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THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF INTERPELLATION

Non-Self, Harmony, and Hypermodernity

Human Interpellation in Asian Cultural Horizons

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PROLOGUE

Asia as the Inverted Mirror of the West — and Interlocutor of Africa

Asia is the only civilisation that has simultaneously thought the dissolution of the individual self as a path of wisdom and the collective mobilisation of the self as the engine of the greatest economic growth in human history. This paradox is not a contradiction — it is the constitutive tension from which Asia interpellates the world.

I. A Civilisation that Confounds Habitual Categories

Asia confounds. It confounds the West, which seeks to grasp it in its own categories — individual, freedom, rights, linear progress — and finds not what it seeks, or finds it transformed beyond recognition. It confounds Africa, which discovers in it familiar resonances — the primacy of the collective, the relationship to the sacred, the depth of the bond — but discovers that these resonances are organised according to a different logic, from distinct anthropologies that produce radically other forms of existence.

And it confounds the phenomenologist of interpellation — because it poses to the A2R triad questions that neither the Western nor the African analysis had yet raised with such acuity: what becomes of the Call in a civilisation that questions the existence of a fixed subject to receive it? What becomes of the Response in a tradition that makes non-action — the Taoist *wu wei* — its highest form? What becomes of Resonance in a world where the dissolution of the self into collective harmony is not a pathology to be treated but a wisdom to be cultivated?

II. Economic Asia and Spiritual Asia: One and the Same Civilisation

It would be convenient — and philosophically lazy — to divide Asia in two: on one side the millennial spiritual Asia, with its traditions of the non-self, of harmony and silence; on the other, contemporary economic Asia, with its Toyotism, its state capitalism, its export power, its models of production that reconfigure the global economy. This would be to treat Asia as one would treat a schizophrenic individual.

Yet the two have everything to do with one another. Toyotism is not an accident of Japanese economic history — it is, in its deep structure, an application of *wa* — the harmony of the group — and of *kaizen* — continuous improvement — to the organisation of work. What Asia says to the world through its economic power is something philosophically profound: that collective Resonance — correctly institutionalised — is a productive force of a power that Western individualism cannot match. Asia exports to the world not only goods and models of production, but structures of collective interpellation whose philosophical depth has not yet been fully recognised.

III. Asia in its Diversity: Focal Points According to Traditions

This volume convenes three great philosophical and spiritual traditions — Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism — treating them as distinct interlocutors who dialogue with one another and with the A2R triad. And it develops precise geographical focal points: Japan for the articulation between Zen and productive hypermodernity, China for the

tension between Confucianism and state capitalism, India for the dialogue between Vedanta and globalisation.

IV. The Central Thesis of This Volume

The Asian traditions have developed forms of the A2R triad that call into question certain presuppositions of the basic model — notably the consistency of the subject of the Call, the active form of the Response, and the dual structure of Resonance — and in so doing, they reveal dimensions of the triad that neither the West nor Africa had fully thematised. Simultaneously, the economic and organisational power of contemporary Asia demonstrates that correctly institutionalised collective Resonance is a transformative force of global amplitude.

V. The Structure of This Volume

This volume proceeds in four interconnected movements. The first explores the Buddhist and Taoist traditions from the question of the non-self and silence. The second explores Confucianism as a philosophy of institutionalised Resonance. The third explores the tension between these spiritual heritages and economic hypermodernity. The fourth proposes resolutions oriented toward an open Asian fulfilment.

VI. A Voice from Respectful Distance and Rigorous Dialogue

In facing Asia, I do not write from within as I did for Africa. I am African, formed in the European phenomenological tradition — and Asia is for me a horizon that I must approach with the respectful distance of one who recognises a depth they have not inhabited from within, and with the rigour of transcultural eidetic variation that alone can do justice to what they have not directly lived.

