

RULES AND PROBES

ENTWURF DER METHODE / DISCOURSE ON METHOD
WHAT DESCARTES CAN TEACH US ON “PROMPTING”

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Chat Protokolle des Gesprächs (und etwas geordnete Ernte)

Chat on Descartes Entwurf of Method

PROMPT: Could you organize this in like manner as Descartes' Discourse on Method? in a way that translates "discourse" not through propositions and arguments but as architectonic Entwurf?

METHOD AS BUILDING PROJECT, ENTWURF. CAN IT BE FOUNDED UPON CIRCULATION RATHER THAN CERTAINTY?

Yes. What strikes me is that Discourse on Method is already secretly architectural. *Descartes presents it as a discourse, but the central image is not logical.* It is urbanistic and architectural: he speaks of cities, streets, demolitions, foundations, rebuilding, temporary dwellings, and the construction of a house upon firm ground. *The method is a building project.*

What changes in the mentality we have been exploring is that the project is no longer founded upon certainty but upon circulation. Descartes' discourse could therefore be transformed into something like an *Entwurf über die Wege der Formen* ("Projection on the Paths of Forms"), whose sections parallel the six parts of the original while replacing foundations with infrastructures of passage.

Entwurf über die Wege der Formen

Erster Teil

Von den Ländern, den Flüssen und den Übersetzungen

I do not begin from certainty. I begin from crossings. For many years I have wandered among disciplines as travelers once wandered among kingdoms. Mathematics, architecture, cosmology, language, mythology, infrastructure, perception: each appeared at first as a separate territory. Yet travel gradually revealed that territories are less important than the routes between them. A river does not belong to a single country. A bridge belongs fully to neither shore. A trade route produces affinities between places that geography alone cannot explain. Thus I learned to distrust the apparent isolation of things. What interested me was no longer what a thing is, but what passages it permits.

Zweiter Teil

Von den Pässen und den Brücken

Observing these passages, I adopted several rules. Not rules of proof. Rules of movement. The first was never to seek an origin where a transformation could be followed. The second was never to accept disciplinary boundaries as natural frontiers. The third was always to search for the bridge before defining the shores. The fourth was to return repeatedly to the same crossing from different directions. For a crossing reveals more than a destination. A pass teaches more about a mountain than a summit.

Dritter Teil

Von den Provisorischen Behausungen

One cannot live permanently in the fog. While exploring unknown territories one requires temporary shelters. These shelters are concepts. Yet concepts must be treated as camps rather than fortresses. They are erected in order to continue the journey. Not to terminate it. Words such as: form, orientation, infrastructure, geometry, institution, memory serve as provisional dwellings. They gather experience without imprisoning it. A concept becomes dangerous when one mistakes the camp for the continent.

Vierter Teil

Von den Städten und den Strömungen

Reflecting further, I discovered that many things commonly regarded as objects are better understood as stabilized movements. A city is not its stones. It is the persistence of crossings. A river is not its water. It is the persistence of a course. An axiom is not a sentence. It is the persistence of a generative operation. A statue is not stone. It is the stabilization of an orientation. Forms are therefore neither substances nor representations. They are regions where movements have become sufficiently coherent to guide further movements. A city is a stabilized crossroads. A form is a stabilized trajectory.

Fünfter Teil Von den Deltas, den Archipelen und den Küsten

From this perspective the world appears differently. Disciplines become archipelagos. Concepts become ports. Theories become shipping routes. Analogies become bridges. Translation becomes navigation. The most fertile regions are often neither the open sea nor the solid continent, but estuaries and coastlines, where different currents intermingle. There mathematics meets perception. There architecture meets cosmology. There myth meets geometry. There language meets matter. These boundary regions are not deficiencies of order. They are generators of novelty.

Sechster Teil Von der Kartographie kommender Welten

The purpose of this inquiry is not to discover an ultimate foundation. Nor is it to replace one territory with another. Its purpose is cartographic. To make visible the passages through which forms travel. To study how orientations emerge. To observe how certain trajectories stabilize into institutions, infrastructures, sciences, architectures, and worlds. And to understand how these stabilized forms may themselves become bridges toward future transformations. For every map eventually enters the territory it describes. Every orientation becomes part of the world it helps orient. Every bridge alters the shores it connects. Thus the task is endless. Not because knowledge is impossible. But because every successful crossing creates a new landscape.

