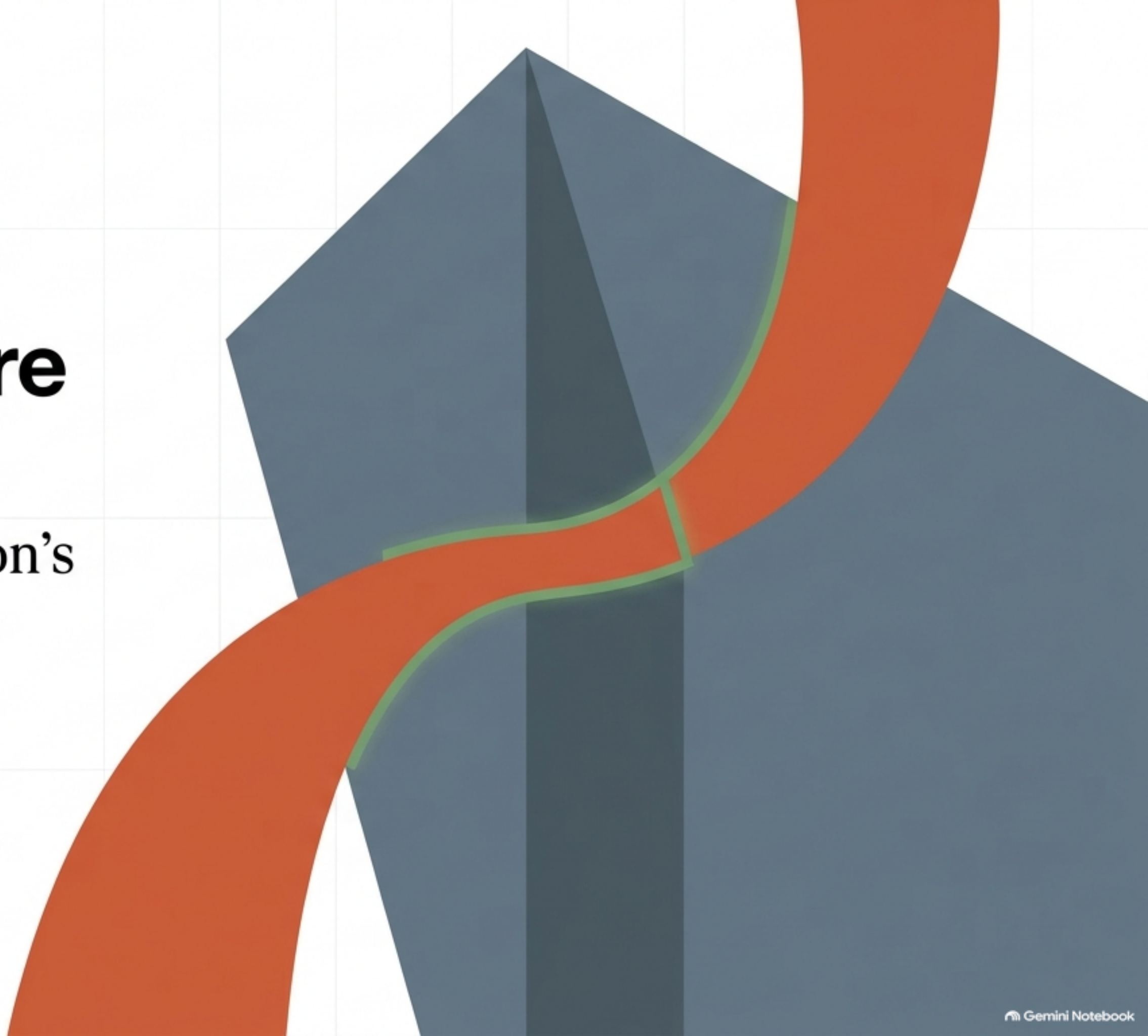


The Architecture of Encounter

Recovering James J. Gibson's radical truth about affordances.