Asia is the only civilisation that has made harmony — and not freedom, not community, not force — the central project of its collective existence. This orientation toward harmony is not a weakness — it is perhaps the most ambitious and most demanding form that human fulfilment can take.

CHAPTER I

The Non-Self as the Structure of the Call: Buddhism, Taoism, and Emptiness

What becomes of the Call in a civilisation that questions the existence of a fixed subject to receive it? What becomes of the Response when its highest form is non-action? What becomes of Resonance when it aims not at the transformation of two individuals but at the dissolution of the boundary between them?

1. Emptiness as the Condition of Receptivity to the Call

Buddhism begins where Western phenomenology stops. Husserlian phenomenology posits consciousness as the fundamental structure of experience — a consciousness always already intentional. Levinas posits the subject as the locus of infinite responsibility. Merleau-Ponty posits the body as the anchor of all experience. Buddhism poses a question that these three thinkers did not pose with the same radicality: what if this subject were not a fixed and permanent reality but a construction, a process, a flux without permanent substance?

This is the Buddhist doctrine of anātman — the non-self. Not the negation of individual existence, but the negation of the permanent and independent consistency of the self. What the phenomenology of interpellation sees in this doctrine: a revelation about the condition of possibility of receptivity to the Call. A rigid self is impermeable to the Call — it can only receive what confirms what it already is. Emptiness — śūnyatā — is not the void of nothingness. It is the availability of being that is not clinging to a fixed identity — the availability that makes possible a receptivity to the Call of a depth and amplitude that the frozen subject cannot reach.

What Buddhism reveals to the A2R triad: the quality of the reception of the Call depends directly on the degree of emptiness of the subject who receives it. The Buddhist practice of meditation is, from the perspective of the triad, a practice of preparation for the reception of the Call — a training in phenomenological availability.

2. The Silence of Wu Wei: When the Response Is Non-Action

Taoism brings to the A2R triad a contribution of radical originality — a contribution that calls into question not the subject of the Call, but the form of the Response. Wu wei — literally non-action or acting without acting — does not designate passivity or inertia. It designates a form of action that is in perfect harmony with the natural flow of things — an action that does not force, does not resist, that acts from the depth of what is, following the immanent logic of the situation rather than imposing an external logic upon it.

What wu wei reveals to the A2R triad: there exists a form of Response to the Call that is not action in the ordinary sense — a form of Response that consists in aligning oneself with what the Call demands from within rather than responding to it from an external will. Water is the quintessential Taoist metaphor — it forces nothing, follows the forms it encounters, flows around obstacles. And yet water wears away stone, carves canyons, nourishes life. Resonance, in these contexts, can only arise if the Response has learned to be light — fluid, available, attuned.

3. Buddhist Compassion as Universal Resonance

The Buddhist notion of *karuṇā* — compassion — is a fundamental disposition of being — an openness to the suffering of all sentient beings, a resonance with their condition that makes no distinction between self and other. The *bodhisattva* — in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition — is the being who has reached the threshold of enlightenment but chooses not to enter it as long as a single sentient being still suffers. This gesture is the highest form of Resonance that the Buddhist tradition knows.

What the A2R triad sees in Buddhist compassion: it is Resonance carried to its maximum degree of amplitude — a Resonance that is no longer limited to the relation between two particular subjects but extends to the entirety of sentient beings. The Taoist notion of *te* — virtue or the power to act rightly — completes this understanding: a being whose *te* is developed resonates with the totality of the real, with the movement of nature, with the immanent logic of each situation.

4. The Triad without Ego: Fulfilment through Self-Transcendence

What the Buddhist and Taoist traditions bring together is the possibility of a triad without ego — a triad in which the Call is received not by a rigid and defensive self but by an available and empty consciousness, in which the Response is not a forced action from individual will but a fluid alignment from the depth of what is, and in which Resonance extends to the universal dimension of compassion and cosmic harmony.

