On the Zeug Character of Verstand and Its Contributions

A Philosophical Path in Two Parts

Part One: Seven Stages of the Zeug Character
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Verstand does not stand before the world.
It reaches into it – and in this reaching is itself concealed.

Dieter Eigler

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PART ONE

The Zeug Character of Verstand and Its Contributions

Seven Stages

Introduction: The Zeug Perspective and the Seven Movements of the Book

This book does not begin by asking which categories Verstand (understanding/intellect, in the Kantian sense) possesses, but how Verstand itself is encountered in the enactment of access to the world. The guiding shift consists in treating it not as an authority enthroned above experience, but as Zeug (equipment/tool, in the Heideggerian sense): as a structure of contributions belonging to Dasein, mostly unobtrusive in use, through which what is encountered can be articulated, recognized again, compared, and carried forward.

The term Zeug denotes neither an arbitrary aid nor a demotion. It denotes proximity to enactment. Like one's own hand, Verstand is not merely a device lying beside the human being. It belongs to the very way in which anything at all appears to us as something. Its categories are therefore neither ready-made labels attached to things nor free inventions. They are instituted, practiced, and alterable grips that must prove themselves against the resistance of happening.

The seven stages pursue this thesis in increasing depth. The first stage lays bare the Zeug character of Verstand and its categories. The second shifts the view from the isolated state to action and path. The third examines forms of co-presence and ordered unfolding in chemistry, mathematics, and information. The fourth moves from information to entropy, trace, selective forgetting, and irreversibility. The fifth asks about logic and ethics as those tools through which differences become valid instances and claims. The sixth turns the Zeug perspective toward the subject-forms I, You, and We, and toward death as the outermost limit of their grammar. The seventh finally examines whether religiosity and spirituality possess a Zeug character, and whether even talk of God as Zeug can be sustained in a cautious limit-sense.

The relation among these stages is not that of a linear proof in which every later proposition follows completely from an earlier one. It is more like a path on which the same fundamental thought displays its reach and its limits in different fields. The book therefore does not attempt to install a single category in place of all others. It seeks a responsible plurality in the use of Zeug: isolating where determinacy is needed; embedding where context threatens to be lost; distinguishing where differences must hold; and correcting where one's own measure misses the happening.

The basic stance is this: knowledge is neither passive representation nor sovereign construction. It is contribution under conditions of resistance. Verstand reaches, but what is grasped also gives the grip its possible form.

> *The Zeug perspective is attentiveness to the fact that every act of knowing works with tools – and that the responsibility of thinking begins where these tools become visible as tools.*

Part One follows this Zeug perspective through seven stages to the limits of subjectivity and religious speech. Part Two then takes up a thought that became especially visible in the perspective of action: that a context need not first be assembled from finished points. It asks about Zwischen (the in-between) as a structure of enactment in its own right, about the integral as a mathematical model of a whole course, and about a present that holds what-has-been and possibility within itself without shrinking to a dimensionless instant. The two parts are connected, but they are not

identical: the first investigates the tools of access to the world; the second deepens the structure of that Zwischen in which these tools can reach at all.

First Stage

The Zeug Character of Verstand

A Phenomenological Grounding

Preliminary Note: A Shift of Perspective

This book begins neither with a new category nor with an additional faculty, nor with an attempt to play Verstand off against feeling, intuition, or embodiment. It begins with a shift of perspective. Ordinarily, Verstand is regarded as the faculty that orders, distinguishes, connects, and judges. It appears as an authority that processes the material of perception and forms an experienceable world out of multiplicity. Even where its limits are investigated, it initially remains the one that does the examining. It stands, as it were, before its own tribunal and judges what it can accomplish and what remains withdrawn from it.

The shift attempted here begins earlier. It asks not only: What can Verstand do? It asks: In what mode of being does this faculty encounter us at all? Is Verstand really first an authority, an upper storey of cognition, or an inner tribunal? Or is it originally much closer to us, far less conspicuous, and far more deeply embedded in our enactment of world? Perhaps it behaves not like a judge who rules from outside on what is given, but like a hand that grasps without looking at itself while grasping.

This brings two philosophical vocabularies into relation. From the Kantian tradition comes Verstand as the faculty of concepts and judgments. From Heideggerian phenomenology comes the Zeug character: the way in which something is encountered not first as an observed thing, but in use, in its in-order-to, and within a referential context. The guiding question is therefore: What happens if Verstand itself is placed under the category of Zeug character?

> *The fundamental thesis of this first stage is: Verstand is not an organ of ordering that stands outside the enactment of world. It is a Zeug of access to the world that belongs to Dasein and is usually concealed in use.*

This thesis is stronger than talk of Verstand as a mere tool might initially suggest. A hammer lies beside the human being and can be put down. Verstand does not lie beside us. It is not one available device among others. Rather, it belongs to the way in which anything at all encounters us as something. For precisely this reason, the term Zeug is not intended as a disparagement. It signifies no inferiority, but proximity to enactment. Zeug is not less real because it serves. On the contrary: in serving, it shows its distinctive efficacy.

From here a second thought moves to the center: not only Verstand as a faculty, but also its contributions possess Zeug character. Space, time, substance, and causality would then not be merely immovable forms or laws governing every possible experience in advance. They would be ways in which Verstand makes world traversable, calculable, recognizable, and narratable. They would be category-Zeug.

This first stage unfolds the thought without already hardening it into a closed system. It seeks to secure the point of departure, clarify concepts, determine the reach of the thesis, and make the decisive difficulties visible. For the dethroning of Verstand must not turn into its disparagement. And insight into the tool character of the categories must not be confused with the claim that they can be put aside at will. One's own hand is Zeug and yet no arbitrary accessory. The field of work of this book lies in this tension.

1. Verstand on the Throne

1.1 The Classical Picture

Modern epistemology tends to think of Verstand as a form-giving authority. Perceptions may change, sensations may arise in disorder, impressions may overlap; Verstand brings unity into this manifold. It distinguishes, establishes relations, forms concepts, and connects representations in judgments. Where something merely happens, it allows us to recognize what is happening. Where changes appear, it asks after what endures. Where events follow one another, it seeks cause and effect.

This picture possesses great plausibility. Without distinction, no object could be identified. Without recognition, there would be no duration. Without temporal order there would be no before and after; without spatial order, no near and far; without causal relation, no expectation of what might follow an action. Verstand therefore seems to be more than an aid. It seems to constitute the condition by which a world emerges from a mere stream of impressions.

Yet precisely its indispensability tempts us toward a certain representation: Verstand is raised above happening. It appears as an authority confronting the material of experience. The world supplies the matter; Verstand supplies the form. Perception gives; Verstand orders. The subject stands on one side, objects on the other, and between them operates an apparatus of mediation.

1.2 The Hidden Metaphorics of Rule

This representation contains a scarcely noticed metaphorics of rule. Verstand masters the manifold, forces it under concepts, and imposes upon what is given the conditions of its knowability. It is legislator, judge, architect, and border guard at once. Even the critique of Verstand often retains this imagery: the judge examines his own jurisdiction, the legislator limits his realm, the architect tests the load-bearing capacity of his building.

The metaphorics of rule has consequences. It makes Verstand appear as something already fully formed before it is used. Its forms seem static, its categories like a fixed inventory. Use then becomes merely the application of a prior endowment. First there is structure, then its activity. First the organ is determined, then it reaches into the world.

The phenomenological shift reverses this order. It begins not with the inventory, but with enactment. The isolated category is not primary; orientation, recognition, expectation, calculation, remembering, and acting are. The category shows itself as something that participates in such enactments. It receives its meaning not outside use, but within it.

1.3 The Blind Spot

The blind spot of the classical picture consists in this: although Verstand is supposed to order everything visible, its own ordering appears strangely placeless. Where is this faculty? How does it belong to living, acting, affected Dasein? How does it come about that categories are not merely thought, but are already at work in every step, every grip, every expectation, and every disappointment?

As long as Verstand is described only as an authority, its character as enactment remains underexposed. We see the finished judgments, but not the unobtrusive accompaniment of ordering schemata. We analyze concepts, but not the way in which they virtually disappear in everyday dealings. This is precisely where the concept of Zeug enters.

2. The Dethroning: Verstand as Zeug

2.1 Zeug Does Not Mean a Mere Means

The word Zeug can initially be misleading. It seems to lower Verstand from an exalted faculty to a mere instrument. Philosophically, however, Zeug denotes precisely not a neutral thing that is only subsequently used. Zeug is determined by its use, its in-order-to, and its insertion into a whole. A hammer is not first a piece of wood and metal to which a function is later assigned. In hammering, fastening, building, and in the context of nails, boards, workshop, and project, it is a hammer.

Applied to Verstand, this means: Verstand is not first a finished faculty that occasionally becomes active. It shows itself in enactments of distinguishing, connecting, holding fast, and expecting. Its being does not lie behind these activities; it occurs in them. Verstand is Zeug for orientation, for reducing complexity, for recognition, for projecting consequences, and for enabling a shared world.

> *Dethroning does not take away the significance of Verstand. It takes away only the appearance that it stands outside what it enables.*

2.2 The In-Order-To of Verstand

Every Zeug points beyond itself. The hammer points to hammering in, this to fastening, this to making a house, and the house in turn to dwelling. Correspondingly, Verstand points to a chain of enactments. It categorizes in order to make contexts manageable. It makes them manageable so that Dasein can orient itself, act, avoid, seek, and project. Verstand is therefore not an end in itself.

This referential chain can be summarized in a first formula: Verstand as Zeug – categorization as in-order-to – coping with world as what-for – enactment of being as for-the-sake-of-which. This chain does not lead from a low practical purpose to a higher abstract truth. Rather, it shows that theoretical truth itself stands within a more encompassing relation to world. Pure knowing, too, is a mode of being-in-the-world.

The expression coping with world must be understood carefully. It does not necessarily mean domination or subjugation. To cope means first of all: to get along with something, to withstand a situation, to be able to move within it. Verstand helps ensure that Dasein is not exposed at every moment to a completely disconnected stream. It creates points of support, transitions, and expectations.

2.3 A Whole of Zeug Rather Than Separate Tools

Verstand does not consist of mutually isolated instruments. Space, time, substance, causality, number, unity, multiplicity, and possibility interlock. Causality presupposes temporal order;

substance connects duration with change; spatial identity supports recognition; possibility and actuality articulate expectations. The categories therefore form a whole of Zeug.

An individual tool receives its meaning from the context in which it stands. Likewise, a category is not fully intelligible when removed from the fabric of enactment. Causality is not merely an abstract concept but part of a network of prediction, action, attribution of responsibility, explanation, and memory. Time is not merely a line, but the ordering of not-yet, now, no-longer, expectation, and having-been. Space is not merely measurable extension, but proximity, accessibility, direction, and place.

Verstand thereby becomes dynamic. A whole of Zeug is practiced and attuned, but not rigid. It can be refined, rebuilt, and coordinated differently in new situations. What changes is not necessarily the bare presence of elementary ways of ordering, but their interpretation, their reach, and their relation to one another.

3. The Contributions of Verstand

3.1 Contribution Rather Than Production

The term contribution marks a decisive restraint. Verstand does not produce the world out of itself. It encounters a happening that does not dissolve into its disposal. At the same time, it does not receive this happening wholly unchanged. It contributes forms of access: articulations, assumptions of duration, relations, possibilities of comparison, and structures of expectation.

Contribution therefore means neither mere mirroring nor sovereign construction. What is known is neither a copy of an outside already completely ordered nor the product of an inside that wholly gives form. It emerges in a relation. Something happens to us, shows itself, resists, or confirms itself; Verstand brings in its ways of grasping. Knowledge is the result of this non-symmetrical interplay.

Talk of contributions prevents two extremes. Against naive realism it insists that an experienceable world does not come about without performances of ordering. Against absolute constructivism it insists that the order is not freely invented. Happening can confirm, limit, or cause the contributions to fail.

3.2 Contribution as a Movement of Grasping

The metaphor of the hand permits a precise determination. A hand does not make the object it grasps. But it helps determine how the object becomes accessible to it. A sphere is grasped differently from a sheet, water differently from stone. The object calls forth a particular posture, while the shape of the hand sets possibilities and limits to grasping. In a successful grip, both moments come together.

Verstand might be conceived in the same way. Its categories are ways of grasping. Substance holds something fast as the same. Causality grasps a change as a consequence. Space orders accessibility and side-by-side existence. Time orders transition, duration, and sequence. These ways of grasping are neither arbitrary nor omnipotent. They encounter resistance. Some phenomena elude a particular grasp or are distorted by it.

3.3 The Excess of Happening

Precisely because Verstand contributes, an excess remains. What happens is more than what fits into the categories. This does not mean that a mysterious thing must be hidden behind experience. It means first only this: no single formulation exhausts what is encountered. An event can be causally explained and at the same time biographically remembered; spatially located and at the same time atmospherically experienced; described as a change of substance and at the same time lived as a rupture in a life story.

The categories accomplish something real, but not everything. Their Zeug character shows itself precisely in the fact that every tool enables a particular achievement while allowing other features to recede. A measuring tape discloses length, not sound. A clock discloses duration in standardized units, not the density of waiting. A causal explanation discloses conditions and consequences, not necessarily meaning.

> *Where a contribution takes itself for the whole of reality, useful Zeug becomes a constricting enclosure.*

3.4 Contributions and a Shared World

The contributions of Verstand are not merely individual. Human beings live within orders shaped by language, technology, and institutions. Time is objectified in calendars, deadlines, and schedules; space in maps, borders, and addresses; substance in property, identity, and concepts of things; causality in science, law, and responsibility. The Zeug of Verstand is therefore always also culturally elaborated Zeug.

This opens a further horizon: categories can be deeply anchored in their basic function within human access to world and yet historically articulated in different ways. The whole of Zeug of Verstand is neither merely a biological organ nor merely a transcendental schema. It is at once practiced activity, language, technology, and an inherited form of dealing with things.

4. Space, Time, Substance, and Causality as Category-Zeug

4.1 Space as Zeug for Making Room and Navigation

In everyday life, space is not first encountered as an empty coordinate system. It is encountered as path, distance, proximity, obstacle, direction, and accessibility. The book is near because it is within reach; the glasses on one's nose recede because one sees through them. A person far away may be nearer in conversation than the person in the same room. Such experiences show that lived space is articulated by concern, attention, and significance.

As category-Zeug, space helps bring relations into a side-by-side order. It makes place, boundary, inside, and outside thinkable. It permits orientation and finding again. Yet the same space can be used in different ways: as geometric extension, political territory, bodily reach, atmosphere, or remembered place. The tool has more than one edge.

The thesis of Zeug character does not claim that spatial order is arbitrary. It claims that space becomes effective for us in enactments of making-room, orientation, and distancing. Abstract space is a particular and highly powerful elaboration of this Zeug, not necessarily its original form.

4.2 Time as Zeug for Ordering and Expectation

Time, too, is more than a neutral line on which events are entered. It is encountered as urgency, waiting, repetition, opportunity, delay, ripeness, and loss. Clock time is a powerful time-Zeug, yet it does not capture the whole of temporality. Five minutes can pass, stretch, or seem barely to have begun. Measured duration remains the same; enacted time does not.

As a contribution, time makes it possible to order changes. It keeps apart what is not simultaneous and connects what is to be understood as consequence. It opens memory and expectation. At the same time, linear temporal order can conceal certain modes of happening: recurrence, interruption, kairos, aftereffect, and the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous.

Time as Zeug must therefore neither be absolutized nor simply discarded. Without temporal order experience would fall apart; yet every concrete temporal order is a particular way of making happening graspable. Verstand temporalizes world, but happening can exceed its temporal grids.

4.3 Substance as Anchoring Zeug

Substance denotes the contribution of what endures. Amid change, something is held fast as the same. The tree loses its leaves and remains this tree; the human being changes and is addressed as the same person; an object is seen from different perspectives and identified as one object.

This achievement is indispensable for orientation. Without it, the world would have to begin anew at every moment. Substance creates anchoring, continuity, and accountability. Yet it has a tendency to harden. What serves as a stable reference point can be taken for an unchanging essence. Persons are fixed to traits, institutions to identities, processes to things.

The Zeug character of substance therefore calls for flexible use. Something may be held as the same without denying its change. Substance would then be not an invisible core behind appearances, but a way of organizing continuity within change.

4.4 Causality as Zeug for Handling and Prediction

Causality is the Zeug of if-then. It connects events in such a way that consequences can be expected from conditions. This makes intervention possible: whoever knows causes can promote, prevent, or alter effects. Science, technology, and everyday action would scarcely be conceivable without this contribution.

Yet causality, too, has a domain of application. It can explain a happening without exhausting its meaning. It can name conditions without fully determining guilt. It can capture regularities without grasping every singularity. If it becomes the sole schema, everything appears as a mere link in a chain, while freedom, novelty, or meaning are treated only as ignorance of causes.

To understand causality as Zeug therefore does not mean devaluing it. It means seeing its enormous achievement and its limit at once. The hammer is excellent where a nail is to be driven. Its strength becomes a problem when everything is treated as though it were a nail.

5. Readiness-to-Hand, Disturbance, and Philosophical Conspicuousness

5.1 Functioning Verstand Disappears

In everyday enactment we scarcely notice the contributions of Verstand. We pass through a door, expect the floor beneath the next step, reach for a cup, and recognize a voice. Space, time, substance, and causality are at work, but they are not thematic. They are ready-to-hand. Verstand is absorbed in use.

This unobtrusiveness is not a lack of awareness. It is the condition of fluid action. Anyone who had to examine explicitly at every step the spatial presuppositions, in every sentence the identity of the words, and in every movement the causal structure would scarcely be able to act. The whole of Zeug carries precisely by not pushing itself forward.

5.2 Disturbance as Disclosure

Only in disturbance does Zeug become visible. A hand becomes conspicuous when it hurts. A hammer becomes an object when its handle breaks. Correspondingly, Verstand becomes conspicuous when its schemata no longer grip. Paradoxes, existential shocks, scientific limit cases, and experiences of radical foreignness can interrupt familiar enactment.

In such situations it does not necessarily become apparent that Verstand fails altogether. Often only a particular mode of use fails. A causal explanation may be insufficient while a statistical description holds. Substantial identity may break down while narrative continuity remains. A linear temporal order may fail while memory and expectation articulate happening differently.

Disturbance therefore has diagnostic force. It lays bare which tool was at work in the background. What previously appeared self-evident becomes recognizable as a contribution. Philosophy often begins in this reversal: the means of seeing is itself seen.

5.3 Critique as Looking at One's Own Hand

Philosophical critique can now be understood as a particular mode of defamiliarization. Verstand makes itself its own object. It places its categories, as it were, before itself and investigates their reach. This movement is unavoidably paradoxical: the tool analyzes itself with its own means. The hand attempts to grasp its own way of grasping.

It does not follow that critique is impossible. It follows that critique never stands completely outside its object. The investigation of Verstand is itself an enactment of Verstand. It cannot occupy an absolutely neutral position. But it can take disturbances seriously, compare limits of use, and try alternative ways of ordering.

Critique would then be less a repair manual for a defective apparatus than an art of tool-awareness. It asks: Which Zeug is being used here? What does it serve? What does it make visible? What does it allow to recede? Where does it become unwieldy? What connection with other modes of access is required?

5.4 Limit Experience and Category Wear

The expression wear does not mean that categories simply become worn out through frequent use. It means that an established schema loses its grip in certain situations. In anxiety, grief, wonder, or radical new beginnings, the familiar referential network can slip away. Things are still there, but their what-for is withdrawn. Time passes, but it does not carry. Causes can be named, but they do not explain what the experience means.

Category wear reveals a double fact: Dasein depends on the Zeug of Verstand, and yet its relation to world is not exhausted by it. The limit of the tool is not the end of all experience. It can be the beginning of another attentiveness.

6. Dasein and Its Own Hand

6.1 Bodily Unobtrusiveness

One's own hand is not an object like other objects. In grasping, it does not step between us and what is grasped. It disappears into enactment. Its movements are not calculated individually; its joints are not made thematic before every action. The hand is the organ through which a particular world of grips, resistances, surfaces, and reaches is disclosed.

In this sense, Verstand relates to Dasein as one's own hand does. It grasps reality without the grasping itself constantly standing before our eyes. Causality, space, time, and substance are not decided upon before every enactment. They participate as practiced forms of organization. In everyday life, Dasein and the Zeug of Verstand form a functional unity.

6.2 Not Possession but Belonging

The metaphor of the hand also corrects the idea of a freely available toolbox. A hammer can be put down; one's own hand cannot be put down in the same way. It belongs to the body. From the outset it structures which actions are possible and how things encounter us. A being with different organs of grasping would have not merely different tools, but a differently disclosed world.

Accordingly, Dasein does not possess Verstand as it possesses an object. The Zeug of Verstand is a mode of its own organization. Space, time, substance, and causality are not spectacles that can be put on and taken off at will. Even the attempt to suspend them takes place from within a world already co-shaped by them.

> *Dasein does not merely use Verstand. In its relation to world, it is itself co-formed by this Zeug.*

6.3 Pain and Wonder

One's own hand becomes conspicuous in two ways: in pain and in wonder. In pain, it no longer obeys. Grasping fails, and the otherwise transparent organ becomes a resistant object. In wonder, it is contemplated without loss of function: one holds it before oneself and marvels at its form, its mobility, and its belonging.

Verstand, too, can become conspicuous in both modes. In crisis, established schemata fail. In philosophical wonder they are contemplated even though they still function. The first conspicuousness is suffered; the second is sought. Both make insight possible. Pain shows the limit; wonder shows the contingency and distinctive character of the accustomed way of grasping.

6.4 The Limit of the Metaphor

No metaphor may be confused with the matter itself. Verstand is not a bodily organ in the anatomical sense. Its contributions are mediated by language, society, and history. Nor is there any simple correspondence between individual categories and fingers. The hand metaphor accomplishes something specific: it shows the proximity, unobtrusiveness, and non-detachability of Verstand from Dasein.

Precisely in this limited achievement lies its strength. It replaces the image of the inner judge with that of an organ of enactment. It shifts epistemology from the architecture of an apparatus to a phenomenology of grasping.

7. Freedom, Limit, and Responsibility in the Use of Categories

7.1 Freedom Is Not Arbitrariness

If categories are Zeug, freedom opens up. Yet this freedom does not consist in abolishing space, time, or causality at will. It consists in not equating their application with the whole of reality. A tool can be used consciously, its purpose named, and its limit respected.

The strongest form of unfreedom lies not in possessing categories but in their invisibility. As long as a way of grasping takes itself to be the only possible one, it remains dogmatic. Once recognized as Zeug, it can be connected with other modes of access: intuition, image, sound, mood, bodily resonance, narrative, and memory.

7.2 Scientific Rigor and Categorical Modesty

The tool thesis is not directed against science. Science is an especially reflective and controlled form of using categories. It renders space, time, number, and causality more precise, develops instruments of measurement, and tests predictions. Precisely for that reason it can also show where everyday categories must be modified.

Categorical modesty does not mean weakening scientific explanation, but determining its domain of validity more precisely. An explanation is stronger the more clearly it states what it explains and what it does not. Awareness of Zeug character protects against the transition from methodological success to ontological monopoly.

7.3 Art, Mysticism, and Other Ways of Grasping

Art and mysticism can be understood as attempts to loosen ordinary category use. They do not create a category-free world. A poem, too, has rhythm; a painting, space; a mystical experience, memory. Yet familiar orders are weighted differently. Time can condense, space can become atmospheric, identity can dissolve, causality can recede behind resonance.

The Zeug of Verstand is not destroyed in this process, but brought into a different interplay. The hand opens instead of holding fast. It feels, carries, or lets go. This extension of the hand metaphor shows: grasping is not only clutching. Receiving, too, is a mode of relation to world.

7.4 Responsibility for the Tools

Categories shape not only knowledge, but practice. Whoever treats human beings as unchanging substances fixes them in place. Whoever causally determines every action can empty responsibility of meaning. Whoever orders time exclusively as a scarce resource turns life into exploitation. Whoever thinks space only as possession and boundary overlooks relation and dwelling.

Conscious use of categories is therefore an ethical task. It is not enough to ask whether a schema works. One must also ask what kind of world it brings forth, what possibilities it opens, and what possibilities it cuts off. Zeug is never wholly innocent. It carries the purposes within whose context it is used.

8. A First Systematic Formulation

8.1 Six Principles

The development so far can be gathered into six provisional principles. They do not constitute a final doctrine, but the working framework for the stages that follow.

First Principle: Primacy of Enactment

Verstand is originally accessible not as an isolated authority, but in enactments of orienting, distinguishing, recognizing, and expecting. The analysis of its forms must begin from these enactments.

Second Principle: Zeug Character

Verstand has an in-order-to. Its achievement consists in making world traversable, manageable, and jointly articulable. It is embedded in referential contexts and is not an end in itself.

Third Principle: Character of Contribution

Verstand neither produces happening nor merely mirrors it. It contributes ways of ordering that can be confirmed, limited, or disturbed by what is encountered.

Fourth Principle: Categories as a Whole of Zeug

Space, time, substance, and causality are not merely individual concepts. They form an interwoven instrumentarium. Their meaning emerges from their interplay and from concrete modes of use.

Fifth Principle: Organic Belonging

Dasein does not possess the Zeug of Verstand as external equipment. It belongs to Dasein's form of organization and relates to it more like one's own hand than like a hammer.

Sixth Principle: Limited Plurality

No single categorical formulation exhausts happening. Different ways of grasping can complement one another. Yet this plurality is not arbitrary, because what is encountered offers resistance and because every contribution must be tested for its capacity to carry.

8.2 A Working Definition

> *Verstand is the whole of contributions belonging to Dasein, mostly unobtrusive in enactment, through which what is encountered appears as ordered, recognizable, expectable, and manageable*.

This definition contains several tensions. Verstand is one's own and yet not private, because its forms are shared linguistically and culturally. It is unobtrusive and yet reflectable. It makes things manageable and can at the same time constrict them. It is unavoidable and yet transformable. Any further theory must preserve these tensions rather than resolving them prematurely.

8.3 Open Objections

The first objection is that the concept of Zeug is itself too practical and cannot capture theoretical knowledge. The answer is: Zeug character does not reduce everything to immediate usefulness. Theoretical questioning, too, has an in-order-to and stands within a relation to world. A mathematical concept can be Zeug without being an everyday tool.

