

# The Destination of Actions

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*Public responsibility in the age of artificial intelligence*

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2026

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# Prologue

## *The Question*

It was nighttime. I was on the balcony of my house, smoking a cigarette, unable to sleep. It wasn't insomnia. It was something more uncomfortable than insomnia.

For weeks I had been watching what was happening with artificial intelligence. Not as a technologist —I'm not from that world— but as someone who observes and feels that something large is moving beneath their feet.

*And I was on the outside.*

I had no code, no company, no formal training in any of what was being discussed. Everything seemed already done, already thought through, already in someone else's hands. The feeling wasn't envy. It was more like arriving late to an important conversation and not knowing how to enter.

I'm not from the tech world. But I have a habit: when something troubles me, I ask questions. That night, instead of putting out my cigarette and going to bed resigned, I opened ChatGPT for the first time and asked it a single question.

*What could we create today that doesn't yet exist, but that in twenty years might seem inevitable?*

It wasn't a strategic question. It was the only question that made sense from where I stood.

What followed wasn't an answer. It was a conversation. And at one point, a question appeared that we hadn't expected:

*How do we know who says, does, or publishes anything?*

*Who did it? Who takes responsibility?*

We were thinking about twenty years ahead and suddenly we were in the present. In this moment when millions of texts, images, ideas and opinions circulate without anyone knowing quite where they come from or who answers for them.

There, in that nighttime conversation, everything began.

This book is the honest attempt of a person who arrived late, asked the right question, and couldn't stop pulling on the thread.

*It began with a question. It continued with a symbol. And behind that symbol, an idea that would not stop growing.*

# Chapter I

## *The Problem Nobody Was Naming*

There are problems that everyone feels but nobody knows how to name.

They are not technical problems. They are something quieter: a discomfort that grows slowly, that appears in unfinished conversations, in texts read and forgotten within seconds, in the sense that something that once carried weight no longer does.

*The problem wasn't that there were lies. The problem was that it no longer mattered who was speaking.*

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## *The World That Was*

For centuries, publishing something was a costly act. Costly in time, in effort, in exposure. Writing a book took years. Signing it meant being forever associated with what it said.

Friction was not the enemy of ideas. It was the condition that made visible the moment when someone said: this is entering the world. And I am responsible for it.

Think of Galileo publishing his astronomical observations. Of Marx and Engels signing the Communist Manifesto. Of Simone de Beauvoir putting her name on *The Second Sex*. In all those cases,

publishing was a deliberate act of exposure.

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### *What Disappeared Without Anyone Noticing*

Digitization didn't eliminate authorship overnight. It dissolved it slowly. First anonymous forums. Then social media. Then recommendation algorithms. And then came automatic content generation.

*Friction disappeared.*

And with it, silently, the moment when someone decides that something belongs to them as an act. Not as property. As responsibility.

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### *The Disappearance of the Destination of Actions*

*A space where everything circulates but nothing weighs.  
Where everything appears but nobody responds. Where  
the abundance of voices produces, paradoxically, a  
silence of presences.*

That was the problem nobody was naming.

**The disappearance of the destination of actions.**

Human institutions —law, science, journalism, democracy— were built on a basic premise: that behind every public act there is someone willing to sustain it. That premise is in crisis.

## Chapter II

### *The Friction That Disappeared*

Friction has a bad reputation. In the language of technology, eliminating it is always an improvement. But when that logic is applied to symbolic production—to ideas, texts, works that enter the public space—something changes. Friction in that context was not an obstacle. It was a function.

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#### *What Friction Did*

That slowness forced you to think before speaking. It forced you to assume that what was written would last. Nobody wrote a public letter without knowing they would be associated with it.

*Friction was not just slowness. It was responsibility accumulated at every step.*

That accumulated responsibility made things weigh. A book weighed. A scientific article weighed. A public declaration weighed. Not because they were perfect, but because there was someone willing to carry them.

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#### *How It Disappeared*



The first stage was the democratization of publishing. The second was speed. The third, the most radical, was automatic generation.

*For the first time in history, publishing something does not necessarily imply being willing to answer for it.*

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### *A Necessary Clarification*

This chapter is not a critique of technology. The democratization of publishing was a real advance. The challenge is not to recover slowness. It is to find a way for the act of assuming to continue to exist, even in a world where nothing is slow anymore.

**A gesture.**

## Chapter III

### *The Gesture*

Before any legal system of intellectual property existed, something already existed.

*A gesture.*

The act by which someone said: this is mine. Not in the sense of property. In the sense of responsibility. I put it in the world. I answer for it.