What this reveals about the West: the crisis of Resonance in contemporary Western societies is also, more deeply, a crisis of the ego. The Buddhist and Taoist traditions offer to this West not a dissolution of the individual — but a liberation from the ego, an availability that makes the triad possible in its full depth. What this reveals about Africa: the African tradition of communal non-self enters into natural dialogue with the Buddhist non-self — two paths of transcending the ego, two different ways of reaching availability to the Call.

5. A2R Reading: What Buddhism and Taoism Reveal about the Triad

Buddhism reveals that receptivity to the Call is a dimension of the triad that can be cultivated — that spiritual practice is a training in phenomenological availability. Taoism reveals that the form of the Response is more diverse than previous analyses had suggested — it can be the silence that aligns, the presence that adjusts, the non-action that follows the flow of the situation. Buddhism and Taoism together reveal that universal Resonance is the most ambitious horizon of the triad.

The triad without ego is not an impoverished triad — it is a triad fulfilled at its deepest degree. What Buddhism and Taoism have been able to see is that the self is not the foundation of the triad — it is sometimes its most persistent obstacle.

CHAPTER II

Social Harmony as Institutionalised Resonance: Confucianism

Confucianism has accomplished something that no other philosophical tradition has attempted with the same ambition and the same systematicity: transforming Resonance into a civilisational project.

1. The Rite as the Structure of Collective Call

At the heart of Confucianism lies li — generally translated as rite or ritual — but which designates something far broader: the very structure of the just social order, the ensemble of forms in which human relations must express themselves for social Resonance to arise. Li is an institutional architecture of the collective Call — it creates the conditions in which the Call can emerge with its full power. And it goes further: it aims to structure the totality of social life as a continuous space of interpellation, governed by li, oriented toward the mutual fulfilment of the persons engaged within it.

2. The Relation as Primary Category: The Five Confucian Relations

The five fundamental relations of Confucianism — wu lun — are: the relation between ruler and subject, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brothers, and between friends. These five relations constitute a mapping of the space of the triad — the five principal spaces in which Calls can arise, Responses can engage, and Resonance can emerge in ordinary human existence. Each is defined by specific virtues that constitute its just form.

What the A2R triad sees in this structure: a mapping of the forms of the Call and the Response according to types of relation. It must however be stated frankly that the rigid hierarchical structure of the five relations produces forms of impediment to the speech of women and subordinates that are phenomenological destructions of the capacity for the triad. The feminist and democratic critique of Confucianism is, from the perspective of the A2R triad, a phenomenologically grounded critique.

3. Virtue as Disposition toward Authentic Response

The central concept of Confucianism — ren — designates first a disposition — a way of being oriented toward the other from which Calls are heard and Responses naturally engage. For Confucius, the junzi — the accomplished person — is not the one who knows the rules and applies them mechanically. It is the one who has cultivated inner dispositions from which the just Response emerges naturally. Confucian virtue is a theory of the formation of the capacity for Response — the recognition that the authentic Response must be cultivated, that it is a competence that develops, a disposition that deepens with practice.

4. Institutionalised Resonance: Ambitions and Limits

At the heart of the Confucian project lies a phenomenological ambition of remarkable scope: to institutionalise social Resonance. Societies deeply formed by Confucianism exhibit remarkable forms of social cohesion. The East Asian economic miracle is not unrelated to these Confucian structures of institutionalised Resonance.

But institutionalised Resonance has its limits. The first danger is the confusion between harmony and conformity. A social harmony produced by the suppression of dissonances is not Resonance but conformity. The second danger is the sclerosis of the rite. The third is the rigid hierarchy as an impediment to the Call of subordinates.

5. A2R Reading: A Civilisation that Has Institutionalised Resonance

Confucianism brings to the A2R triad: the theory of the contextuality of the triad, the theory of the formation of the capacity for Response, and the theory of the institutionalisation of Resonance. What the triad brings to Confucianism: a rigorous critique of its forms of impediment and an orientation toward a form of institutionalised Resonance grounded in the freedom of the Call and the Response of all members.