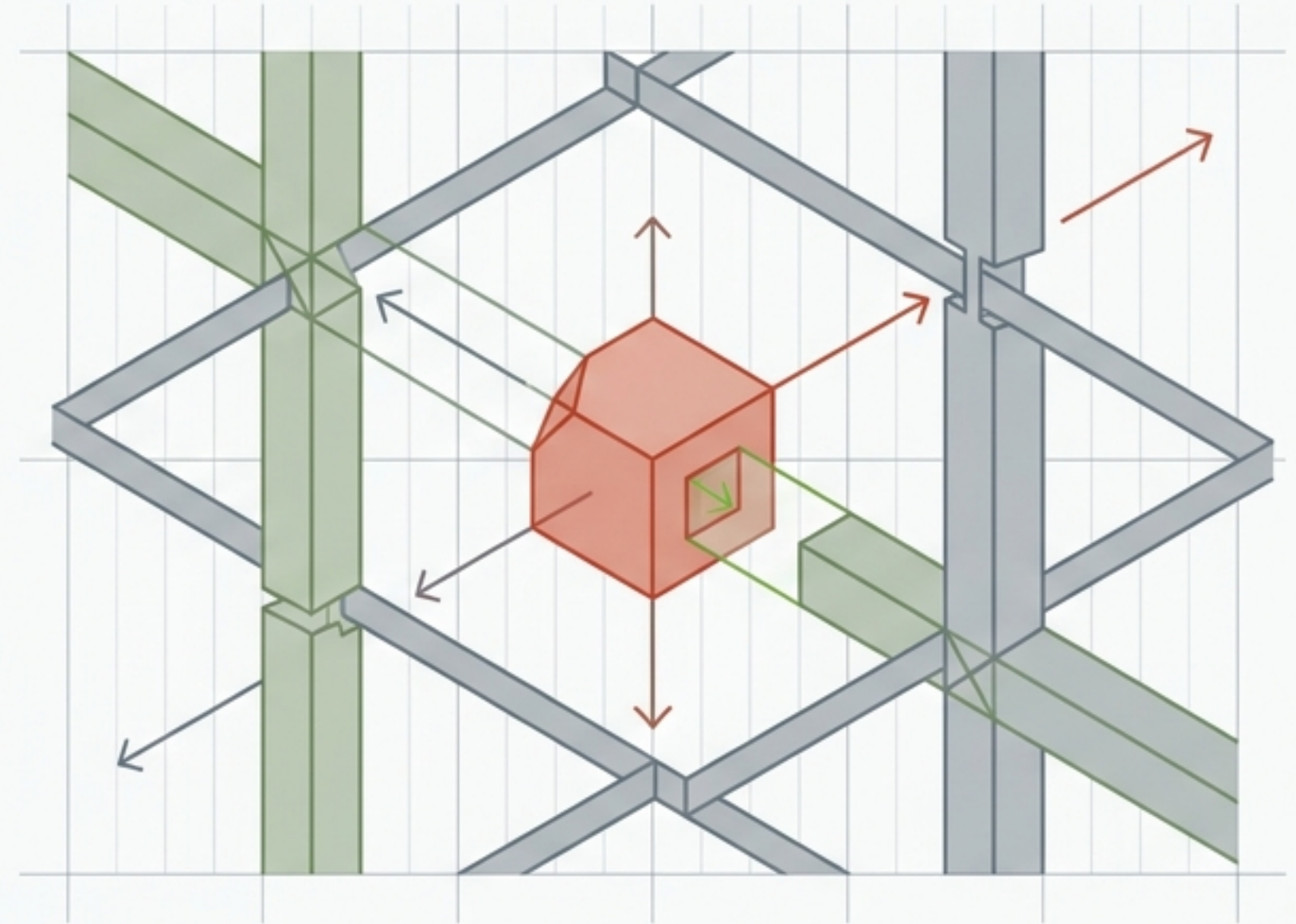
Stripping Away the Psychological Dust

The Dust



Modern discourse psychologizes affordances, reducing them to optimistic self-improvement fluff or a mere UI design buzzword.

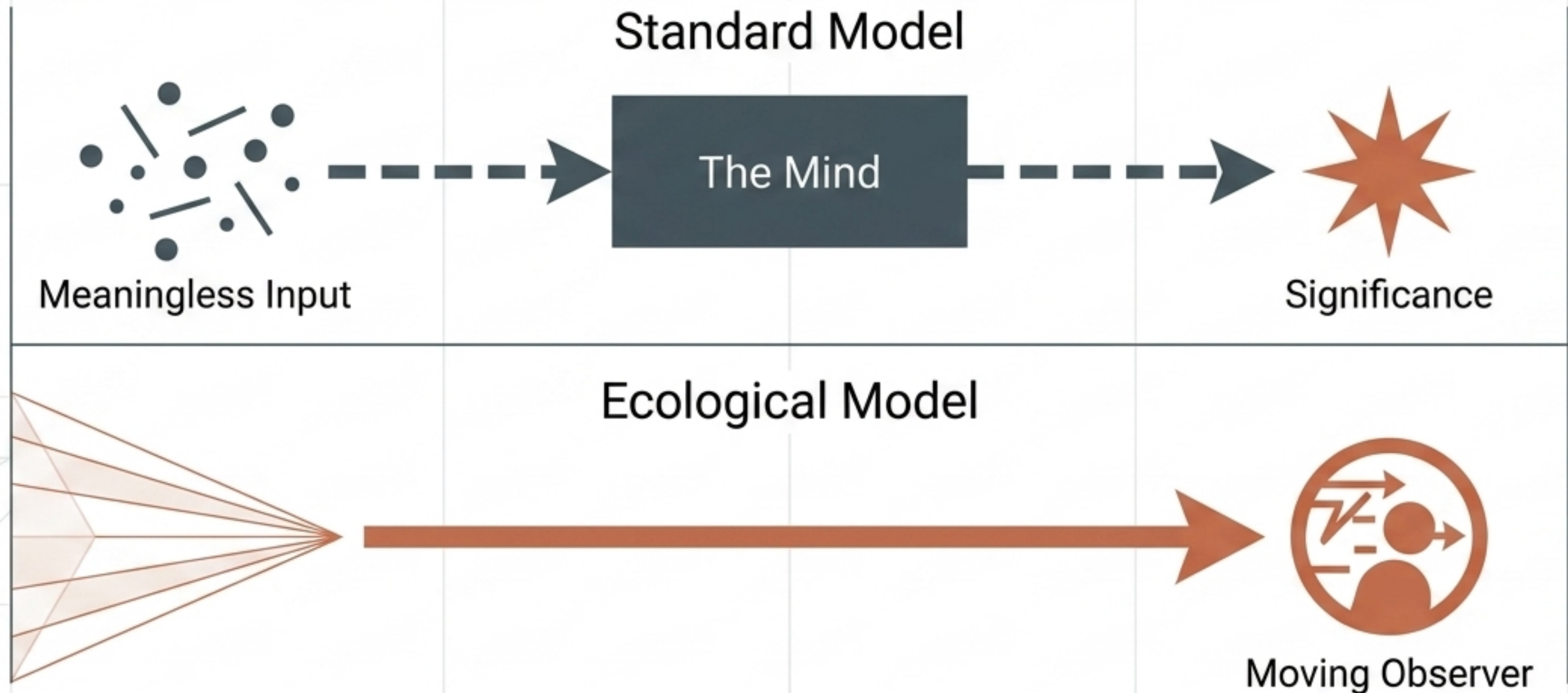
The Reality



Gibson's ecological approach is about the physical architecture of encounter—where affordance operates alongside salience, valiance, and directed attention.

