

Regimes, Ages and Registers of Interpellation

Toward a Differential Phenomenology of the A2R Structure

Preliminary Note

This text constitutes the first systematic development of the open research agenda identified in the monograph presenting the Paradigm of the Anthropology of Interpellation. It draws upon the triadic structure A2R — Appeal, Response, Resonance — as defined therein, and explores its differential power in the face of the diversity of human milieus, life stages, and registers of existence. Further texts, forthcoming, will complement this first deployment.

Introduction — The A2R Structure Confronting the Diversity of Reality

The Paradigm of the Anthropology of Interpellation holds that all human existence is structured by a fundamental triad: the Appeal, the Response, the Resonance. This structure — designated by the acronym **A2R** — is not a metaphor among others. It claims a general anthropological scope: it describes the elementary form through which a subject constitutes itself by being solicited, by responding to that solicitation, and by inhabiting the space of meaning that this response opens in the world.

But such a claim immediately raises a critical question: if the A2R structure is universal, how does it account for the profound heterogeneity of human existences? Is the appeal received by a five-year-old child in a family setting of the same nature as the appeal experienced by a mystic in prayer, a scientist confronting an enigma, a prisoner in his cell, or a head of state facing an irreversible decision? Is the resonance produced by a response in the biological register comparable to that generated by an ethical commitment or a spiritual conversion?

These questions are not objections to the paradigm. They are its necessary extension. For a paradigm that claims generality must precisely show how it modulates without dissolving — how it remains identical in its form while differentiating itself in its realizations. This is the task the present text undertakes.

The stakes are twofold. It is first a matter of preserving the **theoretical force** of the paradigm against two symmetrical pitfalls: sociological relativism, which would dissolve the A2R structure into the pure contingency of contexts, and excessive abstraction, which would empty it of any grip on reality. It is then a matter of deploying its **heuristic fecundity** by showing how the triad Appeal-Response-Resonance modulates according to milieus, shifts according to life stages, stratifies according to registers, and grows more complex according to the temporality proper to existence.

We shall proceed in seven articulated moments. The first establishes the fundamental distinction between the formal universality of the A2R structure and the historical variability of its realizations. The next four deploy this variability according to milieus, life stages, registers, and pathologies of interpellation. The sixth introduces the hermeneutic dimension of retroactive temporality. The seventh proposes a structural extension of the model — A2R³ — before the conclusion opens the perspective of a relational ontology.

I. Formal Universality and Historical Variations

The first difficulty encountered by the paradigm of interpellation is of an epistemological order. If all existence is structured by appeal, response, and resonance, then this structure seems to apply to situations so different that one may rightly ask whether it still says anything precise. Does the claimed universality not risk being merely the mask of an empty generality?

The answer lies in a distinction that twentieth-century linguistics made familiar, and which the anthropology of interpellation may legitimately appropriate: the distinction between the **fundamental form** and its **historical realizations**.

Modern linguistics, from Saussure to Chomsky, despite their profound theoretical divergences, showed that the human capacity for language is universal — it belongs to the species — while particular languages are indefinitely diverse. This universality is not an empty abstraction: it designates a structure of possibility that always realizes itself in a determinate language, without ever being exhausted by it. Similarly, the A2R structure designates the **transcendental form** according to which every human subject constitutes

itself in relation — not a fixed content, but a fundamental disposition to receive appeals, to respond to them, and to inhabit the resonance of those responses.

This universality must not, however, be understood in the sense of a logical necessity or a formal structure of isolated consciousness. It designates rather a relational condition of human existence: the impossibility for a subject to constitute itself independently of the solicitations that reach it and the responses it brings to them. The anthropology of interpellation therefore does not describe an already-constituted subject; it describes the very movement of its relational constitution.

An appeal cannot be reduced to a stimulus. The stimulus provokes a reaction; the appeal opens a space of response. Where reaction is commanded by immediate causality, response presupposes a margin of interpretation, differentiation, and sometimes refusal. It is this openness that constitutes the anthropological heart of interpellation.