The second objection is that the categories are relativized and truth thereby reduced to usefulness. Yet contribution is not arbitrariness. Categories prove themselves against the resistance of happening. Truth can be understood precisely as successful, corrigible, and non-arbitrary disclosure.

The third objection concerns the hand metaphor. If Verstand belongs so closely to Dasein, how can it be changed? The answer lies in the plasticity of the organ. A hand can learn new grips, operate instruments, and technically extend its reach. Likewise, the Zeug of Verstand can develop new coordinations through language, science, art, and practice without being wholly reinvented.

The fourth objection asks about the status of happening beyond the contributions. This first stage can answer only with restraint: happening cannot be described as a ready-made, category-free counter-world. Rather, it shows itself in confirmation, resistance, excess, and disturbance. A theory of happening must therefore be developed from the limits of contributions, not from an alleged view from outside.

Transition to the Second Stage: From Category-Zeug to the Whole of the Path

The first stage has brought Verstand down from the throne without disempowering it. It has determined Verstand as Zeug and understood its categories as contributions that disclose world without being identical with world itself.

The next stage tests this thesis against a particularly revealing case in physics. The classical state perspective asks what a system possesses at a particular time: position, momentum, and energy. The action perspective, by contrast, is directed toward the entire path between boundary conditions. For the first time, a precise scientific description thus emerges in which context is not merely assembled retrospectively from isolated states.

This transition leads the Zeug perspective from the hand that grasps an object to the hand that follows a path. Time and causality are not discarded, but embedded in a more encompassing path-form.

Second Stage

Action, Path, and the Happening Whole

Time and Causality in the Action Perspective

Preliminary Note: From the Failed Arrow of Time to the Fruitful Path Perspective

The starting point of this second stage was initially a different conjecture. In the linear pendulum, physical action was supposed to increase like a running counter and thereby establish an irreversible arrow of time even in a simple one-particle system. Careful examination refuted this conjecture. Lagrangian action is the signed integral of the Lagrangian. For an ideal harmonic oscillator it can rise and fall; over a complete period positive and negative contributions can cancel. It is therefore not a monotonic odometer of happening.

This refutation, however, does not impoverish the philosophical approach. It shifts it to a deeper point. The significance of action does not lie in forming an additional store that accumulates during motion. Its significance lies in evaluating an entire trajectory. Energy and momentum can be assigned to a state. Action, by contrast, is assigned to a course, a path between boundary conditions. It is thus a physical quantity whose proper object is not the isolated instant, but the articulated whole of a happening.

It is precisely here that action touches the approach of happening. Happening is not a retrospectively assembled series of finished states. It is the context in which states first appear at all as earlier, later, connected, and mutually related moments. Action describes this context not as a mere sum of snapshots, but as a path-related unity.

The second stage therefore no longer investigates an alleged action-arrow of time. It asks whether action makes visible another mode of physical description: one that does not begin from the individual place, the individual instant, the momentary possession of energy, and a linear chain of separate causes, but from the whole of possible and enacted paths. The terms a-spatial, a-temporal, a-energetic, and acausal are not understood here as claiming that physics can abolish space, time, energy, or causality. They designate a methodological dethroning: these categories are no longer the sole first terms of description. They are embedded within a more encompassing path-form.

1. Testing the Guiding Thesis

1.1 The Question to Be Tested

In its strongest formulation, the guiding thesis is: physical action opens an a-spatial, a-temporal, a-energetic, and acausal description of the world as a happening whole of paths; in the quantum-mechanical action perspective, alternative paths are additionally taken into account within a common amplitude. This description leads to time as a duration held within a path, not merely to time as an external quantity of measurement.

A rigorous examination must distinguish physical statement, mathematical mode of representation, and philosophical interpretation. If these levels are mixed, a metaphysics easily arises that appeals to formulas without being supported by them. If they are cleanly separated, philosophical interpretation can reach far without overstretching physics.

1.2 What Is Physically Secure

First, in classical mechanics action is a functional of a path. A numerical value is assigned to an entire possible trajectory q(t) between fixed boundary data. The actual classical path satisfies the condition of stationary action. The calculus of variations is thus directed not primarily at an individual state, but compares neighboring complete courses.

Second, action contains relations of space, time, and energy without being identical with any of these quantities. The path is parameterized by configurations, ordinarily by a time variable; the Lagrangian contains kinetic and potential contributions. Action is therefore not literally spaceless, timeless, or energyless. It integrates these moments into a quantity of the entire course.

Third, in Feynman's path-integral formulation transition amplitudes are built up from contributions of many possible paths. Each path carries a phase determined by its action. In the classical limit, contributions near stationary action reinforce one another, while strongly varying phases largely cancel. Here the space of alternatives is physically effective in the calculation of the amplitude.

Fourth, talk of the simultaneity of all paths is permissible only with caution. The path integral does not straightforwardly say that many classical trajectories occur side by side as finished real processes. It is first of all a representation of the quantum amplitude. An ontological interpretation requires additional assumptions that do not follow from the formalism alone.

1.3 Verdict

Verdict: passed in qualified form.

The approach is tenable and philosophically fruitful provided four clarifications are maintained. First, the prefixes a- are to be understood not as privative-ontological but as methodological-relative: the action perspective does not begin from isolated positions in space, instants in time, energy values, and cause-effect pairs. Second, the path description does not replace these quantities but integrates them. Third, the simultaneity of paths is to be formulated as a co-present mathematical-physical alternative within a transition amplitude, not as an unproven claim of a literal multiplicity of happenings. Fourth, duration held within is a philosophical interpretation of path-related integration; it must not be confused with a new, directly measured physical quantity of time.

Under these conditions, the action perspective genuinely deepens the approach of happening. Within physics it shows a form of representation in which the path becomes logically prior to the isolated state, without thereby making state quantities false or superfluous.

2. The Limit of the Classical State Perspective

2.1 The Instant as the Preferred Unit

Classical, especially Newtonian, description likes to place the state of a system at a time at the center. Position and momentum constitute the instantaneous determination; equations of motion specify how the state now gives rise to the state later. This perspective is extraordinarily powerful. It permits initial-value problems, predictions, local force balances, and technical calculations.

Its strength, however, can become an ontological habit. The world then appears as a sequence of complete momentary states. Happening is understood as the transport of information from one instant to the next. The path becomes merely the line that arises retrospectively when the individual states are connected. Time becomes the index of states, causality the rule for their continuation.

This representation is not simply an error. It is highly effective Zeug of Verstand. Precisely for that reason its in-order-to must be asked about. It isolates so that calculation becomes possible. It decomposes so that dependencies can be determined. It enables local intervention. Yet it can make the context it decomposes into individual states appear as a mere result of that decomposition.

2.2 State Quantities and Their Character of Possession

Position, momentum, and energy are linguistically easy to treat as possessions. A body has a position, has momentum, has energy. This way of speaking supports the idea that what is real is first the thing with its present properties. The course would then be only the change in what the thing possesses at each moment.

With action, this character of possession fails. An individual state does not have an action in the same sense. Action is assigned to a path between boundaries. It is not stored in the pendulum body like kinetic energy and is not instantaneously directed like momentum. It designates how an entire dynamical course is weighted.

Action thereby forces a shift in grammar. No longer only: What does the system have now? Rather: Which path connects the boundary configurations, and how does the overall form of this path relate to neighboring possibilities? This question is already shaped by happening.

3. Action: Not Possession of a State but Weight of a Path

3.1 The Action Functional

$$S[q] = \int (t_1 \text{ to } t_2)\, L(q(t), \dot{q}(t), t)\, dt$$

The bracket notation S[q] makes visible what is easily overlooked. Action depends not merely on an instantaneous value q, but on the entire functional course q(t). Two paths can have the same beginning and the same end and yet different actions. Action evaluates the mode of transition.

Here ‘evaluation’ is neither moral nor necessarily to be understood as minimization. The classical path makes the action stationary. Small variations of the path do not change the value of the action to first order. The actual trajectory is therefore not simply the shortest or most economical path in the everyday sense. It is a path of particular stability within the space of neighboring possibilities.

3.2 Action as a Directed Balance

Action is a balance, but not a positive counter. In the usual mechanical form L = T - V, kinetic and potential energy contribute with opposite signs. A path can contain segments whose contributions reinforce or cancel one another. Action therefore differs from a mere length of path or an accumulated activity.

This sign structure is philosophically important. The unity of the path does not arise through the mere accumulation of homogeneous parts. It arises through the inner relation of different moments. The path is an articulated whole in which contributions can stand against one another and, precisely through this opposition, form an overall value.

3.3 Stationarity as a Condition of Wholeness

The Euler-Lagrange equations can be written locally as differential equations. Yet their origin in the variational principle displays another form of the same dynamics. Local motion is equivalently connected with a global condition over the entire path. Locality and wholeness are not opposites, but two representations of the same structure.

Here lies the philosophical significance: physical lawfulness need not be thought exclusively as a push from state to state. It can equally appear as a consistency condition of a complete course. The path is not merely the result of local causes; the local equations can be read as the unfolding of a path-related stationarity.

4. The Duration Held within the Path

4.1 Measured Time and Duration of Enactment

The time variable t in the action is initially a mathematical or physical parameterization. It allows contributions along the path to be ordered and integrated. No independent metaphysics of duration follows from the formula alone. Yet path-related integration changes the role of time.

In the state perspective, time appears as an external index: at t_1 this state obtains, at t_2 that one. In the action perspective, the span of time is not merely the distance between two measuring marks. It is the interval within which the path acquires its dynamical form. Duration is contained in the value of the action not as a mere number beside happening, but as the extension of enactment across which the contributions relate to one another.

We can therefore speak of a duration held within. The path does not have duration in the way a thing has a property. It consists in a temporally extended enactment. The span of time belongs to the articulation of the path itself. It is not merely a container, but the measure of an inner unfolding.

4.2 No Return to Subjective Experienced Time

The duration held within is not simply the psychological duration of waiting, remembering, or experiencing. It remains bound to the physical structure of the trajectory. Yet it opens a bridge: both the physical path and lived enactment resist complete reduction to isolated instants.

The bridge must not be confused with identity. Physical action and phenomenological duration are different concepts. Their structural kinship lies in the fact that both presuppose a context that is not first added up from finished moments. Duration here is the name for the holding-together of context across its moments.

4.3 Time as Contribution and as Resistance

Verstand contributes measurable temporal order: equal units, coordinates, before and after, parameter values. Happening confirms this order in many cases, but also limits it. The action path shows that a span of time does not consist merely of interchangeable points. The distribution of motion and potential within the interval is decisive. The same endpoints and the same total duration can permit different paths and different actions.

Time thus appears doubly anchored. It is an ordering Zeug contributed by Verstand and at the same time tested against the resistance of the dynamical path structure. The action perspective makes this double anchoring clearer than a mere sequence of temporal marks.

5. A-Spatial, A-Temporal, A-Energetic, and Acausal – a Methodological Determination

5.1 The Meaning of ‘a-’

The four negative determinations must not claim that action exists without space, time, energy, and dynamical dependencies. That would be physically false. Action is formed over a path in a configuration, during an interval, and with the aid of a Lagrangian that regularly contains energy quantities.

Rather, the ‘a-’ designates a shift in the primary perspective. A-spatial means: the isolated location is not primary. A-temporal means: the point-like instant and the mere external series of measurements are not primary. A-energetic means: momentary possession of energy is not primary. Acausal means: the linear narrative of separate causes and subsequent effects is not the only or primary form in which lawfulness can be represented.

The action perspective is therefore not category-free. It is a reordering of category use. Space, time, energy, and causality move from governing points of departure to integrated moments of a path.

5.2 A-Spatial: Location as a Moment of the Path

Location is not abolished in the path. Every course passes through configurations. Yet an individual location receives its dynamical meaning from its place within the path. The same location can be reached with a different momentum, in a different direction, within a different overall course. Spatial position alone does not determine the happening.

A-spatial therefore means: the world is not described primarily as a container of things at locations, but as a fabric of possible transitions. Space becomes an articulated moment of the path-form.

5.3 A-Temporal: Instant as Cut, Duration as Context

The instant, too, is retained, but understood as a cut through a course. A cut is informative, but it is not the whole. Action belongs to the interval. A-temporal therefore does not mean timeless, but not reducible to point-like measured time.

Path-related time is duration insofar as the moments receive their meaning from the context traversed. The time parameter orders; action integrates. Integration turns the sequence of parameters into a dynamical form.

5.4 A-Energetic: Energy as Contribution, Not as Final Ontology

Kinetic and potential energy enter into the Lagrangian. Action is therefore not free of energy. But neither is it itself energy. Its dimension is energy multiplied by time. It gathers energetic contributions across a path and weights their relation.

A-energetic means: the world is not described solely as the distribution and transformation of existing amounts of energy. The action perspective directs attention to how energetic differences interact within the form of a course. Energy remains essential, but loses the claim to be the sole basic language of happening.

5.5 Acausal: Lawfulness without a Mere Chain

The action perspective does not abolish causality. The equations of motion derived from it continue to permit causal predictions when initial data are given. Acausal can only mean that the same lawfulness need not be thought exclusively as a successive chain.

The variational principle formulates a boundary-value and wholeness condition. Beginning and end delimit a space of possible paths; the stationary trajectory satisfies a condition of the entire course. This is not a retroactive cause of the end acting upon the beginning. It is a different mathematical organization of lawfulness. The causal initial-value perspective and the path-related wholeness perspective are equivalent tools, but tools with different philosophical emphases.

6. From the Individual Trajectory to the Simultaneity of Paths

6.1 Classical Possibility and Actual Trajectory

In classical variational calculus, many neighboring paths are considered in order to determine the stationary trajectory. These alternatives are initially comparison paths. They need not be understood as simultaneously realized motions. Their role is counterfactual and mathematical: what would happen to the action if the path ran slightly differently?

Even this structure is philosophically significant. The reality of the trajectory is determined not in isolation, but within a horizon of possibilities. The actual path is what it is also through its stationary relation to neighboring possible paths.

6.2 Quantum-Mechanical Co-Presence of Alternatives

In the path-integral formulation of quantum mechanics, the horizon of paths is tied more closely to the physical transition amplitude. Formally, very many paths between beginning and end contribute with a complex phase $\exp(iS/\hbar)$. The amplitude arises from their superposition. Paths with rapidly varying phases largely cancel; near stationary action, contributions add more coherently. The

classical trajectory thus appears as a limiting structure within a more encompassing interference of possibilities.

The expression simultaneity of paths can convey this co-presence provided it is not misunderstood chronologically. The paths do not lie side by side like several films actually being played within the same measured time. They are jointly present in the structure of the amplitude. Their togetherness is modal and interferential, not simply a multiplicity of observable classical courses.

6.3 Action as Phase Order

In the quantum context, action determines not only a weight in the sense of a real-valued balance, but the phase of the path contribution. Differences in action thereby become differences in interference. Happening is described not only by the selection of a path, but by the interplay of alternatives whose phase relations help determine the observable result.

The approach of happening thereby gains a new depth. What is real no longer appears merely as a finished trajectory with the alternatives excluded. The alternatives belong, in a certain way, to the production of the transition probability. Yet restraint is required here as well: what ontology one gives this mathematical structure remains dependent on interpretation.

7. The Zeug Perspective: Embedding and Integrating

7.1 From Isolating to Embedding Use

The Zeug character of Verstand shows itself not only in the fact that categories are used. It also shows itself in the manner of their interplay. The state perspective isolates in order to determine. The action perspective embeds in order to compare courses. Both are modes of Zeug; neither is simply true while the other is simply false.

The action perspective, however, has a particular corrective function. It reminds us that location, instant, momentum, and energy are cut out of a course. The cut is useful, but what is cut out remains a moment of a context. Action integrates without blurring the differences among moments. It forms not an undifferentiated unity, but an articulated whole.

7.2 Integration Rather Than Reduction

Reduction decomposes an appearance into elementary states and relations. Integration asks how these elements belong together within a whole. Action does not lead physics backward into an indeterminate mysticism of wholeness. It is itself a precise mathematical integration.

Precisely for that reason it can become a model for a philosophical Zeug perspective. To embed does not mean giving up individual determinations. It means keeping their reach and their context visible. Verstand need not become less exact; it must become more exact about when its isolating tools constrict happening.

7.3 The Hand That Does More Than Grasp

The first stage compared the Zeug of Verstand with one's own hand. The action perspective extends this image. The hand does not merely grasp individual objects. It traces a path, carries something through a movement, connects beginning and end, sustains a tension across a duration.

An isolating grip grasps the state. A tracing, carrying grip follows the happening. The Zeug perspective thereby moves from punctual apprehension to path-related accompaniment. It not only holds fast what is, but articulates how something becomes.

8. Time as a Contribution of Verstand in the Action Perspective

8.1 Linear Measured Time as Highly Effective Zeug

Linear measured time orders events through numerical values. It makes clocks, equations, periods, velocities, and reproducible experiments possible. Its Zeug character lies precisely in this achievement. It becomes problematic only when it presents itself as a complete ontology of time.

In the action perspective, measured time is necessary but not sufficient. The bare list of parameter values does not yet say how the dynamical contributions interact across the interval. Action adds a path-related structure of wholeness to the temporal sequence.

8.2 Instants as Contributions, Duration as a Form of Enactment

Verstand contributes instants as distinguishable cuts. Happening, however, does not encounter us as a set of motionless cuts. It enacts transitions. In action, the cuts are taken back into a path-context through integration.

It does not follow that duration would be immediately given without Verstand. Duration, too, is a concept. But it answers to a feature of happening that the pure concept of the instant does not capture: that a course holds its moments within itself without being exhausted by any single one of them.

8.3 Irreversibility Remains a Separate Question

The wholeness of a path must not once again be confused with an arrow of time. The action principle for conservative systems is in principle compatible with time-reversal-symmetric equations of motion. The directed time of real processes requires additional structures such as special boundary conditions, dissipation, entropy production, decoherence, or recording.

The action perspective therefore does not directly support the thesis that every happening is already irreversible by virtue of action. It supports a different thesis: in physical thought, time is not merely the external index of isolated states, but can appear as the inner extension of a path-related form of lawfulness.

9. Causality as a Contribution of Verstand in the Action Perspective

9.1 The Causal Chain as a Local Tool

Causality orders happening in if-then relations. In mechanics it is often made precise by local differential equations. From state and law the subsequent development follows. This tool is indispensable for explanation, prediction, and intervention.

Its limit appears where lawfulness itself is imagined only as a sequence of individual pushes. The context of the path then appears as a mere effect of local transitions. The action perspective shows that the same equations can be expressed in a more global form.

9.2 Lawfulness of the Whole Instead of Retroactive Cause

The stationary-action principle refers to a complete path between boundary conditions. It would be tempting to infer from this a retroaction of the future on the past – for example in the pointed

question: ‘How does a photon know which path has a stationary travel time?’ This inference is not necessary and in classical mechanics is usually misleading.[1][2]

[1]Fermat’s principle can indeed be understood as counterintuitive, because the path whose total travel time can only be evaluated over the completed route is already taken from the beginning. In the ordinary causal picture one thinks: light starts at a point; it moves onward step by step; at each place it reacts only to the local environment; only at the destination could one determine how long the whole path has taken. Fermat’s principle describes the same process instead from the whole of the path: among neighboring possible paths, the actual light path is distinguished by the fact that its travel time, or optical path length, is stationary. Strictly speaking, it need not always be the absolutely shortest; what matters is that small changes in the path do not change the travel time to first order. This gives rise to the genuinely puzzling question: how can the path from the beginning run in such a way that a property of the whole path, completed only at the end, is fulfilled? The puzzle arises because we involuntarily imagine light as a little traveler that would have to decide at every fork. It then seems as if the photon had to know the destination, the refractive indices, and all possible travel times already at the beginning. Yet this image is itself a contribution of Verstand: it translates a physical lawfulness into the picture of successive decision. Fermat’s principle does not say that the photon first calculates all paths and then chooses the fastest. It says that the complete physical course possesses a stationary optical path length. The ‘knowledge of the end’ arises only when a condition of wholeness is translated back into the language of a locally deciding particle.

[2]With Planck’s quantum of action, the path perspective gains an additional depth. The action of a path is not generally restricted to integral multiples of h or $\hbar$. It still arises as a continuous integration of the Lagrangian over the duration of the path. But $\hbar$ provides the elementary scale at which differences in action between possible paths are translated into phase differences. A path integrated over a duration thus appears not merely as a continuous numerical value, but as the bearer of a quantum phase order. Discreteness need not

The better concept is lawfulness of the whole. The path as a whole satisfies a consistency condition. This condition can be translated locally into causal equations of motion. The two representations are mathematically connected, but they suggest different metaphysical pictures: here successive production, there coherent form.

9.3 Acausality as Dethroning, Not Abolition

The action perspective dethrones causality by moving it from the sole basic form of world-description to one possible interpretation of the same dynamics. Cause and effect remain effective categories. But they are embedded in a path-context that need not be completely decomposed into individual causal arrows.

Acausal therefore means here: not exclusively shaped as a causal chain. The expression should always be understood in this qualified sense. Otherwise the false impression would arise that action contradicts the causal predictions of mechanics.

10. Action and Happening: A First Systematic Formulation

10.1 Eight Principles

First Principle: Primacy of the Path
Action is assigned to a path and not to an isolated state. For the action perspective, the course is the primary unit of description.

Second Principle: Integrated Determinacy
Space, time, energy, and dynamical relations do not disappear. They are integrated as moments of the path.

Third Principle: Stationarity
The classical path is distinguished by a condition of stationarity relative to neighboring possible paths. Reality appears within a horizon of possibilities.

Fourth Principle: Duration Held Within
The span of time is not merely the external distance between measuring marks, but the interval in which the path unfolds its dynamical form.

Fifth Principle: Lawfulness of the Whole
Local equations of motion can be understood as expressions of a condition of the entire path without thereby asserting retroactive causes.

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lie in individual instants of time; it can be a property of the conditions of wholeness under which a course becomes physically connectable. Put pointedly: the quantum does not necessarily fragment the path. It quantizes the way whole paths correspond to one another, reinforce one another, or cancel one another.h $\hbar$

Sixth Principle: Limited A-Categoriality
A-spatial, a-temporal, a-energetic, and acausal mean a methodological dethroning of isolating categories, not their physical abolition.

Seventh Principle: Modal Co-Presence
In the quantum-mechanical path formulation, alternative paths contribute jointly to the transition amplitude. Their simultaneity is modal-interferential and not straightforwardly classical-ontological.

Eighth Principle: Plurality of Zeug
The state perspective and the action perspective are different tools. Knowledge gains when it connects their achievements rather than absolutizing one of them.

10.2 Working Definition

> *Action is the path-related physical weighting of a temporally extended course in which spatial, energetic, and dynamical determinations are integrated into an articulated whole.*

This definition is deliberately restrained. It does not declare action to be the substance of the world or the immediate proof of a metaphysics of happening. But it shows why action is particularly suitable as a physical point of connection for such an ontology. Its mathematical form takes the course seriously without sacrificing the precision of individual determinations.

10.3 Happening as Path, Not as a Traveling Thing

In this perspective, happening is not an object transported through time. It is the path itself: the articulated change in which locations, states, energies, and relations occur. A state is an abstraction from happening, not its smallest ontological building block.

This reversal has far-reaching philosophical implications. Things are not first and then enter into processes. Rather, things stabilize as recognizable moments within processes. Action does not provide a complete proof of this, but it does provide a precise physical model in which the path has an independent, irreducible role relative to the state.

11. Objections and Limits

11.1 Objection: Action Is Only a Mathematical Reformulation

It is true that the variational principle and the local equations of motion are equivalent in many classical cases. But it does not follow that their philosophical significance is identical. Mathematically equivalent representations can make different structural aspects visible. The state perspective emphasizes local continuation; the action perspective emphasizes path comparison and consistency of the whole.

Philosophy may investigate this difference so long as it does not invent experimentally new physics from the difference in representation.

11.2 Objection: Action Itself Presupposes Time and Space

The objection is correct and limits talk of the a-spatial and a-temporal. Action is not independent of configuration and parameter. The qualified thesis is therefore only that individual spatial positions and instants are not the primary objects of action. They appear as moments of a path.

11.3 Objection: Paths in the Path Integral Are Not Real Paths

This objection, too, must be taken seriously. The formalism alone does not decide what reality belongs to the integrated paths. What is certain is that they contribute to the calculation of the amplitude. Whether they are possibilities, histories, computational devices, or ontologically real alternatives depends on the interpretation of quantum mechanics.

The book should therefore speak of simultaneity or co-presence of paths only in an explicitly formal and modal sense. A stronger ontology can be marked as an open hypothesis, but not presented as a physically proven fact.

11.4 Objection: The Approach of Happening Is Being Read into Physics

Every philosophical interpretation reads structures under a particular question. What matters is whether the interpretation encounters resistance in the formalism. The approach of happening is not justified here merely because action uses the word path. It is supported by the fact that the action functional actually takes complete courses as its arguments and that the dynamics can be formulated through variation of such courses.

Physics does not force an ontology of happening. But it makes such an ontology connectable and protects it from the claim that physics knows only isolated states and local causal chains.

Transition to the Third Stage: From the Whole of the Path to Ordered Co-Presence

The action perspective has shown that a course can be described as a whole without dissolving its individual determinations. The path carries its instants; the condition of wholeness orders local transitions. A form has thereby been gained in which what is different can be present together without becoming undifferentiated.

The third stage follows this structure beyond physics. In chemical equilibrium, opposing processes operate at the same time. In mathematical inference, premise and conclusion are connected within the same order of validity. In data and rules, information can be implicit without yet being accessible. What these cases share is an ordered co-presence that is unfolded only in enactment.

In this way the concept of double anchoring becomes concrete: order is contributed by categories, models, and operations; at the same time it remains bound to substances, relations, and formal resistances that cannot be treated arbitrarily.

