

The Illusion of Choice and the Ontology of Admissibility

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We are accustomed to treating choice as the foundation of human freedom. We speak about decisions, responsibility, alternative paths, as if at every point of the present a fan of possibilities truly opens before us. This experience is so familiar that it feels self-evident: here I am, here are the options, here is the moment in which I choose.

This is precisely where the mistake lies. Not a logical one, but an ontological one.

What we experience as choice almost always arises too late. It appears at a point where the space of the possible has already been radically filtered. We feel freedom at the very moment when alternatives have already been destroyed — not by an act of decision, but by the accumulation of irreversibilities that had no form of an event and required no consent.

Reality does not cut off the future with a sharp gesture. It does so quietly. Through unclosed phases, through prematurely authorized commitments, through states that stretched on “until it becomes clear”. Each such fragment does not look fateful. Yet it is precisely these fragments that form admissibility — that invisible architecture within which the illusion of choice later arises.

By the time a person says “I choose”, there is nothing left to choose. What remains is only the realization of what is still possible. All other trajectories disappeared earlier — not because

they were rejected, but because they became inadmissible. This disappearance is not experienced as loss, because it was never noticed. There was no moment that could be named a decision.

From this emerges a deep mismatch between subjective experience and ontological reality. The subject feels free because they do not see the boundaries. But they do not see them not because the boundaries are absent, but because they are already embedded in the situation itself. Freedom of choice becomes a psychological superstructure over an already fixed admissibility.

This is why conversations about local freedom turn out to be empty. Freedom presupposes the existence of alternatives. But alternatives do not exist in the present — they exist in the past, in how the structure of the future was held or lost. The present only manifests what remains possible.

In this light, will ceases to be the capacity to choose. It does not operate at the moment of decision. It either operated earlier, or it no longer operates at all. Will is not an act and not an effort, but a mode of maintaining admissibility before it was cut off. It is the capacity not to allow interpretation to become final too early and the capacity not to enter irreversibility whose cost exceeds the remaining future.

When will is absent, a system may be rational, consistent, and even successful. It may act correctly, optimize, adapt. Yet at the same time it will steadily lose its future. And at some point what will be experienced as a “choice” will turn out to be nothing more than the last possible movement within an already compressed space.

This is an uncomfortable conclusion, because it deprives us of the last consolation. We spoke for too long about choice without realizing that it had long since ceased to exist. We discussed

freedom where the architecture of admissibility was already at work. We argued about decisions when there was nothing left to decide.

And if ONTOΣ V and VI speak about phases, debt, and irreversibility, then this text speaks about the essential thing: that freedom of choice is not a foundation, but a symptom. A symptom of the fact that everything important happened earlier.

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