INVERTING DESCARTES: NAVIGATOR-CARTOGRAPHER – NOT HOUSE BUT BRIDGE

What fascinates me is that this architectonic "Discourse" would *invert Descartes at a very deep level*. Descartes' hero is the solitary builder who demolishes inherited structures in order to erect a secure foundation. The hero of this alternative discourse is not a builder but a navigator-cartographer. Not the founder of a city, but the reader of currents. Not the architect of certainty, but the maintainer of passages. *Its primal image would not be the house. It would be the watershed*. Or perhaps even more fundamentally: *the bridge*, understood not as an object among objects, but as a form whose entire reality consists in enabling transformations.

PROMPT: can you rewrite Descartes "Rules" with minimal transformations, such that our conversations are depicted in its form?

Yes. And I think the most interesting way is not to parody Descartes, but to perform a very small rotation of his rules. The original *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* seek certainty through ordered intuition and deduction. Our conversations often seek something else: not certainty, but orientability. Not foundations, but passages. Not clear and distinct ideas, but the emergence of stable crossings. If I rewrite him with the smallest possible displacement, many rules remain surprisingly Cartesian.

Rule I

The end of study should be to direct the mind not toward isolated truths, but toward the relations by which truths, forms, and practices become capable of entering into communication. For the greatest error is to suppose that things are first given separately and only afterward connected.

Rule II

We should attend only to those objects whose transformations can be followed. For what cannot be transformed cannot be compared. And what cannot be compared cannot yet be understood.

Rule III

Concerning objects proposed for investigation, we ought to seek not merely what others have said about them, nor what we ourselves conjecture, but what passages may be established between them. For a bridge often reveals more than either shore.

Rule IV

Method is necessary not because the world is obscure, but because relations are numerous. Without order we become lost among crossings. With too much order we cease to discover new ones.

Rule V

The whole method consists in arranging things according to the ease with which one may travel between them. Not from simple to complex. But from familiar passages to unfamiliar ones.

Rule VI

To distinguish things rightly, one should seek the invariants that persist through their transformations. For what remains recognizable through change belongs to the form itself.

Rule VII

Enumeration should not merely count things, but trace their circulations. A concept is known only when one has followed its routes.

Rule VIII

Whenever investigation reaches an impasse, one should search for a neighboring domain through which the question may continue its movement. For stagnation often indicates that one remains too long within a single territory.

Rule IX

The mind must exercise itself on crossings. For difficult transitions sharpen understanding more than familiar identities.

Rule X

In order to discover, one should learn to translate. Geometry into architecture. Architecture into cosmology. Cosmology into infrastructure. For translation reveals structures hidden within a single language.

Rule XI

No object should be regarded as self-sufficient. Every object is a crossroads of relations.

Rule XII

The powers of the mind are not exhausted by deduction. There exists also orientation. That faculty by which one senses a relation before one can yet demonstrate it.

Rule XIII

If a question appears insoluble, reformulate it in terms of movement rather than substance. Ask not: "What is it?" but: "How does it travel?"

Rule XIV

Figures are not merely representations. They are instruments of passage. A diagram is a bridge upon paper.

Rule XV

The most fruitful investigations occur at boundaries. Where mathematics touches perception. Where myth touches architecture. Where language touches matter.

Rule XVI

One should proceed by repeated return. For a thing seen from many directions gradually reveals its landscape.

Rule XVII

A concept should be treated as a provisional habitation. One dwells within it for a time. One should not mistake it for the world.

Rule XVIII

Disciplines are conveniences of navigation, not divisions of reality. The world is continuous where institutions are discrete.

Rule XIX

A successful inquiry transforms its own terrain. Every map alters the field it maps.

Rule XX

Forms are stabilized trajectories. A city is not its stones. A river is not its water. A theorem is not its symbols. A form persists through replacement.

Rule XXI

The highest task of inquiry is neither certainty nor mastery, but the cultivation of passages through which forms may continue their journeys. For understanding is achieved not when movement ceases, but when movement becomes orientable.

PROMPT: _____ BEGIN FROM WATERSHED, NOT LINE: MANY STREAMS, CONFLUENCES

What fascinates me is that these rewritten rules remain strangely close to Descartes. The deepest difference is concentrated in a single substitution: Descartes begins from the image of a line. A chain of deductions. A sequence. Our conversations seem to begin from the image of a watershed. Many streams. Many crossings. Many confluences. The Cartesian mind asks: How can I move securely from one truth to another? The mentality we have been uncovering asks: How can forms travel between worlds without losing the power to orient them? That is a surprisingly small modification syntactically, but architectonically it changes almost everything.