Appendix: Minimal Physical Foundations and Literature

A.1 Minimal Formulas

$$L(q, \dot{q}, t) = T(\dot{q}, q, t) - V(q, t)$$

$$S[q] = \int (t_1 \text{ to } t_2)\, L(q, \dot{q}, t)\, dt$$

$$\delta S = 0 \;\Rightarrow\; d/dt(\partial L/\partial \dot{q}) - \partial L/\partial q = 0$$

$$K(b,a) = \int Dq \cdot \exp(iS[q]/\hbar) \quad \text{(schematic path-integral form)}$$

The last formula is schematic. Its exact mathematical definition depends on the system, boundary conditions, construction of the measure, and regularization. It serves here solely to make visible the role of action as the phase of path contributions.

A.2 References

• MIT OpenCourseWare: Classical Mechanics III, especially Chapter 1 (analytical mechanics and variational calculus) and Chapter 4 (Hamilton-Jacobi theory and action variables).

• MIT OpenCourseWare: Classical Mechanics II, lectures on the principle of stationary action, Lagrangian mechanics, and oscillators.

• Richard P. Feynman: Nobel Lecture (1965), on the development of the space-time or path-integral perspective in quantum electrodynamics.

• Richard P. Feynman and Albert R. Hibbs: Quantum Mechanics and Path Integrals. Classic presentation of the path-integral formulation.

• Herbert Goldstein, Charles Poole, and John Safko: Classical Mechanics. Standard account of Lagrangian, Hamiltonian, and Hamilton-Jacobi mechanics.

Third Stage

Equilibrium, Inference, and Information

Co-Presence, Ordered Unfolding, and the Embedding Zeug Perspective

Preliminary Note: From the Whole of the Path to Ordered Co-Presence

The second stage determined action as a physical quantity of the path. It belongs not to the isolated state, but to the course between boundary conditions. This made visible a form of thought in which individual moments do not disappear, but are understood from within a more encompassing form. The action perspective does not first isolate and then connect; it takes context itself as its object.

The present third stage carries this shift into other fields of knowledge. It begins from three observations. In chemical equilibrium, forward and reverse reactions can occur simultaneously even though the macroscopic composition appears stationary. In mathematics, a valid conclusion is already contained in the premises even though it becomes accessible only through an ordered chain of inference. In information theory, one must distinguish among available informational content, its arrangement, and its actual accessibility.[3]

These three observations are not identical. Chemical co-presence is a real dynamic counter-happening. Logical co-validity is a relation among propositions. Informational co-presence means that structures or conclusions can be implicit in a stock without already being explicitly available. What they share is not physical simultaneity but a form: a whole contains several interconnected possibilities or determinations whose order emerges only in enactment.

> *The third stage investigates happening not only as path, but as the ordered unfolding of what is co-present.*

This also expands the concept of Zeug. Categories are not merely grids that arrange objects. They can stabilize distributions, make transitions readable, unfold inferences, and render hidden connections accessible. The Zeug perspective embeds by asking not only what is present, but how a stock articulates, shifts, and discloses itself under conditions.

1. Testing the Guiding Extension

1.1 The Strongest Formulation

The strongest thesis would be: chemical equilibrium, mathematical inference, and information display the same basic structure of a simultaneous reality that unfolds only in different orders. Such an equation would be too strong. It would bring physical processes, logical validity, and epistemic accessibility under a single ontology without respecting the differences among their kinds of objects.

[3]As a fourth example, one may consider the translation of genetic information into protein processes. Although the DNA sequence, through transcription and translation, fundamentally constrains the amino-acid sequence of a protein, there is no simple, one-step one-to-one reading of a finished blueprint. Epigenetic regulation, transcriptional control, RNA processing and alternative splicing, different kinds of RNA, regulation of translation, as well as folding and subsequent modification of proteins all help determine which protein arises when, in what quantity, in what form, and in what functional context. The genetic stock thus contains possibilities and structural constraints whose concrete form is produced only in regulated cellular happening.

1.2 What Holds

What is tenable is a structural, not an identical, analogy. In all three fields, consideration of isolated states is insufficient. Chemical equilibrium is not merely a resting mixture, but the result of opposing reaction rates. A mathematical theorem is not merely an end state of thinking, but is connected to the premises by a chain of permissible transformations. Information is not merely a quantity of signs, but depends on distribution, code, order, redundancy, and access.

The common structure is this: a stock is articulated by relations, conditions, and operations. The result is neither freely invented nor merely passively read off. It is brought forth in enactment and at the same time anchored in the initial stock.

1.3 Verdict

Verdict: The approach is tenable in qualified form and suitable as the third stage.

The qualification requires four distinctions. First, chemical simultaneity is simultaneity of real processes, whereas logical simultaneity is co-validity. Second, at a given temperature, pressure generally changes the equilibrium position of gaseous systems, but not the thermodynamic equilibrium constant itself; in its usual form, that depends on temperature. Third, deductive inferences add semantically nothing that does not already follow from the premises, but they can disclose information that is epistemically and computationally new. Fourth, information must not be reduced to a single meaning: statistical, semantic, and algorithmic information are different concepts.

2. Three Meanings of Simultaneity

2.1 Chronological Simultaneity

Chronological simultaneity denotes processes occurring within the same measured time. In dynamic chemical equilibrium, forward and reverse reactions proceed continuously side by side. Individual molecules react; others are formed again. Macroscopic constancy conceals microscopic enactment.

2.2 Modal Co-Presence

Modal co-presence denotes possibilities that jointly form the horizon of a happening. In the action perspective, possible paths are compared; in the path integral, alternative paths formally contribute to the amplitude. They are not necessarily several chronologically observable processes, but they are jointly relevant to the determination of the transition.

2.3 Logical Co-Validity

Logical co-validity means: if the premises are true and the inference is valid, the conclusion cannot be false. Beginning and end of the chain of inference are therefore not temporally simultaneous, but they are connected within the same order of validity. The proof does not produce the truth of the theorem; it makes its dependence visible.

2.4 Informational Co-Implicitness

Informational co-implicitness denotes the case in which a structure is contained in data, rules, or premises without already being explicitly represented or practically accessible. A conclusion can be implicitly fixed but not yet found. A compressed file can contain the same content as its unfolded representation, even though the latter arises only through an algorithm.

> *'Simultaneous' is a family term in this stage: temporal simultaneity, modal co-presence, logical co-validity, and informational co-implicitness may be connected, but they must not be confused.*

3. Chemical Equilibrium: Simultaneous Counter-Direction

3.1 The Reaction Equation Is Not the Happening

A chemical reaction equation writes reactants and products side by side. This notation can give the impression that the left side is an initial state and the right side a final state. For reversible reactions, that is too simple. The double arrows do not signify a mere back-and-forth between two resting images, but two reaction directions that occur simultaneously under suitable conditions.

$$aA + bB \rightleftharpoons cC + dD$$

In dynamic equilibrium, the rates of forward and reverse reaction are equal. Macroscopically the compositions remain constant; microscopically, bonds are continually formed and broken. Equilibrium is therefore not standstill, but a stationary distribution within a happening.

3.2 The Sides as Modes of Distribution

The left and right sides should not be conceived as two completely separate worlds. They designate forms of stock between which transitions take place. At equilibrium, neither side has simply disappeared. Both are present in a particular distribution. What stabilizes is not the individual molecular state, but the relation among populations and reaction flows.

This structure resembles the action perspective in that the observed state becomes intelligible only when the path, or the transitions, are thought along with it. Concentration values are cuts; reaction rates articulate the happening that carries these values.

3.3 Equilibrium as a Statistically Formed Gestalt

The macroscopic equilibrium position arises from a very large number of microscopic events. It is neither merely random nor the mechanical consequence of a single causal arrow. Thermodynamic potentials, temperature, pressure, activities, and stoichiometric conditions constrain the possible distribution. Within these conditions, statistical molecular motions realize the stationary form.

> *Chemical equilibrium shows: constancy can be the appearance-form of a continuing counter-happening.*

4. Pressure and Temperature as Conditions of Order

4.1 Temperature and the Equilibrium Constant

Temperature changes the energetic weighting of possible states and thus the thermodynamic equilibrium constant. It is not merely an external numerical value, but a condition for which distributions are macroscopically favored. A change in temperature can therefore shift the equilibrium position because it changes the relative free energy of the forms of stock involved.

4.2 Pressure and the Reaction Quotient

Pressure requires a more precise distinction. For a given reaction system, the thermodynamic equilibrium constant at fixed temperature does not simply depend on the total pressure. A change in pressure or volume does, however, alter activities or partial pressures and thus the reaction quotient. The system responds until the reaction quotient again corresponds to the equilibrium value. This is especially visible in gas reactions with different numbers of gaseous particles on the two sides.

Pressure therefore often shapes the distribution, but not in the same way as temperature. Temperature changes the equilibrium value; pressure initially changes the current position relative to that value. This distinction is essential to the philosophical interpretation: conditions do not all operate on the same level.

4.3 Categories as Control Variables and Reading Devices

Pressure and temperature are at once physical quantities and ordering Zeug of Verstand. Measuring instruments, scales, and models make them determinable. Yet their effect on the system is not invented by Verstand. Happening answers with reproducible shifts. Double anchoring becomes visible here: the categories are contributed through practices of measurement and modeling and at the same time tested against the resistance of material processes.

5. Mathematical Inference: Co-Validity and Unfolding

5.1 Inference as a Path

A mathematical chain of proof has a beginning, intermediate stages, and an end. This temporal representation can obscure the fact that the relation of validity is not first produced step by step. If the premises logically imply the conclusion, then this dependence holds regardless of when anyone discovers or writes it down.

$$P_1, P_2, \ldots, P_n \vDash Q$$

The proof is nevertheless not superfluous theater. It creates a traversable path through a space of possible transformations. Every step must conform to rules; shortcuts may remain hidden; some proofs require new concepts, auxiliary theorems, or representations. The path of inference makes co-validity operationally accessible.

5.2 Initial and Final State

The terms initial and final state are only partly appropriate in mathematics. The premises are not an earlier physical state from which the theorem later arises causally. The final theorem is another representation of what is determined by the premises. The order of the chain of inference is therefore neither mere chronology nor mere identity. It is an order of insight.

5.3 Proof as Integrating Zeug

A proof isolates individual steps, but it does so in order to carry a context. It is akin to the path of action: not the individual proposition alone, but the articulated sequence of permissible transitions grounds the insight. Proof is Zeug that connects premises and consequence in such a way that the connection can be retraced, tested, and repeated.

> *The truth of the conclusion is not produced by the proof; its accessibility is brought forth by the proof.*

6. Does New Information Arise in Proof?

6.1 Semantically, No Independent Additional Truth

In a valid deductive inference, the conclusion cannot allow more possible worlds than the premises. In this sense it adds no independent truth to the semantic content. Anyone who already completely surveyed all logical consequences of the premises would learn nothing new from the inference.

6.2 Epistemically, Very Much Something New

A finite knower, however, does not completely survey the consequences. For such a knower, a proof can be surprising, explanatory, and action-changing. The information has not arisen ex nihilo; it has moved from implicit determination into explicit availability. This transition is itself a happening.

6.3 Computational Depth

Some consequences are logically fixed but reachable only through very long calculations. Considerable computational depth then lies between premise and conclusion. The final theorem was derivable, but not practically graspable. Information therefore has not only content, but also a structure of access: length of proof, required auxiliary concepts, memory, time, and algorithmic complexity.

6.4 Order Brings Information Forth

The formulation that mathematics brings forth information is tenable if ‘bringing forth’ is understood epistemically. Proof orders, compresses, separates the relevant from the irrelevant, and produces an explicit form. It does not necessarily alter the semantic space of possibilities, but it does alter the state of knowledge.

Mathematical information can be contained at the same time and yet be gained only in the happening of inference.

7. Information between Stock, Order, and Accessibility

7.1 Statistical Information

In statistical information theory, information is determined through probability distributions, surprise, and reduction of uncertainty. This theory does not primarily ask about meaning, but about distinguishability and transmission. A rare message carries, in this technical sense, more information than an expected one.

7.2 Semantic Information

Semantic information concerns meaning, truth, and reference. Two strings of symbols can be statistically equally complex and yet semantically completely different. A measure of improbability therefore cannot be translated directly into philosophical content.

7.3 Algorithmic Information

Algorithmic information asks for the shortest description from which an object can be generated. A long sequence of numbers can possess little algorithmic information if it arises from a short rule; a shorter sequence can be difficult to compress. Here too, extent and content are not the same.

7.4 Accessible Information

For the present approach, a fourth perspective is important: accessible information. It denotes not a new universal measure but a philosophical category. Information can be implicit in data or premises, yet become available only through suitable Zeug – an algorithm, proof, measuring procedure, diagram, or concept.

Verstand does not arbitrarily contribute meaning here. Its tool must grip the structure of the stock. An unsuitable algorithm discloses nothing; a faulty proof does not carry; a false model conceals. Accessibility is therefore doubly anchored: in the ordered achievement of the Zeug and in the resistance of the object.

8. A Fourth Case of Investigation: Computation and Compression

8.1 Unfolding without Adding

A compressed file and its unfolded representation provide an intuitive model. The decompression algorithm does not arbitrarily add content to the coded stock. Yet on the output side a visible, audible, or readable form arises that was not previously directly accessible. The result is jointly implicit in the code and in the procedure.

8.2 The Program as a Path

A computation is not merely a mapping from input to output. It consists in a sequence of state transitions. Different programs can compute the same function and yet have different paths, running times, and memory structures. As with action, one must therefore distinguish equality of endpoints from the form of the path.

8.3 An Action Perspective on Information

Transferred to Zeug character, one might say: the state perspective sees input and output; the perspective of happening sees the computation. The output is not merely new in the temporally later state, but disclosed in the enactment of the algorithm. The path possesses informational significance even when beginning and end are functionally fixed.

9. Time and Causality in the Three Fields of Investigation

9.1 Chemical Time

In chemical equilibrium, time is the dimension of continuing reaction events. The macroscopic state remains the same even though microscopic history takes place. Time here is not merely a change in the observed mean value. It carries exchange, fluctuation, and renewal within constancy.

9.2 Mathematical Time

The validity of an inference is not temporal. Recognizing, testing, and writing down the inference very much are. Mathematics therefore separates especially sharply between atemporal validity and the temporal path of knowing. The contribution of time by Verstand is useful here so long as it does not turn the sequence of proof into a causal history of truth.

9.3 Informational Time

Information can be stored and yet require time for its unfolding. Computation, search, measurement, and interpretation are processes. The temporal cost structure does not necessarily belong to semantic content, but it does belong to real accessibility. An answer derivable only in astronomical computation time is available differently from one that can be read immediately.

9.4 Three Forms of Causality

In chemistry, real interactions and reaction mechanisms are at work. In mathematics, an inference grounds its conclusion, but does not physically cause it. In information technology, computational operations cause changes of state, while functional correctness is determined by formal relations. The concept of causality must therefore be used in a field-specific way.

> *Causality is not a uniform arrow running unchanged through all forms of knowledge.*
> *It is a Zeug concept whose achievement depends on the field of objects.*

10. The Zeug Character of Categories: Isolating, Distributing, Unfolding

10.1 Isolating

The first achievement of Verstand often consists in isolating. It determines kinds of substances, states, propositions, symbols, and instants. Without these cuts, neither chemical measurement nor mathematical proof nor transmission of information would be possible.

10.2 Distributing

Chemistry shows a second achievement: categories order distributions. Concentration, partial pressure, activity, and temperature describe not merely individual things, but populations and weightings. Here Verstand does not grasp punctually, but statistically.

10.3 Unfolding

Mathematics and computation show a third achievement: categories and rules unfold implicit connections. A path of inference makes visible what follows from a stock. An algorithm brings forth an output determined by input and rule. Here Verstand is not merely container or judge, but Zeug of enactment.

10.4 Embedding

The action perspective adds a fourth achievement: embedding. States, energies, instants, and local relations receive their meaning within the path. Correspondingly, chemical compositions receive their meaning within reaction-happening, mathematical propositions within the structure of inference, and data within the process of their coding and disclosure.

> *The Zeug perspective is not the opposite of analysis. It is analysis that keeps its cuts within context.*

11. A Third Systematic Formulation

11.1 Ten Principles

First Principle: Co-Presence
A happening can jointly contain several opposing processes, possibilities, or determinations without these being real in the same way.

Second Principle: Distinction of Levels
Chronological simultaneity, modal co-presence, logical co-validity, and informational co-implicitness must be distinguished.

Third Principle: Dynamic Stationarity
Macroscopic constancy can arise from continuing microscopic happening.

Fourth Principle: Conditioned Distribution
Temperature, pressure, and other conditions shape distributions on different levels; not every control variable changes the same law-governed quantity.

Fifth Principle: Path of Inference
A valid consequence is fixed by the premises, but is disclosed by the proof as a path that can be checked.

Sixth Principle: Epistemic Novelty
What is semantically contained can constitute new information for finite knowers.

Seventh Principle: Structure of Access
In addition to content and statistical form, information possesses a concrete structure of accessibility.

Eighth Principle: Relevance of the Path
The same initial and final determinations can be connected by differently articulated paths; the path is not always eliminable.

Ninth Principle: Field-Dependence of Categories
Time, causality, state, and information accomplish different things in chemistry, mathematics, and computation.

Tenth Principle: Embedding Use of Zeug
Contributions of Verstand are appropriate when they can isolate without declaring context to be ontologically subsequent.

11.2 Working Definition

> *Ordered co-presence is the structure of a stock or happening in which several processes, possibilities, or consequences are jointly implicit and enter into a particular accessible order only through conditions, transitions, or operations.*

This definition is deliberately general. It claims no identity among molecules, propositions, and data. It names a structural similarity that makes the Zeug character of Verstand visible: knowledge consists not only in representing what is present, but in appropriately articulating the conditions and paths of unfolding.

12. Objections and Limits

12.1 Objection: Equilibrium Is Not the Simultaneity of Sides

The objection is justified if ‘sides’ means finished macroscopic states. What is simultaneous are the forward and reverse reactions, not two completely separate total worlds. Talk of a simultaneous left and right side may therefore be used only as an abbreviated description of co-present species and opposing reaction flows.

12.2 Objection: Pressure Does Not Determine the Equilibrium Constant

Correct. In the usual thermodynamic formulation, the equilibrium constant for a given reaction is a function of temperature. Changes in pressure and volume often shift composition because they alter activities and the reaction quotient. The document keeps these levels distinct.

12.3 Objection: Deduction Produces No Information at All

This statement is correct only from an omniscient semantic perspective. For real knowers, a consequence can be new, unexpected, and difficult to access. The novelty concerns not an additional independent truth, but explicitness, justification, compression, and access.

12.4 Objection: The Concept of Information Is Overextended

The danger exists. The investigation therefore distinguishes statistical, semantic, algorithmic, and accessible information. ‘Accessible information’ is introduced not as a competing measure, but as a philosophical name for the transition from what is implicit to disclosed content.

12.5 Objection: Structural Similarity Proves No Ontology

This objection is also correct. Similarities among chemistry, mathematics, and information do not yield a unified doctrine of substance. The third stage develops a theory of tools and description. It shows that thinking in terms of happening can connect with different fields; it does not prove that all fields are ontologically the same.

Transition to the Fourth Stage: From Co-Presence to Directed Trace

The third stage has shown that a content can be implicit at the same time and yet become accessible only within an order of enactment. Chemical distributions, mathematical consequences, and informational structures make visible that simultaneity and unfolding do not exclude one another.

What remains open, however, is why some unfoldings adhere while others disappear, and why enacted processes leave traces. The next stage therefore introduces entropy and irreversibility. It asks how a directed history emerges from co-presence, how information is physically inscribed, and why forgetting is selective.

Paradoxes and contradictions thereby appear as different forms of connectability: the paradox can, as a barb in thinking, force a new ordering; bare contradiction can lose continuation and fall out of the memorable context.

Fourth Stage

Entropy, Trace, and Selective Forgetting

Irreversibility, Paradox, and the Bias toward Happening

Preliminary Note: From Co-Presence to Directed Trace

The third stage showed that a context can contain different things in co-presence and yet unfold them in an ordered way. In chemical equilibrium, forward and reverse reactions operate simultaneously; in mathematical inference, premise and consequence are valid together, even though the proof passes through an order of cognition that appears irreversible; in information, a content can be implicit without already being accessible. A structure had thus been gained in which simultaneity and order do not exclude one another.

The fourth stage begins at another, sharper point. It asks no longer only how what is co-present is ordered, but why enacted orders leave traces, why some differences are preserved while others disappear, and what gives a happening a direction that cannot be reversed at will like a film. Entropy and irreversibility thereby move to the center.

Caution is required. Entropy is not a philosophical synonym for decay, disorder, or forgetting. It is a precise physical quantity whose meaning depends on the system under consideration and on its statistical description. Forgetting likewise is not a merely thermodynamic process. It is structured biologically, psychologically, culturally, and informationally. Yet the two touch where differences are physically carried, traces stabilized, states distinguished, and records erased.

> *The guiding question is therefore: How does a possible difference become an adhering trace – and an adhering trace become a piece of directed happening?*

Here an earlier distinction acquires new significance: the paradox is not the same as the contradiction. A paradox resists rapid resolution. It remains caught like a barb in thinking, binds attention, forces reordering, and can bring forth a path. Bare contradiction, by contrast, often destroys continuation because, within classical logic, anything follows from it. It is not necessarily fruitful; it can dissolve into noise, be rejected, and be forgotten. A path through a paradox shapes something. A path through a bare contradiction more easily falls out of a context that can be continued.

This difference must not be prematurely physicalized. A paradox does not possess lower entropy than a contradiction in any immediate thermodynamic sense. But it can serve as a model of selective stabilization: a tension ordered enough not to collapse and resistant enough not to be passed over generates connection. It becomes a trace. In this sense, the paradox can form a bias toward happening: a minimal tilt in favor of what continues to have effects over what nihilates without consequence.

1. Testing the Guiding Thesis

1.1 The Strongest Formulation

The strongest formulation of the thesis would claim: entropy directly explains forgetting; paradoxes are physically lower in entropy than contradictions; and their greater capacity to adhere provides an ontological reason why Something prevails over nihilation. In this form the approach would not be tenable. It would mix thermodynamic, information-theoretical, cognitive, logical, and ontological levels.

1.2 The Tenable Formulation

What is tenable is a layered structure. First, thermodynamics grounds an arrow of time for macroscopic processes: under suitable conditions, the entropy of a closed system typically increases. Second, memory and recording arise only in physical carriers whose production, stabilization, and erasure involve irreversible processes. Third, forgetting is selective because not all traces are equally strong, equally connectable, or equally often reactivated. Fourth, paradox and contradiction differ in their cognitive and logical connectability. Fifth, this difference can be read philosophically as a model of a bias toward happening without being presented as physical proof of an ontology.

1.3 Verdict

> *Verdict: The approach is tenable in qualified form and opens an independent fourth stage.*

The qualification requires four limits. Entropy and forgetting must not be equated. Paradox and contradiction must be distinguished logically and cognitively, not identified thermodynamically. The bias toward happening is a philosophical interpretation of persistence and connection, not a law of nature directly derived from the second law. And talk of nihilation denotes a limit-form of the failure of continuation, not a measurable physical state.

2. Entropy: Measure, Distribution, and Direction

2.1 Entropy Is Not Simply Disorder

The common equation of entropy with disorder is intuitive but imprecise. Thermodynamic entropy characterizes how many microscopic states are compatible with a given macroscopic state, or how energy and other conserved quantities are distributed over accessible degrees of freedom. A macrostate can therefore appear stable and outwardly ordered while still possessing high entropy.

For philosophical consideration, what matters is that entropy contains a relation between levels of description. The macrostate gathers many microstates under the same coarse determination. Entropy thus does not merely measure something adhering to a single particle. It arises from the multiplicity of possible microconfigurations relative to a macroscopic distinction.

2.2 The Second Law

The second law does not say that every microscopic process at every instant must necessarily run in only one direction. The fundamental laws of motion of many microscopic models are symmetric under time reversal. The thermodynamic arrow arises from statistical typicality, special initial conditions, coarse-grained description, and the overwhelming number of microstates that appear macroscopically as higher entropy.

A gas spreads through a space because vastly more microstates correspond to an even distribution than to one in which all molecules happen to gather in a corner. The reverse motion is neither

logically nor microdynamically excluded. It is macroscopically so extremely atypical that it is practically never observed.

2.3 Direction as the Typicality of Happening

Irreversibility thereby acquires a peculiar form. It is neither mere logical compulsion nor pure illusion. It is a stable asymmetry of typical happening. The path from the special to the multiply realizable is statistically broad; the return path requires extraordinarily precise coordination of innumerable degrees of freedom.

> *The thermodynamic arrow of time is not the prohibition of the return path, but its almost complete loss of accessibility.*

3. Irreversibility without Simple Compulsion

3.1 Reversing a Film and Real Reversal

A film played backward shows a reversed sequence of images. A real reversal, by contrast, would have to return with precision every velocity, correlation, thermal motion, emitted sound wave, photon, and environmental influence. The difference between film and happening therefore lies not merely in sequence, but in the embedding of the process in an incalculable network of traces.

A breaking glass could in principle be described in microscopic equations as a process running backward. In reality, however, not only every shard, but every movement of air, every flow of heat, and every acoustic wave would have to return in exactly coordinated fashion. Reversing an isolated section of an image is not enough. Happening has an environment, and this environment carries direction along with it.

3.2 Irreversibility as the Spreading of Correlations

An event leaves traces by generating correlations. The broken glass changes the floor, the air, the light, and the perception of an observer. Information about the process is distributed across ever more degrees of freedom. This distribution does not mean that information in the strictest sense must simply be destroyed; rather, it becomes practically inaccessible because reconstructing it would require nearly unattainable control over the environment.

3.3 Happening Binds the Environment

The second stage emphasized the path over the isolated state. The fourth stage adds: a real path is not merely a line of the system, but a progressive entanglement with its environment. Irreversibility arises where the path scatters correlations, multiplies traces, and binds its own reversal to ever more conditions.

> *A happening becomes irreversible by drawing more world into its trace.*

4. Trace, Memory, and Physical Inscription

4.1 What Is a Trace?

A trace is a present difference that refers back to a past happening. It is not the past itself. It is a change in the now whose structure becomes intelligible only if an earlier process is thought along with it. The impression in the ground, the altered synapse, the stored bit, the scar, and the memory are different forms of such present reference-back.

