

# THE THEOLOGY OF RESPONSE IN THE ALGORITHMIC AGE

*For a Spiritual Ecology of Interior Availability*

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*Oramellon Collection*  
*The Interpellation of the World*



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## INTRODUCTION — The Displacement That Changes Everything

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There is a way of posing the question of the digital that consistently produces insufficient answers: the one that asks what technologies do to human beings. This formulation, however legitimate, presupposes what it should explain — a subject already constituted, exposed after the fact to external forces that influence, disturb or threaten it. It authorises moral responses, behavioural regulations, ethics of usage. It does not touch the depths.

The depths are this: contemporary digital architectures do not only transform what human beings do. They transform the conditions in which human beings become capable of responding. And this distinction — between acting on behaviours and reconfiguring the conditions of response — is the most important that contemporary thought must operate in the face of the algorithmic challenge.

It is this distinction that opens the present text. It distinguishes our approach from the ethical, pastoral and doctrinal approaches that, however necessary, stop short of the real problem. And it makes possible, for the first time, a theology of response — not as an additional discipline appended to existing corpora, but as a founding displacement of theological reflection itself in the face of the algorithmic age.

For theology has always been, in its deepest forms, a theory of the call. From Genesis to Revelation, from the Torah to the Gospels, from the Quran to the Upanishads, from the contemplative traditions of the East to the mystics of the West — everywhere, the human being is thought of as an addressed being. Something — or Someone — precedes it, convokes it, interpellates it. And it is in the quality of its response to this call that what it is reveals and constitutes itself.

Yet contemporary digital architectures act precisely on this space. They do not destroy beliefs. They do not suppress religious institutions. They do something more

subtle, more profound, and more decisive: they saturate, accelerate, fragment and colonise the interior space of availability without which no call — whether human, ethical or transcendent — can be truly heard, discerned and followed.

The contemporary spiritual crisis is therefore not primarily a crisis of belief. That would be too simple, and too comfortable. It is a crisis of the anthropological conditions of possibility of listening. And as long as this distinction is not operated with all the rigour it requires, theological, pastoral and institutional responses will remain at the surface of the problem — useful, sincere, but structurally inadequate to the depth of what is at stake.

It is here that the Mahoukou Law and its triadic structure Call — Response — Resonance (A2R) intervene. This relational anthropology maintains that the human being does not constitute itself in the solitude of the cogito — but in the quality of the interpellation regimes it traverses. The human being forms, or deforms, in what it receives as calls, in the freedom with which it can respond to them, and in the depth of the resonances that these exchanges deposit within it.

Respondeo ergo sum: I respond, therefore I am. This formula is not a philosophical play on words — it is a fundamental anthropological thesis. And A2R allows one to formulate with a precision that existing approaches have not yet reached: why do certain digital architectures structurally produce fragmented, reactive subjects, incapable of silence and depth — and therefore incapable of a free response to any call whatsoever?

This text will unfold in five movements. The first will establish theology as a theory of the call. The second will analyse what the digital does to the conditions of spiritual listening. The third will develop the concept of a theology of interior availability. The fourth will explore the vocation crisis as a particular case of the crisis of the ecologies of interior availability. The fifth will open the foundations of a theology of discernment in saturated environments and an ecclesiology of silence. A conclusion and a postface will close the whole.

We do not write this text as a critique of the digital. We write it as an invitation — urgent, grounded, and we hope irrefutable — to think at the right level what the algorithmic revolution does to humanity.

## PART I — THEOLOGY AS A THEORY OF THE CALL

*A2R as an unprecedented anthropological foundation*

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### 1. The human being as addressed: a constant of the great traditions

There is an intuition shared by the great spiritual traditions of humanity, beyond their doctrinal, ritual and cultural divergences: the human being is not primarily a being that thinks, produces or consumes. It is an addressed being. Something — or Someone — precedes it, convokes it, interpellates it. And it is in the quality of its response to this call that what it is reveals and constitutes itself.

This intuition runs through the Bible from end to end. It is present from Genesis, when the divine voice calls Adam in the garden — Where are you? — and all of human history unfolds as a response to this foundational question. It resounds in the book of Samuel, when the child hears his name in the night and gradually learns to discern the voice that calls him. It culminates in the Gospels with that lapidary and decisive word: Follow me. Two words. A call. And an entire life as response.