That gesture is older than writing. It appears in cave paintings where an artist leaves their handprint beside the figures they created. In the potter's signature on the bottom of the vessel. In the sculptor's name carved into the base of the statue.



### *Three Historical Moments*

**The Communist Manifesto, 1848.** Marx and Engels signed it with their names. They understood that a manifesto without an author is just noise.

**Zola's Declaration, 1898.** Émile Zola signed "I Accuse" with his full name. Those real consequences were exactly what gave the text its moral weight.

**The Double Helix, 1953.** Watson and Crick published their model with their names, their institutions, their data. If the data was wrong, the authors answered.

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### *The Threshold*

The gesture of assuming a work is a symbolic threshold. Before it, an idea can be a draft, private reflection. After the gesture, the idea enters shared space. It can be read, interpreted, discussed, refuted.

Without it, there is no debate: just parallel monologues. No science: just statements without a subject. No democracy: just voices without bodies.

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### *The Gesture in Today's World*

The problem is not that the gesture has completely disappeared. The problem is that it became optional.

*What is needed is to recover the gesture. To make it visible. To give it a name. To give it a form.*

It just needed to be named. And to name it, the first thing we needed was a symbol.

## Chapter IV

### *The Symbol*

We had the problem. We had the diagnosis. But we had no name.  
We had no form.

*What symbol could represent the act of belonging to  
something? Not possessing. Not creating. Belonging as an  
act.*

And there, from mathematics, came the answer.

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### *A Symbol That Already Existed*

In mathematics, the symbol  $\in$  means "belongs to." When we write  $x \in A$ , we are saying that element  $x$  belongs to set  $A$ . Not that it possesses it. Not that it created it. That it is part of it.

The distinction matters. Possessing is a relationship of control.  
Belonging is a relationship of existence.

$\in$

*The gesture had a name.*

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### *What $\in$ Does and What It Doesn't Do*

∈ is not a copyright. It protects nothing. It only establishes something.

∈ is not a digital signature. It doesn't verify identity: it declares intention.

∈ is not a quality seal.

*∈ marks the moment when a work crosses the threshold.  
The moment when someone says, without saying it in  
words: this is entering the world, and I am here.*

That's all. And that's enough.

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### *The Symbol as Act*

When a work carries ∈, the reader knows there is someone there. They don't know if they agree. They don't know if the work is good. But they know they are not facing noise. They are facing a presence.

Reading something assumed is not the same as reading something that simply circulated. In one case there is encounter. In the other, only flow.

# Chapter V

## *The Institution*

Institutions are not born from decrees.

They are born from gestures that repeated until they became practices, practices that consolidated into norms, norms that stabilized until they became the water in which we all swim without noticing.

Language is an institution. Money is an institution. Modern science is an institution. The sequence is always the same:

*Gesture → Practice → Norm → Institution*

*Not the other way around.*

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## *An Institution Without Headquarters*

€ as an institution has no headquarters. No president or board. No budget or employees. It cannot be bought, captured or co-opted by any particular interest.

*That apparent weakness is in reality its greatest strength.*

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## *What Defines the Field*

*A work  $\in$  when its authorship has been assumed.*

*A work that does not  $\in$  may exist, but does not operate within the field.*

There are no gradients. The gesture either happened or it didn't.

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## *The Founding Document*

Document 0 says, at its core:

*Every published work must be accompanied by an explicit act of assumed authorship. Without authorship there is no legitimacy.*

*Two sentences. No exceptions. Document 0 is the first act of the institution. The inaugural gesture.*

Institutions don't live on the inaugural gesture. They live on repetition.

**The age of autonomous agents.**

# Chapter VI

## *In the Age of Agents*

Until now, the problem we have described is fundamentally human.

Today, a growing part of the actions that occur in the digital space are executed by agents: AI systems that act autonomously, make decisions, and produce real effects in the world without a person being present at every step.

*If humans need to assume their public actions, what happens when the one acting is not a human?*

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### *The Agent Nobody Sees*

A company deploys an AI agent to manage customer communications. The agent answers questions, sends emails, makes decisions. All automatically.

The customer doesn't know what instructions that agent has. Doesn't know who deployed it or under what limits. Doesn't know who is responsible if something goes wrong.

This is the problem of implicit authority: the agent acts as if it had authority—and in fact it does—but nobody declared that authority explicitly.



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### *Agent Manifest: Declaration Before Execution*

From that question, Agent Manifest was born —a technical proposal I developed in parallel to this book to address the problem of identity and interoperability of autonomous agents.