A trace must satisfy three conditions: it must be produced by a happening, remain sufficiently stable, and be readable in a later context. Without stability it dissolves. Without readability it remains mere change. Without reference to an earlier time it is not a trace, but only a state.

4.2 Memory Is Not Storage

Memory is easily imagined as a container in which finished contents are deposited. In fact, remembering is a renewed enactment. A trace is reactivated in a present situation, supplemented, reordered, and partly changed. Memory is therefore not only preservation, but a happening of taking-up-again.

This insight connects with Zeug character. Categories of memory – identity, sequence, cause, meaning – do not merely order stored data. They contribute to what can return at all as the same experience, as the consequence of an earlier event, or as a relevant past.

4.3 Erasing Has a Cost

Erasing information is not merely a disappearance in thought. In a physical memory, reliable erasure means bringing many possible initial states back to a uniform final state. This logically irreversible operation is associated with a thermodynamic minimum cost. It does not follow that every psychological forgetting can be calculated directly from a simple energy formula. But it does show that information has no disembodied location. Its preservation and removal are embedded in material processes.

5. Forgetting Is Selective

5.1 Not Everything Disappears Equally

Forgetting is not a uniform erasure. Some impressions fade within seconds; others return after decades. Some thoughts cannot be retained despite conscious effort; others adhere against one's will. Frequency, emotional significance, surprise, connection to existing structures, and repeated activation influence what remains.

Selectivity does not necessarily mean conscious selection. Memory does not decide on every content like a judge. Rather, different conditions of stability obtain. A content remains because it is embedded in existing networks, reinforced by repetition, affectively marked, or held open by unresolved tension.

5.2 Forgetting as Loss of Connection

A content can be present and yet fall out of the context that can be continued. It is not necessarily destroyed without trace; its trace is simply no longer reachable or no longer strong enough to determine present enactment. Forgetting can therefore be understood as a loss of connection.

> *Forgetting is not always the becoming-nothing of a trace. Often it is the breaking-off of the path to it.*

5.3 Productive Forgetting

Not every forgetting is a deficiency. A system that retained every detail unchanged might become incapable of action. Generalization requires neglecting differences; attention requires allowing other things to recede. Forgetting reduces overload and enables new order. It is therefore itself Zeug: it does not hold everything fast so that something determinate can emerge.

Yet this Zeug is ambivalent. Selective forgetting can relieve, but also repress; it can abstract, but also erase; it can make reconciliation possible, but also interrupt responsibility. The transition to ethics is already becoming visible.

6. Paradox and Contradiction

6.1 Contradiction

A contradiction obtains when a proposition and its negation are asserted at the same time in the same sense. In classical logic, a genuine contradiction threatens the system's capacity for distinction, because by the principle of explosion any proposition whatsoever can be derived from it. Where everything follows, no determinate conclusion is privileged.

This does not mean that human beings always notice contradictions immediately or forget them. Contradictory beliefs, too, can persist psychologically for a long time. The philosophical claim is narrower: within the classical order of inference, bare contradiction has no stable direction of continuation. It provides no resistance of determinate form, but can dissolve the boundaries of inferential order.

6.2 The Paradox

A paradox, by contrast, is a constellation in which well-grounded steps lead to an unexpected, self-referential, or tension-filled result. It is not merely an arbitrary error. It remains effective precisely because its genesis can be retraced and simple rejection does not suffice. Russell's paradox, for example, was not forgotten; it forced a reordering of set theory and its foundations.

The paradox therefore contains a double binding: it cannot be incorporated without contradiction in the existing framework, yet because its path is retraceable it cannot simply be expelled either. It keeps the process of thinking open.

6.3 Difference of Paths

> *A path through a paradox shapes something. A path through a bare contradiction loses its determinate continuation.*

This formulation must not be understood as a universal psychological law. It describes a structural tendency. The paradox preserves the path of its own production: the steps can be repeated, the tension reached again, and work can continue from it. A bare contradiction without a sustainable derivation possesses no such path structure. It is corrected, rejected, or removed from the active context.

7. The Barb of the Paradox

7.1 Resistance to Smoothing

The paradox is a barb because it resists seamless classification. An ordinary thought can be absorbed into existing categories and thereby become unobtrusive. The paradox remains conspicuous. It produces a disturbance that cannot be treated merely as a defect because it arises from the rules of thinking themselves.

It thereby approaches the damaged Zeug of the first stage. In breakage, the ordering Zeug that had previously worked unobtrusively becomes visible. A paradox makes categories conspicuous. It shows not only that an inference fails, but where a conceptual system produces its own limit.

7.2 Adhesion through Organized Tension

The paradox's capacity to adhere rests not on maximal disorder, but on organized tension. It is ordered enough to be reproducible and open enough not to be closed. Precisely this intermediate position gives it mnemonic force. It can be narrated, traversed again, and answered in new systems.

Here lies a structural analogy to the trace. A trace must be stable enough to remain and differentiated enough to indicate something determinate. A paradox is a logical trace of a limit. It carries within its form the path by which thinking arrived at that limit.

7.3 The Boundary between Nihilation and Happening

In the previously developed scale of happening, nihilation stood for the zero of continuation, the paradox for a boundary state: not yet stable happening, but already more than disappearance without consequence. This classification can now be made more precise. The paradox is a proto-happening of thought. It works inwardly, binds attention, and generates possible reordering, even when no stable outward solution is yet present.

8. Bias toward Happening: Why Something Adheres

8.1 Bias as a Minimal Tilt

Bias here does not primarily denote a cognitive distortion, but a minimal tilt in favor of continuation. Between complete nihilation and stable happening lies a scarcely perceptible excess: a tiny bit more than nothing, just by the smallest imaginable margin. It is enough that a difference does not disappear completely, but can become effective again as a barb.

The bias does not causally explain why world exists at all. It denotes a formal and ontological minimum condition: for happening to prevail over nihilation, at least one difference must remain connectable. What permits no trace, resistance, or resumption whatsoever falls out of every possible history.

8.2 Not Everything That Persists Is True or Good

Persistence alone ennobles no content. Errors, prejudices, and traumas can be especially tenacious. The bias toward happening is therefore not a bias toward truth, still less toward the good. It says only that adhesion and continuation constitute more happening than complete inconsequentiality.

This restriction is decisive for the later ethics. What remains demands examination. The barb can open knowledge, but it can also wound. The philosophical task is not to affirm every persistence, but to judge the conditions of its adhesion and its consequences.

8.3 Entropy and Bias

Entropy provides no direct proof of this bias. On the contrary: macroscopically it often describes the spreading and leveling of usable differences. Yet irreversible processes at the same time generate traces, correlations, and new historical conditions. The glass breaks and loses its earlier form; at the same time shards, sounds, memories, and records arise. Irreversibility is therefore not only a loss of order. It is a transformation of the conditions of future happening.

> *The past does not remain as an identical state. It remains as an altered possibility of going on.*

9. Information, Entropy, and the Preservation of Differences

9.1 Information Is Not Simply Negative Entropy

Talk of information as the inverse of entropy has a powerful intuition behind it, but requires differentiation. Statistical information and thermodynamic entropy use related mathematical forms, yet are not simple opposites in every context. A system can build locally ordered information while generating entropy overall. Living beings, computers, and archives preserve structures by converting energy and releasing entropy into their environment.

9.2 Information as Preserved Difference

For the perspective of happening, information can initially be understood as a difference that can make a difference to a further enactment. Information is thus bound to connection. A pattern that can never be read, made effective, or distinguished possesses at least no accessible information for the system in question.

This determination connects information and trace. The trace is a physically preserved difference with backward reference; information is its possible efficacy within an order. Memory actualizes this possibility. Forgetting weakens or interrupts it.

9.3 Entropy as the Price of Distinction

Preserving differences requires delimitation, stabilization, and error correction. Such achievements are not physically free. An archive requires material, energy, and care; a brain requires metabolism; a computer requires electrical work and heat dissipation. Order remains locally possible, but is embedded in more encompassing irreversible processes.

The Zeug perspective therefore recognizes neither information nor entropy as the sole fundamental category. Information foregrounds differences; entropy describes the distribution of possible microstates and the direction of typical macroscopic development. Only their interplay shows how local adhesion of traces is possible within an irreversible world.

10. Time and Causality in Irreversible Happening

10.1 Time as the Order of Traces

In the second stage, time appeared as duration held within a path. A further determination now enters: the past is the direction from which traces are present; the future is the direction from which no corresponding records yet exist. This asymmetry is not the complete definition of time, but it connects the thermodynamic arrow with the arrow of memory.

We remember the past and not the future because memories are physical records in present systems that arose from earlier interactions. The arrow of time is thereby not merely measured, but lived in the structure of the trace.

10.2 Causality as a Directed Reading

Causality orders traces in one direction: the earlier event counts as the cause of the later change. In time-reversal-symmetric equations, this direction is not always directly inscribed. It gains its practical unambiguity through boundary conditions, records, possibilities of control, and increase of entropy.

The Zeug character of causality becomes especially clear here. Causality is an indispensable tool for ordering responsibility, intervention, and explanation in a world of irreversible traces. But it is not necessarily the only basic ontological form. The path-related context and statistical directionality help carry what is subsequently distinguished as cause and effect.

10.3 From Arrow to History

An arrow of time alone is not yet a history. History arises when irreversible differences remain readable, are related to one another, and are taken up into new actions. Entropy grounds macroscopic direction; trace and memory turn direction into a transmissible form.

11. The Zeug Character of Memory and Order

11.1 Memory as Zeug of Selection

Memory does not return the past in full. It selects, condenses, connects, and omits. In this it resembles other contributions of Verstand. It makes happening narratable by not treating everything equally. Its in-order-to lies in orientation, identity, expectation, and capacity for action.

The danger begins where this selection becomes invisible. What is not remembered then seems never to have happened; what is often remembered appears larger or more unambiguous than it was. Zeug character therefore calls for a double view: memory is necessary, but its selection is not identical with the past itself.

11.2 Paradox as Zeug of Testing

The paradox has a special role in the structure of tools. It serves not primarily rapid ordering, but the testing of order. It holds open a limit at which categories do not prove themselves smoothly. It thereby works against the premature forgetting of problems that are not solved by mere smoothing.

11.3 Forgetting as Zeug of Relief and Repression

Forgetting, too, is not merely passive failure. It can be a functional means of reducing complexity and making the present possible. At the same time, it can become an instrument of power: traces are removed, archives destroyed, concepts avoided, victims excluded from narratives. The question of memory thereby already crosses beyond epistemology and becomes ethical.

12. A Fourth Systematic Formulation

12.1 Ten Principles

First Principle: Entropic Directionality

Irreversibility is macroscopically a statistically stable direction of typical processes, not an absolute microscopic prohibition of every reversal.

Second Principle: Trace Principle

A happening becomes historically effective when it brings forth present differences that refer back to its enactment.

Third Principle: Environmental Entanglement

Real irreversibility grows with the spreading of correlations and the inclusion of ever more degrees of freedom.

Fourth Principle: Selective Forgetting

Forgetting is not uniform nihilation, but often the unequal loss of stability, readability, or connection.

Fifth Principle: Paradoxical Adhesion

A paradox remains effective because it preserves a retraceable path to a tension that cannot be smoothly resolved.

Sixth Principle: Loss through Contradiction

In classical logic, bare contradiction has no determinate direction of continuation and is therefore often corrected, isolated, or removed from the active context.

Seventh Principle: Bias toward Happening

A minimally persistent difference constitutes more continuation than complete nihilation, without thereby already being true or good.

Eighth Principle: Informational Connectability

Information is a difference that can make a further difference within a system; trace, readability, and order belong together.

Ninth Principle: Zeug Character of Memory

Remembering and forgetting are contributions that make happening orientable while at the same time selecting and altering it.

Tenth Principle: Double Arrow of Time

Thermodynamic directionality and the direction of memory are distinct but physically interwoven: records arise in irreversible processes.

12.2 Working Definition

> *Irreversible happening is a path whose interactions inscribe themselves in an environment as distributed traces and whose complete reversal thereby becomes statistically and practically inaccessible*.

This definition avoids two reductions. It reduces irreversibility neither to subjective memory nor to a mystical becoming. At the same time, it does not reduce it to an abstract entropy number. It connects physical distribution, trace, accessibility, and historical continuation.

12.3 Paradox as Proto-Happening of Thought

The paradox can now be determined as proto-happening: a difference not yet stably resolved, but already adhering and resonant. It stands at the boundary between nihilation and fully formed happening. Its resistance prevents consequence-free dissolution; its incompletion compels further movement.

13. Objections and Limits

13.1 Objection: Entropy Is Metaphorically Overextended

The objection applies to every account that transfers thermodynamic entropy directly to thoughts or society. The present stage asserts no numerical entropy of the paradox. It uses entropy physically only where microstates, macrostates, heat, distribution, and irreversible operations are meant. The connection to thought is structural and mediated through physical carriers of memory.

13.2 Objection: Contradictions Are by No Means Always Forgotten

Correct. Human beings and institutions can preserve contradictions for a long time. The thesis is therefore not psychologically universal. It concerns the logical structure of connection: in classical logic a bare contradiction offers no unambiguous continuation, whereas a paradox, through the path of its derivation, leaves behind a determinate open task.

13.3 Objection: Paradoxes Can Be Resolved

Correct again. Some paradoxes rest on ambiguity or faulty premises. Yet even their resolution can remain permanently fruitful because it forces a distinction that was previously missing. The barb then lies not in eternal insolubility, but in the impossibility of returning to the old state without conceptual change.

13.4 Objection: The Bias toward Happening Explains Nothing

As a causal explanation of the origin of world, the concept would be too weak. Here it is a boundary determination. It names the minimal difference between complete inconsequentiality and beginning continuation. Its task is not to supply a Why behind everything, but to determine the threshold at which something first counts as trace, resistance, or resumption.

13.5 Objection: Entropy Destroys Traces Rather Than Creating Them

Entropic processes can blur traces. At the same time, every real formation of a trace is embedded in irreversible processes. A photograph, a scar, or a memory trace arises through directed interactions and energy turnover. The relation is therefore double: entropy limits the duration of traces and at the same time enables the direction in which records arise.

Closing Remark: Transition to Logic and Ethics

The fourth stage has led the Zeug character of Verstand into a zone in which ordering, remembering, and forgetting can no longer be separated from one another. Time becomes experienceable as the direction of readable traces. Causality orders these traces into paths of bringing-forth. Information keeps differences accessible. Entropy limits their stability and binds every local order to irreversible processes.

The paradox occupies a special position within this. It is not a mere error to be removed from thinking. It can act as a barb that holds fast a limit and thereby forces new order. Contradiction, by

contrast, shows where an order of inference loses its determinate continuation. Between the two it is decided whether a tension becomes a path or falls out of connectable happening.

> *Logic is the Zeug that determines which transitions may adhere in thought. Ethics is the Zeug that asks which adhering transitions ought to be continued.*

The step to the fifth stage is thereby prepared. Logic will have to be considered there not merely as a timeless collection of valid forms of inference, but as a tool for preserving and limiting connection. It decides what can follow from premises, what falls out of order as contradiction, and what, as paradox, demands a revision of order.

Ethics, correspondingly, will appear not merely as a catalogue of commandments. It concerns the selection of what is remembered, carried forward, interrupted, or left to forgetting. Every moral order continues some traces and erases others. It distributes attention, responsibility, and future. Precisely for that reason it must not conceal its Zeug character. What counts as self-evidently good may be a practiced grip; what is forgotten may remain a repressed obligation.

The fifth stage will therefore have to ask about a double responsibility: the responsibility of logic for paths of inference and the responsibility of ethics for paths of continuation. The one protects the determinacy of thinking from collapse into arbitrariness. The other protects the happening of others from nihilating in selective forgetting.

> *Not everything that adheres logically ought to be continued ethically. Not everything that must be remembered ethically is already ordered in a way convenient to logic.*

Appendix: Minimal Conceptual and Physical Determinations

A.1 Thermodynamic Entropy

For a macrostate with Ω compatible microstates, the Boltzmann relation is schematically: S = k_B ln Ω. In general statistical form, entropy can be written as S = -k_B Σ p_i ln p_i. Both formulas must be interpreted contextually and do not replace an exact specification of system, ensemble, and macroscopic quantities.

A.2 Irreversibility

Macroscopic irreversibility denotes the stable asymmetry of typical processes under given boundary and initial conditions. It is compatible with the microscopic time-reversal symmetry of many fundamental equations.

A.3 Information and Erasure

Shannon information entropy H = -Σ p_i log p_i measures the uncertainty of a probability distribution. Its formal similarity to statistical entropy grounds important relations, but permits no undifferentiated equation of semantic information with thermodynamic order. Logically irreversible erasure of physical information has a thermodynamic minimum consequence; actual memories regularly lie far above this limit.

A.4 Paradox and Contradiction

Contradiction: simultaneous assertion of A and not-A in the same sense. Paradox: a retraceable constellation that leads to an unexpected, self-referential, or apparently contradictory result and can force revision of premises, concepts, or rules of inference.

Fifth Stage

Logic, Ethics, and the Formation of Instances

Distinguishing, Setting Measures, and Assuming Responsibility

Preliminary Note: From Adhesion to the Instance

The fourth stage considered happening from the perspective of entropy, trace, and selective forgetting. Not every difference remains. Not every trace becomes readable. Not everything that once appeared gains connection to later enactments. Paradoxes could be understood as resistant barbs of thought: they do not simply dissolve, but keep a difference open. Bare contradictions, by contrast, if they allow no determinate continuation, more readily lose their connectability and fall into selective forgetting.

Yet this still does not explain when a difference counts as a difference at all. Several transitions lie between a physical stimulus, a perceived deviation, a conceptual distinction, and a logically relevant opposition. A happening is not recognized merely because something is different. An instance must be formed for which this difference counts. A measure must grip. A threshold must be crossed. A difference must be ordered so that it becomes recognizable, comparable, and continuable.

The fifth stage begins here. It investigates logic and ethics as especially fundamental forms of the Zeug of Verstand. Logic determines which differences adhere in thought, which transitions count as valid, and which inferences are treated as permissible. Ethics determines which differences count in acting and suffering, which transitions are required, permitted, or to be prevented, and which events are classified as good, evil, or neutral.

> *Logic turns a difference into a valid distinction. Ethics turns a valid distinction into a claim.*

The guiding thesis is not that logic and ethics are arbitrary inventions. Nor is it that happening is in itself wholly undifferentiated. Rather: the forms in which differences become instances, judgments, and obligations do not lie ready-made on things. They arise through instituted measures. These measures are Zeug. They can fit or miss, open or constrict, protect or injure. Precisely because they are instituted, those who institute them bear responsibility for their use.

1. Testing the Guiding Thesis

1.1 The Strong Formulation

In its strongest form the thesis might say: logic and ethics are exclusively orders instituted by Verstand; in happening itself there are neither logical distinctions nor good, evil, or neutrality. Only an instance forms thresholds, separates cases, orders consequences, and invests events with normative significance.

This formulation contains an important thought, but it is too strong. If it meant that every instituted logic and every instituted ethics were equally good, it would lose the possibility of critique. Then no measure could fail against happening, for everything that happens would merely be material for a freely chosen order. That would contradict the earlier concept of double anchoring: knowledge is anchored in the contributions of Verstand, but equally in the resistance of what is encountered.

1.2 The Qualified Formulation

A qualified formulation is tenable. Logical and ethical determinations do not lie on things like visible labels. They are formed through rules, concepts, thresholds, and modes of comparison. Yet these formations are not freely without consequence. Happening answers them. An unusable logic becomes entangled in arbitrariness, permits no stable inferences, or loses the capacity to preserve distinctions. A failed ethics produces avoidable suffering, makes those affected invisible, justifies violence, or destroys the conditions of a shared world.

Logic and ethics are therefore neither mere discoveries nor mere inventions. They are responsible acts of institution under conditions of resistance. Their validity arises in a relation: Verstand contributes the order; happening limits, confirms, corrects, or refutes its use.

1.3 Verdict

> *The guiding thesis is tenable if institution is understood not as arbitrariness but as the responsible formation of measures under the resistance of happening.*

This stage can thereby complete the book so far. The Zeug character of Verstand reaches its sharpest form here. Not only space, time, substance, and causality, not only path, equilibrium, information, and memory, but also the rules of correct inference and the standards of right action appear as contributions. They are not thereby diminished. On the contrary: only their character as Zeug makes visible that they must be used, tested, changed, and answered for.

2. Knowledge Begins with Adhering Differences

2.1 Difference and Distinction

Not every physical deviation is recognized. Light arrives in innumerable gradations; sounds overlap; bodies change continuously. Only attention singles something out. It forms a distinction: brighter than, louder than, earlier than, equal to, different from. A distinction is therefore not merely a property of two things. It is a relation that becomes visible under a particular measure.

The measure can be coarse or fine. To the naked eye two color tones appear the same; to a measuring instrument they are different. In everyday language two actions may count as the same, while a legal system or ethical analysis recognizes relevant differences. What adheres as a distinction depends on which instance compares and which threshold it employs.

2.2 Adhesion as a Condition of Knowledge

Knowledge presupposes that a difference does not disappear again in the next moment. It must be rememberable, repeatable, or fixable in a trace. Only then can it be compared with a further difference. Adhesion is therefore not merely a psychological phenomenon of memory. It is the minimum condition of every order: what preserves no difference can form no sequence, no rule, and no inference.

Logic begins at this point. It treats differences not merely as changing impressions, but as determinable relations. Identity holds something fast. Negation delimits. Conjunction connects. Implication orders transitions. These forms are not the whole of thinking; they are the grips with which thinking holds differences in such a way that a continuable structure arises from them.

2.3 Happening through the Formation of Instances

Happening is not only what exists after an instance has been formed. But for a knowing instance, it becomes a determinate happening only thereby. A continuous course is articulated into events. A sound becomes the beginning of a sentence. A change becomes the crossing of a boundary. A behavior becomes an action. A suffering becomes an injustice.

The formation of instances therefore does not mean that Dasein creates the world out of nothing. It means that within a happening it forms points of support, units, and transitions. This formation is applied logic. It decides what recurs as the same case, which deviation is relevant, and when a gradual change has become a new instance.

3. Logic as Instituted Zeug

3.1 Instituted Logic

Logic is instituted insofar as rules are laid down explicitly or implicitly: What counts as identity? Which inference is permitted? How are contradictions handled? Which propositions may be asserted together? A logical order is not simply the imprint of happening. It is a form in which Verstand tests happening for determinacy, repeatability, and connection.

The word instituted must not suggest that logic is arbitrarily invented. A measuring standard is also instituted: the unit, zero point, and procedure are fixed. Yet the measurement can fail on the object, be imprecise, or capture an unsuitable aspect. Likewise, a logic can be sustainable for certain tasks and insufficient for others.

3.2 Logic as Measure

Logic does not measure length or weight. It measures connectability. It asks whether a transition preserves the instituted distinctions. From A and If A, then B, B should follow. From the identity of an object, two different objects should not arise without reason. A contradiction should not unnoticedly make every arbitrary assertion possible at once.

In this sense, logic is a measure of the stability of the path of thought. It determines not only endpoints, but permits or forbids transitions. Its units are not numbers, but forms of validity: follows, contradicts, is equivalent, is independent, is undecidable under the given premises.

3.3 Logic as Perspective

Every logic foregrounds particular structures. Classical logic favors clear bivalence and the exclusion of contradiction. Many-valued logics permit intermediate values. Paraconsistent logics

prevent everything from following from a contradiction. Modal logics distinguish possibility, necessity, and actuality. Temporal logics order propositions according to earlier, later, and until.

This plurality makes Zeug character especially clear. There is not merely one neutral form that adheres to all objects by itself. Different tasks require different grips. It does not follow, however, that all logics are interchangeable. A logic must disclose which transitions it permits, which it blocks, and for which field it is suited.

> *Logic is not the skeleton of the world that only needs to be uncovered. It is the articulated measure by which transitions are treated as sustainable or unsustainable.*

4. Formation of Instances and Thresholds

4.1 No Instance without a Threshold

An instance arises when a course or a manifold is treated as one case under a rule. This requires a threshold. When does a sound become a word? When does a change in temperature become a phase transition? When does a deviation become an error? When does repeated behavior become a habit?

The threshold does not simply lie in the thing as a visible line. It arises from the interplay of measuring procedure, purpose, attention, and resistance. Water freezes under particular conditions; yet which deviation in a series of measurements counts as relevant depends on the instrument, precision, and question. The physical transition resists arbitrary interpretations, but its apprehension requires an instituted order.

4.2 The Logic of Forming Instances

The formation of instances uses at least four logical operations. First, identity is instituted: these appearances count as the same case. Second, difference is instituted: that appearance no longer belongs. Third, a boundary is determined: up to here the assignment holds, from here onward it does not. Fourth, a rule of connection is formed: further expectations or actions follow from the assignment.

The threshold is therefore not merely a point. It is a decision about continuations. If a state is instantiated as illness, diagnosis, treatment, and care follow. If an utterance is instantiated as a promise, expectations and obligations follow. If a difference is instantiated as contradiction, logical blocks follow. The instance orders not only what something is; it orders what may happen with it.

4.3 Continuum and Discrete Order

Many courses of happening are continuous while our concepts form discrete classes. Transitional zones lie between healthy and ill, awake and asleep, dangerous and harmless, voluntary and coerced. Verstand must set thresholds because action requires decisions. Yet every threshold can generate borderline cases that it captures poorly.

The Zeug perspective therefore demands double attentiveness: it must be able to decide and at the same time know that its decision has an edge. Blunt Zeug distinguishes too little. Zeug that is too sharp dissects contexts that are essential to happening. Good formation of instances consists not in maximal hardness, but in appropriate discriminating sharpness.

5. The Thing, the Measure, and Resistance

5.1 Neither Pure Thing nor Pure Measure

The proposition that thresholds lie in the logic of forming instances and not in the thing itself protects against naive essentialism. But it must not be understood as though what is encountered carried no structure of its own. The thing does not compel exactly one measure, yet neither does it permit every measure equally.

A measure can be too coarse and swallow relevant differences. It can be too fine and elevate mere noise into instances. It can measure the wrong dimension. Appropriateness shows itself in whether the instances formed enable stable, explanatory, and action-capable connections without systematically bypassing the resistance of happening.