Confucianism has seen what neither the West nor Africa had seen with the same clarity: that Resonance can be a civilisational project — that social harmony is not a state that arises by chance, but the result of patient, rigorous, and collective work.

CHAPTER III

The Tension between Spiritual Tradition and Hypermodernity: Asia Interpellated

Contemporary Asia lives a tension that no other civilisation embodies with the same intensity and the same global visibility: it is simultaneously the civilisation of the non-self, of wu wei and of millennial harmony — and the economic locomotive of a world that is accelerating, digitalising, and restructuring at a vertiginous speed.

1. Japan: Zen and Productive Performance — Coexistence or Contradiction?

Japan is perhaps the most striking example of the tension between a millennial spiritual heritage and productive hypermodernity. Wa — the harmony of the group — traverses both Zen and the world of the Japanese enterprise. Kaizen traverses both spiritual practice and the Toyota Production System. The Toyota Production System is, in its deep structure, an architecture of productive Resonance — it creates the conditions in which each member of the organisation is simultaneously emitter and receiver of Calls, invited to engage in a Response that enriches the collective.

But this articulation is not without tensions. Karoshi — death from overwork — reveals a pathology of institutionalised Resonance: when the harmony of the group becomes a totalitarian pressure that destroys health and life, Resonance has transformed into impediment. Tatemae — the social facade — and honne — one's true thoughts — coexist in a permanent tension: when tatemae systematically dominates honne, the social surface is harmonious but the depth is silent.

2. China: Confucianism and State Capitalism — Harmony or Imposed Conformity?

Contemporary China poses to the A2R triad a question of particular acuity: is the remarkable coherence and discipline of contemporary Chinese society the product of authentic Resonance — or of imposed conformity? The honest answer is that both dimensions coexist. Chinese economic growth has mobilised a genuinely Confucian creative energy. But the Chinese model also produces serious forms of dialogical impediment.

The suppression of dissent is a phenomenological destruction of the capacity for the triad. The social credit system transforms the Response into a calculated performance driven by fear of sanction rather than by the freedom of engagement. What the A2R triad reveals: the Chinese model has captured the Confucian ambition of institutionalised Resonance but has sometimes replaced its authentic foundation with an imposed conformity.

3. India: Vedanta and Globalisation — Absorption or Dissolution?

Vedanta philosophy — in its great articulations, from Shankara to Sri Aurobindo — posits that the separation between the self and the world, between subject and object, is an illusion — maya — and that human fulfilment consists in traversing this illusion to recover the deep unity. Vedantic Resonance is carried to its maximum degree of

depth — not simply a vibration at the same frequency, but a recognition of the deep identity that makes this vibration possible.

But contemporary India lives painful tensions. The commercialisation of spirituality separates techniques from their philosophical context. The caste system is one of the most profound forms of impediment to the Call that human history has produced. And yet India has produced remarkable thinkers — Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi, Tagore, Ambedkar — who undertook the work of creative assumption between spiritual depth and democratic modernity.

4. The Specific Forms of Asian Dialogical Impediment

The impediment of the subordination of the individual to the collective is perhaps the most specifically Asian form. The impediment of social face — the preoccupation with social image — can become a major obstacle to authentic Response. The impediment of technological and productive hyper-acceleration is a form that Asia shares with the West but lives with particular intensity. The impediment of reactive cultural nationalism threatens certain Asian societies — when pride in tradition becomes a closed nationalism, the Call loses its universal dimension.

5. What Asia Reveals to the Phenomenology of Interpellation

Asia reveals the productivity of institutionalised collective Resonance — a phenomenological demonstration that collective Resonance releases a creative and productive energy of considerable power. Asia reveals the contemplative dimension of receptivity to the Call — sophisticated practices for cultivating phenomenological availability. Asia reveals the productive tension between the non-self and performance — an interpellation to inhabit that all of humanity must now confront.