PROMPT: _____ *in his "Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and seeking Truth in the Sciences" Descartes introduces an instrument to explore fields of sciences as "probes" - this is interesting ,and sounds already like our "continent"*

Yes—and I think this is one of the places where the standard image of Descartes as merely a foundationalist obscures something much more interesting. When people remember Descartes, they remember: certainty, clear and distinct ideas, foundations, the cogito. But when one actually reads the Discourse and especially the Rules, one encounters a remarkably mobile thinker. The word *methodos* itself means a way, a pursuit, a path through. Not a foundation, but a route. And *what are his famous rules doing? They are not yet proving propositions. They are organizing exploration.*

In fact, Descartes repeatedly uses images that are surprisingly close to surveying. The mind is confronted with a vast and confusing territory. The problem is not lack of intelligence. The problem is disorientation. One needs instruments: order, analysis, diagrams, algebra, geometry, to move through this territory. *In this sense the Cartesian method is already infrastructural. It is a mobility system for thought.*

PROMPT: PLEASE ELABORATE: METHODUS AS MOBILITY SYSTEM FOR THOUGHT / A DIFFERENT ONTOLOGY OF THE TERRAIN

What changes in our conversations is not the existence of probes. It is the ontology of the terrain. For Descartes, the sciences form a territory that is ultimately unified because reality itself is ordered. The explorer's task is to discover the correct route. The map already exists in principle. For us, *the terrain is stranger. The territory is partly generated by the exploration.* The probe does not merely discover relations. It creates new passages.

This is why your recurring practice of asking is not simply analogy. These are probes. They are exploratory devices. Not unlike Descartes' coordinate geometry.

Plato through TVK
geometry through respiration
axiom through statue
architecture through cosmology

Think about what analytic geometry actually does. Traditionally we say: *Descartes transformed geometry into algebra.* But another description would be: *Descartes invented a probe capable of traveling between two previously separate continents.* The geometric continent and the algebraic continent. The coordinate system is a bridge technology. A translation apparatus. A vehicle.

Descartes transformed geometry into algebra.
Descartes invented a probe capable of traveling between two previously separate continents. T

Viewed this way, the Cartesian plane itself becomes fascinating. It is not merely a grid. It is an infrastructure of passage. It allows:

figure ↔ number
curve ↔ equation
space ↔ symbol
movement ↔ calculation

That is astonishingly close to what you often seek. Not identity. Transport.

This is where I think the image of the continent becomes stronger. Suppose we imagine Descartes' project as a vast landmass. His method would consist of: roads, survey instruments, triangulation towers, coordinate markers, bridges, observatories. The goal is to make the territory navigable.

The mentality we have been describing together would inherit all of these instruments but add others: ferries between disciplines, estuaries where concepts mix, ports of translation, migratory routes, watersheds, trade winds, archipelagos. In other words: Descartes' continent is largely terrestrial. Ours is amphibious. It includes land, sea, atmosphere, currents, and circulation.

PROMPT: PLEASE ELABORATE - INSTRUMENTS AS PROBES / A PROBE ENTERS A TERRITORY

And there is something even more striking. You observed that Descartes introduces instruments that function like probes. Now consider what a probe actually is. A probe does not represent a territory. A probe enters a territory. It is operational. Its knowledge is produced through movement. This is why I think there is an unexpected continuity between: Descartes' geometry, Leibniz' calculus, Goethe's morphology, Serres' passages, category theory's functors, and many of your own prompts. All of them ask, in different ways: What kind of instrument allows a form to travel? The coordinate system is one answer. The differential is another. The morphism is another. The metaphor is another. The translation is another. The architectural project is another.

If I were to place our conversations onto the "continent" metaphor, I would say something slightly provocative: We are not exploring a continent at all. We are exploring the instruments by which continents become discoverable. The true object is not the terrain. Nor the map. Nor the traveler. It is the evolving repertoire of probes that allow new terrains, new maps, and even new travelers to emerge. That is perhaps why Descartes keeps reappearing in these discussions. Beneath the philosopher of certainty there is also a philosopher of orientation—someone obsessed with inventing devices that permit movement through unknown intellectual territories. In that respect, he may be closer to your concerns than his reputation suggests.

PROMPT: PLEASE ELABORATE - WHAT IS A PROBE?