But this structure does not stop at the frontiers of Christianity. In the Quranic tradition, all of humanity is convoked even before its creation — *Alastu bi-rabbikum?: am I not your Lord?* — and its primordial response founds the covenant between Creator and creature. In Buddhism, awakening itself is a form of response — not to a personal God, but to reality as it is, to the call of liberation perceived in the fullness of silence. In the African traditions of interpellation — so important for our philosophical corpus — the human being exists in and through the network of calls that connect it to the ancestors, to the community, to the cosmos.

Everywhere, therefore, the same fundamental structure: the human being as a called being, whose existence takes form in response. This is not a metaphor. It is an anthropology. And it is this anthropology that the Mahoukou Law formalises for the first time in all its philosophical rigour.

## **2. The Mahoukou Law as foundation: what A2R brings to theology**

The triadic structure Call — Response — Resonance (A2R) was not born of theological reflection. It was born of a phenomenology of human existence. But precisely because it is not primarily theological, it can offer theology something it cannot give itself: a structural anthropological foundation, universally accessible, independent of confessional presuppositions.

The Call is what opens the relational space. In theological tradition, God's call possesses a double characteristic unanimously recognised by the great traditions: it is non-coercive and non-saturating. It does not impose. It does not force. It creates a space of freedom by opening the possibility of a response. The divine call waits. It demands listening, discernment, availability. It can be refused. It can be misheard. It is precisely this risk that founds the dignity of the human response.

The Response is the locus of the subject. *Respondeo ergo sum*: it is in its manner of responding that the human being actualises itself as a free subject. But a free response supposes conditions: sufficient interior space for the call to be received, processed, interpreted — and not merely reflected as a reflex. It supposes time — the long time of maturation, silence, discernment. It supposes a stable interiority.

Resonance, finally, is what the response deposits — in the subject itself, in the relation, in the common world. Resonance is spiritual memory, interior transformation, accumulated depth. It is what traditions call, according to their respective vocabularies, conversion, sanctification, awakening, growth in faith. It supposes time still — the duration of maturation.

## **3. The decisive difference: call of revelation and interpellative capture**

Not all calls are equivalent. There is a structural difference — not only moral, but anthropological — between a call that opens and a call that captures; between a call that creates freedom and a call that produces dependence; between a call that awaits a response and a call that extracts a reaction.

The spiritual call, as the great traditions describe it, possesses precise characteristics: it respects the freedom of the subject; it can be deferred, resisted,

refused; it does not impose itself through saturation or artificial urgency; it opens towards growth, towards a transformation of the subject in the direction of its greatest freedom.

Contemporary algorithmic interpellation functions according to a structurally inverse logic. It does not aim at the growth of the subject — it aims at its retention. It does not open towards durable transformation — it produces repeated reactivity. It does not respect the freedom of withdrawal — it is precisely designed to make withdrawal difficult, psychologically costly, cognitively uncomfortable.

We can therefore oppose: the call of revelation — non-coercive, non-saturating, deferrable, oriented towards the growth of the subject — and interpellative capture — intensive, continuous, non-deferrable, oriented towards the retention of the subject. This is not a moral judgement on technologies. It is a structural description of two radically different logics of call.

#### **4. What classical theology presupposed without saying so**

Classical theology reflected with depth on God's call, on grace, on human freedom, on faith, on conversion and sanctification. But it presupposed, without always thematising it explicitly, a fundamental anthropological condition: the existence of an interior space of availability. It supposed that the subject seeking God possesses a certain capacity for listening, a certain quality of attention, a certain aptitude for silence.

What the algorithmic age reveals, with a brutality that demands a new theological response, is that this interior availability is no longer merely fragile. It is ecologically threatened. Not by individual sins or moral weaknesses — to which moral theology has always known how to respond — but by systemic architectures that, by their very structure, produce the saturation, fragmentation and colonisation of interior space.

And this changes everything for theology. For if the conditions of spiritual listening are ecologically conditioned, then theology can no longer confine itself to reflecting on call and response without simultaneously reflecting on the conditions of possibility of this response in the concrete environments where human beings live. It is

this displacement — from the theology of response to the theology of the conditions of response — that constitutes the heart of our contribution.