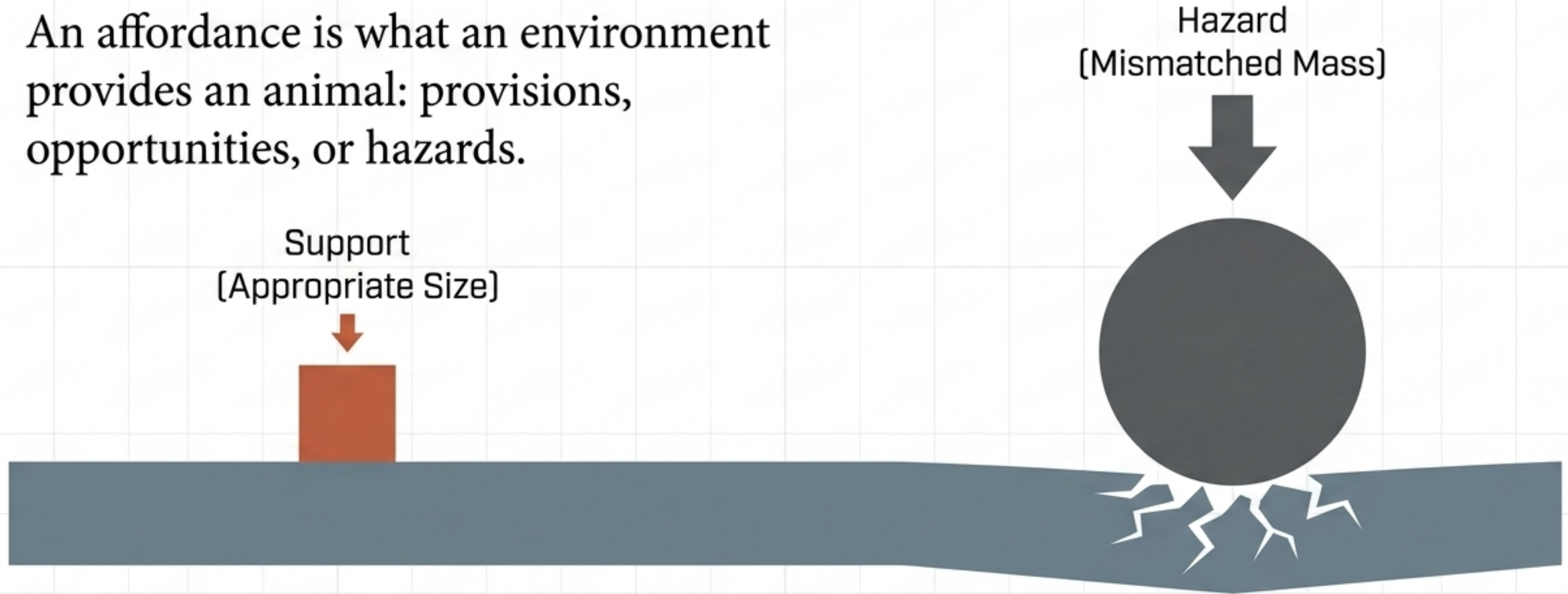
The Problem Gibson Solved

The standard picture of perception is a two-stage affair: sensation, then interpretation. Gibson argued this mental processing is entirely unnecessary. Nothing needs adding, because nothing is missing.

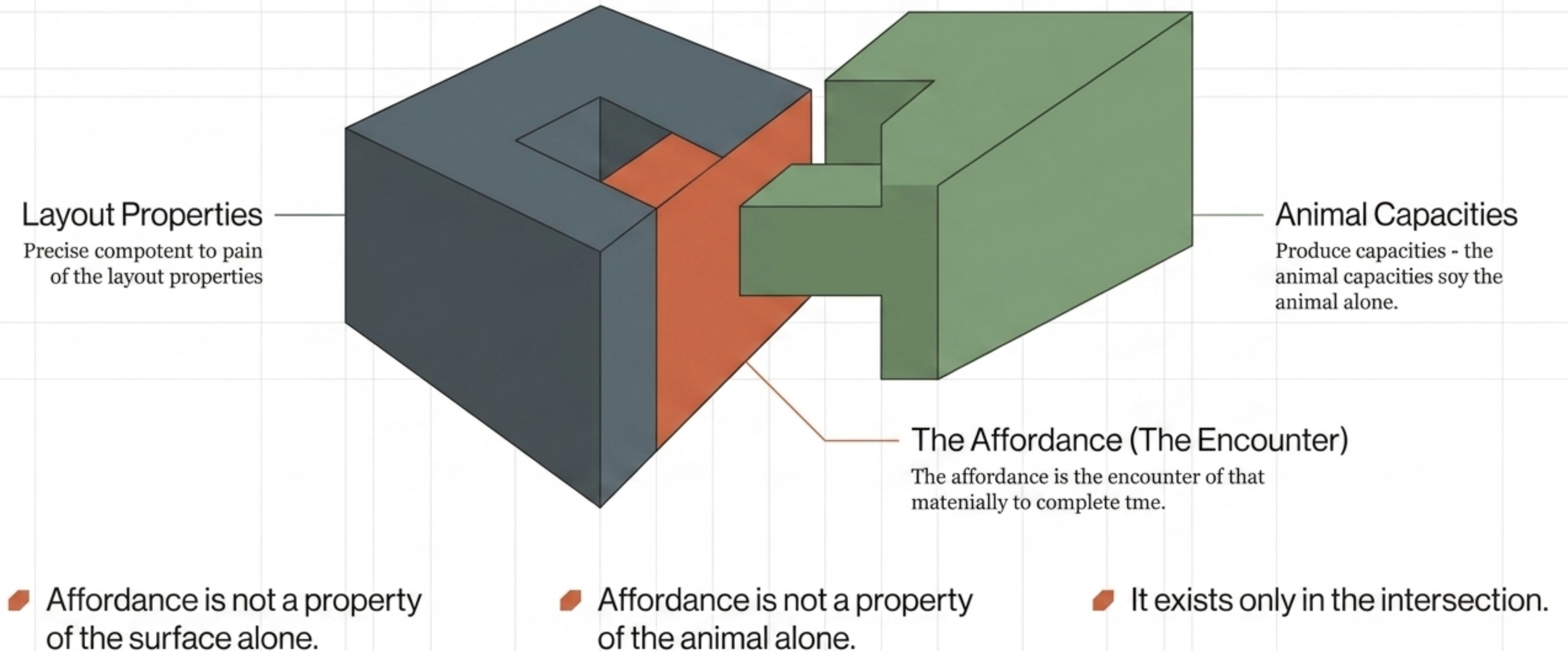


What an Environment Offers

An affordance is what an environment provides an animal: provisions, opportunities, or hazards.