This distinction makes it possible to avoid the two pitfalls mentioned. Against sociological relativism — of which Bourdieu would here be the most rigorous critical interlocutor¹ —, it affirms that variations in milieu, age, or register do not produce radically different structures, but **regimes** of one and the same fundamental structure. Against excessive abstraction, it recognizes that this structure is never observed in a pure state: it is always already embodied in a milieu, borne by a body at a determinate age, engaged in a particular register of existence.

The A2R structure is universal in its form; it is historical in its regimes.

This preliminary proposition governs all that follows.

One difficulty nevertheless remains open: if the subject is constituted by interpellation, can one still consider that it pre-exists the responses it gives? Or must one think that the subject itself emerges progressively in the process of appeal, response, and resonance? This question will accompany discreetly all the analyses that follow.

II. Milieus as Regimes of Interpellation — The Notion of Appeal Field

¹Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Sens pratique*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, notably the developments on habitus as a system of durable dispositions that mediate every response to a situation — which raises the question, to be addressed, of the freedom of the interpellated subject in the production of its response.

A milieu is not a simple backdrop. Nor is it a neutral context in which interpellations would occur by chance. A milieu is a **selective structure**: it renders certain appeals audible and represses others into inaudibility. It configures possible responses and orients resonances toward determinate forms of meaning. In this sense, each milieu constitutes what we propose to call an **appeal field** — a structured space within which the A2R triad unfolds according to a dominant tonality.

Every appeal field is likewise a field of selective deafness. In rendering certain appeals audible, it simultaneously contributes to obscuring others. No milieu is therefore a simple amplifier of meaning; it is also a filter. The anthropology of interpellation must consequently attend as much to appeals that have become inaudible as to those that are heard.

This notion of appeal field makes it possible to surpass two symmetrical insufficiencies. On one side, a purely determinist sociology — the kind Bourdieu radicalizes in his theory of fields² — would tend to reduce the response to a simple reproduction of incorporated dispositions, thereby denying the constitutive freedom of the interpellated subject. On the other, a purely subjective phenomenology would ignore that the appeal is always already mediated by collective structures of meaning. The notion of appeal field holds both demands together: it recognizes the formative power of the milieu without dissolving the responsibility of the subject who responds.

It is necessary, however, to distinguish the appeal field from the source of the appeal. One and the same appeal may traverse several fields without identifying with any of them. The field renders the appeal audible, confers upon it a form of intelligibility and orients possible responses; it is not necessarily its origin. This distinction will be particularly important when we address vocational or spiritual appeals.

Four appeal fields merit distinction here, not as an exhaustive list, but as paradigmatic configurations.

The family milieu

The family milieu constitutes the first appeal field traversed by every human subject. The appeals heard there are of an affective, identitary, and genealogical order. They pose

²Pierre Bourdieu, 'Quelques propriétés des champs', in *Questions de sociologie*, Paris, Minuit, 1984, pp. 113-120.

founding questions: *Who am I? From whom do I come? Who loves me and to whom do I owe love?* Before being able to respond, the child is named. Nomination perhaps constitutes the most originary form of human interpellation: to be called by one's name is to be summoned to a singular existence within a world already inhabited by others. The dominant resonance produced there is one of **belonging** — the sense of being inscribed in a lineage, of having a place within a network of relations that precedes and exceeds the individual. It is in this field that the most archaic layer of identity is formed — what Ricœur would call the *idem* — identity as sameness — before the subject is even able to narrate itself.³

The school milieu

The school milieu introduces a rupture in the regime of interpellation. Appeals become cognitive, normative, and performative. The fundamental question is no longer *who am I?* but *what do you know? what are you worth? what can you succeed at?* The subject encounters for the first time a systematic external evaluation of its responses. The dominant resonance shifts from belonging toward **social recognition** — a recognition which, unlike that of the family milieu, is conditional and reversible. It is here that the passage occurs, often painfully, from a regime primarily founded on belonging to one where recognition becomes more explicitly dependent upon performance and evaluation.