## **5. Our interlocutors and what distinguishes us from them**

Augustine of Hippo understood magnificently that the human being is a being of desire oriented towards God. His *Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi* — do not go outward, return into yourself — is of inexhaustible depth. But in Augustine, dispersion remains primarily moral and spiritual. He cannot think the industrial architectures of capture that colonise the very interior into which he invited us to return.

Pascal perceived with extraordinary acuity the mechanism of *divertissement* — that flight from oneself that prevents the human being from confronting its condition. But in Pascal, *divertissement* remains essentially anthropological and psychological. What our approach introduces is the industrial and systemic dimension: *divertissement* is now organised, optimised and monetised by architectures whose economic logic depends precisely on its perpetuation.

Simone Weil thought attention as spiritual act par excellence. She is probably our closest spiritual interlocutor. But Weil thinks attention as interior and individual ethical experience. We add the ecological, institutional and political dimension: the collective conditions of formation and destruction of attention in concrete technical and economic environments.

What distinguishes us from all these great interlocutors can be summarised thus: we do not think only dispersion, *divertissement*, attention or technique. We think the civilisational architectures of interpellation and their developmental effects on the human capacities of spiritual response.

## PART II — WHAT THE DIGITAL DOES TO THE CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL LISTENING

*The colonisation of interior space*

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### **1. A change of environment, not merely of behaviour**

The temptation is great, when reflecting on the effects of the digital on spiritual life, to remain in the behavioural register. People pray less, recollect themselves less. Remedies are prescribed: digital fasting, meditation apps, disconnection retreats. All of this is right. None of it is sufficient. For what we are living through is not a change of behaviours. It is a change of anthropological environment. And the difference between the two is exactly the same as between treating the symptoms of an intoxication and analysing the chemical composition of the air breathed by an entire population.

The digital has become an environment. This shift is the major anthropological fact of our era. And this environment acts on the conditions of spiritual listening not through the contents it diffuses, but through the very structure of the interpellation regimes it imposes.

### **2. Saturation: when everything calls simultaneously**

In all the great traditions, the spiritual call is described as a voice heard in silence. Elijah was not in the great wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire. After the fire, there was the sound of a gentle silence. This image says something structural: the call that comes from further than human systems does not manifest itself in the mode of urgency, intensity or competition. It demands a certain prior clearing of the interior space.

Contemporary digital architectures produce exactly the opposite. Their fundamental economic logic rests on the maximisation of engagement — notifications, algorithmic recommendations, infinite scroll, autoplay, social validation metrics. In a saturated environment, all calls become equivalent in intensity. And the spiritual call —

precisely because it does not function according to the logic of capture, precisely because it respects the freedom of withdrawal — is structurally disadvantaged in the competition for human attentional space.

### **3. Acceleration: when the time of maturation disappears**

Every authentic spiritual experience — vocational discernment, deep prayer, interior conversion, contemplative awakening — supposes a temporality that traditions qualify as long. Moses's vocation did not decide itself in an instant — it developed through years of desert. Augustine's conversion was the fruit of fifteen years of maturation. This is not a historical accident. It is the very nature of spiritual transformation: it demands time.

Contemporary digital environments have erected instantaneity as norm. What this acceleration silently destroys is the very experience of interior duration — that form of lived time in which profound things can happen. Without interior duration, there is no possible maturation. Without maturation, there is no stable vocational response.

### **4. Fragmentation: when interiority loses its continuity**

Spiritual life supposes a certain continuity of the interior subject. Not rigidity, but a capacity to maintain an orientation, to inhabit a direction, to recognise in the present moment the coherence of a path that comes from the past and goes towards the future. This continuity allows the believer to recognise in daily events the traces of a presence; it allows the one discerning a vocation to maintain orientation through doubts.

Contemporary digital architectures systematically fragment this continuity. Permanent interruption does not only produce a punctual distraction: it progressively reorganises the very structures of attention and memory. In a subject whose interiority is structurally fragmented, prayer becomes a succession of discontinuous instants. Discernment becomes an oscillation without orientation.

### **5. The colonisation of silence: when availability disappears**

Silence is not an absence. In all the great spiritual traditions, it is an active space — the condition of listening, the milieu of availability, the matrix of resonance.