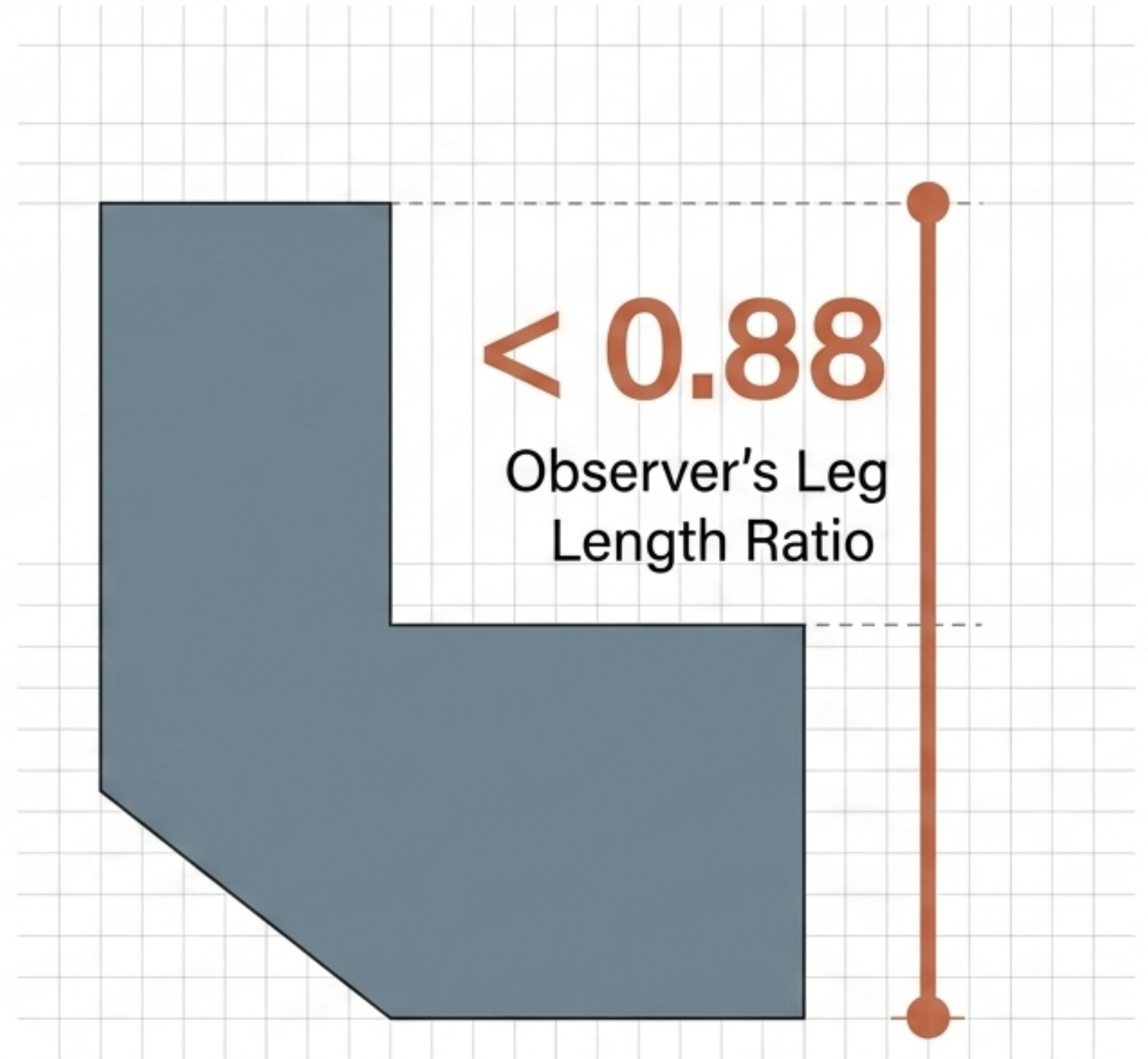


The Relational Equation



Operationalizing the Encounter

Warren's stair-climbing work proves this relational fit can be mathematically operationalized. A stair riser affords climbing universally when its height falls below a specific body-scaled ratio.