5.2 Double Anchoring of Logic

Logic is anchored in Verstand because rules, signs, thresholds, and forms of inference are instituted. It is anchored in happening because these institutions must prove themselves. An order of inference that preserves no recognizable distinctions loses its use. A classification that repeatedly breaks against the phenomena must be corrected.

This double anchoring prevents two extremes. Against dogmatism it insists: no logical form may declare itself, without examination, the sole language of what is real. Against relativism it insists: not every form carries. Happening has barbs on which bad orders catch and visibly fail.

5.3 Truth as Successful Adhesion

Truth can in this context be understood as successful adhesion. A statement adheres not only in memory, but to happening. It proves itself in repetition, explanation, prediction, and correction. This image does not replace a classical theory of truth, but extends it by the character of enactment: truth is not only a static correspondence, but a relation that withstands strain.

A false statement can adhere strongly in psychological terms. Adhesion alone is therefore no criterion of truth. What matters is double adhesion: to an order of thought and to the resistance of what is encountered. Logic and ethics touch precisely here. Moral judgments, too, can adhere culturally and yet fail against the suffering of those affected.

6. Contradiction, Paradox, and Connectability

6.1 Contradiction as Interruption

In classical logic, contradiction marks a limit. If A and not-A are asserted at the same time in the same sense, the distinction loses its stability. Without a further rule, any arbitrary proposition can follow from the contradiction. The path of inference falls apart because its differences no longer carry a determinate direction.

For that reason bare contradiction readily falls into forgetting. Not because it was never perceived, but because it offers no ordered connection. It is rejected, cleaned up, or removed from active memory. Selective forgetting protects the continuability of thinking.

6.2 The Paradox as Adhering Tension

The paradox differs in that it does not simply destroy the order. It shows a tension within the order that cannot be removed without loss. It forces premises, levels, or concepts to be re-examined. Precisely for this reason it adheres. It is a contradiction with path character: a blockage that at the same time opens a direction of search.

The path through a paradox shapes something. It changes the logic of forming instances. A previously invisible premise becomes visible; a threshold is shifted; a concept is differentiated. The path through a bare contradiction, by contrast, falls into forgetting if no such transformation succeeds.

6.3 Logic as Dealing with Barbs

Logic is therefore not merely a system for avoiding contradictions. It is Zeug for distinguishing productive from unproductive tensions. It must decide whether a conflict disappears through clarification, belongs to different levels, marks a genuine limit of the system, or requires another logic.

> *The paradox adheres not despite logic, but at its boundary. It shows where the previous measure no longer carries the path.*

7. Ethics as Normative Zeug of Distinction

7.1 The Analogous Shift

A largely analogous differentiation applies to ethics. Good, evil, and neutral do not lie in a thing like chemical properties. An action possesses no visible quantum of goodness. An event bears no label that could be read independently of those affected, intentions, consequences, relations, and alternatives.

Ethics forms instances. It distinguishes acting from allowing to happen, help from intervention, protection from paternalism, guilt from mere causation, reasonable demand from overload. These

distinctions are Zeug of Verstand. They order a happening so that claims, responsibilities, and limits come to the fore.

7.2 Ethics as Measure

The ethical measure asks not only: What is the case? It asks: What may be continued? What ought to be interrupted? What is imposed on whom? Whose possibility is enlarged or curtailed? What trace does an action leave in another life?

Ethics is therefore not an addition made after knowledge has been completed. The very formation of relevant instances can be ethical. Whether a pain is treated as mere noise, as a medical finding, or as a call for help decides what relation to world arises. Attention is not neutral, because making invisible has consequences.

7.3 Ethics as Perspective

Different ethical theories form different perspectives. Consequentialist ethics weight effects. Deontological ethics attend to rules and respect for persons. Virtue ethics consider dispositions and forms of life. Care ethics bring relations, dependencies, and vulnerability to the foreground. None of these perspectives is merely another name for the same thing.

Zeug character permits their achievements to be compared without prematurely reducing them to a single basic form. One perspective can make visible aspects another obscures. Yet ethical plurality, too, must be tested against happening: against suffering, freedom, vulnerability, reciprocity, and the conditions of a shared future.

8. Good, Evil, and Neutral as Formed Instances

8.1 Good

Something does not become good merely because the concept is arbitrarily applied to it from outside. The instance of the good forms where a happening is recognized as preserving, liberating, healing, just, or enabling. Which of these dimensions counts depends on the measure. But the measure must answer to real needs, vulnerabilities, and possibilities.

The good is therefore neither a pure property of a thing nor mere subjective approval. It is a relational determination within a happening. An action can help one person and harm another; relieve in the short term and create dependence in the long term; enlarge one freedom and restrict another. Ethical formation of instances must consider these paths, not merely momentary states.

8.2 Evil

Evil, too, does not lie as a dark substance in an object. It is instantiated where a happening brings forth injury, destruction, humiliation, or avoidable restriction and responsibility can be attributed. This determination requires distinctions: between intention and accident, power and powerlessness, knowledge and ignorance, self-defense and attack, tragic consequence and intended harm.

The Zeug character of the concept of evil protects against metaphysical reification. But it must not lead to trivialization. The fact that the category is formed does not mean that suffering is merely formed. The measure is instituted; the injury resists. Ethical order must prove itself precisely against this resistance.

8.3 Neutral

Neutrality, too, is an instance, not the absence of all classification. Something is treated as neutral when, under the measure employed, it produces no relevant positive or negative difference. This classification always depends on thresholds. What appears neutral from a great distance can be grave from the perspective of those affected.

For that reason the category neutral is especially critical. It can create necessary relief, because not every event may be moralized. But it can also organize invisibility. Ethical attention must examine who sets the threshold of relevance and whose experiences disappear below it.

9. The Threshold of Ethical Relevance

9.1 From Difference to Claim

Not every difference grounds a moral claim. Differences of taste, color, or speed are initially descriptive. They become ethically relevant when they touch vulnerability, freedom, participation, justice, or the possibility of a flourishing life. The transition is a formation of thresholds.

This threshold cannot be read entirely from the thing. It depends on which beings are recognized as capable of claims, which harms count, which time spans are considered, and which indirect consequences are included. Historically, human beings, animals, and future generations have been excluded from ethical instances because the measures employed did not register their vulnerability.

9.2 Attention as Ethical Preliminary Work

Before a judgment can be made, something must become visible. Ethics therefore begins with attention. It asks which differences may adhere and which are forgotten for convenience. An injustice can persist because its trace is not readable for the governing instance. An ethics of Zeug character must therefore investigate its own blind spots.

Attention alone is not yet a solution. It can overwhelm, be selective, or be manipulated. But without it the measure remains abstract. Ethical Zeug needs proximity to happening: to bodies, histories, dependencies, consequences, and the voices of those affected.

9.3 Thresholds under Uncertainty

Ethical decisions are often made without complete knowledge. The threshold must be set even though consequences are uncertain. Here the special responsibility of the measure becomes visible. It must take account of risks, asymmetries, and possible irreversibility. The greater the possible injury and the lower its reversibility, the less neutrality may simply be assumed.

This connects to the fourth stage. Irreversible traces alter ethical weighting. An action that can easily be corrected requires a different measure from one that permanently destroys life, trust, or ecological conditions. Entropy is not a moral criterion; irreversibility can nevertheless increase the urgency of moral caution.

10. Logic and Ethics: Analogy and Difference

10.1 The Analogy

Logic and ethics form instances through differences and thresholds. Both are instituted orders. Both determine permissible transitions. Logic asks which conclusion may follow from which premises. Ethics asks which action should or should not follow from which situation. Both turn an open manifold into an ordered path.

Both have a character of exclusion. Logic rejects certain inferences as invalid. Ethics rejects certain actions as impermissible. Both can become dogmatic when they hide their thresholds and present themselves as mere imprints of the thing. Both can become arbitrary when they lose the resistance of happening.

10.2 The Difference

The analogy must not become an equation. Logical validity concerns the preservation of distinctions and inferential relations. Ethical validity concerns claims, injuries, and responsibilities. A logically correct inference can be used in an ethically reprehensible way. A morally respectable intention can be poorly justified logically.

Logic organizes what follows from something. Ethics evaluates which consequence ought to be intended, permitted, or prevented. Logic can represent a chain of action precisely without determining its goodness. Ethics needs logical coherence, but exceeds it through normative reference to those affected and to possible worlds.

10.3 The Shared Field: Continuability

Despite this difference, logic and ethics meet in the question of continuability. Logic protects the continuability of thinking: distinctions should not collapse arbitrarily. Ethics protects the continuability of a shared world: actions should not destroy the conditions under which others can appear as instances and respond.

> *Logic preserves difference so that thinking can go on. Ethics preserves others so that world can go on together.*

11. Power, Responsibility, and Correction

11.1 Whoever Forms Instances Exercises Power

The formation of instances is not innocent. Whoever determines what counts as a case determines which rules grip. Diagnoses, legal concepts, statistical categories, identity markers, and moral

attributions open possibilities of help, but can also fix and exclude. Zeug co-forms the object of its use.

This power cannot be avoided by dispensing with categories. Non-attention, too, is a decision about thresholds. Responsibility therefore belongs not only to whoever pronounces a judgment, but also to whoever determines what appears as relevant to judgment at all.

11.2 Corrigibility as a Mark of Quality

Good Zeug is corrigible. Logical and ethical orders must be able to take up their own borderline cases. They need procedures by which new experiences, paradoxes, perspectives of those affected, and unexpected consequences are allowed to alter the measure. An order that treats every refutation as merely a deviation of the object is not strong, but immunized.

Corrigibility does not mean constant arbitrariness. A measure must be stable enough to give orientation and open enough to learn from happening. This tension is not a defect, but an expression of double anchoring.

11.3 Responsibility in the Use of Zeug

Because logic and ethics are Zeug, it is not enough to apply their rules correctly. One must also ask why this Zeug was chosen, which differences it foregrounds, which it obscures, and which consequences its use generates. Responsibility begins where Verstand no longer hides behind the apparent neutrality of its instruments.

The dethroning of Verstand thereby acquires a new meaning. Verstand is not disempowered, but moved from the position of invisible legislator into that of a responsible user of Zeug. It may set measures, but it may not pretend merely to have read them off from a finished world.

12. A Fifth Systematic Formulation

12.1 Twelve Principles

First Principle: Condition of Adhesion

Knowledge presupposes differences that can be preserved beyond the instant, recognized again, and connected with one another.

Second Principle: Formation of Instances

A happening becomes determinate for a knowing instance by articulating courses under rules as cases, events, and transitions.

Third Principle: Instituted Logic

Logical rules are contributions of Verstand. They do not lie on things as a finished order of signs, but determine which distinctions and inferences count.

Fourth Principle: Threshold Character

Every formation of instances contains thresholds. These are neither pure properties of things nor free inventions, but instituted boundaries under conditions of resistance.

Fifth Principle: Logic as Measure

Logic measures the connectability of paths of thought. It determines which transitions preserve distinctions and which allow them to collapse.

Sixth Principle: Paradoxical Correction

Paradoxes can act as barbs showing where a previous measure fails and a new order of thinking becomes necessary.

Seventh Principle: Instituted Ethics

Good, evil, and neutral are normative instances. They are formed through ethical measures and do not lie in things as visible properties.

Eighth Principle: The Resistance of Suffering

The institution of ethical measures is not arbitrary. Vulnerability, suffering, freedom, dependence, and irreversible consequences limit their appropriateness.

Ninth Principle: Attention

Ethical knowledge begins by making relevant differences visible and adhering. Making invisible is itself a form of normative order.

Tenth Principle: Continuability

Logic protects the continuability of thinking; ethics protects the continuability of a shared world.

Eleventh Principle: The Power of Zeug

Whoever forms instances and thresholds exercises power. The use of logical and ethical categories therefore demands responsibility.

Twelfth Principle: Double Anchoring

Logic and ethics are anchored in Verstand as instituted orders and in happening as resistance, proof, and correction.

12.2 Working Definitions

> *Logic is the instituted and corrigible Zeug of Verstand through which differences are ordered into instances and transitions into valid or invalid inferences.*
>
> *Ethics is the instituted and corrigible Zeug of Verstand through which differences in acting and suffering are ordered into claims, responsibilities, and evaluations as good, evil, or neutral.*

Both definitions contain the same reservation: instituted does not mean arbitrary. The measure does not come ready-made from the thing, but it must answer to the thing, to happening, and to those affected. It carries only as long as this relation of response is preserved.

12.3 The Shared Model

The shared model can be represented as a sequence: attention foregrounds a difference. Memory or trace allows it to adhere. Logic forms an instance from it and orders possible transitions. Ethics examines which of these transitions ought to be continued. Action inscribes the chosen order back into happening. The consequences form new differences against which the measure can be corrected.

Zeug character is thereby not an external commentary on the world. It is itself a moment of happening. The instance that distinguishes alters, through its distinction, the conditions of further courses. Knowledge and responsibility are therefore not two separate storeys. They belong to the same circuit of access to world.

13. Objections and Limits

13.1 Objection: Without Objective Logic Everything Becomes Arbitrary

The objection points to a real danger. If institutedness is equated with arbitrariness, all validity disintegrates. The answer lies in double anchoring. Logics can be compared in consistency, expressive power, domain of application, and proof in practice. They are instituted, but not freely without consequence. Happening and task offer resistance.

13.2 Objection: If the Good Does Not Lie in the Thing, There Is No Moral Truth

This conclusion is not necessary either. Relational properties can be true without being substantial components of a thing. That an action injures someone depends on relations, circumstances, and consequences; nevertheless the injury can be real. Ethical truth would then be truth about relational structures of happening, not the discovery of a moral substance.

13.3 Objection: The Formation of Instances First Constructs Injustice

The category injustice is formed; suffering, humiliation, or loss of freedom are not thereby first caused. Without a suitable category, however, they can remain invisible. Ethics does not produce every injury, but makes it articulable as a claim and a question of responsibility.

13.4 Objection: The Concept of Happening Becomes Too Encompassing

If everything is called happening, the concept threatens to lose its discriminating force. The answer lies not in a final definition, but in the formation of instances itself. Happening here does not denote any arbitrary something, but the articulated enactment in which differences arise, adhere, are ordered, and are continued. States, things, and rules are stabilizations within this enactment.

13.5 Limit of the Analogy between Logic and Ethics

Logic and ethics share structures of distinction, threshold formation, and continuation. Yet ethical claims cannot be derived from logical forms alone. A difference remains between validity and

goodness. This difference must be preserved so that ethics does not become mere calculation and logic does not become concealed morality.

Transition to the Sixth Stage: From Instances to Subjects

The fifth stage has shown how logic and ethics do not merely find differences, but allow them to adhere as cases, validities, and claims. It is not yet clear, however, who distinguishes, judges, promises, is injured, and responds in these enactments. The subject has so far been presupposed everywhere: as bearer of the Zeug of Verstand, as addressee of ethical claims, and as instance of responsibility. Precisely for this reason it may no longer remain unquestioned in the background.

The next stage directs the Zeug perspective toward I, You, and We. It asks whether the self is neither fixed substance nor mere illusion, but a real and alterable form of bundling and continuing happening. At the same time it will have to examine whether the You precedes the I, how a We can carry without swallowing the individual, and whether death truly leads into the utmost solitude or instead makes visible a deeper connectedness with humanity.

> *Once measures and instances have become visible, thinking must return to those who, through them, find themselves and one another.*

Sixth Stage

The Zeug of Subjects

I, You, and We in Happening

Of the Narrated Self, Wonder at the Other, and Death as Opening Out

Preliminary Note: After the Instances, the Subjects

The preceding stages understood Verstand and its contributions as Zeug. Space, time, substance, and causality were released from their apparent self-evidence; action, equilibrium, information, entropy, logic, and ethics appeared as ways in which happening is articulated, held fast, and continued. With the sixth stage, a contribution now comes into view that has been carried along everywhere but not examined in its own right: the subject itself.

If Verstand is Zeug, the I cannot remain unquestioned as the owner of this Zeug. Who is this I that orders, remembers, decides, and assumes responsibility? Is it a fixed ontological entity that remains unchanged through all alterations? Or is it a mere illusion, a linguistic shadow without reality of its own? Both answers fall short. The I is neither an immutable core nor nothing. It is a way of bundling, addressing, remembering, and continuing happening. It is Zeug.

The same applies to the You and the We. The You is not merely an object among objects. It is the addressability of a counterpart, the interruption of my self-sufficiency, and at the same time one of the earliest conditions of my life. The We, in turn, is neither the mere sum of finished individuals nor a collective substance hovering above them. It is an enactment of shared dependence, language, memory, and responsibility.

Here too, the term Zeug does not mean disparagement. Zeug is real by being used, carrying, and disclosing a world. Precisely because I, You, and We need not be ultimate substances, they are not unreal. Their reality lies in enactment: in remembering, answering, promising, caring, injuring, forgiving, and dying.

> *The subject is not the fixed bearer of happening. It is a way in which happening gathers, addresses, and continues itself together.*

1. The I between Illusion and Substance

1.1 Two Inadequate Extremes

Talk of the self often moves between two extremes. In the first, the self counts as a fixed identity: an inner core that remains the same from childhood to death and possesses changing properties. Memories, roles, convictions, and bodily states may change; behind them an identical bearer is supposed to persist. In the second extreme, the self is declared a mere illusion: a deception arising because language and memory assert a context where in truth there are only changing states.

The first position overestimates persistence. It turns useful and often necessary recognition into an immutable being. The second underestimates the achievement. That something arises through contribution, narrative, and repetition does not make it unreal. A melody, too, is not an object behind the notes; yet it is not an illusion. It consists in a particular connection and continuability of its moments.

Accordingly, the I can be understood as a form of a course. It is not hidden behind its enactments, but occurs in them. It is the way in which experiences, memories, expectations, and responsibilities are held together under a first person. This coherence is real, but not substantial in the sense of an immutable core.

1.2 Heidegger's Dasein and Restraint toward the Self

It is instructive that Heidegger speaks of Dasein and does not elevate the concept of the self into a final ontological substance. Dasein denotes no soul as an occurrent thing. It denotes a mode of being: being-in-the-world, being-ahead-of-itself, being-with, and care. Where the self is spoken of, it appears not as isolated possession, but as a way of relating to possibilities.

This conceptual restraint can be made fruitful for the thought of Zeug. A finished self does not first exist and subsequently use modes of access to world. Rather, selfhood forms in enactments of relating. The I is not first there and then enters into relations. It finds itself already speaking, addressed, cared for, remembered, and expected.

The I is not abolished thereby. It is released from the position of an ultimate ground. Its place is not beneath or behind happening, but within happening.

2. The Narrated Child and the Strangeness of One's Own Past

2.1 The Child I Am Said to Have Been

For most people, their own self in early childhood is accessible only in fragments. A few images may remain: a staircase, a smell, a face, a patch of light in a room. Most of it is narrated. Parents, siblings, and other witnesses report what one was like, what one said, what one feared, and what one laughed at. The earlier I thus reaches the present I largely like a person handed down in testimony.

In this respect, some narratives about one's own childhood do not differ fundamentally from narratives about great-great-grandparents one never knew. The difference is not that the one person would be immediate and the other merely mediated. One's own childhood-I, too, is largely mediated. The difference lies in the special rule of connection: the narrative about this child is attributed to me. Its name, body, consequences, and relations are carried as the prehistory of my present.

This attribution is a powerful Zeug. It creates biographical continuity without presupposing immediate memory. It allows responsibility, gratitude, injury, and development to be organized across long periods of time. Yet it must not be confused with proof of an immutable essential core.

2.2 Memory as Re-Creation, Not Archive

Memories of youth and early adulthood are likewise not unchanged objects in an inner storehouse. Some seem clear, others scarcely more graspable than dreams dreamed long ago. Often what remains is not the event itself but a later narrative about it. One remembers that one has remembered. Images are supplemented, affects shifted, connections retrospectively smoothed out.

This does not make memory worthless. It reveals its character as enactment. Remembering is a present activity in which what is past is grasped anew under present conditions. The past is not freely invented, for traces, documents, other people, and bodily reactions offer resistance. But neither is it simply retrieved. It is produced as the past of a present I.

The self is therefore not the archive of its memories. It is also the respective ordering, omission, and recombination of these memories. Its continuity is selective, fragmentary, and corrigible.

2.3 Biography as Zeug

A biography is not a neutral record. It is a way of grasping. It posits beginnings, highlights turning points, connects decisions with consequences, and fashions a narratable path from a multitude of happenings. Without this achievement, personal responsibility would hardly be thinkable. No one could keep a promise over a longer period if the later I bore no connection at all to the earlier one.

Yet biography can become an enclosure. What was once narrated as a character trait, calling, guilt, or conviction can occupy every new possibility. The Zeug that enables continuation can prevent continuation. The story of an origin then becomes the prescription of a future.

Biographical fidelity therefore need not mean preserving every earlier self-description. It can also mean taking the history seriously enough for its correction to remain possible.

3. Yesterday's I and the New Day

3.1 'Why Should I Care about My Chatter from Yesterday?'

The proverbial remark that yesterday's chatter need not bind us today can serve as an excuse. It can devalue responsibility and destroy reliability. Yet it also contains a justified provocation. Why should an earlier statement rule the present merely because I once uttered it? Why should the temporal origin of a conviction grant it an inalienable right?

Yesterday's I is at once close to me and strange. It created conditions under which I live today. Its promises, errors, and decisions cannot simply be erased. But its reasons must be allowed to be examined anew. Personal continuity is not the duty to repeat. It is the responsibility to answer again, in the present, for what has been inherited.

The Zeug of identity must therefore combine two opposing achievements: it must let consequences adhere and enable a new beginning. If it only holds fast, identity becomes a prison. If it dissolves everything, it becomes flight.

3.2 The First Day

To live each day as if it were the first does not mean waking without a history. The first day is not a condition of complete amnesia. It is an attitude toward what is coming: the new day need not merely execute the old self-description.

A first day allows something to encounter us that does not yet fit the existing categories. It allows us to change an opinion, lay down a role, conduct a relationship differently, or cease defending an old certainty. The new I is not thereby created from nothing. It arises from a reordering of the inherited whole of Zeug.

Novelty is not loss of identity. It is the capacity of the Zeug of the self to loosen its own grips.

3.3 Conviction and Openness

Deep convictions carry weight because they endure beyond the moment. Without such bonds, life would disintegrate into mere reaction. But the depth of a conviction does not prove its truth. Errors too can be deeply rooted; harmful self-images too can feel like certainties.

Openness to a new I therefore does not require permanent arbitrariness. It requires a double fidelity: fidelity to the carrying capacity of what has proven itself, and fidelity to the resistance of what the old conviction can no longer carry. The self remains responsible precisely by being able to change.

A living I does not say: This is how I was, therefore I must remain so. It says: This is how I have become; now I must answer anew.

4. The You: There Is Someone and Not No One

4.1 The Second Wonder

The classical metaphysical question wonders that there is something at all rather than nothing. Another, perhaps still more primordial wonder would be: there is someone and not no one. What encounters me is not merely a form, a movement, or a sound, but a counterpart. It looks back, answers, withdraws, suffers, and can mean me.

This wonder cannot be translated completely into the ascertainment of an object. A You is not merely a something with additional properties. It changes the structure of the field. Where a You appears, there are claim, vulnerability, misunderstanding, trust, and response. The You is not a content within my world; it is an interruption of that world's mere mine-ness.

Even more than the question of the being of things, the You leads to the boundary of isolated Verstand. For I can describe the You, but I cannot produce its presence from my description.

4.2 The Null Hypothesis of the You

Despite this immediacy, a radical question remains possible: whence comes the certainty that there is someone there and not merely a happening that feels like someone? Everything that encounters me does so in perception, language, behavior, and effect. Could the You be a particularly stable interpretation, a hypothesis that Verstand brings to complex happening?

A strict ultimate justification of another consciousness seems unattainable. I can see expressions of pain, hear answers, experience surprises, and encounter the resistance of other people's decisions. But I cannot experience from the Other's perspective that the Other experiences. The null hypothesis 'There is no You' cannot be conclusively refuted like a simple hypothesis in natural science.

Yet it does not follow that the You is assumed arbitrarily. Happening offers massive resistance to its reduction to mere projection. Others surprise me, contradict me, withdraw from my expectations, and carry me when I myself can no longer carry. The You is a contribution under the strongest conditions of resistance.

The certainty of the You is therefore neither demonstrative certainty nor mere belief. It is a primordial practice of responding. I relate to the Other as to someone before I form a theory about what is inside them.

4.3 The You as Lifelong Zeug

The You belongs among the fundamental forms of Zeug in our lives. It makes care, language, learning, love, conflict, and reconciliation possible. It articulates happening into address and response. It lets actions appear not merely as movements, but as attention, rejection, help, or injury.

Like every Zeug, the You too can be narrowed. People can be reduced to roles, used as means, or enclosed in fixed images. Then the address remains external while the counterpart disappears as a real You. The ethical task is not to do without images, but to preserve their provisional character.

The You remains Zeug until death, because even there it continues to organize relation where response no longer seems possible: in farewell, care, remembering, and speaking to someone who has died.

5. Cogitamus, Ergo Sumus

5.1 The Grammatical-Number Error of the Cogito

The proposition cogito ergo sum gains its force from radical reduction. Even if everything is doubted, a thinking one seems to remain in the enactment of doubting. Yet this grammatical singularization conceals an earlier dependency. No human being could arrive at such doubt as an isolated I. On the day of birth, one would die if no one fed, warmed, carried, and answered one's sounds.

The Cogito presupposes a language that was not invented by the individual infant. It presupposes distinctions, signs, and practices that arose in a shared life. Even the loneliest doubt speaks with inherited words. The singular is therefore not false, but derivative.

Before the cogito stands a cogitamus; before the sum, a sumus. Not because a collective subject would have to replace the individual, but because every first person emerges from relations it did not itself establish.

5.2 The Other Precedes the Self

The Other does not necessarily precede the self chronologically as an already finished person. The Other precedes it as a condition. The child is addressed before it can say 'I'. It is held before it can hold itself. It is received into a name, a language, and a world of expectation before it affirms or rejects them.

The self therefore does not first form itself and then seek community. It arises in a field of responses. The first-person singular is a late linguistic achievement within a happening that is already shared.

