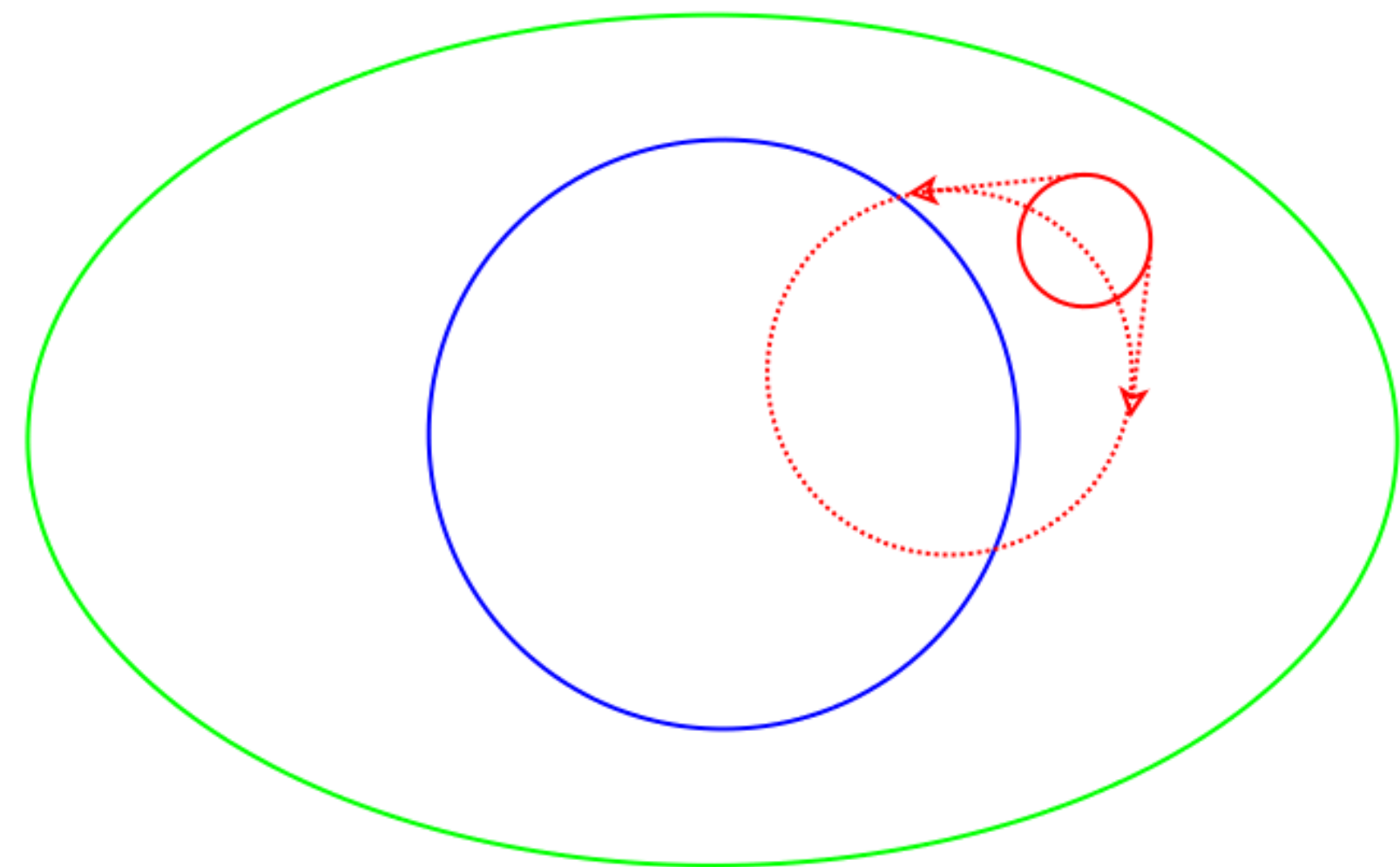
what is **concrete** as present in **consciousness** & present in your **scene**  
what is **prospective** as present in **consciousness** & forward beyond  
your **scene's** time and/or space horizon