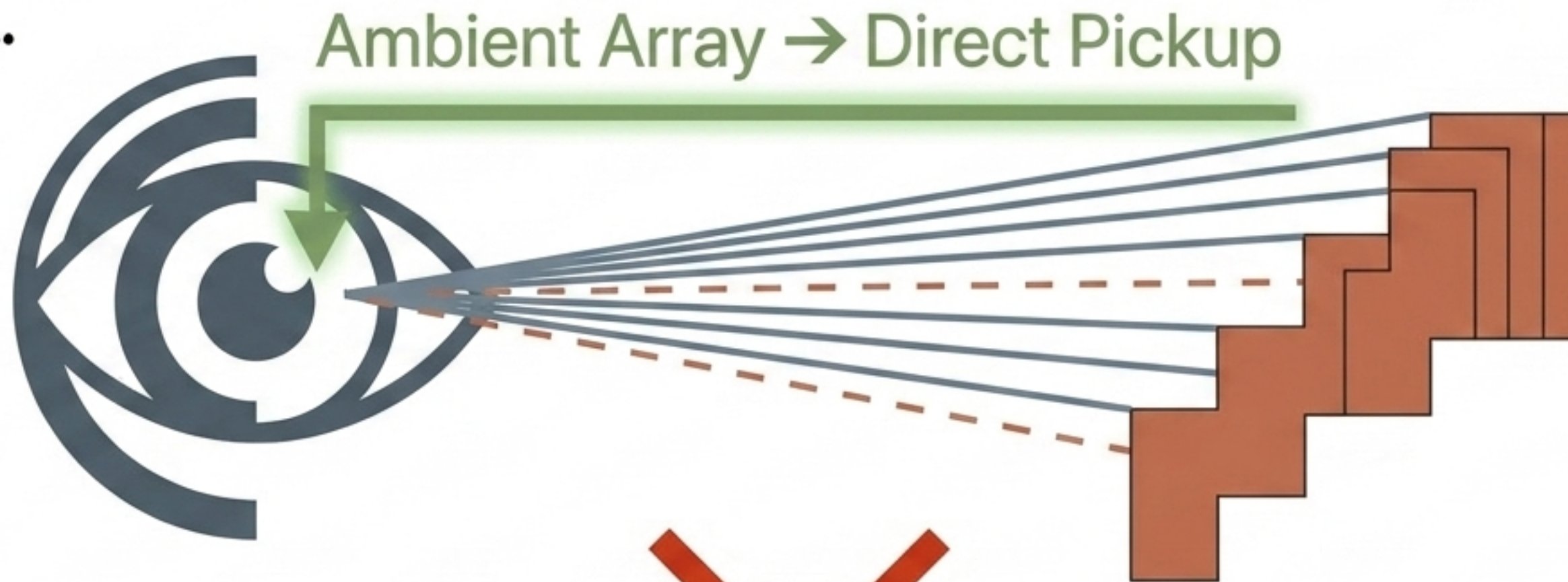
The Metaphysical Dispute

If affordances are relational, where do they actually reside? This dictates whether they exist without animals and if they can be counted.

Thinker	Locus (Where it resides)		Core Definition
Gibson		Neither / Both	Cuts across subjective and objective divisions.
Turvey et al.		Environment	Dispositional properties actualized by effectivities.
Chemero		N/A (Malformed Question)	Relations between abilities and situations; not properties.
Stoffregen		The Whole System	Resides entirely in the animal-environment system.
Reed		Environment (Prior)	Independent resources on which natural selection operates.

The Radical Claim of Directness

Because the fit between capacities and layout is already specified in the ambient array, there is no inferential step. No internal representation is consulted.



~~Geometry + Inference = Utility~~

Pushing Back on Direct Pickup

Fodor and Pylyshyn argue directness either restricts perception to tiny properties or becomes indistinguishable from inference.

The Defense: Ecological Psychologists

Information lawfully specifies its source.



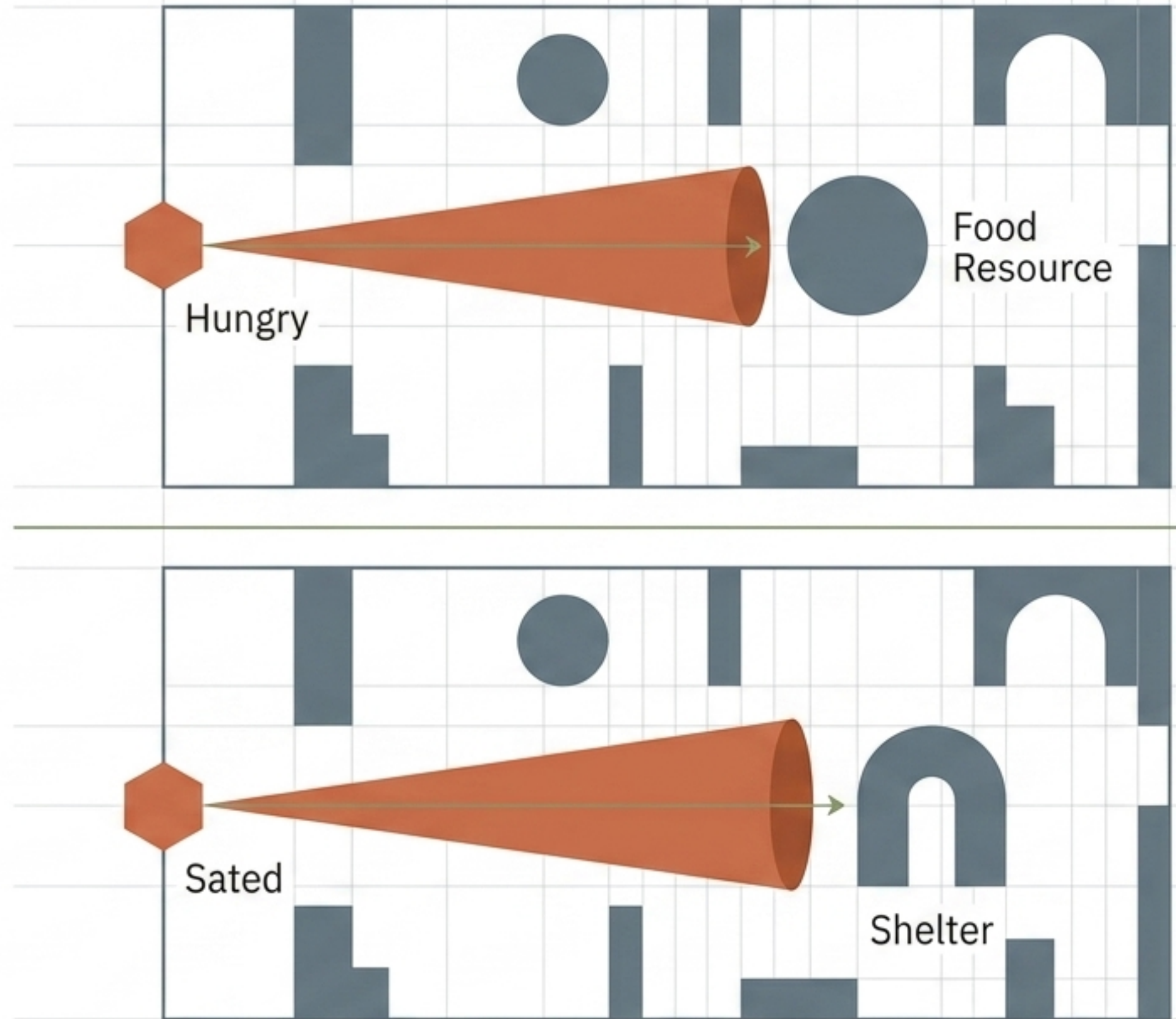
The Critique: Predictive Processing

Hidden inference must exist to bridge the gap.