This priority of the Other does not deprive the I of independence. Independence is itself an acquired form of relation. It consists not in severing every dependency, but in the capacity to respond within dependencies, set boundaries, and assume responsibility.

5.3 Dependence without Disempowerment

The thesis of primordial dependence can be misused. Communities can derive duties of obedience from it and subordinate the individual to the collective. Yet from the fact that the I is made possible through Others it does not follow that Others may dispose of it.

Precisely because the You is life-grounding, it must be respected as You and not as the material of a community. The We that carries the individual must not swallow them. A viable We enables difference, contradiction, and exit.

Cogitamus ergo sumus therefore does not mean: the collective thinks, therefore the individual does not count. It means: thinking and being are, from the beginning, embedded in shared enactments.

6. The We as Enactment

6.1 Neither Sum nor Supra-Subject

The We is easily understood in two inadequate ways. Either it is regarded as the mere sum of individual I's that already exist independently and subsequently join together. Or it becomes a supra-subject to which a unity and will of its own are ascribed and into which individuals are expected to fit.

Understood as Zeug, the We is neither mere addition nor substance. It is coordination. It arises where actions, memories, rules, and expectations are related to one another. A We can exist for minutes when several people carry an injured person together. It can endure for generations when language, institutions, and narratives are continued.

Its reality lies in shared continuability. A We exists wherever differences are connected in such a way that a common next step becomes possible.

6.2 The Grammar of We

The word we can include and exclude. It can express care or conceal domination. Whoever says 'we' draws a boundary: these belong, those do not. The Zeug perspective therefore asks of every We: Who is speaking? Who is included? Who was not asked? Who bears the consequences?

A responsible We must not make its institution invisible. It must disclose the commonality on which it rests and how that commonality can be corrected. A familial We, a political We, a religious We, and a We of humanity have different ranges. They must not be collapsed into one another as if their claims were identical.

The strongest We is not necessarily the most closed. A viable We is one that need not abolish the strangeness of its members.

6.3 Humanity as an Open We

Humanity is not an immediately experienced circle of personal acquaintance. Nevertheless it forms a real horizon of shared vulnerability, mortality, and dependence. People who will never know of one another share conditions, consequences, and possibilities. Technical, ecological, and political effects exceed every manageable community.

The We of humanity is therefore not a feeling that would have to be constantly present. It is an ethical and historical Zeug by means of which distant relations and consequences across generations are made to adhere. Its weakness lies in its abstractness; its necessity in the fact that the consequences of our actions have long since become global and future-directed.

An open We does not claim that everyone is the same. It holds fast to the fact that difference does not abolish shared affectedness.

7. Solitude and Being-with

7.1 The Experience of Solitude

Solitude is a real experience. It can strike a person even when others are physically present. It consists not merely in the number of people in a room, but in the breakdown of addressability, resonance, and shared world. Precisely for this reason it must not be cancelled by the abstract assertion that we are always being-with.

Yet the experience of solitude proves no ontological isolation. Rather, it shows how deeply Dasein is oriented toward relation. Solitude hurts because an expected connection is missing. It is the disturbance of a We-Zeug, not proof that such a Zeug never existed.

The Zeug perspective takes solitude seriously without declaring it the ultimate truth of Dasein.

7.2 Against the Absolutization of Isolated Dasein

The philosophical emphasis on existence as one's own can be an important correction. No one can completely take over my decision; no one can lead my life in my place. Yet from this non-substitutability it does not follow that my Dasein is originally isolated.

Even what is most one's own is linguistically, bodily, and historically intertwined with Others. My anxiety carries images I have learned; my hope uses words that were given to me; even my withdrawal responds to relations. Individuation is a mode of being-with, not its abolition.

Solitude is therefore no final ontological chamber. It is one possible form within a prior and continuing nexus.

8. Death as Zeug

8.1 Death and the Ultimate Attribution

Death initially seems to be the end of every Zeug. Where use is no longer possible, readiness-to-hand ends. Yet for the living and the dying, death remains a powerful contribution. It articulates

time, makes finitude adhere, changes priorities, and forms a boundary from which life appears as singular.

Death is not merely a future event. It is a way of ordering the present. It brings farewell, omission, urgency, and sufficiency into view. As Zeug it can narrow life when the whole of life is placed under fear of the end. But it can also open life when it loosens the possessive character of the self.

Death is not an object that the I possesses. It is the ultimate boundary at which the grammar of possession fails.

8.2 Do We Die Alone?

The claim that every person dies alone gains its plausibility from non-substitutability. No one can take over the biological and experienced enactment of my dying in my place. This singularity cannot be denied. But the inference to absolute isolation is a contribution of Verstand.

We do not die without Others. Others died before us and left behind the world in which we die. Others die at the same time, often unseen. Others will die after us and take up or lose our traces. People care for the dying, hold hands, tell stories, keep watch, remember, and mourn. Even an outwardly solitary death stands within biological, linguistic, and historical nexuses.

The lonely death arises when non-substitutability is confused with absence of relation. The one does not follow from the other.

8.3 Others Die with Us

The sentence that others die with us does not mean that they suffer the same death at the same time. It designates a deeper shared affectedness. In every death a shared relation to world dies: particular forms of address, memories, possibilities, and responses end. Those who remain are changed. A part of their own world goes with the person who dies.

At the same time, every dying person carries the dead with them. Language, gestures, genes, narratives, and habits are condensed presences of those who have died. In dying, therefore, it is not a wholly autonomous possession that ends. A knot in the fabric comes undone while the fabric changes and continues.

Perhaps in dying we are more deeply connected with humanity than in the most intense life. For in life, possession, achievement, and role can conceal the common condition. In dying, what no one transcends and yet no one has brought forth alone comes into view.

8.4 Death as Opening Out

If the self is not a fixed ontological substance, its end need not be thought as the fall of a closed unit into nothingness. It can be understood as an opening out. The expression asserts no knowledge of an afterlife. It describes a shift of perspective: what has gathered as an I does not fall out of every nexus. Its bodily matter, effects, traces, and relations pass into other happening.

Opening out is not the continued existence of the same person in transformed form. Nor is it a trivialization of loss. Death ends addressability, possibilities, and a unique course. Precisely therein lies grief. Yet ending and isolation are not the same.

We do not necessarily die into nothingness, abandonment, and closure. These images are possible tools of Verstand, but not the only permissible ones. Death can equally be thought as a transition from the condensed I-form into more encompassing nexuses that have always already carried the I.

Opening out is not a comforting assertion about what comes afterward. It is a modesty of thought before the end.

9. Responsibility without a Fixed Essential Core

9.1 Objection: Without an Identical Self There Is No Responsibility

If the I is understood as Zeug, an objection immediately arises: if today's I is not ontologically identical with yesterday's, why should it answer for yesterday's actions? The answer lies in the structure of continuation. Responsibility requires no immutable core. It requires sufficiently strong relations of connection among action, memory, consequences, and present capacity to respond.

Institutions too can bear responsibility even though their members change. A melody remains recognizable even though no note endures. Likewise, a person can answer for earlier actions because their consequences adhere in the person's present form of life and because the person is addressed as the continuation of this path.

The Zeug thesis therefore does not weaken responsibility. It merely prevents responsibility from being metaphysically hardened. To answer for something does not mean being identical in every respect with the earlier I. It means not rejecting the consequences as those of a complete stranger.

9.2 Forgiveness as a Reordering of Identity

Forgiveness would be impossible if identity meant rigid sameness alone. The guilty person would then remain forever fixed to the deed. Forgiveness, by contrast, presupposes that the past adheres and yet does not determine the only future.

It does not erase what happened. It reorders its continuation. The I that became guilty can be addressed as the same and yet become different. It is precisely the mobile continuity of the self that makes conversion thinkable.

Self-forgiveness too is not absolution by a sovereign I. It is work on the Zeug of one's own narrative: neither denial nor eternal imprisonment.

9.3 Promise and Openness

A promise binds a future I that does not yet exist. It is an astonishing achievement of the Zeug of the subject. The present person projects a continuation and allows Others to rely on it. Without a certain stability of the I, trust and shared planning would be impossible.

Yet no promise can completely anticipate all future conditions. Fidelity therefore requires not mechanical repetition but responsible interpretation. The future I must take up the promise anew in an altered situation, fulfill it, renegotiate it, or, in the extreme case, break it with justification.

Reliability and openness are not opposites. They are the two sides of an identity that remains Zeug.

10. A Sixth Systematic Formulation

10.1 Twelve Principles

First principle: non-substantiality. The I is not an immutable core behind its enactments.

Second principle: non-illusion. The absence of substantiality does not make selfhood unreal; its reality lies in bundling, addressability, and continuation.

Third principle: narrative mediation. A large part of one's own earlier self is accessible only through narratives, traces, and attributions.

Fourth principle: remembering present. Memory is not an unchanged archive but a present, resistance-bound re-grasping of what is past.

Fifth principle: open continuity. Identity must let consequences adhere and yet enable a new beginning.

Sixth principle: priority of the You. The self arises in care, address, language, and response; the Other precedes its developed self-relation.

Seventh principle: practical certainty. The You cannot be ultimately proven, but is grounded as a practice of response under strong conditions of resistance.

Eighth principle: primordial plural. Before the cogito stands the cogitamus, before the sum the sumus.

Ninth principle: We as coordination. The We is neither a sum of finished individuals nor a supra-subject, but an enactment of shared continuability.

Tenth principle: non-substitutability without isolation. No one can take over my death; it does not follow that I die without relation.

Eleventh principle: death as Zeug. Death articulates life and can be understood as the boundary of the possessive character of the I.

Twelfth principle: opening out. The end of the I-form need not be thought as an entry into absolute absence of relation, but as an opening out into nexuses that have always already carried the I.

10.2 Working Definitions

> *The I is the Zeug formed and continued in enactment through which experiences, memories, possibilities, and responsibilities are bundled under a first person.*
>
> *The You is the Zeug of addressability through which what encounters us appears as someone and not merely as something, and opens response, claim, and relation.*
>
> *The We is the corrigible Zeug of shared continuability through which different I's and You's coordinate actions, memories, rules, and consequences with one another.*
>
> *Death is the boundary-Zeug through which finitude adheres and the possessive character of the I recedes before the question of its opening out.*

10.3 The Shared Model

The shared model does not begin with the isolated subject. Happening encounters body, care, language, and address. Within this, an I forms that bundles experiences. This I encounters Others as You and is itself addressed as You. From repeated responses arise forms of We that continue a shared world. Death dissolves an individual course without severing it from all relations and effects.

I, You, and We are therefore not three separate substances. They are different cuts through a happening of relation. The I marks the first person of bundling, the You the second person of addressability, the We the shared continuation. None of these forms can completely replace the others.

The grammar of persons is itself a whole of Zeug of life.

11. Objections and Limits

11.1 Objection: The Concept of Zeug Devalues the Person

The objection rests on the assumption that only a substantial entity can possess dignity. Yet dignity need not depend on immutability. It is precisely the vulnerable, relational, and becoming person who requires protection. Zeug character does not mean interchangeability. The unique course of a human being can be unrepeatable without requiring a metaphysical core.

11.2 Objection: The You Is Merely Projected

To understand the You as a contribution does not mean that I produce the Other. The contribution consists in a way of access. It encounters resistance, response, and withdrawal. A projection that could at every moment be completely controlled by me would precisely not be a You.

11.3 Objection: The We Endangers Freedom

This danger is real. Every We draws boundaries and can produce exclusion, conformity, and violence. It must therefore remain corrigible. A responsible We recognizes that it rests on the independence of its members and must not abolish it.

11.4 Objection: Opening Out Is Covert Religious Consolation

The concept of opening out must not be presented as knowledge of personal survival. It designates first of all an immanent fact: the matter, effects, memories, and consequences of a life do not disappear at the same instant into absolute absence of relation. Beyond that, the claim remains open. It refuses both certainty of nothingness and certainty of an afterlife.

11.5 Limit: The Perspective of the Dying Person

No general philosophy can fully anticipate the concrete experience of dying. Anxiety, pain, confusion, consolation, or composure cannot be derived from concepts. The thesis of dying-with must therefore never be played off against a person's felt solitude. It is an ontological and relational correction, not a revocation of experience.

Conclusion: The Subject Does Not Carry Alone

The sixth stage has not abolished the subject. It has released it from its apparent self-evidence. The I is not a pure illusion, but neither is it a fixed ontological entity. It is a Zeug of bundling, memory, and responsibility. It holds together a life path without turning it into an immutable essence.

The You emerges as an even more primordial challenge. There is someone and not no one. This certainty cannot be converted into an ultimate proof, yet it carries life from the beginning. The Other cares, speaks, contradicts, and responds before the I can ground itself. The singular of the Cogito stands within a prior plural.

The We designates shared continuability, but must be hardened neither into mere addition nor into collective substance. It is an open and corrigible structure in which different people act, remember, and bear responsibility together.

At death this whole of Zeug reaches its ultimate boundary. The non-substitutability of dying remains, but it proves no absolute isolation. Others die before us, with us, and after us. Others are changed by our death. We carry the dead in language, body, and memory. The lonely death is not the only possible description; it is a contribution of Verstand that makes one side visible and can conceal the more encompassing nexus.

We do not necessarily die into a nothingness of relation. The I ends as unique addressability and possibility. Yet what it was passes into traces, matter, effects, and other lives. Death can therefore, without consolation and without ontological excess, be thought as opening out.

> *We do not live from an isolated I. We become at the You, carry a We, and in dying return into nexuses from which we have never completely emerged.*

Outlook toward a Seventh Stage: Religiosity, Spirituality, and God as Zeug

The question of I, You, We, and death leads to another boundary. Human beings have always interpreted experiences of being carried, addressability, and opening out in religious and spiritual ways. Rituals, prayers, images, sacred texts, silence, and names of God articulate experiences that elude a purely objectifying description. They too could be understood as Zeug: not as arbitrary inventions, but neither without qualification as immediate images of a reality beyond.

A seventh stage would therefore have to ask whether religiosity and spirituality are forms of Zeug through which finitude, gratitude, lament, hope, and connectedness become traversable. The Zeug perspective would neither confirm nor unmask too quickly. It would ask about the in-order-to, resistance, carrying capacity, and dangers of religious contributions.

The boldest question would finally be whether even God may be thought as Zeug. This would not mean that God is merely a human tool. It would initially ask whether all human speech of God has the form of Zeug: used, handed down, corrigible, hidden in enactment, and bound to experiences of resistance and excess. Perhaps the name of God would then not be possession of an ultimate entity, but a grip that must open itself in gripping.

Such a stage would have to be especially vigilant. The concept of Zeug must not make God available; conversely, talk of God must not conceal its own Zeug character. Between reduction and absolutization there would be a narrow path: religiosity as a responsible contribution to a happening that it neither produces nor exhausts.

> *Perhaps God is not the final thing behind all things, but the name for the fact that no Zeug ever takes final possession of happening*.

Seventh Stage

Religiosity, Spirituality, and God as Zeug

Prayer, Hope, Doubt, and Transcendence in Happening

From the Religious Enactments of Dasein to the Cautious Question of God

Preliminary Note: The Boldest Extension of the Thought of Zeug

The preceding stages have unfolded the Zeug character of Verstand, its categories, its instances, and finally the subject-forms I, You, and We. Zeug never meant merely an external device. Rather, Zeug was a mode of enactment: something that carries in use, discloses world, orders relations, and is effective precisely in its inconspicuousness. The seventh stage carries this thought to a boundary where particular caution is required. It asks whether religiosity and spirituality too possess Zeug character—and whether even God may be spoken of as Zeug.

The first question seems comparatively accessible. Human beings pray, hope, lament, give thanks, doubt, keep silence, celebrate, and mark transitions. They use words, gestures, spaces, times, images, and narratives in order to relate to what exceeds them. Such enactments have an in-order-to. They make finitude traversable, open gratitude, give lament a form, and keep hope open where disposal is no longer possible. In this sense, religiosity and spirituality can be understood as a whole of Zeug of Dasein.

The second question is more difficult. If God is called Zeug, confusion immediately threatens. A tool is ordinarily at our disposal; God, however, if the word carries at all, would be precisely unavailable. A tool is used for a purpose; God must not be reduced to a means of reassurance, explanation of the world, or moral discipline. The expression God as Zeug can therefore be tested only in a strictly limited and self-critical sense. It must not claim to have determined God's essence. Rather, it asks how God encounters us in the human enactment of world: not as a static thing behind things, not as pure idea, and not as mere projection, but in experiences of resonance, resistance, claim, withdrawal, and unavailable opening.

This stage is therefore not a doctrine of God in the classical sense. It proves neither God's existence nor God's nonexistence. It examines the grammar and phenomenology of religious enactments and asks whether more occurs in them than self-reassurance. Its guiding attitude is neither believing self-certification nor skeptical prejudgment, but examining openness.

> *Religiosity is Zeug where it opens Dasein to unavailability. It becomes an enclosure where it takes possession of the unavailable.*

1. Religiosity and Spirituality as Modes of Enactment

1.1 No Finished Objects

Religiosity and spirituality are not things a person possesses like a book or an ability. They show themselves in enactments. Someone prays, pauses, lights a candle, reads a handed-down text, keeps silence, sings, doubts, seeks community, or withdraws. Only in such movements does the religious take shape. It need not be bound to a closed doctrine, but neither is it merely a private mood.

The concept of spirituality can be broader than that of religiosity. It can designate forms of attention, connectedness, and self-transcendence that belong to no particular tradition. Religiosity points more strongly toward inherited symbols, rites, narratives, and communities. The two concepts overlap without being identical. Their shared question is: How does finite Dasein relate to what it does not completely bring forth, explain, or master?

As forms of Zeug they possess a character of enactment. Their meaning lies not only in propositions about a reality beyond, but in a way of listening, speaking, hoping, and acting. A religion that only asserts but no longer opens any enactment hardens into an inventory of petrified statements. A spirituality that remains mere feeling can lose itself in its own interiority. Zeug carries by being used, tested, and bound to resistance.

1.2 The Religious Whole of Zeug

Religious enactment seldom works with a single tool. Prayer refers to address; address to a You or an open presence; hope to the future; lament to suffered injustice; thanks to reception; ritual to repetition; community to shared memory. From this arises a whole of Zeug in which language, body, space, time, music, silence, and narrative interlock.

A church interior, a path, a table, a grave, a candle, or a particular hour can become Zeug within this nexus. Their religious significance does not lie merely in their material constitution. It arises from the references into which they are placed. At the same time, these things are not arbitrary. Material, place, history, and use offer resistance. Not every sign can replace every other without loss.

The Zeug thesis thereby makes religious practice neither unreal nor arbitrary. Rather, it allows its concrete efficacy to be described without immediately deriving a complete ontology from that efficacy.

2. The Transcendentality of Dasein

2.1 Dasein Is Beyond Itself

Dasein is not first a closed container that occasionally crosses a boundary. From the beginning it is beyond itself. It is with things, with people, with tasks, with memories and possibilities. It understands itself from what it moves toward, what it recoils from, and what it binds itself to. This structure can be called the transcendentality of Dasein: not an escape into a second world, but an original being-beyond-itself.

Transcendence, then, does not begin only with religion. Perception is already directed toward something, speech is addressed to someone or something, action projects a possibility not yet realized. The I never finds itself only within itself. It is exposed, addressed, and cast ahead. It lives in relations it has not completely instituted itself.

Religiosity radicalizes this basic structure. It directs being-beyond-itself not merely toward individual objects and goals, but toward the horizon within which objects, goals, and relations gain meaning at all. It asks not only: What should I do? It asks: Within what does this doing carry? Not only: What will happen? But: For what may I hope?

2.2 Transcendentality without a Proof of Transcendence

No proof of a transcendent reality follows from the transcendentality of Dasein. That human beings ask beyond themselves does not prove that every object of such questioning exists independently. Hunger does not prove food in every individual case; longing does not prove its fulfillment. The structure of questioning must not be confused with the existence of what is asked about.

Yet the question must no more be devalued because it cannot be proven. Being-beyond-itself is not an accidental addition. It belongs to the way Dasein is at all. Religious language can therefore take its point of departure from a real structure of life even if its interpretations remain open and contested. It does not invent finitude, dependence, and unavailability. It gives them a particular form.

The decisive test is therefore not only whether religious statements can be proven. We must also examine whether they disclose happening adequately, whether they permit resistance, whether they foster responsibility, and whether they keep open or conceal the excess of what encounters us.

2.3 Transcending as Dasein's Ownmost Zeug

A certain Zeug of transcending is intrinsic to Dasein. It can ask, hope, doubt, and give thanks. These enactments are culturally shaped, yet they do not begin only with theological education. A child already calls before it can explain exactly to whom the call is directed. A suffering person hopes before possessing a theory of hope. Doubt begins where familiar interpretations no longer carry.

Praying, hoping, and doubting are therefore not merely interchangeable opinions. They are possible basic grips of Dasein in dealing with unavailability. Prayer speaks; hope opens the future; doubt loosens an overly fixed grasp. They can become explicitly religious, but already before every systematization they carry within themselves a transcendental movement.

Dasein does not possess these grips sovereignly. Often they become conspicuous only in crisis. Then what had previously gone along in concealment shows itself: life was never carried completely by its own securing.

3. Crisis Piety and the Obvious In-Order-To

3.1 Why Petitionary Prayer Arises More Easily

In crisis, a petitionary prayer often arises more easily than a prayer of praise. The reason is obvious: the in-order-to of petition is immediately visible. One asks for healing, protection, rescue, clarity, support, or a change in the situation. Where possibilities of action diminish, address remains. Prayer becomes a final grip when other grips fail.

This structure explains the power of crisis piety. Petitionary prayer bundles anxiety, names distress, and prevents the person from disintegrating into mere speechlessness. It can create community, gather attention, and open a space in which powerlessness may be spoken. Its in-order-to is not hidden: something is to become different, or at least remain bearable.

Precisely this clarity carries a danger. God can become an emergency instrument, the final lever deployed when all others have failed. Prayer is then judged by its success. If the petition is fulfilled, God seems effective; if it remains unfulfilled, God seems absent or the one praying seems guilty. Such a logic of use narrows prayer and God alike.

3.2 Petitionary Prayer between Instrument and Relation

Petitionary prayer inevitably has an instrumental aspect. Whoever asks wants something. This directedness toward an end need not be denied. It belongs to the honesty of distress. It becomes problematic only when the reality addressed is exhausted by the desired effect. A You that is merely a means to the fulfillment of a request is not truly acknowledged as You.

Religious petition can therefore deepen by withdrawing its own disposition. It does not only say: bring this about. It also says: see this distress; hold me within it; do not let me harden; show what is to be done. The in-order-to does not disappear, but it changes. The desire for control can become a request for presence, strength, and truthfulness.

This transformation must not be romanticized. Someone who suffers does not have to arrive immediately at higher insight. Lament and concrete petition retain their right. A cautious concept of Zeug demands precisely that religious speech not overwrite the reality of suffering through pious reinterpretation.

3.3 Crisis as Disclosure and Distortion

As with other Zeug, disturbance makes religious enactments visible. In crisis it becomes apparent what a person actually trusts, which images of God carry them and which oppress them. This can be a disclosure of one's own religious whole of Zeug. But it can equally lead to distortions. Anxiety narrows, seeks quick causes and unambiguous agents of responsibility. It can fix God as a punishing instance or magical helper.

Crisis piety should therefore neither be dismissed as inauthentic nor idealized as especially pure piety. It is an intensified situation of use. In it, what religious Zeug accomplishes becomes visible, but also where it breaks. Precisely for that reason it is philosophically instructive.

4. Praise, Thanks, and the Less Visible In-Order-To

4.1 Why Praise Is More Difficult

A prayer of praise often comes less easily than a petitionary prayer. In petition the purpose is graspable; in praise the in-order-to seems to be missing. Why praise if nothing is to be achieved? Why give thanks if the thanks changes nothing in happening? Precisely this poverty of purpose makes praise and thanks a special test of the thought of Zeug.

Praise need not be flattery of a powerful instance. It can be a way of not immediately translating what encounters us into possession, utility, or explanation. In praise, Dasein pauses and allows something to count as good, beautiful, or wondrous without having to derive an advantage from it. The in-order-to of praise then lies, paradoxically, in the interruption of the ordinary in-order-to.

Thanks is similarly ambiguous. It can be understood as exchange: I give thanks so that the gift may be repeated. Yet genuine thanks releases the gift from the character of possession. It acknowledges that something was received that was not fully owed. Gratitude thereby becomes an exercise in non-sovereignty.

4.2 Praise as Opening the Nexus of References

In praise, the world does not become purposeless, but its structure of purposes opens. A tree is not only timber, shade, or carbon storage. A person is not only helper, competitor, or bearer of a function. Praise does not suspend instrumental relations; it prevents them from exhausting what encounters us.

Religious praise can relate this opening to the whole. It need not say that everything is good. In the midst of a damaged world it can articulate the experience that goodness, beauty, and connectedness nevertheless happen. No proof of God lies in this. But there is a particular form of resonance that cannot be completely translated into utility.

A prayer of praise is therefore no less Zeug-like because its purpose is less determinate. It is Zeug for releasing, perceiving, and not consuming.

4.3 The Limit of Praise

Praise can become cynical when it drowns out suffering. A religious practice that, in the face of violence, illness, or loss, calls only for assent turns praise into a Zeug of discipline. It protects an image of God at the expense of those affected. Lament therefore belongs within the religious whole of Zeug. Praise without lament becomes blind; lament without any opening can remain enclosed in the wound.

The appropriate tension does not consist in a quick reconciliation. Religious Zeug must withstand contradiction: gratitude and pain, trust and disappointment, praise and accusation can be real at the same time.

5. Prayer as Zeug of Address

5.1 To Pray Means to Address Happening

Prayer is first of all a spoken or silent address. It does not necessarily presuppose that the person praying already knows exactly who or what is being addressed. Often address arises before doctrine. A cry can turn toward God even when the image of God is uncertain. Silence can stand before a presence that cannot be conceptually fixed.

Prayer is thereby neither mere self-talk nor already a proven dialogue. It moves within an open structure. The person praying contributes the form of address; whether and how an answer occurs remains unavailable. Answer cannot simply be equated with a desired result occurring. It can be experienced as resistance, a change in attention, a surprising possibility, or even continuing silence.