Contemporary digital environments have made this emptiness rare, uncomfortable, almost structurally inaccessible. Not by deliberate malevolence, but by the very logic of capture systems: a moment of silence is a moment that the attention economy does not monetise.

## **6. The formation of desire: perhaps the most profound transformation**

In the Augustinian tradition, desire is the motor of interior life. Not desire in the vulgar sense of covetousness — it is the desiderium, the deep desire, the aspiration towards what satisfies without exhausting. This desire forms slowly. It supposes the experience of lack — not as suffering to be immediately eliminated, but as fecund tension orienting towards something essential.

Contemporary digital architectures are precisely designed to short-circuit the experience of fecund lack. Their economic logic rests on immediate and repeated satisfaction. This cycle of stimulation-satisfaction-restimulation is extraordinarily effective at maintaining engagement — and extraordinarily destructive for the formation of deep desire. The contemporary spiritual question may not primarily be: do people still believe? It is: can they still desire deeply?

## **7. An unprecedented competition for interiority**

The digital does not destroy beliefs head-on. It does not suppress religious institutions. It does something more subtle: it creates an unprecedented competition for human interiority. Not a competition of convictions — but a competition for the interior space itself: for the attention, silence, availability, desire, and interior continuity that are the anthropological conditions of all authentic spiritual experience.

The response to this challenge cannot be only moral. It must be anthropological and ecological: a rigorous reflection on the conditions of possibility of interior availability in environments of permanent capture, and a concrete proposal for preserving, rebuilding and institutionalising them.

## **PART III — THE THEOLOGY OF INTERIOR AVAILABILITY**

*Silence as an anthropological condition of transcendence*

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### **1. A concept to be founded, not merely invoked**

Silence occupies a central place in all the great spiritual traditions. It is recommended, practised, institutionalised. But it is rarely founded with the anthropological rigour that our era demands. It is prescribed as a remedy without fully explicating the pathology it treats. It is here that our concept of interior availability must be grounded — not as a spiritual practice among others, but as the structural anthropological condition of the availability necessary for the experience of the call.

### **2. Interior availability: what the traditions knew without always saying so**

The great spiritual traditions have all, in their way, articulated the idea of an interior availability necessary for the experience of the transcendent. In the Christian tradition, kenosis — that interior emptying of which Paul speaks in the letter to the Philippians — is perhaps the most radical formulation of what we call interior availability. In the Islamic tradition, the concept of fana — the annihilation of the self in divine contemplation — describes a state of absolute availability. In the Buddhist traditions, shunyata — emptiness — is the space of pure availability in which reality can manifest itself.

What all these traditions converge in saying can be formulated thus: interior availability is the state in which the human subject is sufficiently freed from its own internal and external solicitations to be genuinely open to a call that comes from elsewhere. It is not a passive state — it is a form of interior activity of the highest quality. And it is precisely this state that contemporary digital architectures threaten in its very possibility.

### **3. Availability as an ecologically conditioned capacity**

The tradition has always known that interior availability was fragile. It developed disciplines — asceticism, fasting, regular prayer, retreat — precisely to cultivate it. But it conceived the forces that threaten it essentially as interior or morally qualifiable realities. What our era reveals is of a different nature: interior availability can be destroyed structurally, by environments whose logic of functioning systematically produces the saturation, acceleration and fragmentation incompatible with it.

In other words: interior availability is an ecologically conditioned capacity. It depends on environments that can either support or erode it. And in contemporary digital environments, the forces of erosion are of a power and persistence without precedent in human history. This recognition has considerable theological consequences.

#### **4. Silence as theology: three founding displacements**

First displacement: from silence as practice to silence as condition. In the ascetic tradition, silence is a practice — something one does, chooses, cultivates. Our approach introduces an additional dimension: silence is also and primarily a condition — something on which depends the very possibility of certain spiritual experiences. This displacement transforms the status of silence in theological reflection: from a recommended spiritual counsel, it becomes a structural condition to be preserved collectively.

Second displacement: from individual interiority to collective spiritual ecology. The tradition has thought interior availability essentially as an individual matter. Our approach adds a collective dimension: the conditions of interior availability are also social, institutional and technical conditions. There exists a collective responsibility — pastoral, political, institutional — in the preservation of these conditions.