Asia interpellated is not an Asia in difficulty — it is an Asia in transformation. It lives, with unprecedented intensity, the question that all of humanity must now confront: how to hold together the depth of spiritual heritage and the demands of productive modernity without sacrificing one to the other?

CHAPTER IV

A2R Resolutions: Toward an Open Asian Fulfilment

Asia does not need to be saved from its tradition — it needs to be faithful to its tradition in its truest depth. For its tradition, in its truest depth, is not a call to withdrawal — it is a call to openness.

1. The Middle Way as the Methodology of Fulfilment

Buddhism has formulated, with remarkable precision, the principle that can serve as a guiding thread: the middle way — majjhimā paṭipadā. Neither extreme asceticism, nor hedonism. Neither nostalgic return to a frozen tradition, nor dissolution into imported modernity. The middle way is not the mediocrity of compromise — it is the rightness of dynamic balance, the precision of well-held tension. This methodology is exactly what the A2R triad proposes to contemporary Asia.

2. Can the Singularity of the Call Be Liberated in Cultures of the Collective?

The first movement is the rigorous distinction between emptiness of the self and suppression of singularity. Buddhism does not demand the suppression of singularity — it demands the transcendence of rigid attachment to a fixed identity. Emptiness liberates singularity — it does not destroy it. The second movement is the revalorisation of creative dissidence as a form of authentic Call. The greatest Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian masters have all been dissenters who formulated disturbing Calls from their own depth. The third movement is the liberation of the speech of women and younger generations as a condition of collective fulfilment.

3. Can the Response Be Deepened in Cultures of Performance?

The first movement is the distinction between politeness and authenticity — the reconstitution of an authentic politeness that is at once consideration for the other and engagement from within oneself. The second movement is the revalorisation of contemplative practice as the foundation of productive Response. The Japan that loses its Zen cannot long maintain the quality of its Toyotism — because Toyotism, in its depth, is Zen applied to production. The third movement is the rehabilitation of error and failure as necessary Responses.

4. Can Asian Resonance Be Offered to the World without Impoverishing It?

The first movement is the transmission of philosophy along with technique. When Japan exports the Toyota Production System, it should export with it the philosophy of wa, kaizen, and monozukuri that constitute its soul. An organisation that adopts the tools of lean management without the inner disposition of kaizen will obtain only the superficial results of a technique without a soul. The second movement is resistance to the superficial commercialisation of spirituality. The third movement is active contribution to global ethical debates on technology, artificial intelligence, the organisation of work, and governance.

5. Concrete Directions: Individual, Community, Institution, Global Dialogue

At the level of the individual, the A2R resolution passes through the maintenance of a regular contemplative practice as the foundation of availability to the Call, the cultivation of the capacity to formulate Calls from one's own depth, and exposure to encounter with other traditions from a confidence in one's own heritage. At the level of the community, the resolution passes through the reconstruction of authentic communal Resonance — distinct from imposed social conformity.

At the level of institutions, the resolution interpellates Asian organisations on the distinction between performance and fulfilment. At the level of global dialogue, the resolution invites Asia to fully assume its position as a major contributor to universal philosophical thought — not by imposing its models, but by offering them from confidence in their depth and in availability to enriching dialogue.

6. What Asia Brings to the Triad — and What the Triad Brings to Asia

What Asia brings to the triad: the revelation that emptiness is a condition of possibility of receptivity to the Call. That wu wei is a high form of the Response. That universal compassion is Resonance carried to its maximum amplitude. That institutionalised Resonance is possible — and demonstrated by the remarkable economic performances of Confucian societies. And that the middle way is the most appropriate methodology for navigating the tensions of modernity.

What the triad brings to Asia: a rigorous formulation of what it has accomplished and what it has missed. A tool for critical analysis of its impediments. A compass for navigating the tension between tradition and hypermodernity. And an invitation to contribute to the world philosophical dialogue from confidence in the universal depth of its heritage.