The idea is simple: before an autonomous agent acts in the world, a document should exist declaring its identity. A manifest. A public declaration of who that agent is, what it can do, what it cannot do, who authorized it, and to whom it answers.

*The key word is before. Not after something goes wrong. Before.*

The connection to  $\epsilon$  is structural. An agent's manifest is its  $\epsilon$ : the document that marks the moment that agent enters public space with a declared identity and a visible chain of responsibility.

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### *Boundary Handshake: The Limit as Protection*

In parallel work I also developed Boundary Handshake, a protocol proposal so that agents declare and negotiate their limits explicitly when they interact with each other.

*The oldest human gesture —publicly assuming an action— turns out to be the most urgent principle for the most technological future we can imagine.*

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## *The Question That Has No Answer Yet*

*What I do believe is that the answer cannot be "nobody answers."  
And the only way to avoid that future is to start now.*

The systems we are building will not slow down. Agents will act, write, negotiate and decide at scales that no human institution has ever managed before.

*If responsibility does not become visible again, the world will fill with actions that have no destination.*

And a civilization cannot sustain that for long.

# Chapter VII

## *The Destination of Actions*

*This chapter is the landing.*

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### *In Creation*

An artist who publishes a work and assumes it is affirming something AI cannot affirm by itself: that a person was there, chose, and decided this deserved to exist.

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### *In Science*

*A scientist who uses AI as a tool and declares it explicitly, who assumes responsibility for the results, is doing exactly what  $\in$  proposes. The tool doesn't matter. The gesture of assuming does.*

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### *In Journalism*

The crisis of journalism in the digital age is not only economic. It is a crisis of  $\in$ . The answer is not regulation. It is culture. It is readers beginning to ask, before sharing something: is there someone who answers for this?

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## *On Social Media*

*Assuming on social media requires no special symbol. It requires a change of habit: only publishing what one is willing to sustain. That habit, practiced by enough people, is an institution.*

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## *In Everyday Conversation*

Every time someone says something and is willing to stay with it, not erase it, not escape if the conversation gets uncomfortable, they are doing  $\in$ . Not with the symbol. With the gesture.

*And that creates trust. Trust, always, begins with a gesture.*

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## *The Destination*

*$\in$  is the destination of actions. The place that every public action has to reach in order to truly exist.*

No more than that. No less than that.

# Appendix

## *The $\in$ Principle*

A public work exists when its author assumes responsibility for it.

*The symbol  $\in$  marks that gesture of assumption.*

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## *Operational Definition*

A work  $\in$  when:

- (1) it has an identifiable author who assumes it publicly,
  - (2) that author is willing to answer for its content,
  - (3) the act of assumption is explicit and verifiable.
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## *Extension to the Domain of Agents*

An autonomous agent  $\in$  when a public manifest exists declaring its identity, capabilities, limits, and the human chain of responsibility that backs it.

*Without that declaration, the agent operates outside the field of legitimized public existence.*

# Epilogue

## *What Still Doesn't Exist*

I began this book with a question.

*What could we create today that doesn't yet exist, but that in twenty years might seem inevitable?*

I didn't know then that the answer wasn't going to be a product or a technology. It was going to be a condition. Something more like a promise than an invention.

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## *How the World Looks in Twenty Years*

It is a world where public space has relief again. Where there is a recognizable difference between what someone assumed and what simply appeared. Where that difference matters: in how it is read, how it is cited, how it is trusted.

It is a world where autonomous agents declare their identity before acting, where "nobody answers" has ceased to be an acceptable answer.

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## *What Still Doesn't Exist*

But that world doesn't exist yet.

For  $\in$  to become an institution, it needs time and repetition. It needs other people to practice it.  $\in$  only becomes real when it stops being mine.

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### *A Final Honesty*

This book was written in dialogue with artificial intelligences.

I'm not saying this as a legal disclaimer. I'm saying it because this book is about assuming, and it would be a deep contradiction not to assume that fact explicitly.

The ideas are mine. The story is mine. The question that started all this, the night on the balcony: that is mine.

*What makes me the author of this book is not having written it alone. It is being willing to answer for it.*

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### *The Invitation*

The next time you publish something, ask yourself: am I willing to stay with this? Am I willing to answer?

If the answer is yes, publish. If the answer is no, wait.

That moment of pause, that simple question, is  $\in$ . Not the symbol. The gesture.

And if that gesture repeats, if others adopt it, if in twenty years it seems inevitable that someone who publishes something is willing to answer for it...

*Then that night on the balcony was worth it.*

Hernán Alfredo Capucci

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€ *Document Series* · 2026

— *to be continued* —

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*History cannot be broken.*