**the sense-symmetric answer:**  
take talk in mind as fore, as prospective  
imagery beyond the scene's time/space  
horizon, no extra category needed

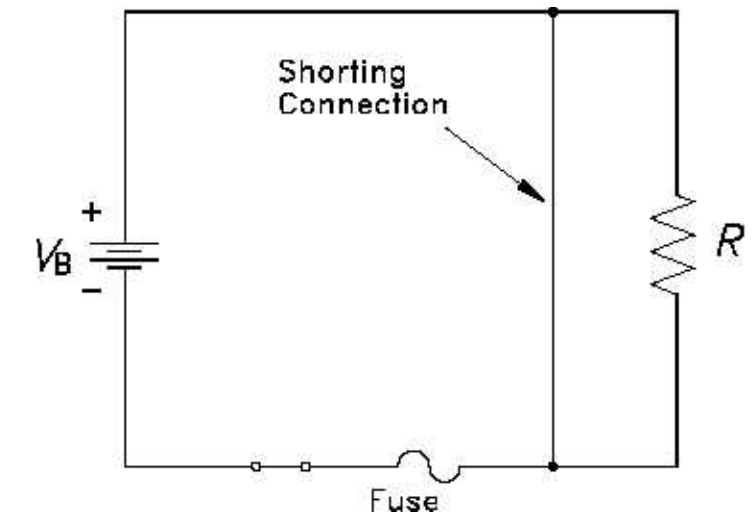
# Consciousness Eclipsed

- Prep and gating of both prospects and present awareness to consciousness are unconscious processes
- What subsequently arises — or not — both from details of the present scene attended below the conscious threshold, and prospects in incubation, is selected in a feedback relationship with the existing conscious focus
- When inner speech is taken to be a real detail of the present scene — a direct perception of self rather than just partial reflection in a prospect — the feedback to the unconscious processes can have a suppressive effect on gating of arisings discordant to the pretense
- The false presence can displace part of current awareness, while restricting the range of fresh prospects gated to the conscious space
- The potential of consciousness can be partly eclipsed, direct awareness and prospective imagination both hindered



- The **prospective** scope is larger, and can accommodate without contradiction far more than can fit harmoniously in the **present scene**
- When **talk in mind** arising in prospect is received as if within the scope of the present, it displaces present situational awareness, and the more complete reflection of self across the scope of prospects

# The Short



- To know a thing is to know something of its prospects
- Every perception is in part an expectation
- Self-expectancy based on an “inner voice” seen as real has, in that context, efficacy as knowledge
- Expectancies drawn from it, when contrary awareness and envisionings are largely suppressed, can be self-fulfilling
- There are whole systems of discipline based around it
- It is particularly useful within social arrangements where conformity to a set of opinions is preferred to direct awareness and independent vision
- That may describe most social niches in contemporary cultures
- The arc through imagination to resolution is shortened by the apparent ease of simple self-expectancy from the opinions enaudited
- Since the pattern is to quickly identify with whatever opinions arise, which a presumed self-in-self has already selected to say, there is less conscious involvement in weighing, drawing out and developing diverse opinions
- In seeming paradox then, the reliance on “inner speech” impoverishes the scope of language in thought
- It is a short circuit of the dynamic system otherwise comprised by envisioning and enfeeling when enauditing is integrated into a common space with them, received to symmetric epistemological status on arising from the unconscious, without a presumed privileged ontological reality

# A New Resolve

- The tuning is fundamental to the composition
- In this case to the composition of the composer
- More specifically to the composition of the reflection of the composer
- You may wonder if decision even works when prospective voicings are integrated in the prospective space beyond the horizons of our present direct awareness, as merely prospects of one sort interwoven with prospects of other sorts, with no throne from which to command our next action
- But of course it does
- Like William James' arising from bed
- Decision as by vision, among prospects laid out in conscious array, comes naturally once the distorted appearance of decision by voice has been let to fall away
- In this different tuning there will be more junctures where we don't know yet what we'll do
- But on the other hand there will be more junctures
- That is, we know more of prospect
- At the same time as we're less certain of what we will do, we're more certain of where we are now
- To be at a crossroads, free, with equal visions and feelings of going either way, is as specific a position as being surely on a single road
- The same juncture which is freedom triangulates our position

# Precedents

Chuang Tzu, much concerned with language, said to put the mind out, take the world in. If we take that as "put the mind over the prospect horizon, take the present scene as the center of self" it matches well.