The open Asian fulfilment is not a fulfilment that will turn inward — it is a fulfilment that will offer to the world what it holds most precious: the wisdom of the non-self, the fluidity of wu wei, universal compassion, and the Confucian rigour that institutionalises harmony without reducing it to conformity.

CONCLUSION

Asia Interpellating

Asia was, for centuries, a civilisation that thought in silence. Today, it speaks to the world through its economic power, through its organisational models, through its growing technological presence. This volume has sought to show that this economic and technological speech carries within it, in its depth, a philosophical word of irreplaceable richness.

1. What This Volume Has Accomplished

This volume undertook to read the double reality of contemporary Asia — its millennial spiritual depth and its global economic power — from a unified phenomenological perspective. It showed that the three great Asian spiritual traditions bring irreplaceable contributions to the phenomenology of interpellation. It showed that the economic and organisational power of Asia is, in its deep structure, an expression of these spiritual traditions. It analysed with frankness the tensions and impediments. It proposed resolutions oriented toward an open Asian fulfilment grounded in the middle way.

2. What Asia Must Now Accomplish

The first imperative is coherence between spiritual depth and economic power. Asia cannot continue to export Toyotism without Zen, lean management without Buddhist compassion. The second imperative is the democratisation of the triad — Asia cannot fully fulfil itself as long as significant members cannot formulate their Calls from their own depth. The third imperative is the explicit philosophical contribution to world dialogue — to formulate this philosophy in global dialogue with the necessary rigour and confidence.

3. What This Volume Opens Toward the Following Volumes

Volume V — dedicated to the Americas — is one of the most urgent and most original that this project has yet to accomplish. North America is the place from which digital technology globally redefines the conditions of the Call, the Response, and the Resonance for all of humanity. Silicon Valley is not only an economic pole — it is the place from which the being-in-the-world of all individuals and all collectives on our earth is today shaped, structured, and sometimes confiscated. The phenomenological analysis of this reality through the A2R triad is a philosophical task of unprecedented urgency.

South America brings a radically different dimension — buen vivir, Pachamama, liberation theology — philosophical contributions that enter into natural dialogue with what Africa and Asia have revealed. And Volume VI — dedicated to the radical questions about the human in the age of artificial intelligence — will find in the five preceding volumes the resources necessary to approach these questions with all the transcultural depth they demand.

4. Asia as Interpellator of the World

Asia interpellates the world from two simultaneous registers. It interpellates from its spiritual depth: from the Buddhist emptiness that says to a West clinging to its ego —

let go, and you will receive the Call you do not yet hear. From the Taoist wu wei that says to a world of forced action — the most just Response is sometimes the non-action that aligns with what is. From universal compassion that says to a world fractured by identities — authentic Resonance knows no borders.

It interpellates from its economic and organisational power: from the Toyota Production System that says to organisations the world over — collective Resonance can be institutionalised. These two registers are the two voices of a single interpellation, addressed to all of humanity from the depth of a civilisation that has known how to hold together contemplation and action, inner depth and outer power, the wisdom of emptiness and the energy of creation.

5. The Threshold Toward Volume V

This volume closes with the conviction that Asia has accomplished something philosophically and practically unique. The question that now opens is this: what do the Americas, in their double North and South reality, reveal about the A2R triad? What does the civilisation that produced Silicon Valley and liberation theology, the American dream and buen vivir, the absolute individual and communities of resistance — what does it say to humanity about what interpellation is and can be in a contemporary world where technology redefines the very conditions of the Call, the Response, and the Resonance?

Asia interpellates.

From the silence of Zen and from the noise of the factories.

From the Buddhist emptiness and from the precision of kaizen.

From universal compassion and from global economic power.

And what it says — in this double register — is what contemporary humanity needs to hear.