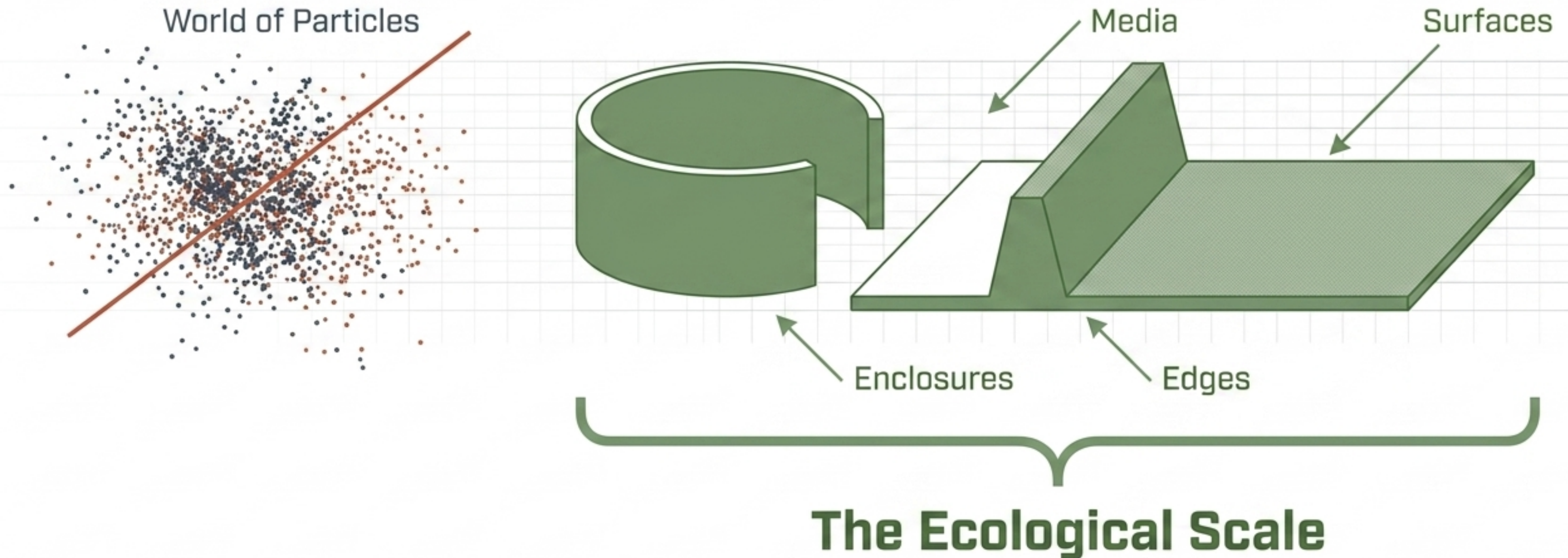
Invariance Across States

A hungry animal and a sated animal are offered the exact same things. The layout remains invariant; what varies is merely which affordances are attended to.



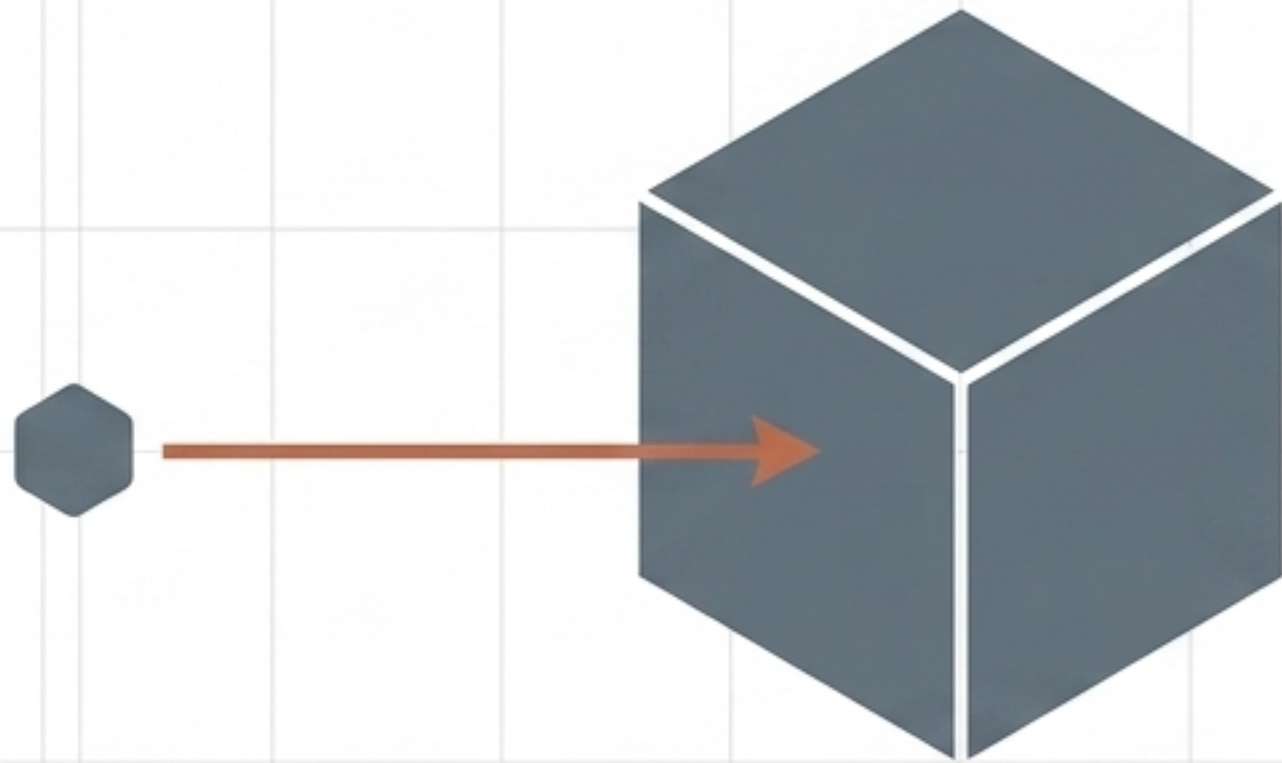
The Scale of Perception

Affordances are properties of the world at the exact size at which animals live, act, and encounter reality—not the world of particles.