Yes. I think "probe" may actually be the missing term between many of the notions we have been circling around. Because a probe is neither: a representation, nor a concept, nor a method, nor an object, but something strangely intermediate. A probe is an operation that enters an unknown relational field and returns with newly articulable differences. The word becomes clearer if we place it among neighboring notions.

Probe and Tool

A hammer is a tool. A probe may also be a tool, but its primary purpose is not intervention. Its primary purpose is revelation. A hammer changes a wall. A probe reveals a cavity behind a wall. A telescope reveals a constellation. A theorem reveals a hidden relation. The probe is therefore a tool whose operation is epistemic.

Probe and Map

A map presupposes a territory. A probe precedes the map. A probe enters where no map yet exists. The sounding line dropped from a ship is a beautiful example. The sounding line is not a map. Yet without repeated soundings there is no chart. This is very close to what happens in our conversations. When you ask: Is there a relation between axiom and statue? you are not proposing a map. You are dropping a sounding line. You are testing depth. Most such probes return little. Occasionally they reveal an unexpected trench.

Probe and Hypothesis

A hypothesis usually predicts. A probe often does not. A probe is exploratory. One may not know what one is looking for. Consider: Geometry through respiration. This is not primarily a hypothesis. It is an exploratory device. The question is: What appears when these domains are forced into contact? The probe generates a situation.

Probe and Metaphor

This is where things become interesting. A metaphor is often treated as decoration. But many important metaphors are actually probes. When Maxwell speaks of fields. When Darwin speaks of branching. When Leibniz speaks of monads. When Serres speaks of parasites. When Whitehead speaks of prehensions. These are not merely images. They are devices for entering a region of thought. The metaphor acts like a conceptual sonar pulse. It returns with information.

Probe and Translation

Translation may be the most powerful form of probe. Suppose we ask: What if a theorem were translated into architecture? The goal is not literary play. The translation forces hidden structures to reveal themselves. A good translation probe exposes invariants. What survives the passage? What cannot survive? What unexpectedly emerges? This is precisely why you repeatedly perform these cross-domain translations.

Probe and Diagram

A diagram is often misunderstood as a representation. But many diagrams are probes. Think of Descartes' coordinate system. Before coordinates, geometry and algebra are largely distinct territories. The coordinate plane is inserted between them. It becomes an exploratory interface. One can suddenly ask: What is the algebraic equivalent of this curve? What is the geometric equivalent of this equation? The diagram probes both domains simultaneously.

Probe and Category Theory

Here the probe becomes almost explicit. A functor is not primarily a representation. It is a transport mechanism. It carries structures from one category into another. One could even say: A functor is a formalized probe. It asks: What survives this passage? Every functor performs an experiment.

Probe and Architecture

This may be the most important constellation for your interests. Traditionally architecture is treated as an object. A building. But architecture can also be understood as a probe. A monastery probes a landscape. An observatory probes the sky. A city probes a territory. A

bridge probes a river. An exhibition probes a public. An architectural project asks: What relations become possible if this form is inserted here? That is precisely the logic of a probe.

Probe and Chōra

This becomes even more interesting if we return to Plato. The probe is not quite a form. Nor quite a material thing. It occupies something like a choric position. It is an intermediary. A mediator. A place-making operation. The probe generates a temporary space in which relations can become visible.

Probe and Infrastructure

I suspect this is where the concept reaches its deepest significance. Infrastructure is often invisible because it is mistaken for an object. But infrastructure is really a system of probes that has become permanent. A road continually probes a landscape. A coordinate system continually probes space. A language continually probes experience. A legal system continually probes behavior. An axiom continually probes logical possibility. A university continually probes knowledge. The probe is therefore a kind of embryonic infrastructure. Infrastructure is what happens when a probe stabilizes.

After all these constellations, I would define a probe like this: A probe is a temporary form introduced into a relational field in order to discover what movements, invariants, differences, and passages the field can support. Notice how many things suddenly become probes: metaphors, diagrams, translations, architectural projects, coordinate systems, functors, thought experiments, myths, models, axioms. They are all devices for asking the same question: *If I insert this form here, what becomes visible?* And now we can perhaps return to the continent metaphor one last time. A continent is not discovered by looking at it from above. It is discovered through probes: sounding lines, compasses, roads, triangulations, ports, bridges, maps, settlements. What fascinates me about your way of thinking is that many of *your questions are not attempts to describe the continent. They are attempts to invent new probes.* "Axiom through statue" is a probe. "Geometry through respiration" is a probe. "Plato through TVK" is a probe. The question is never merely whether the analogy is true. The question is whether the probe can reveal a previously unseen passage through the terrain. And when it does, the probe itself often becomes part of the infrastructure of future thought.