Prayer makes happening addressable without thereby completely personifying it. It is a grip that opens itself at the same time. Its hand does not only grasp; it also receives.

5.2 Self-Talk and More-than-Self-Talk

Psychologically, prayer can be described as self-talk. Words order feelings, calm, focus, and make decisions possible. This description is plausible and captures real effects. Yet it does not necessarily exhaust the enactment. For prayer can confront the one praying with something that does not fit their intention. It can interrupt, shame, console, or call them to an action they precisely wanted to avoid.

This more-than-self-talk proves no external divine voice. It designates first of all an experience of otherness within one's own enactment. The person praying experiences that the address does not remain completely under their control. Religious interpretation may call this resistance answer, spirit, or presence. Skeptical interpretation can speak of unconscious processes, cultural formation, or inner polyphony.

The Zeug thesis does not decide prematurely among these interpretations. It holds fast to the fact that in prayer something actually happens that need be reduced neither to mere exchange of information nor to arbitrary invention.

5.3 Silence as Zeug of Prayer

Not every prayer needs words. Silence can be a particularly demanding form of address. It refrains from immediately occupying the encounter with one's own sentences. Yet silence too is not categoryless. It is practiced, framed, and permeated by expectations.

Religious silence can open; but it can also conceal emptiness or suppress conflicts. Its carrying capacity shows itself in whether it deepens perception and strengthens the capacity to respond. A silence that no longer hears the cry of the Other is not responsible Zeug of transcendence.

6. Hope as Zeug of the Not-Yet

6.1 Hope Is Not Prediction

Hope differs from expectation. Expectation reckons with a probable course; hope keeps open a possibility that does not follow from the available data. It is therefore not knowledge of the future. Its religious proximity lies precisely in its non-availability.

As Zeug, hope orders the not-yet. It prevents the present from becoming the complete measure of the possible. It can enable people to act even though success is not guaranteed. It is therefore neither mere consolation nor certain prospect. It is a way of inhabiting the future without possessing it.

Religious hope directs this openness toward a sustaining meaning, toward justice, reconciliation, or a being-gathered of what has been lost. Such hope exceeds empirical prediction. It must therefore not be presented as prediction. Its truth shows itself differently: in the way it enables or prevents life, resistance, and solidarity.

6.2 Hope and Consolatory Deferral

Hope becomes a narrowing Zeug when it is played off against present action. Whoever refers sufferers to a later afterlife in order not to have to change existing injustice uses religion as a means of pacification and domination. A hope that devalues the now betrays its own claim.

Viable hope, by contrast, opens action. It allows the possible not to be reduced to the probable. It gives courage without guaranteeing success. Its in-order-to is not escape, but continuability under conditions that offer no certainty.

6.3 Hope as Shared Practice

Hope is rarely purely individual. People hope for one another, carry the hope of others, and are held by inherited images of hope. The religious We can thereby keep open a future that the individual I can no longer project. Yet here too appropriation threatens. Shared hope must not forbid the individual their anxiety and doubt.

The We of hope carries only when it preserves the voice of the You.

7. Doubt as Religious Zeug

7.1 Doubt Is Not the Opposite of Faith

Doubt is often treated as a defect of religiosity. Yet from the Zeug perspective it can possess a necessary function. It makes visible where a religious tool has hardened, where a statement claims more than it can carry, or where an image of God breaks against the resistance of happening.

Doubt loosens the grip. It protects against equating projection with revelation, wish with promise, and institutional power with divine claim. In this sense it belongs not outside but within the religious whole of Zeug.

Yet doubt too is not sovereign. It can become an attitude that immunizes itself against every touch. Then it no longer serves examination but self-securing. Viable doubt remains addressable. It does not know, but it does not close the question.

7.2 Doubt about One's Own Interpretation

Religious modesty begins not only with doubt about God, but with doubt about one's own speech of God. Every conception of God is linguistically, historically, and biographically mediated. It bears traces of parental images, authorities, fears, hopes, and cultural symbols. This mediation does not necessarily make it false, but it makes self-criticism indispensable.

The sentence God wills can become especially dangerous when the speaker no longer distinguishes between their own judgment and divine claim. The Zeug character of religious speech requires every such statement to remain visible as a human grip. It must be tested against the You, against suffering, against justice, and against the possibility of correction.

7.3 Doubt as Fidelity to Unavailability

Paradoxically, doubt can be a form of fidelity. It refuses to confuse God with a finished image. It keeps open the possibility that what is called God could be greater or other than the inherited formulation. Such doubt need not destroy relation. It can prevent relation from becoming possession.

Faith without doubt threatens to become an enclosure; doubt without any readiness for resonance threatens to become closed armor.

8. Resistance and Resonance in Religious Happening

8.1 Against Pure Projection

The projection thesis carries weight. Human beings project wishes, fears, parental images, and social orders onto God. The history and psychology of religion offer many examples. A God can be formed in the image of a ruler, judge, father, protector, or bookkeeper. The Zeug perspective must take these projections seriously.

Yet from the presence of projection it does not follow that religious experience is completely projection. Every perception too contains contributions of the perceiver, without what is perceived thereby being merely invented. What matters is whether resistance is encountered. If a person is only confirmed in their wishes, projection is likely. If they are interrupted, corrected, overwhelmed, or called to a responsibility they did not choose, more occurs than simple self-mirroring—even if the interpretation of this more remains open.

Experience of God can therefore be described as a happening of resonance and resistance. Resonance does not mean mere harmony. A string resonates because it is struck. Religious resonance can console, but also unsettle. It can contain nearness and withdrawal at once.

8.2 Resistance Is Not Proof

Resistance too does not prove God. The unconscious, other people, texts, natural events, and social conflicts can likewise interrupt the self. An experience does not become divine merely because it is surprising or intense. Critique of religion remains necessary precisely because intensity is easily confused with truth.

Yet the absence of proof does not devalue the happening. Philosophically, it can be held that religious experience does not consist only of freely disposable representations. It is embedded in encounters, traditions, bodily states, communities, and events that exceed the interpreter. The word God is one possible, non-coercive interpretation of this exceeding.

8.3 Criteria of Discernment

If not every resonance may be called divine, religious use of Zeug requires criteria. Such criteria cannot create ultimate certainty, but they can limit abuse. An interpretation should not make the Other a means, deny suffering, suspend responsibility, sanctify violence, or forbid correction. It should open life without mastering it.

These criteria do not prove that an experience comes from God. They test whether the interpretation is compatible with the Zeug perspective developed so far. Where God serves to legitimize dehumanization, religious Zeug is broken, regardless of the subjective intensity of the experience.

9. May God Be Thought as Zeug?

9.1 The Danger of Availability

The expression God as Zeug is provocative because Zeug ordinarily stands within an in-order-to. A hammer serves for hammering, a concept for ordering, a prayer perhaps for petition. If God is placed in the same series, God seems to become a means to human purposes. God would then not be God, but an especially powerful instrument.

This danger is not merely conceptual. Religion has often used God as a means: to stabilize domination, explain gaps, soothe anxiety, or secure moral judgments. The thought of Zeug must not gloss over such use. It must make it visible precisely as use.

For this reason God cannot be Zeug in the same sense as an object or a category. If the expression carries at all, then only in a shifted meaning: God would not be a Zeug possessed by Dasein, but a nexus of Zeug within which Dasein experiences itself as non-sovereign, addressed, and exceeded.

9.2 God Not as a Static Entity

A static God is easily thought like a highest thing: immutably present, located outside happening, and intervening from there. Such an image can be metaphysically powerful, yet it stands in tension with the Zeug perspective. It turns God into an entity under the sign of maximal greatness and at the same time removes God from enactment.

The cautious alternative is not simply to identify God with happening. That too would be a hasty definition. Rather, God could be thought as unavailability encountered in happening: as claim, enabling, interruption, sustaining excess, or resonance that does not dissolve into an occurrent thing.

God would then be no static object behind the world, but a name within a relation to happening. This name does not necessarily designate a merely human invention. It can articulate the experience that Dasein is reached by something it does not completely institute. Yet the name remains human language and is therefore fallible.

9.3 God as Zeug and Counter-Zeug

Perhaps the expression can be further specified: God would be Zeug only insofar as the relation to God discloses world, carries hope, relativizes the I, and lets the You become unavailable. At the same time God would be counter-Zeug, because every genuine speech of God would have to thwart the attempt to use God completely.

God as Zeug would then be the Zeug that withdraws from possession. It carries not by being available, but by limiting availability. It does not serve an arbitrary in-order-to; it calls purposes themselves into question. Where human beings harness God for their ends, God thus understood would encounter them precisely as resistance to this harnessing.

This formulation remains paradoxical. It is not meant to simulate a reality through conceptual elegance. It marks a boundary: speech of God can carry within the enactment of world without reducing God to the function of this carrying.

9.4 God as Event of Address

Another possibility is to think God not first as an object but as an event of address. God would not simply be the You alongside other You's. God would be the opening in which address becomes infinitely serious: the claim that no human being is merely something; the experience that guilt need not have the last word; the hope that what is lost does not become meaningless.

This way of speaking too is no ontology from a secure height. It describes how the name of God functions and resists in particular enactments. Whether God Godself encounters us therein or a particularly deep human possibility remains beyond final philosophical decision. Religiosity lives precisely in this irreducible tension.

10. Experience of God in Happening

10.1 Not Behind, but in Happening

Experience of God need not be understood as a look behind the world. It can occur within happening itself: in an encounter that changes a person; in unexpected forgiveness; in being appalled by injustice; in a beauty that cannot be consumed; in a silence that does not remain empty; in a solidarity whose emergence was not calculated.

The word in is as important here as it is cautious. It does not say that every happening is divine or that God is exhausted by the process of the world. It says only that religious experience requires no categorial back room. It can arise in concrete enactments without being reduced to their merely empirical description.

God would not be the additional cause alongside other causes. The name of God would articulate another dimension of encounter: not what mechanically produces effects, but what addresses, carries, demands, or opens.

10.2 Resonance without Fusion

Resonance must not be misunderstood as fusion. Dasein does not necessarily dissolve into unity in religious experience. Often distance remains. Precisely non-identity can carry the enactment: I am addressed, but do not dispose of the voice; I experience nearness, but cannot hold it fast; I hope, but do not know.

Such resonance is doubly anchored. It contains the contributions of Dasein—language, expectation, memory, tradition—and at the same time encounters a resistance or excess that changes these contributions. In this respect it resembles the book's general model of knowledge. Yet because of the particular reach of religious interpretation, the danger of overextension is greater.

10.3 Withdrawal as a Possible Experience of God

Experience of God need not appear only as fullness or nearness. Withdrawal, silence, and the failure of an image of God can also be religiously significant. When a static, punishing, or overly available God breaks apart, this need not end every question of God. Perhaps that question begins only where the previous tools no longer grip.

This negative experience must not be sanctified too quickly. Absence can simply be absence; despair needs accompaniment, not metaphysical elevation. Nevertheless withdrawal shows that God does not simply function as an occurrent possession in religious enactment. The relation to God can become recognizable precisely through its non-availability.

11. Religion as Help, Danger, and Responsibility

11.1 Carrying Zeug

Religion can carry. It provides words for lament, preserves images of hope, connects the living and the dead, creates rituals of farewell, and opens community. It can remind human beings that they do not merely achieve, possess, and function. In crises it can preserve a language when other languages fail.

These achievements are real even when metaphysical questions remain open. Zeug character allows them to be acknowledged without immediately deriving truth from their usefulness. A consoling representation is not true merely because it consoles; but neither is it false merely because it consoles.

11.2 Dangerous Zeug

Religion can also become dangerous. It can intensify fear, compel obedience, forbid doubt, and sanctify violence. Precisely because it touches ultimate horizons, its use of Zeug can overpower other tools. A religious proposition can withdraw from every correction by appealing to divine authority.

The Zeug perspective therefore calls for a particular dethroning of religious certainty. It is not God who is dethroned, but the human claim to possess God without doubt. Institution, scripture, tradition, and experience remain mediations. Their dignity does not depend on infallibility, but on remaining open to truth, correction, and the You.

11.3 Responsibility in Religious Use

Religious practice must allow itself to be tested by its effects without being reduced to effects. It must ask: What images of humanity does it produce? To whom does it give a voice? Whom does it silence? Does it promote responsibility or flight? Does it open hope or merely defer consolation? Does it keep the question of God open or close God within a system?

The responsibility is double. On the one hand, religion must not deny its own tools. On the other, critique must not too quickly reduce religious experience to deception. Both sides must respect the resistance of happening.

12. A Seventh Systematic Formulation

12.1 Fourteen Principles

First principle: character of enactment. Religiosity and spirituality are originally accessible in prayer, lament, hope, thanks, silence, and shared practice.

Second principle: transcendental openness. Dasein is from the beginning beyond itself and not enclosed within an isolated self.

Third principle: no proof of transcendence. The openness of Dasein does not immediately entail the existence of a transcendent counterpart.

Fourth principle: intrinsic transcending. Praying, hoping, and doubting are fundamental grips of Dasein in dealing with unavailability.

Fifth principle: conspicuousness in crisis. In crisis religious Zeug becomes visible because other grips fail or reveal their limit.

Sixth principle: petition and in-order-to. Petitionary prayer possesses an obvious aim, but must not reduce God to the function of wish fulfillment.

Seventh principle: praise open to purpose. Praise and thanks interrupt the pure relation of utility and allow what encounters us to count without drowning out suffering.

Eighth principle: address. Prayer makes happening addressable without being able to secure dialogue in the form of proof.

Ninth principle: hope as open not-yet. Hope is not prediction but a way of making the future inhabitable without a claim of possession.

Tenth principle: doubt as corrective Zeug. Doubt protects religious speech from hardening and must itself remain open to resonance.

Eleventh principle: projection and resistance. Religious experience contains human contributions, but through resistance and interruption can experience more than mere self-mirroring.

Twelfth principle: God is not available. God cannot be Zeug in the ordinary sense of a deployable means.

Thirteenth principle: God as counter-Zeug. Speech of God carries only where it thwarts the claim to possess God and subjects purposes themselves to examination.

Fourteenth principle: experience of God in happening. The name of God can interpret resonance, claim, withdrawal, and sustaining excess in happening without deriving a static ontology from them.

12.2 Working Definitions

> *Religiosity is the historically and communally formed whole of Zeug through which finite Dasein makes unavailability traversable in prayer, lament, hope, thanks, ritual, and responsibility.*
>
> *Spirituality is the more broadly conceived mode of enactment in which Dasein practices and interprets its self-transcendence, connectedness, and openness to an unavailable excess.*
>
> *Prayer is the Zeug of address through which distress, thanks, lament, hope, and silence are related to a possible counterpart or an open presence without making response available.*
>
> *God as Zeug does not designate a usable divine means, but the cautious interpretation that in religious enactment an unavailable presence, a claim, or a sustaining excess is encountered that both carries and limits human purposes and images of God.*

12.3 The Shared Model

Dasein is beyond itself. It encounters world, You, finitude, and future not from a closed inwardness but in enactments of addressability. Where these enactments reach their limits, prayer, hope, doubt, lament, thanks, and silence arise as religious or spiritual grips. They order unavailability without abolishing it.

These grips are human contributions. They are linguistically, culturally, and biographically mediated. Yet they encounter happening that confirms, limits, interrupts, or changes them. Religious experience arises in this double movement. It is neither pure depiction of a ready-made transcendence nor sovereign invention of an isolated consciousness.

The name of God enters within this movement as the most far-reaching interpretation. It can name the event of address, resonance, claim, withdrawal, and hope. But it must not be identified with the interpretation itself. The name is Zeug; God, insofar as God is encountered, cannot be enclosed within the name.

13. Objections and Limits

13.1 Objection: Zeug Character Reduces Religion to Function

The objection is serious. Whoever asks only what religion is for could replace truth with utility. But the concept of Zeug does not mean mere function. It describes enactment, reference, resistance, and boundary. That prayer carries does not prove God; that it has a function no more disproves God. The question of truth remains open and is neither settled nor abolished by functional analysis.

13.2 Objection: God as Zeug Is Conceptually Inappropriate

This objection touches the most sensitive point. God as Zeug can be misunderstood because God is precisely not supposed to be available. The expression is therefore admissible only as a boundary concept. It designates not God's essence, but the way speech of God and relation to God become effective in Dasein. Where this distinction is lost, the expression should be abandoned.

13.3 Objection: Resistance and Resonance Can Be Explained Psychologically

That is correct: many religious experiences can be described psychologically, socially, or neurologically. Such an explanation need not deprive them of all meaning. It shows conditions of experience. Whether these conditions completely exhaust what is experienced is a further question. The seventh stage posits no gap into which God would have to be inserted. It only keeps open that conditionedness and meaning are not the same.

13.4 Objection: The Language Remains Too Indeterminate

This restraint can create the impression that in the end only a vague openness is being called God. The danger is real. The name of God must therefore be tested against concrete enactments and traditions. At the same time, greater determinacy would not automatically be truer. In a question that concerns unavailability in principle, conceptual modesty may be more appropriate to the matter than apparent precision.

13.5 Limit: The Perspectives of Believers and Nonbelievers

A philosophical description cannot completely replace the inner perspective of lived faith. For believers, God may be more than interpretation: presence, You, origin, and future. For nonbelievers, the same language may appear as human symbol formation. The Zeug perspective creates no neutral place above both perspectives. It can only make their enactments, claims, and limits comparable.

The open question remains whether the resistance and resonance of happening demand, permit, or merely fail to exclude a divine interpretation. This stage does not decide the question. Its task is to pose it in such a way that neither faith nor critique is replaced by prejudgment.

Conclusion: The Zeug That Withdraws

The seventh stage has examined religiosity and spirituality as forms of Zeug of transcending Dasein. Dasein is not closed within itself. It asks, hopes, doubts, gives thanks, laments, and keeps silence because it finds itself in a happening that it has neither completely instituted nor completely mastered. These enactments are not intrinsic to it as finished dogmatics, but as possibilities of address and self-transcendence.

Crisis piety reveals the Zeug character especially clearly. Petitionary prayer arises more easily because its in-order-to is obvious. It is meant to bring about rescue, healing, or support. Yet precisely here God threatens to be narrowed into an emergency instrument. Praise and thanks possess a less visible in-order-to. They interrupt utilization and allow what encounters us to count without immediately using it. Lament protects both from false harmony.

Prayer is neither mere self-talk nor a provable dialogue. It is an open address in which Dasein gives form to distress and hope and at the same time becomes receptive to a possible answer. Doubt belongs within this enactment. It guards against confusing one's own image of God with God.

The boldest question was whether God Godself may be called Zeug. The answer can only be cautious. God is no tool among others and no means to human purposes. If the expression carries at all, then as a paradoxical boundary concept: God as the Zeug that withdraws from possession; as counter-Zeug against every religious availability; as a name for a resonance experienced in happening, a claim, a withdrawal, or a sustaining excess that need not be explained without remainder as human projection.

God is thereby neither proven nor declared a mere idea. The question of God remains embedded in happening. It occurs where Dasein is touched and interrupted, where hope arises without guarantee, where a You becomes unavailable, and where one's own measure is insufficient. Perhaps experience of God is not possession of a highest object, but the experience that happening contains more address than the I can produce from itself.

> *God would then not be the final tool in our hand. The name of God would be the Zeug at which the hand learns to open itself.*

Outlook: After Zeug

With the question of God, the thought of Zeug reaches its greatest tension. Everything examined so far could be described as a mode of enactment of Dasein. With God this description is not sufficient, insofar as God is to be more than a human form. A further stage would therefore have to ask whether the concept of Zeug itself reaches a boundary: Is there a happening that can no longer be described as our Zeug, but as our being-carried?

Perhaps the path from Zeug leads not to a final object but to a reversal. We do not only use Zeug in order to disclose world. We discover ourselves as carried, used, passed on, and placed in nexuses

that we do not possess. The question would then no longer be only what Zeug we have, but whose Zeug, or the Zeug of what, we are.

> *Perhaps the path of Zeug ends where Dasein no longer grips, but experiences itself as gripped.*

Interim Conclusion: Thinking in Happening

The seven stages have treated the Zeug character of Verstand not as a marginal note in epistemology, but as a possible starting point for a more encompassing philosophical path. Verstand encounters us not first as an enthroned instance imposing its laws on a finished world. It encounters us in enactment: as hand and way of grasping, as accompaniment of whole paths, as order of co-presence, as memory of traces, and as formation of logical and ethical instances.

With the sixth stage this path returned to what had been tacitly presupposed in all earlier investigations. I, You, and We too proved not to be rigid substances, but forms of Zeug in which happening is bundled, addressed, jointly carried, and continued. The I remains real without being an immutable core. The You encounters us as resistance to the mere mine-ness of the world. The We carries insofar as it does not swallow difference. Even death then appears not merely as end and individuation, but as the ultimate boundary at which Dasein can experience its historical and human connectedness.

The seventh stage has carried the thought of Zeug to its most sensitive boundary. Prayer, hope, lament, praise, thanks, doubt, and silence can be understood as modes of enactment of a Dasein that is from the beginning beyond itself. They possess an in-order-to without being exhausted by it. Petitionary prayer in particular shows how easily religiosity can become an emergency instrument; praise and thanks, by contrast, show an interruption of mere utilization. Religious enactments are human contributions, yet they can encounter resistance, resonance, claim, and withdrawal that cannot be treated without remainder as free inventions of the I.

This also changes the concept of category. Space, time, substance, causality, equilibrium, information, entropy, logic, ethics, subjectivity, and religious interpretation are ways of grasping, opening, and responding. Their Zeug character does not make them arbitrary. Every grip stands under conditions of resistance. It can carry or slip, make visible or conceal, open relation or exercise violence. Where God is spoken of as Zeug, this language reaches its paradoxical boundary: God cannot be taken into the hand as an available means. The name of God can at most be that Zeug at which the hand learns to open itself.

The approach of happening forms the continuous counterpoint to the absolutization of isolated states and fixed entities. Action belongs to the path; equilibrium is continuing counter-happening; information is disclosed and forgotten; logic and ethics let differences adhere; I, You, and We gather relation; religiosity responds to unavailability. In all these cases, what is real is not mere stock. It is articulated enactment that shows itself to our contributions and at the same time resists them.

The deepest yield of dethroning therefore lies not in weakening Verstand, the subject, or religious language, but in making them responsible. A Zeug can be examined, changed, supplemented, and limited in its range. A supposedly final ground, by contrast, easily conceals its presuppositions. The Zeug perspective keeps the tools visible without claiming thereby to have exhausted happening.

> *No final category brings thinking to a close. The responsible openness of its tools keeps it in happening—and perhaps precisely where the hand opens, another way of being-carried begins.*

This interim conclusion ends the first stream of thought, but not the movement of the book. Precisely the final gesture—the opening hand—directs attention toward that within which gripping, carrying, encountering, and being-carried take place at all: Zwischen. In the first part it appeared implicitly everywhere, in the in-order-to of Zeug, in the path of action, in the co-presence of possibilities, in the trace, in the formation of instances, and in the You. The second part makes this Zwischen explicitly its subject. It asks how far the analogy between the phenomenological nexus of references and the physical integral and path perspective carries—and where it must be limited.

PART TWO

The Integral of Zwischen

Zeug, Light, and the Present Held Within

Zwischen is not empty. It carries.

Preliminary Note: From Zeug to Zwischen

The first part has determined Verstand and its contributions as Zeug. Zeug does not encounter us first as an observed object, but in use, in the in-order-to, and within a nexus of references. It carries by withdrawing in enactment. Only when it breaks, is missing, or resists does it become explicitly visible.

This determination permits a further conjecture. Perhaps Zeug designates not merely something located within a Zwischen. Perhaps Zeug is a way in which a Zwischen first becomes articulated and traversable at all. Zwischen is not an empty distance between two already finished poles. It is not first the stretch between a closed subject and a finished object. Such an image would already presuppose what it is meant to explain: here a knowing human being, there a finished world, and between them a means of connection.

The nexus of Zeug begins earlier. The hand is hand in gripping. The hammer is hammer in hammering. The nail is nail in fastening. The wall is wall within dwelling. None of these moments possesses its full meaning in isolation. Enactment does not subsequently connect finished parts. Within it, the parts are determined as these parts.

Zeug is therefore not identical with Zwischen. It is an articulation of Zwischen. It makes transitions possible, keeps differences apart, and connects them in an in-order-to. It is anchored neither merely in the subject nor merely in the object, but in the regulated enactment of their relation.

The following investigation asks whether cautious analogies for this phenomenological structure can be found in physics. The action principle describes a course not only through individual states, but assigns a value of action to a complete path. Fermat's principle determines the path of light through a condition formulated over the entire path. The path-integral formulation of quantum mechanics constructs a transition amplitude from contributions of many possible paths.

These physical forms prove no ontology of Zwischen. Nor are they a mathematical translation of Heidegger. But they show with great precision that scientific lawfulness need not proceed exclusively from the isolated state. A local cut can receive its meaning from a complete course. Beginning, intermediate segments, and end can be moments of a condition of wholeness.

From here the question of time opens anew. If Zwischen is no empty stretch, perhaps the present is no dimensionless point either. The present could be that temporal form in which what-has-been as trace, what-is-to-come as possibility, and present enactment as effective articulation belong together.

> *The present would then be no standstill. It would be the integral of Zwischen.*

1. The Misguided Alternative: Subject or Object

1.1 Two Finished Poles

Modern epistemology often describes knowledge as a relation between a subject and an object. The subject perceives, thinks, and judges. The object stands opposite it and is to be known. Between them arises the question of how representations can reach the real.

This question is not meaningless. It becomes problematic, however, when it already presupposes subject and object as independent starting points. A bridge must then be built after the shores have first been conceptually separated.

1.2 Enactment Comes Earlier

In everyday dealing, neither an isolated subject nor a neutral object is encountered first. Someone hammering in a nail does not first perceive a body with certain properties in order subsequently to assign it a function. Hand, hammer, nail, wall, and undertaking belong to an enactment.

This does not mean that things disappear in enactment. The hammer possesses weight, hardness, and form. The nail offers resistance. The wall can crumble. Precisely this resistance prevents the in-order-to from being a free construction. Zwischen is therefore doubly anchored: in Dasein's articulating contribution and in the resistance of that with which it deals.