Third displacement: from moral distraction to structural pathogenesis. The tradition has long thought the obstacles to spiritual life in the moral register. This register remains pertinent in certain situations. But it becomes insufficient — and sometimes unjust — when applied to difficulties that belong to the structural

transformation of anthropological environments. The theology of interior availability introduces this distinction between moral fragility and structural pathogenesis.

### **5. The divine call and algorithmic calls: a founding dissymmetry**

There is a fundamental dissymmetry between the divine call as traditions describe it and algorithmic calls as digital architectures organise them. The divine call — in all traditions that think it — is characterised by its constitutive non-coerciveness. It does not force. It does not impose itself through saturation. It can be refused — and this possible refusal is precisely what founds the dignity of the response.

Algorithmic calls are structurally inverse. They are designed precisely to make withdrawal difficult — psychologically costly, socially penalising, cognitively uncomfortable. In an environment saturated with non-deferrable algorithmic calls, the divine call — precisely because it respects the freedom of withdrawal — finds itself structurally disadvantaged in the competition for human attentional space.

### **6. Interior availability as a common spiritual good**

The most important consequence of what we have just developed is this: interior availability is not only an individual good. It is a common spiritual good. A common good is a good whose nature is such that it can only be fully preserved collectively. In the same way, interior availability can no longer, in contemporary conditions, be preserved by individual discipline alone. It depends on collective conditions that societies can choose to preserve or to sacrifice.

## **PART IV — THE VOCATION CRISIS AS A CRISIS OF THE ECOLOGIES OF INTERIOR AVAILABILITY**

*What A2R reveals that habitual analyses do not see*

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### **1. A poorly posed question produces insufficient answers**

The vocation crisis — particularly visible in the Churches of Western Europe — is one of the most commented and least understood phenomena of our religious era. Analyses oscillate between three registers that each say something true, but all stop short of the real problem: the moral and doctrinal register, the institutional register, and the sociological register. Our approach proposes a fourth register — not to replace the three preceding ones, but to ground them more deeply. It maintains that the contemporary vocation crisis is, at a more fundamental level, a crisis of the anthropological conditions of possibility of vocational listening.

### **2. Vocation as an A2R structure: what the model reveals**

A vocation is an interpellation structure of a particular nature. It is a call demanding a stable, durable response that orients an entire life. Read within the A2R framework, vocation possesses a precise structure. The vocational Call is persistent, oriented, transformative, and non-saturating. For it to be heard, the subject must possess an interior space sufficiently silent for the persistent but non-saturating voice of vocation to be distinguishable from the background noise of ordinary solicitations.

The vocational Response supposes the capacity to defer, the stability of desire, and interior continuity. These three conditions are precisely those that contemporary digital environments most systematically fragilise. The vocational Resonance, finally, supposes a fidelity that itself depends on long memory, a community of support, and a certain impermeability to alternative solicitations.

### **3. Other determinants: what our approach does not efface**

Our thesis would be gravely incomplete if it claimed to reduce the vocation crisis to its sole anthropological and attentional dimension. The crisis of the great symbolic mediations is an undeniable factor. The crisis of long temporality is equally constitutive of contemporary vocational difficulty. The crisis of transcendence cannot be ignored either. All these factors are real. Our approach adds a deeper, more foundational layer that has until now been under-thought.

#### **4. What the vocation crisis reveals about our era**

The vocation crisis is a first-order anthropological revelator. It renders visible, with particular acuity, what the crisis of the ecologies of interior availability produces in one of its most demanding domains. For a vocation is precisely one of the human realities most demanding in terms of anthropological conditions. The vocation crisis is therefore not only an ecclesial or religious crisis. It is the most acute symptom of a broader anthropological crisis.

#### **5. Towards a pastoral of the conditions of listening**

If our analysis is correct, it implies a profound renewal of what vocational pastoral care adapted to the algorithmic age could be. Such pastoral care would begin by protecting and recreating the conditions of listening. Before even speaking of vocation, it would work to restore the interior spaces in which a call can be heard. It would take seriously the developmental dimension of vocational availability. And it would recognise that vocational accompaniment in our era demands a new competence: that of distinguishing vocational difficulty of a spiritual and moral order from difficulty of an anthropological and ecological order.