Aristotle, in the *Ethics*, differentiated between two psychologies, that of people ruled by opinion, which he held inferior, and that of people in broader connection with the good things in the world, which was his eudaemonic ideal.

Dogen Zenji said much the same as Chuang Tzu.

Not all cultures have been tuned the same. Svetlana Alpers has shown how in Golden Age Dutch art language was placed as equal to other objects on display, as contrasted to Italian art of the same time, where language is treated as the "soul" of the action depicted.

Francis Hutcheson argued that the extended outer senses can combine into a common "inner" sense, which he named our moral sense, while in the same book being much concerned with the aesthetics of symmetries.

Emerson had his own epiphany parallel to Chuang Tzu and Dogen's.

Emerson's godson, William James had an experience whose full analysis, he claimed, might be a successful theory of human will.

Freud held that the problem of ego has to do with "verbal contents" and allowing more to rise into conscious integration from the unconscious — a claim that can stand apart from his now-doubted model of the unconscious.

Paul Grice proved that language's meaning is not contained within its structure, but takes its full meaning only in the context of real acts of speech between people.

Gendlin's "centering" bears a family resemblance, as he brings in vision and feeling to balance verbal thought.

Jackendoff argues for an unconscious executive which does not conduct decisions in our public language — I disagree as to the absoluteness of the unconsciousness, but generally concur.

Johnson, Lakoff, Turner & Fauconnier connect features of language to the structure of prospective scenes and spaces.

Stapp's quantum freedom is at least isomorphic to the experience after retuning.

Velmans rejects Descartes' denial of the extension of thought, and has coined the phrase "phonemic imagery," both moves which fit here.

Koch follows Jackendoff.

The short may be a prime example of, even motivator for, the preference for "premature collapse of mystery" Lanier has diagnosed in our culture.

Bruckner and Carroll's *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* article, "Self-projection and the brain," has introduced the term "prospection," to sum up what they see as an emerging consensus in "diverse fields of psychology and neuroscience" about the "default state" of consciousness involving projection into the future.

## Emerson:

The world, — this shadow of the soul, or other me, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. (*The American Scholar*)

## James:

We know what it is to get out of bed on a freezing morning in a room without a fire, and how the very vital principle within us protests against the ordeal. Probably most persons have lain on certain mornings for an hour at a time unable to brace themselves to the resolve. We think how late we shall be, how the duties of the day will suffer; we say, "I must get up, this is ignominious," etc.; but still the warm couch feels too delicious, the cold outside too cruel, and resolution faints away and postpones itself again and again just as it seemed on the verge of bursting the resistance and passing over into the decisive act. Now how do we ever get up under such circumstances? If I may generalize from my own experience, we more often than not get up without any struggle or decision at all. We suddenly find that we have got up. A fortunate lapse of consciousness occurs; we forget both the warmth and the cold; we fall into some reverie connected with the day's life, in the course of which the idea flashes across us, "Hollo! I must lie here no longer" — an idea which at that lucky instant awakens no contradictory or paralyzing suggestions, and consequently produces immediately its appropriate motor effects. It was our acute consciousness of both the warmth and the cold during the period of struggle, which paralyzed our activity then and kept our idea of rising in the condition of wish and not of will. The moment these inhibitory ideas ceased, the original idea exerted its effects.

This case seems to me to contain in miniature form the data for an entire psychology of volition. (*Principles of Psychology*)