The professional milieu

The professional milieu shifts the regime once more. Appeals there are productive, functional, and strategic: *What can you contribute? What is your output? What is your usefulness within this system?* The dominant resonance becomes **efficacy** — a form of meaning measured by impact produced, result obtained, contribution recognized. This appeal field is the one where the subject most risks being reduced to its function — where the being-interpellated yields to the being-exploited, to borrow a distinction Marx had intuited without possessing the conceptual tools to formulate it in terms of interpellation.⁴

It is nonetheless necessary to distinguish the functional appeal from the vocational appeal. Certain professional activities are not reducible to the execution of a function:

³Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, notably *Studies III and VI on narrative identity*.

⁴Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. M. Milligan, New York, International Publishers, 1964. The notion of alienation designates precisely this reduction of the subject to its labor power — which the anthropology of interpellation would reformulate as the crushing of the being-interpellated onto one of its functions.

they are experienced as a response to an interior demand or to a responsibility toward others. The professional field then appears as the site of intersection of several regimes of interpellation.

The religious or spiritual milieu

The religious or spiritual milieu constitutes an appeal field of a qualitatively different nature. Appeals there take on a vocational, symbolic, and transcendent dimension. The fundamental question is: *What does that which exceeds me want of me?* Resonance there is no longer measured by criteria of belonging, recognition, or efficacy, but by categories of another order: conversion, sanctification, communion, accomplishment. This appeal field is also the one where the A2R structure attains its most radical depth — because the appeal there is lived or interpreted as coming from a source that infinitely exceeds any particular human milieu.

Regimes of interpellation can enter into conflict. The professional appeal and the family appeal can contradict each other. The social appeal and the spiritual appeal can frontally oppose one another. Concrete human existence is not the harmonious unfolding of a single appeal field, but **the always fragile and always renegotiated articulation of several competing appeal fields.** This conflictuality is not a pathology of interpellation — we shall return to this in Section V — but its normal condition within a plural and temporally extended existence.

Conversely, appeal fields can also enter into relations of mutual reinforcement. Certain responses produce resonances converging across several fields simultaneously. Human existence therefore reduces neither to competition nor to harmony among appeals, but unfolds in a complex play of tensions, trade-offs, and mutual fecundations.

Appeal fields are not immutable. They transform historically. Certain societies grant primacy to the family field, others to the religious field, still others to the economic or political field. A fully developed anthropology of interpellation will thus need to articulate the analysis of appeal fields with a history of the regimes of audibility proper to different cultural formations.

One might therefore define **existential maturity** not as the absence of conflicts between appeal fields, but as the capacity to inhabit them simultaneously without allowing oneself

to be reduced to any one of them — what Charles Taylor designates as the quest for the *sources of the self* in their irreducible plurality.⁵

III. Life Stages as Displacements of the Dominant Pole

If milieus constitute differentiated appeal fields in the space of existence, life stages trace its **temporal differentiation**. A subject does not traverse the same appeal fields in the same way at five, twenty, fifty, or eighty years of age. But the variation does not concern only the contents of the appeals received. It touches something more structural: **the respective place occupied by the three poles of the A2R triad according to the moment in life where the subject finds itself.**

The hypothesis we formulate here is the following: each life stage is characterized by a **dominance** of one of the three poles over the other two. This dominance does not signify the absence of the other two moments — the triad remains whole at every age — but it designates the center of gravity around which existence organizes itself at a given period. In this sense, life stages are not simply steps of a linear development: they are **different configurations of the same A2R structure**. This typology does not claim to describe exhaustively all cultural constructions of age. It designates existential polarities susceptible of receiving very diverse historical and cultural translations.

Childhood

Childhood is the time of the dominance of the Appeal. The child receives more appeals than it produces. It is named before it can name itself. It is educated, questioned, recognized, shaped by appeals that precede and exceed it on all sides. The entire world speaks to it before it knows how to respond.