1.3 Zeug as Articulated Mediation

Zeug does not mediate like a neutral tube between two finished sides. It changes what becomes possible in the relation. Through the hammer, the wall appears as something to which things can be fastened, the nail as hammerable, and the hand as capable of striking. Zeug opens a world of transitions.

> *Zeug is an articulation of Zwischen that mostly recedes in enactment, through which differences are connected, transitions enabled, and resistances made manageable.*

2. Zwischen Is Not an Empty Space

2.1 Distance and Relation

A distance can be measured without the separated points being internally related to one another. Zwischen in the sense used here, by contrast, is relational. It does not consist merely of meters or seconds. It encompasses the way beginning and end, actor and acted-upon, possibility and enactment refer to one another.

2.2 Zwischen Carries Its Poles

The strong thesis is not that there are no things or subjects. Rather, it is this: subject and object can appear as distinguishable stabilizations within a more encompassing enactment of relation. In gripping, the hand is determined as an acting hand. The object is determined as graspable, heavy, smooth, or resistant. The two do not dissolve into one another. Their difference is articulated within their relation.

2.3 Difference Instead of Fusion

Zwischen must not become a mystical unity in which all differences disappear. A viable concept of Zwischen must explain precisely how differences are preserved within a relation. Zwischen connects not by making equal, but by relating differences to one another.

The second part thereby continues an insight of the first: knowledge is contribution under conditions of resistance. Zwischen too is not freely available. It has a form co-determined by the participating poles and limited by their resistance.

3. The Action Integral as a Model of the Whole of a Course

3.1 Action Belongs to the Path

In analytical mechanics, a value of action is assigned to a possible course q(t) between two boundary data:

$$S[q] = \int_{t1}^{t2} L(q(t), \dot{q}(t), t)\, dt$$

Action does not belong to an individual instant. It evaluates a complete path. Two paths can have the same boundary points and the same duration and yet have different actions. This was already, in the first part, the decisive reason for reading action not as a possession of a state but as a quantity of a course.

3.2 Stationarity

For the classical path, what holds in general is not a naïve principle of least action but a condition of stationarity. Under small variations of the path, the first-order change vanishes:

$$\delta S = 0$$

Depending on the problem, the stationary solution can correspond to a minimum, a maximum, or another stationary situation. Philosophically important is not a supposed economy drive of nature, but that the condition is formulated over the complete course.

3.3 No Integral of Being

It does not follow from this mathematical structure that the integral first produces reality or that all being can be mathematically integrated. The action integral is a physical model of certain dynamical systems. Its philosophical significance lies more modestly and precisely in showing a form of exact description in which connection does not first appear as a subsequent sum of finished states.

3.4 Local Equation and Global Form

Within their domain of validity, the action principle and the local equations of motion are connected with one another. The global path condition does not replace local physics. It orders the same lawfulness differently. The local perspective asks how the course continues at each point. The

integral perspective asks what condition the complete course fulfills. The two perspectives can be mathematically equivalent while philosophically accentuated in different ways.

4. Fermat's Light and the Riddle of the Complete Path

4.1 The Counterintuitive Question

Fermat's principle distinguishes the path of light by the fact that its optical travel time, or optical path length, is stationary with respect to small changes in the path. In the popular formulation one speaks of the path of shortest time; for the philosophical argument the more precise language of stationarity is preferable.

From this arises the pointed question: How does the light know at the beginning which complete path will, at the end, possess a stationary travel time? The question is anthropomorphic, but not foolish. It makes visible how difficult it is for stepwise causal thinking to grasp a condition formulated over an entire path.

4.2 No Knowledge on the Part of the Photon

Light calculates no paths and receives no message from the future. Propagation can be described through local wave equations and refraction conditions. Fermat's principle formulates the same lawfulness in a global form. The apparent foreknowledge arises when a condition of wholeness is translated into the image of a locally deciding particle.

4.3 Refraction as an Example

At the transition between media with different propagation speeds, the geometrically shortest path is generally not the temporally stationary one. Light changes direction. Locally this can be described by Snell's law of refraction; globally by stationary optical travel time. Precisely the equivalence of the two approaches is philosophically instructive: one and the same happening can be read as local continuation and as a consistent overall form.

$$n_1 \sin(\theta_1) = n_2 \sin(\theta_2)$$

4.4 Lawfulness of Wholeness

Fermat's principle therefore does not suggest a backward action of the goal upon the starting point. Rather, it shows that a lawfulness can determine the entire course without having to be narrated as a chain of individual commands. Beginning and end do not cause one another. Together they delimit the space of paths within which a stationary course can be determined.

> *Lawfulness of wholeness is not a backward-working cause. It is another organization of the same lawfulness.*

5. The Quantum of Action and the Phase Order of Paths

5.1 Action Is Not Accumulated Step by Step

Planck's quantum of action does not mean that the Lagrangian action of a path can grow only in packets of h or $\hbar$. Action can take continuous values. Nor must an integral formed over a duration rise or fall like a counter in fixed portions of action.

5.2 The Scale of Differences in Action

In the path-integral formulation, every possible path carries a complex phase determined by its action:

$$e^{is(q)/\hbar}$$

What matters, then, are differences in action between paths. Through $\hbar$ they are translated into phase differences:

$$\Delta\varphi = \Delta S / \hbar$$

If the action changes by h = 2π$\hbar$, the phase changes by one full revolution. Action itself is not thereby generally restricted to multiples of h; its significance for interference nevertheless has a fundamental scale.

5.3 The Quantum Does Not Fragment the Path

The philosophically decisive insight is therefore not that duration consists of smallest time pieces or action of smallest portions. Rather, the quantum of action orders the way path contributions integrated over a duration are related to one another. The continuous extension of the path and quantum phase order do not simply stand opposed.

> *The quantum does not necessarily fragment the path. It sets the scale at which differences in action between whole paths become phase-effective.*

6. From Fermat to Feynman: Continuity and Limit of the Analogy

6.1 A Developmental Line of the Path Perspective

There is a genuine line of physical development between Fermat's optics, the variational principles of classical mechanics, and Feynman's path integral. In all three cases, complete paths and variations of paths play a central role. Yet these are not three stages of the same ontology.

6.2 Three Different Statements

In Fermat, a classical light path is described by stationary optical travel time. In classical mechanics, the actual path fulfills a stationarity condition of action. In the path integral, formally many possible paths contribute to the transition amplitude. The third case is therefore not simply a stronger version of the first two, but has a specifically quantum-mechanical structure.

6.3 Path Integral and Transition Amplitude

Schematically, the transition amplitude between boundary data a and b can be represented as a sum or integral over paths:

$$K(b,a) = \int \mathcal{D}q \cdot e^{iS(q)/\hbar}$$

The formula is deliberately schematic here. Its mathematically exact definition depends on the system and on regularization procedures. For the philosophical consideration its structure is sufficient: not only a single classical path but a space of possible paths contributes to the amplitude.

6.4 Possibility Instead of a Many-Worlds Claim

The path-integral formalism alone does not decide what ontological reality belongs to each path. What is secure is their role in calculating the amplitude. Further interpretations remain interpretation-dependent. We therefore speak of a space of effective alternatives or of formal co-presence, not of a proven simultaneous reality of all classical paths.

7. The Rainbow as a Phenomenon of Zwischen

7.1 Neither Thing nor Imagination

A rainbow has no fixed location like a tree or a house. Whoever walks toward it does not reach it. Yet it is not an arbitrary projection. It can be observed, photographed, and physically explained.

Its appearance requires a particular constellation: light source, raindrops, refraction and internal reflection, spectral dispersion, as well as direction of observation and standpoint. None of these conditions by itself is already the rainbow. Only their lawful relation brings forth the appearance that becomes visible as a colored arc.

The rainbow is therefore especially well suited to a philosophy of Zwischen. It is neither simply out there as a finished object nor merely produced inside an observing subject. Its reality is relational without therefore being arbitrary. Zwischen here is no empty distance between world and eye, but a physically articulated relation in which an appearance becomes possible.

7.2 The Colors as Different Path Forms

The relation to Fermat's principle reaches still deeper in the rainbow. White light does not pass through the raindrop as a single path identical for all its spectral components. The refractive index of water depends on wavelength. Red, green, and blue light are therefore refracted to different degrees on entering the drop and later on leaving it.

For each wavelength, the optical path length can be expressed by an integral along the light path:

$$\mathcal{L}\lambda = \int n(\lambda, r)\, ds$$

The physically distinguished light path fulfills a stationarity condition. Because the refractive index n depends on wavelength λ, this condition differs slightly for the different colors. Red and blue therefore do not simply traverse the same geometric path in different colors; their respective optical path forms differ.

This is especially illuminating for the concept of Zwischen. Zwischen is not a neutral space through which an already fully determined light merely passes. Within the same drop it is articulated differently according to wavelength. The same material constellation opens different stationary optical paths.

The rainbow, however, does not arise from this dispersion alone. After the first refraction, the light is reflected within the drop and refracted again on leaving it. For a particular family of such paths, the total angle of deviation has an extremum. Neighboring rays therefore leave the drop within a narrow angular range. Light accumulates there, and the arc becomes visible. Because this extremum lies at a slightly different angle for each wavelength, the colors appear spatially fanned out.

The colored arc is the visible order of different wholes of optical paths.

Fermat's principle thereby gains particular vividness for the philosophy pursued here. The difference between the colors does not first appear as a subsequent property of an already finished path. Different wavelengths produce different stationary path forms in the same medium. Zwischen is not empty; it is structured, and its structure participates in what appearance becomes possible.

7.3 Objectivity without a Fixed Location of the Object

The rainbow thus shows two things at once. Already within the drop, the optical paths of the individual wavelengths differ; at the same time, the visible form of the arc depends on the place from which these paths come into view. Objectivity here therefore does not mean that an object would have to be present at a fixed location independently of every relation of observation.

Several observers do not numerically see the same rainbow, because each observing position incorporates different drops and different ray geometries into its line of sight. Yet the appearance is not subjective in the sense of being freely produced. The refractive indices, dispersion, possible ray paths, and characteristic deviation angles follow physical laws.

Precisely here lies an important form of double anchoring. The appearance requires a standpoint and is therefore not independent of the mode of access. At the same time, this access responds to a structure not instituted by the observer. If the observer shifts, the concrete relation of appearance shifts; the underlying optics, however, does not become a matter of their discretion.

The rainbow is therefore an example of objectivity without thing-like location. Its reality does not consist in lying at one place in space like an object. It consists in the repeatability and lawfulness of a relation.

7.4 Closing an Appearance

The eye produces neither dispersion nor the stationary optical paths. It does, however, close the relation in which light source, wavelength-dependent path forms, raindrops, and direction of observation become a particular colored appearance.

The word close must not be misunderstood causally here. The observer adds no missing physical link to nature. Rather, it designates the completeness of that relation under which a rainbow appears at all for a particular standpoint. Without light, no arc; without drops, no arc; without the fitting paths of light, no arc; without a suitable direction of observation, no visible arc.

The rainbow thereby offers a particularly vivid form of Zwischen. It is real without being present as an isolated thing. It depends on relations without thereby becoming arbitrary. It shows itself only from a particular perspective without thereby being reducible to a mere perspectival illusion.

For the Zeug perspective this structure is decisive. Access to the world need not be subsequently mediated between a finished subject and a finished object. Mediation itself can belong to that articulated reality within which subject and object first obtain their determinate positions. In the rainbow this insight becomes visible: light, drop, and gaze remain different, but the phenomenon lies in none of them alone.

Zwischen connects not by erasing differences. It connects by ordering them into an appearing whole.

8. The Present as Integral

8.1 The Present Is Not an Instant

The ordinary conception of time easily turns the present into a dimensionless now between a past that is no longer present and a future that is not yet present. Such a now, however, cannot carry an enactment. Every enactment possesses duration, aftereffect, memory, expectation, and inner articulation.

8.2 The Present That Holds Within

The integral present is not the sum of three temporal segments. It designates the mode of presence in which what-has-been is present as trace, habit, injury, or ability; what-is-to-come participates as possibility, tension, expectation, or openness; and the present enactment holds both moments within itself without being identical with them.

The present is not broad because it would have to last many seconds. It is dense because it carries its temporal references within itself. The concept thus connects with the duration held within developed in the first part, but shifts it from the physical description of paths into a phenomenological determination of time.

8.3 No Abolition of the Future

The integral present denies neither projection nor care nor future. It denies only that the present receives its meaning exclusively from being-ahead-of-itself. It is not the present that is a meager cut made from past and future. Rather, past and future appear as ways in which present happening remembers, expects, opens, and limits itself.

> *The present is not the point between no-longer and not-yet, but the enactment that holds both within itself.*

9. Heidegger and the Primacy of the Future

9.1 A Fair Reconstruction

Heidegger does not think future, having-been, and present as three successive pieces of time. They form the unity of ecstatic temporality. The future has a primacy because Dasein projects itself toward possibilities and, from this projection, retrieves itself into its having-been. The criticism must therefore not be that Heidegger simply forgot the present or confused it with a later calendar date.

9.2 The Remaining Objection

It can nevertheless be asked whether the primacy of projection determines the present too strongly from being-ahead-of-itself. If Dasein is understood primarily from its possibilities, the present enactment threatens to become a passage or place of execution for an anticipatory projection. It is precisely here that the reweighting of the integral present begins.

> *Dasein is not first the being that is ahead of itself, but the being in whose present enactment having-been and possibility are held together.*

9.3 Reweighting Instead of Refutation

The counterproposal does not seek to refute Heidegger's temporality. It takes up precisely its non-punctual character and its intertwining of the ecstases. The difference lies in weighting: Heidegger thinks authentic presence essentially from future and having-been. The integral present asks whether future and having-been can in turn be understood as dimensions presently effective in enactment.

10. The They and the Colonization of the Present

10.1 The Future as a Social Regime

The future can change from existential openness into social compulsion. Modern and late-modern forms of life often organize the present as preparation: education for later employment, work for later security, building for later dwelling, saving for later life, optimization for a future better version of the self. The present is not thereby abolished. It is functionalized.

10.2 The House-Builder as a Figure

The house-builder can become an exemplary figure. For years, they live toward a finished house. Every present step receives its meaning from the not-yet. Yet when the house is finished, the same mode of projection can seek a new goal. Dwelling is postponed once again. The figure is not a criticism of building; it shows a form of time in which the in-order-to loses its present serviceability and becomes permanent advance performance.

10.3 No Simple Diagnosis of an Epoch

An urban life that appears present-oriented can likewise be dominated by anxiety about the future, acceleration, and self-projection. Conversely, long-term planning can take place within a carried present. The decisive difference therefore does not run simply between modern and postmodern human beings, but between two ways of using time: the present as a mere means to a later, and the present as an integrating enactment that keeps the future open without being sacrificed to it.

11. Kairos, Care, and Trust

11.1 Kairos Is Not Timelessness

Kairos does not designate an exit from chronology. It is the fulfilled occasion in which an enactment does not merely measure its time but holds it within. The kairotic present can be short or long. What matters is not its metric duration, but the density of its significance and its openness to what occurs.

11.2 Trust Instead of Disposition

Trust does not mean that no danger exists and no precaution is needed. It means that Dasein need not completely anticipate and secure its future in order to be able to act in the present. A trusting Dasein still has projects, memories, and fears. But it is not completely organized by them.

11.3 Rereading Care

Heidegger's care must not be equated with everyday worry. It designates the structural whole of Dasein. Nevertheless, within this structure a concrete rule of precaution can arise: a life that treats every now as a lack to be remedied only by a later result. The counterconcept is therefore not carelessness, but trust.

> *Kairos-Dasein is not without a future. It is released from the sole rule of the precautionary future.*

12. A Systematic Formulation

12.1 Ten Principles

First principle: primacy of Zwischen. Subject and object are not the first units of access to world. They can appear as distinguishable poles within a more encompassing enactment of relation.

Second principle: articulation by Zeug. Zeug is a way in which Zwischen becomes articulated and traversable. Its meaning arises in the in-order-to and against the resistance of use.

Third principle: integrality. A connection can possess a determinacy of its own that is not exhausted by the mere addition of isolated states.

Fourth principle: plurality of representations. A local causal perspective and a global path perspective can articulate the same lawfulness differently. No representation may be prematurely equated with ontology itself.

Fifth principle: stationary wholeness. Fermat's principle and the action principle distinguish paths not through foreknowing goal selection, but through a stationary condition of the complete course.

Sixth principle: quantum phase order. The quantum of action does not necessarily fragment the path. It determines the scale on which differences in action alter the phase relation of possible path contributions.

Seventh principle: relational appearance. A phenomenon can be objective and lawful without possessing a fixed object-location independent of the observer. The rainbow is the vivid model.

Eighth principle: integral present. The present is not a dimensionless instant. It is the enactment in which having-been is carried along as trace and future as possibility.

Ninth principle: future without supremacy. Projection remains a moment of Dasein. It must not reduce the present completely to advance performance for a later.

Tenth principle: trust. A successful present keeps possibilities open without having to dispose of them completely. Trust designates this non-possessive openness.

12.2 Working Definitions

> *Zwischen designates the articulated relational space of an enactment in which differences are related to one another without losing their difference.*
>
> *Integral present designates the mode of presence in which having-been as trace and future as possibility are effective within current enactment.*

12.3 Limit of the Synthesis

The strongest temptation of this second part would be to fuse phenomenology and physics into a single doctrine. Precisely this must be avoided. The in-order-to of Zeug is not a Lagrangian function. The action integral is no mathematical proof of Zwischen. The rainbow is no philosophical argument in the form of a natural phenomenon. And the integral present is no new physical quantity of time.

The connection carries as a structural comparison. It shows that in different fields forms arise in which relations, paths, and wholes are not merely subsequent connections of finished points. Where this analogy encounters resistance, it must be limited. Precisely this limitation preserves the Zeug character even of the theory itself.

Conclusion of Part Two: Zwischen Carries

The investigation began with a seemingly small shift. Zeug was no longer to be understood merely as an object with a function. It appeared as an articulation of Zwischen in which hand, tool, resistance, and undertaking first obtain their respective places.

Physics could not prove this thesis. But it placed unexpectedly precise forms of thought beside it. The action integral belongs to the whole path. Fermat's principle formulates a condition of the entire light path. The path integral orders transitions through phase contributions of possible paths. In none of these cases does the local disappear. But the local receives its meaning within a more encompassing form.

The rainbow made this structure visible. It is neither an object one can walk toward nor a mere imagination. It appears when light, water, direction, and gaze enter into a particular relation. Its reality lies not in an isolated pole, but in the lawfulness of their coming together.

From there the path led to time. The present too is no isolated pole. It is no narrow cut between two absences. It carries what-has-been as trace and what-is-to-come as possibility. It is neither the end of the path nor merely its starting point. It is the way in which the path becomes wholly present each time without being complete.

The integral of Zwischen is therefore no new world formula. It is a Zeug of thinking. It reminds us that reality does not lie only where something can be ascertained and held fast. It also happens in transitions, mediations, resistances, and open enactments.

> *Zwischen is not empty. It carries. And perhaps the present is the name for this carrying.*

Overall Conclusion: From Zeug to Zwischen

The two parts of this book follow two streams of thought that touch without dissolving into one another. The first proceeded from the Zeug character of Verstand. It dethroned categories without disempowering them and asked about their use, their range, and their responsibility. The second turned toward the relational structure of this use itself and asked about Zwischen as articulated through Zeug.

In the first part, the hand was the guiding image: it grips without constantly looking at itself while gripping. In the second part it becomes visible that every grip spans a Zwischen. It connects without fusing the connected poles. Hand, object, and purpose are not first finished units that subsequently enter into relation; their respective meaning forms in the enactment of their relation.

The action perspective, Fermat's light path, and Feynman's path integral have not proven this thesis ontologically. They have, however, shown how precisely science itself can work with descriptions in

which the complete course plays an irreducible role. Here the Zeug perspective receives an important corrective: wholeness must not be called mysticism when it is mathematically determinable; and mathematics must not be called ontology merely because its structure is philosophically suggestive.

The present too gains its form from this double movement. It is neither the frozen now of a metaphysics of states nor the mere preliminary stage of something future. It is the enactment in which traces, possibilities, resistances, and actions come together as presently effective. The now is thereby not broadened like a measurable interval. It is deepened as connection.

Perhaps the whole path of the book can therefore be summarized in one final shift. At the beginning stood the question: with what does Verstand grip the world? At the end stands the question: within what does this gripping take place? The answer is no new object. It is a relation: Zwischen, which does not lie beside its poles but happens in their enactment.

> *Thinking possesses tools. But it does not live in them. It lives in Zwischen, which they open, order, and never wholly possess.*

Postscript

Ah, Yes—the Non-Simultaneity

An Addendum to the Integral of Zwischen

Ah, yes. *There is one more thing to add. Perhaps precisely because it is so familiar that one easily reads past it: the relativity of simultaneity.*

The preceding reflections have led from Zeug to Zwischen, from the isolated state to the path, and from the instant to the integral present. Again and again the conjecture has arisen that what is real need not first consist of fully determined individual points that are subsequently connected with one another. The action principle provided a mathematical perspective of wholeness; Fermat's principle showed in light that a complete path can be distinguished by a stationary condition; the rainbow made visible that an appearance can be relational and nevertheless lawful.

One might now object: all this consists of special perspectives. Perhaps, in the end, the world can nevertheless be decomposed into a sequence of objective states. At every instant it would then simply be fixed what is the case everywhere. The whole would be the sum of such complete world-states.

It is precisely here that special relativity inserts a remarkable barb.

1. The Lost World-Now

In the pre-relativistic picture it seems self-evident that there is a single now. What happens here now and what happens there now belong to the same present. Two spatially separated events are either simultaneous or they are not. Different observers may be mistaken; but behind their different perceptions, so the intuitive expectation runs, there would have to lie an objective simultaneity.

Special relativity deprives this expectation of its self-evidence. For spatially separated events, simultaneity depends on the state of motion of the frame of reference. Two events that are simultaneous in one inertial frame need not be simultaneous in another inertial frame moving relative to it. Neither inertial frame possesses the status of the actually correct, privileged standpoint on the world.

The reality of the events does not thereby fall apart. The observers do not disagree about whether the events occurred. What changes is their division of the whole of events into shared now-cuts. The same structure of events permits different, physically equivalent cuts into 'simultaneous' and 'not simultaneous'.

This is more than a technical correction to clock time. It touches a deeply rooted ontological habit: the idea that at every instant the world must possess one single, globally determined state. Relativity does not force us to abandon every concept of

state. But it shows that the global world-state 'now' is not an observer-independent framework of physics.

2. Different Cuts through the Same Whole of Events

Spacetime offers an almost ideal image for this. It can be understood as the totality of events. Observers moving relative to one another divide this totality differently into spatial slices of simultaneity. One draws the now-slice this way, another differently. The slices do not contradict one another because one observer measured badly. Their difference belongs to relativistic structure itself.

For the thought of Zwischen developed here, this is remarkable. The individual instant appears once again as a cut, not as bearer of the whole. It is a possible articulation within a more encompassing connection. What belongs to the same now for one observer can be distributed over different times for another. The events themselves remain; their temporal grouping into a global present is not absolute.

One might put it pointedly: relativity does not let the whole world fall into identical slabs of presence that are the same for every observer. Rather, it preserves a structure of events within which different temporal cuts are possible.

The expression 'integral present' thereby gains additional caution and, at the same time, additional strength. Integral present must emphatically not mean that there is after all a cosmic now, only conceived more broadly. That would be a relapse behind relativity. What can be meant instead is a mode of presence in enactment: a local, perspectivally situated holding-within of having-been, present efficacy, and possibility, without a claim to one universal simultaneity of all things.

3. Locality Remains—State Atomism Does Not

A distinction is important here. Relativity does not say that physics becomes nonlocal or arbitrarily holistic. On the contrary: its causal structure is extraordinarily strict. Light cones order which events can causally affect one another; no arbitrary point in spacetime can act immediately on every other. Locality is therefore not abolished.

What comes under pressure is something else: state atomism. By this is meant the idea that reality could be completely composed of isolated local states simultaneously present, with their relations added only afterward. Already the question of which spatially separated local states belong to the same now has no frame-independent answer in special relativity.

Precisely for this reason, locality must not be equated with isolating state-thinking. A theory can preserve local causality and nevertheless require events to be understood from a more encompassing spacetime structure. The local does not

disappear; it merely loses the claim to carry the whole order already without its embedding.

For the integral of Zwischen, this may be the decisive addendum. The integrative perspective need not be played off against local physics. Rather, it asks which whole is presupposed for local statements to obtain their determinate place at all.

4. Zwischen Once More

With Zeug, Zwischen was the nexus of involvement in which hand, hammer, nail, and undertaking obtain their places. With the action integral, it was the whole of the path within which individual states are moments of a course. With the rainbow, it was the lawful relation of light, drop, wavelength, and direction of observation. Relativity now adds another form: simultaneity too is no invisible glue connecting all spatially separated points into an absolute now.

The world therefore need not be thought as an undifferentiated whole. That would only be the mirror-image exaggeration of state atomism. What matters instead is an articulated whole: differences remain differences, local events remain local, causal boundaries remain boundaries. But their order need not arise from one single privileged cut.

Perhaps precisely here lies the recurring movement of this book. The parts are not abolished. What is dismantled is the claim that they could first exist completely on their own and that connection would arrive only afterward.

Zwischen is not the opposite of the local. It is that within which the local obtains its place.

5. Ah, Yes—and the Present

The addendum thereby returns to its starting point. To speak of an integral present does not mean smuggling a new absolute present into physics. Relativistic non-simultaneity is precisely a warning against that.

The present of this book is no global surface on which the entire universe rests simultaneously. It is enactment. It designates the way Dasein, in its respective here, holds having-been within as trace, responds to what is present, and keeps possibilities open. This present can be dense without becoming cosmic; integral without being absolutely simultaneous.

Perhaps relativity even makes the thought clearer. The now need not force the whole world onto a single cut in order to be real. The present can be real without becoming a universal measure.

Ah, yes: perhaps precisely this still had to be added.

Relativity proves no philosophy of Zwischen. But it deprives a certain opposing position of the appearance of self-evidence: the idea of a world that could at every instant be decomposed into a single, globally simultaneous total state. The events remain local; their common present does not.