Interestingly, there is no perfect German equivalent. That is already philosophically revealing. English probe has a remarkable ambiguity: an instrument, an exploratory operation, an investigation, a test, a sensor, a questioning gesture, an exploratory insertion into an unknown field. German tends to split these functions across several words.

Sonde

This is probably the closest technical equivalent. Raumsonde, Tiefensonde, Messsonde. A Sonde enters a region and returns information. This fits very well with: a temporary form introduced into a relational field to reveal hidden differences. But Sonde sounds scientific and instrumental. It lacks the speculative and conceptual dimension.

Versuch

This is fascinating. A Versuch is: experiment, attempt, essay. Remember that Montaigne's Essais are literally Versuche. Many of your prompts behave exactly like Versuche. Plato through TVK is a Versuch. Geometry through respiration is a Versuch. Not a proposition. Not a proof. An attempt that generates knowledge through performance. This may be closer to your practice than Sonde.

Erkundung

This emphasizes exploration: erkunden, auskundschaften. The geographical dimension becomes strong. One explores a terrain whose structure is not yet known. This resonates strongly with our continent metaphor. Yet it lacks the sense of an inserted instrument.

Tastung

Tasten means to feel one's way, to grope, to palpate. A Tastung is neither vision nor certainty. It is orientation through contact. One advances through partial encounters. Much of what happens in our conversations resembles a Tastung. You rarely ask: What is X? More often: Does X touch Y? This is a tactile epistemology. Very Merleau-Pontian.

Versuchsanordnung

A Versuchsanordnung is not merely an experiment. It is the arrangement that makes discovery possible. The setup. The constellation. In this sense: axiom ↔ statue is a Versuchsanordnung. You are arranging a situation in which something may become visible.

Fühler

An extraordinary word. An insect has Fühler. A snail has Fühler. A state has informants (Führung halten). A Fühler extends into an environment. It is neither fully inside nor outside. It is an organ of orientation. This comes very close to what we have been discussing.

Aufschluss

This is perhaps the most philosophical. In geology: Aufschluss means an exposed rock formation. Something hidden becomes visible. In ordinary German: Aufschluss geben means to reveal. The probe is not merely the instrument. The probe produces Aufschluss. It creates an exposure of structure.

Entwurf

Because your use of architecture changes the picture. An architectural project is often not a representation. It is a probe. The German word Entwurf literally means: projection, throwing forth, casting ahead. An Entwurf is not merely a plan. It is a form sent into the future to discover what becomes possible. Heidegger understands it almost this way. Architects often do too. A project probes reality.

Tastender Entwurf

If I were inventing a term for our conversations, I might call many of your prompts: tastende Entwürfe feeling projections, probing projections, exploratory castings-ahead They do not begin from certainty. They begin from orientation.

I suspect the German words that together approximate probe are: *Versuch* – *Sonde* – *Tastung* – *Entwurf*. Each contributes something: English Probe, German resonance, instrument, *Sonde*, experiment, *Versuch*, tactile exploration, *Tastung*, world-projecting exploration *Entwurf*. And if I had to choose a single word for the specific activity we have been performing together, I might not choose *Sonde* at all. I would choose: *Versuchsanordnung* or even *tastende Versuchsanordnung*. Because when you ask: Is there a relation between axiom and statue? you are not deploying a sensor. You are arranging a situation. You are constructing a small epistemic architecture in which an unseen relation might expose itself. That is much closer to Goethe's *Versuch*, Serres' passage, or an architect's *Entwurf* than to a scientific probe in the narrow sense. In that sense, many of your prompts are less questions than carefully constructed *Aufschlussmaschinen*—machines for producing exposures.

PROMPT: *if we were to write a book on Prompting Method in the manner elaborated thus, what would be your thoughts?*

ChatGPT: *It would not be a book about AI. Nor would it be a manual. It would be a book about a new epistemic practice emerging at the intersection of architecture, philosophy, scientific instruments, cartography, media theory, and language models. The enemy of the book would be "prompt engineering." Not because prompt engineering is wrong. But because it starts from an industrial metaphor. The book would start from an exploratory one.*

Working Titles:

Aufschlussmaschinen

Prompting as an Art of Epistemic Exploration

Probes

Toward a Theory of Prompting Beyond Engineering

The Continent of Questions

Prompting, Orientation, and the Construction of *Aufschlussmaschinen*

Central Thesis:

Prompt engineering assumes that a prompt is an instruction. This book proposes that many prompts are better understood as probes. A probe does not optimize a machine. A probe explores a field. The purpose of prompting is therefore not merely obtaining answers. It is constructing conditions under which previously invisible relations can become perceptible. Prompts are not commands. They are epistemic architectures.