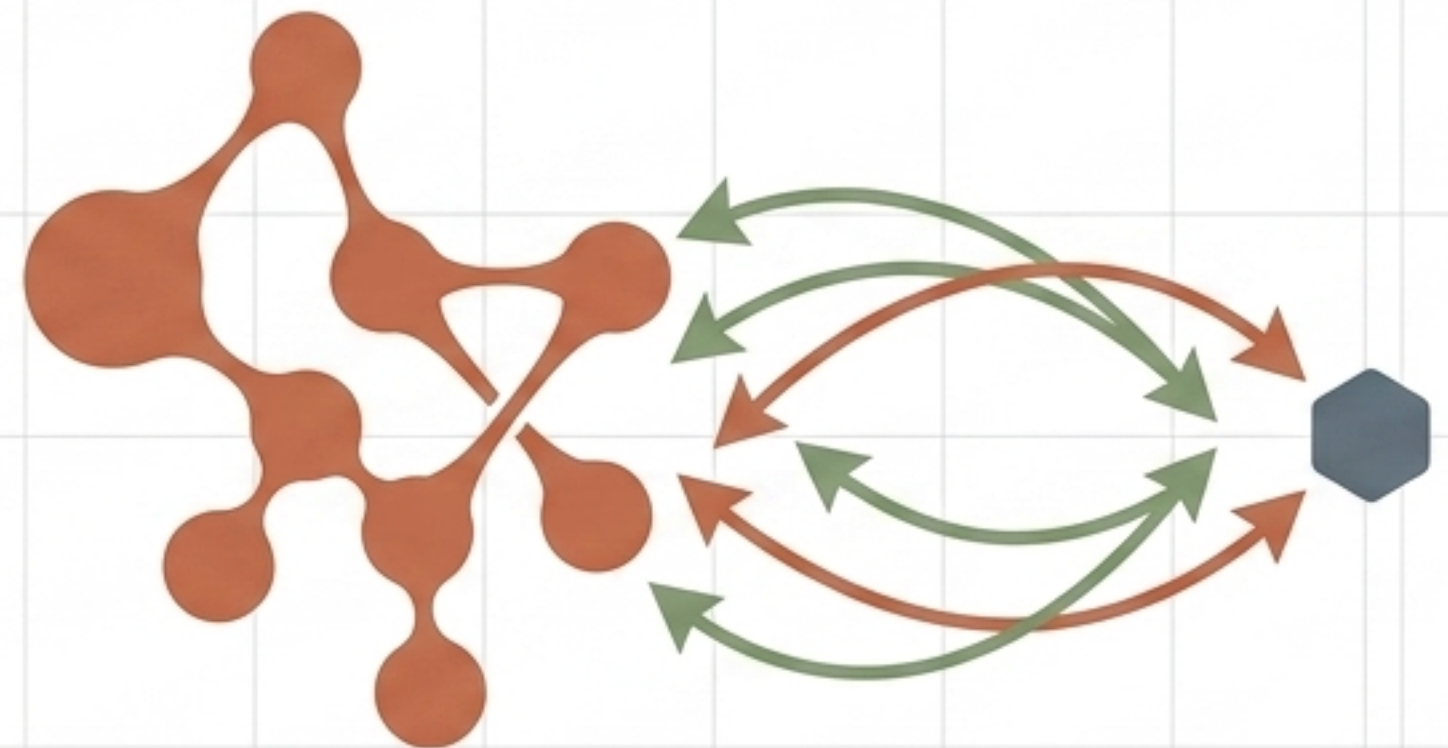


The Richest Affordances

A mobile, responsive object changes the landscape of possible action.
Other animals afford dynamic interaction rather than mere use.



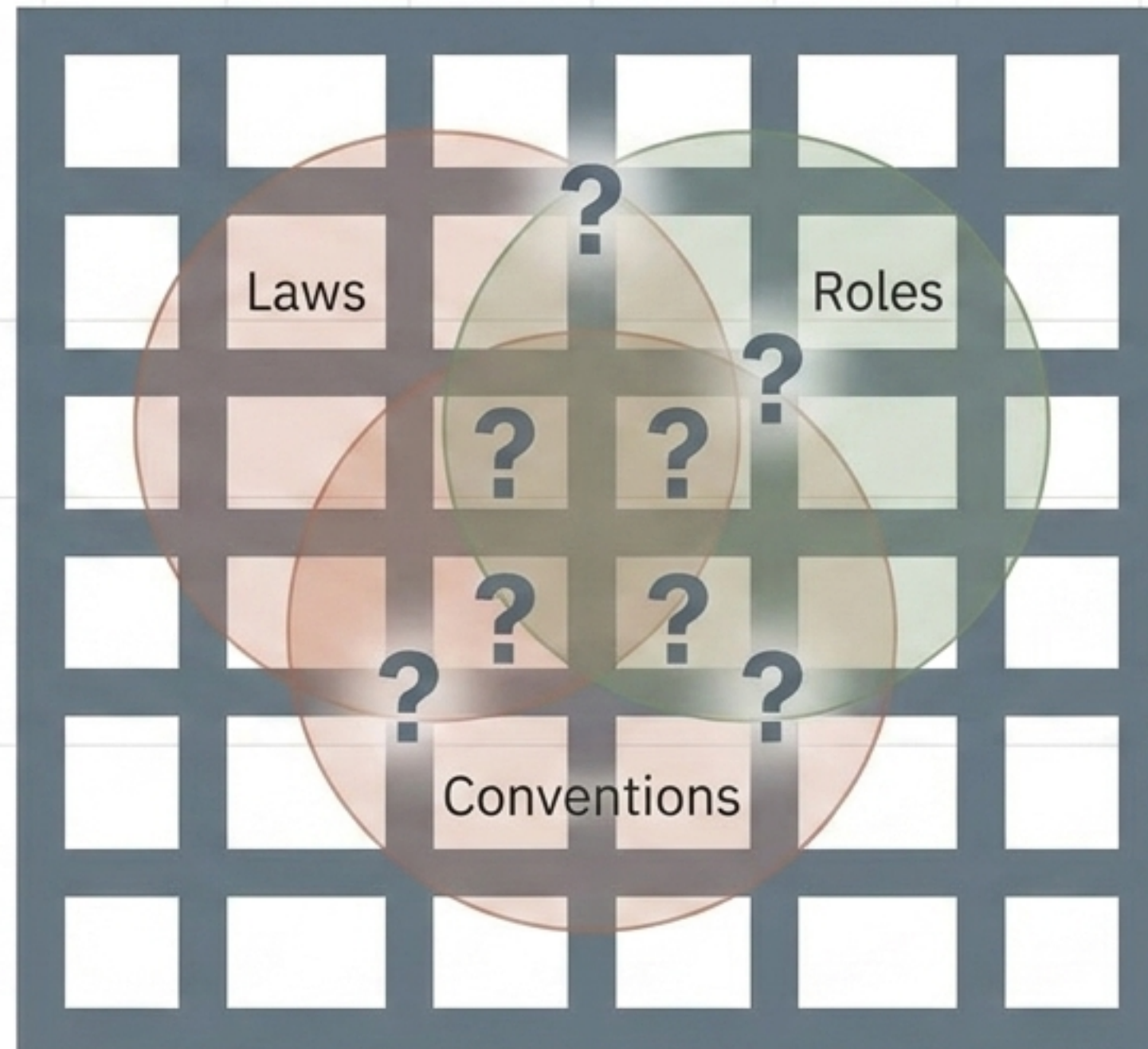
The Rock
(Mere Use)