## **PART V — THEOLOGY OF DISCERNMENT IN SATURATED ENVIRONMENTS AND ECCLESIOLOGY OF SILENCE**

*What spiritual institutions must become*

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### **1. Discernment: an ancient reality in a radically new context**

The discernment of spirits is one of the oldest and most sophisticated practices of the Christian spiritual tradition. Ignatius of Loyola gave it its most systematic formulation in the Western tradition. The Buddhist tradition has developed remarkable cartographies of mental states. All these traditions of discernment rest on a common anthropological presupposition: it is possible to distinguish, in the interior space of the subject, movements of different nature. What our era radically modifies is the context in which this discernment must be exercised.

### **2. Three structural obstacles to contemporary discernment**

Spiritual discernment supposes three conditions that contemporary digital environments fragilise most systematically. The capacity for stopping is undermined by the continuity of sollicitations. The memory of interior movements is fragilised by attentional fragmentation — discernment supposes being able to compare experiences across time, and this comparison supposes an interior memory that is not constantly reinitialised. The patience with uncertainty is eroded by the culture of immediacy.

### **3. A theology of discernment in saturated environments: founding principles**

First principle: prior suspension as the condition of discernment. In a saturated milieu, discernment does not begin with the observation of interior movements — it begins with the creation of the conditions of their observability. Before asking which interior movement orients towards truth, one must ask how to create sufficient interior space for these movements to be perceptible.

Second principle: the distinction between deep call and surface resonance. In a milieu saturated with competing interpellations, the primary difficulty of discernment is no longer to choose between good and evil — it is to distinguish what resonates in depth from what resonates on the surface. The subject discerning in such a context must learn to pose a new question: does this resonance deepen over time, or does it quickly vanish to be replaced by another?

Third principle: reading the A2R effects in duration. Discernment in saturated environments must learn to evaluate not only the immediate quality of the calls received, but their effects in the A2R structure of the subject over time. An authentic call progressively increases the subject's capacity for attention and availability, widens its interior space, stabilises its deep desire, and deepens its interior resonance.

#### **4. The ecclesiology of silence: what spiritual institutions must become**

If the anthropological conditions of interior availability and discernment are ecologically conditioned, then spiritual institutions have a new and considerable responsibility. They can no longer confine themselves to proposing spiritual practices to individuals they suppose capable of receiving them. They must become protectors of the anthropological conditions of interior availability. This is what we call an ecclesiology of silence.

This ecclesiology of silence implies several profound institutional conversions. The liturgical conversion: the liturgy has an irreplaceable anthropological function — forming subjects capable of interior availability — which can only be preserved on condition of resisting the adaptation pressures that would empty it of its substance. The conversion of spaces: places of worship are physically distinct spaces from the ordinary flux — an anthropological necessity in environments where every space is progressively colonised. The conversion of community rhythms: the great traditions structured the life of their members through rhythms that structurally guaranteed spaces of interior availability. The conversion of spiritual formation: explicitly integrating the ecological dimension of interior availability.

#### **5. The Church as a sign of anthropological contradiction**

There is a prophetic dimension to the ecclesiology of silence that we cannot leave implicit. A spiritual community that deliberately preserves spaces of silence, rhythms of availability, and practices of slow discernment in a world of permanent capture poses a sign of contradiction at the heart of the civilisation that surrounds it. It witnesses to the possibility of another way of inhabiting time, space and interiority. It says, by its very existence, that the human being is not reducible to an exploitable unit of attention.

## **6. The dialogue with Magnifica Humanitas: convergences and surpassing**

It would be artificial, in the context of the simultaneous publication of the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* of Leo XIV, not to situate our approach explicitly within this dialogue. The encyclical, centred on attention to the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, testifies to an acute awareness that the technological revolution underway poses fundamental anthropological questions. This is a gesture of great historical pertinence, and we welcome it.

But our approach situates itself at a level that the encyclical, in its magisterial logic, cannot fully reach. Our contribution is therefore not alternative to *Magnifica Humanitas* – it is complementary, and it offers what magisterial texts cannot give themselves: the founding anthropological substrate that explains why ethical and pastoral recommendations, however just, will remain insufficient if not accompanied by a transformation of the ecological conditions in which subjects form their capacities for response.