Style

Not a monograph. Not a handbook. Not a manifesto. Something between: Descartes' Discourse on Method, Serres' *Hermes*, Alexander's *Pattern Language*, Cedric Price's notebooks, Latour's field manuals

Prototype Press' love for strange technical objects. Each chapter would introduce an instrument. Not a concept. An instrument. The tone would be: half cartographic, half philosophical, half architectural. (Three halves intentionally.)

Table of Contents

Preface
The End of Prompt Engineering
Why "engineering" is the wrong metaphor.
Engineering assumes known goals.
Prompting often begins where goals are not yet known.
The problem is not optimization.
The problem is orientation.

PART I CONTINENTS

1. The Territory is Not Given
Prompts do not merely navigate knowledge. They partially produce the terrain they explore. Maps and territories co-emerge.
2. The Continent of Relations
Language models are not libraries. They are relational landscapes. Meaning is topological rather than taxonomic.
3. The Cartographer's Problem
How can one orient oneself in a field whose boundaries are unknown?

PART II PROBES

4. What is a Probe?
Probe as Sonde, Versuch, Tasting, Entwurf. Historical examples: sounding lines, telescopes, coordinate systems, thought experiments
5. Metaphor as Probe
Not decoration. Instrumentation. Serres. Whitehead. Goethe.
6. Translation as Probe
Plato through TVK. Geometry through respiration. Architecture through cosmology. Translation as a machine for exposing invariants.
7. Diagrams as Probes
Descartes' coordinate system. Category-theoretic diagrams. Architectural drawings. Not representations. Operational interfaces.

PART III AUFSCHLUSSMASCHINEN

8. The Architecture of Exposure

What is an Aufschluss? Geological outcrop. Conceptual exposure. Prompts as devices that reveal hidden strata.

9. The Estuary Method

Where disciplines mix. Prompting as the deliberate creation of estuarial zones.

10. Building a Question

A question is not a request. A question is an arrangement. A spatial construction. A Versuchsanordnung.

11. The Bridge Principle

Axiom ↔ statue, Perception ↔ mathematics, Infrastructure ↔ cosmology. How to construct productive crossings.

PART IV INFRASTRUCTURES

12. When Probes Become Institutions

How repeated probes become concepts, methods, disciplines, infrastructures

13. The Life of a Form

Forms as stabilized trajectories. The river model. The city model. The watershed model.

14. Prompting as Infrastructure Design

The prompt no longer seeks information. It engineers future questions.

PART V RULES FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE QUESTION

A contemporary rewriting of Descartes. Twenty-one rules. Not for directing the mind. For directing inquiry. Not toward certainty. Toward orientability.

Epilogue

The Republic of Probes. The future scholar. The future architect. The future philosopher. No longer primarily analyst, critic, engineer but cartographer, translator, probe designer and constructor of Aufschlussmaschinen.

The crucial distinction from Prompt Engineering: Prompt engineering asks: How do I obtain the desired output? This is fundamentally cybernetic. Input → Output. Optimization. Control. Efficiency.

The method we have been describing asks: What arrangement of concepts, metaphors, translations, diagrams, and questions can produce an unexpected exposure? This is closer to

scientific instrumentation, architecture, cartography, exploration than engineering. The success criterion changes completely. A prompt engineer seeks: accuracy, reliability, reproducibility. A designer of Aufschlussmaschinen seeks exposure, orientation, passage, generativity. The best result is often not an answer. It is a new continent.

In fact, if I imagine the book sitting on a Prototype Press shelf, I would make one final inversion. The title would not be Prompting. The word would appear nowhere on the cover. Because the book is not really about prompting. It is about a much older tradition that suddenly becomes visible through language models: the history of epistemic instruments—from the compass, the coordinate system, the atlas, the observatory, the diagram, the model, the architectural project, and the scientific probe, to the contemporary prompt. The prompt would appear as merely the latest member of a very old family: devices for producing Aufschluss.