The Other Animal
(Interaction)

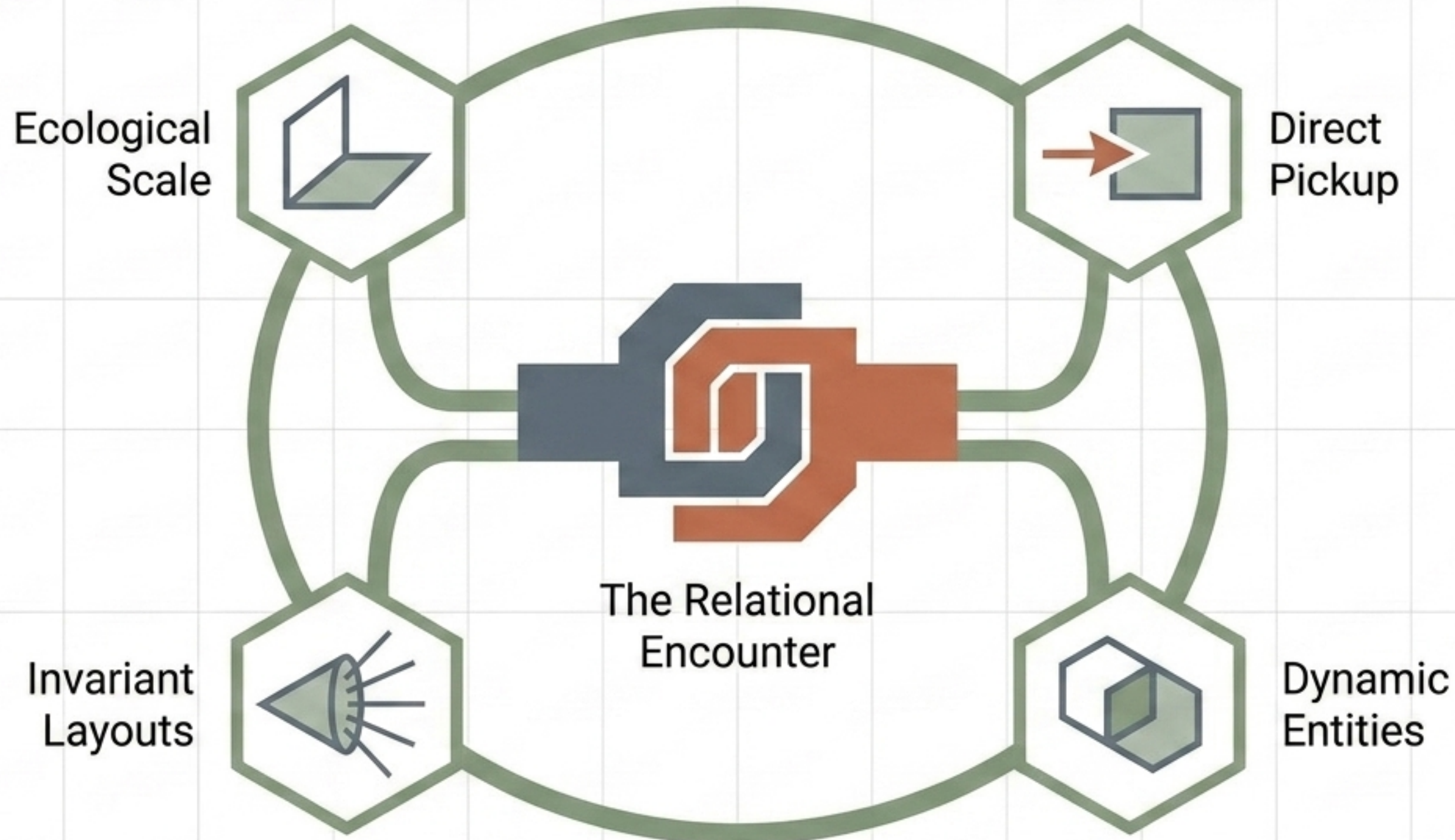
The Social Frontier

Can institutional facts, conventions, and social roles afford anything without relying on the exact representational machinery Gibson hated?



The Architecture of Encounter

Gibson's ecological approach is a unified, interlocking system.



Beyond the Buzzword

Affordance is not a design trick for making buttons look clickable. It is a radical re-imagining of how creatures interface with reality.

Meaning is physically woven into the architecture of the world, waiting directly for our encounter.