## CONCLUSION — THE RESPONSE THAT RESISTS

*What the algorithmic age cannot abolish — and what this demands of us*

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### 1. What we have built

We departed from a displacement — the only one that allows the question of the digital to be posed at the right level — and followed it to its most demanding consequences. This displacement can be formulated in one sentence: contemporary digital architectures do not only transform what human beings do — they transform the conditions in which human beings become capable of responding. And this transformation touches the heart of what theology has always sought to think: human freedom as the capacity for response to what calls from a depth that no system can reduce or substitute.

### 2. What the algorithmic age cannot abolish

We have not said that spiritual experience has become impossible. We have not said that God's call has been neutralised by algorithmic architectures. What we have said is that the anthropological conditions of listening to this call can be fragilised. The voice may continue to call in the gentle silence — but if silence is rendered structurally unavailable, the audibility of the voice diminishes.

And it is precisely here that what the algorithmic age cannot abolish resides: the capacity for response itself, in its most fundamental dimension, is not an attentional resource — it is a constitutive structure of the human being. *Respondeo ergo sum*: I respond, therefore I am. This capacity cannot be destroyed by digital architectures, because it is not the product of architectures — it is the condition of their very existence.

### 3. A2R as theological keystone

The Call, in its highest theological dimension, is what precedes the human being and convokes it to a response that surpasses it. In the algorithmic age, this call is

surrounded by a density of competing calls of unprecedented power. The theological question is not whether the divine call continues to exist — it does. The question is: how can the conditions of its audibility be preserved or restored?

The Response, in its full theological dignity, is the locus of human freedom. *Respondeo ergo sum* says that the human being does not constitute itself in the solitude of its thought, but in the quality of its response to what calls it. This response is threatened not in its existence — the human being continues to respond, always, to something — but in its freedom. Resonance, finally, is what the free response deposits in duration. It supposes time, continuity, and community.

#### **4. What we ask of spiritual institutions**

We ask spiritual institutions of all traditions three precise things. First, to name the problem at its real level — not only at the moral or pastoral level, but at the structural anthropological level. Then, to take their ecological responsibility — to become active protectors of interior availability as a common spiritual good. Finally, to enter the public debate — contributing to the most urgent question of our era with an anthropology of the human being as a being of response and a millennial experience of the formation of interior availability.

#### **5. Two open horizons**

This text is not a conclusion — it is a beginning. It opens two horizons. The first is a universal theology of discernment — a framework common to all contemplative traditions for thinking together what their respective wisdoms can contribute to the most urgent anthropological question of our era. The second is a political anthropology of grace — a new reflection, at the frontier of theology and political philosophy, on what a just society must do to preserve the conditions in which its members can still freely receive what calls them towards their greatest humanity.

#### **6. Final formulation**

*Contemporary digital architectures cannot abolish the call that precedes the human being and convokes it towards its greatest freedom. But they can, if we allow them to do so, saturate the interior space in which this call can be heard, fragment the interior continuity in which a free response can mature, and impoverish the depth of resonance in which this response can durably transform a human being and the world it inhabits.*

*The theology of response in the algorithmic age has as its mission — urgent, grounded, and we hope irrefutable — to name what is at stake at this level; to ground anthropologically why the conditions of free response must be preserved as a common good of all humanity; and to propose the frameworks within which spiritual institutions, human communities and civil societies can together take responsibility for this preservation.*

*For as long as a human being can still stop, listen in the silence to what calls it from further than all systems, and respond freely — something essential in the human being remains intact. And it is for that something that we write.*

## POSTFACE — A Corpus in Dialogue

*A note from the author on the relationship between this text and The Theology of Convergent Fractures*

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The attentive reader may have perceived, throughout these pages, the resonances of another text — published in this same Oramellon corpus, and whose title already speaks the depth of its own vocation: *The Theology of Convergent Fractures. Towards a Theology of the Integral Call*.

This is not the place to present that text in detail — it deserves to be read for itself, in its fullness. But it would be intellectually inexact not to say explicitly what the two publications share as a relationship: they are not two parallel texts. They are the two faces of the same theological edifice.

*The Theology of Convergent Fractures* departs from the outside. It departs from the face — the concrete face of the convergently fractured person of the twenty-first century: economically excluded, numerically invisible, ecologically vulnerable, politically inaudible. It maintains, with impressive scriptural and phenomenological rigour, that these faces are theophanic places — precise points in human history where God chooses to make himself present in an irreducible manner. And it grounds, in the kenosis of the Pauline Christ, the paradigm of every authentic response: entering from within into the condition of the fractured person, allowing oneself to be reached, consenting to be transformed by the encounter.

*The Theology of Response in the Algorithmic Age* departs from the inside. It departs from the interior space — that space of silence, availability, and deep attention without which no call can be truly heard, discerned and followed. It maintains that contemporary digital architectures structurally threaten these conditions of possibility of free response. And it seeks to ground theologically and anthropologically why this threat is a spiritual question of the first order.

The two texts meet at a precise point, which the reader of *The Convergent Fractures* will immediately recognise: thesis V of that text — digital poverty as the theologically primary fracture — names with prophetic acuity what *The Theology of Response* seeks to ground anthropologically. When *The Convergent Fractures* writes, in the lineage of Simone Weil, that the digital attention economy fragments, disperses, exhausts the capacity for attention — and in doing so destroys the capacity for love, it says from the outside — from the face of the fractured person — what *The Theology of Response* says from the inside.

Together, the two texts form a theological proposition that neither alone can form. *The Convergent Fractures* says: God calls from the fractures of the world — and he precedes us in all contemporary exclusions, including the most unprecedented. *The Theology of Response* says: the environments we build can structurally make it difficult to hear this call and to respond to it freely — and this difficulty is itself a fracture, perhaps the most interior and least visible of all.

Between these two texts there is a tension that is, precisely, the most fecund tension that contemporary theology has to maintain: between the transcendence of the call — which cannot be entirely neutralised by any system — and the fragility of the anthropological conditions of its reception — which can be structurally eroded by environments we have the duty to think and to transform. This tension is not a contradiction. It is the living heart of a theology that takes seriously both the primacy of grace and human responsibility in the formation of the conditions of its reception.

The reader who has traversed one of these two texts is invited to traverse the other — not to find the same ideas repeated in a different form, but to discover what each reveals of the other: the angles that one illuminates that the other presupposes, the depths that one sounds that the other skirts, the horizons that one opens that the other prepares.

For this is how a living theological corpus is built — not as a closed and self-sufficient system, but as an interior dialogue between texts that seek each other, respond to each other, and together approach what none of them could have reached alone.

*The Call always precedes. The Response belongs to you. The Resonance will come.*

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## BACK COVER

*What if the contemporary spiritual crisis were not primarily a crisis of belief — but a crisis of the conditions in which believing is still possible?*

At a time when the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* of Leo XIV calls the Church to think through the anthropological challenges of artificial intelligence, this text proposes the foundation that doctrinal and ethical approaches cannot give themselves: a rigorous anthropology of what digital architectures do, structurally, to the conditions of possibility of free human response.

The thesis is simple in its formulation, immense in its implications: contemporary digital environments do not only transform what human beings do — they transform the conditions in which human beings become capable of responding. To what calls them. To what convokes them towards their greatest freedom. To God himself.

Grounded in the Mahoukou Law and its triadic structure **Call — Response — Resonance**, this text maintains that theology has always been a theory of the call — and that the algorithmic age poses a new question, deeper than any it has previously answered: how can the anthropological conditions of spiritual listening be preserved in environments of permanent capture?

In five rigorously articulated movements, this text finds the concept of a *theology of interior availability*, rereads the crisis of vocations as a crisis of the ecologies of listening, proposes a theology of discernment in saturated environments, and sketches an *ecclesiology of silence* — what spiritual institutions must become to remain faithful to their deepest mission in the algorithmic age.

*A foundational text. An irreplaceable contribution to the most urgent theological debate of our time.*

**Christian Mahoukou** is a philosopher and theologian, founder of the Mahoukou Law and the A<sup>2</sup>R triadic structure. *The Theology of Response in the Algorithmic Age* is part of the **Oramellon** collection, the visionary and prospective line of *The Interpellation of the World*, in dialogue with *The Theology of Convergent Fractures* by the same author.

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— Oramellon · *The Interpellation of the World* —

Christian Mahoukou · 2026