More deeply still, childhood is the time when the subject progressively learns to recognize something as an appeal. Before being able to distinguish a demand, an invitation, a prohibition, or a promise, it must enter the symbolic world where such distinctions become possible. At bottom, interpellation itself has a genesis.

⁵Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1989.

The fundamental question that secretly structures this period could be stated thus: *Who calls me, and from what depth?* It is in this period that the most archaic layers of subjectivity are constituted — what Winnicott designated as the *good enough environment*⁶, and which the anthropology of interpellation would reformulate as the **primordial appeal field**: the one whose quality largely determines the subject's subsequent capacity to receive appeals without being crushed by them, or to refuse them without cutting itself off from them.

Youth

Youth marks the displacement toward the dominance of the Response. The individual begins to choose, to commit, to refuse, to experiment. The question dominating this period is: *What am I going to respond to — and what am I going to refuse to respond to?* Refusal is not here the failure of interpellation but one of its most decisive modalities. It is often by refusing certain appeals that the subject discovers those to which it truly consents to respond. In no way should our theory of interpellation be interpreted as a theory of obedience. Youth is the age of founding commitments, of necessary ruptures, of identifications and disidentifications. Erikson had sensed the centrality of this period in the formation of identity⁷; what the paradigm of interpellation adds is the understanding of this identity not as a substance to be discovered, but as a **response to be constructed** in the face of the plurality of competing appeals.

Adulthood

Adulthood is the time of the dominance of Resonance. The responses accumulated over the years sediment into identity, responsibility, trajectory. Not all responses, however, sediment with the same intensity. Some become structuring events that durably reorganize existence; others remain peripheral. A phenomenology of resonance should thus distinguish weak, strong, and transformative resonances. The adult subject is no longer merely the one who responds — it is the one who *is* its responses, who assumes them and bears their consequences in the world. The dominant question becomes: *What do my responses produce in the world, and what am I building or destroying through them?* This is

⁶Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, London, Tavistock, 1971. *The notion of the good enough environment designates the minimal conditions of a reception that permits the subject to constitute itself without being invaded or abandoned.*

⁷Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, New York, Norton, 1950; and *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, New York, Norton, 1968.

the age where resonance ceases to be a simple echo and becomes an **engaged responsibility** — the capacity to *answer for* what one has responded to.

Old age

Old age introduces an unprecedented temporal figure: that of **retrospective resonance**. The aging subject is engaged in the work — often silent, sometimes painful — of interpreting what has resonated throughout its existence: *What will have finally resonated from my existence? What will I have built, transmitted, missed?* Old age is also the moment when the subject may itself become a living memory and a source of interpellation for subsequent generations. What it transmits is not only a material or symbolic heritage, but a certain manner of having responded to the appeals of existence. What is at stake is no longer only the response, but **the interpretation of the response** — what Erikson called the challenge of integrity against despair⁸, and which the anthropology of interpellation reformulates as the passage from being-responding to being-interpreting.

The passages from one configuration to another do not always occur progressively. Certain biographical crises — a bereavement, an illness, a decisive encounter, a conversion — can suddenly redistribute the relations between appeal, response, and resonance. Life stages must therefore be understood as dominant polarities rather than airtight compartments.

These dominances are not fatalities. In this sense, life stages trace a **vocation** rather than a necessity: the vocation to traverse, by fully inhabiting them, the three moments of the triad. One must therefore distinguish chronological age from **interpellative age**: the dominances described here do not correspond mechanically to years lived; they designate existential configurations susceptible of being maintained, returning, or transforming over the course of a single life.

These temporal configurations are in close dialogue with what we shall develop in Section VI on retroactive temporality: the fact that resonance retrospectively reinterprets the appeal. This dialogue between life stages and the temporality of understanding constitutes one of the most fecund articulations of the paradigm.

⁸Erik H. Erikson, *ibid.* *The eighth stage of psychosocial development — ego integrity versus despair — corresponds to what we designate as the retrospective resonance of old age.*

IV. Registers of Existence — Toward a Hierarchy of Interpellations

Milieus differentiate interpellation in social space. Life stages differentiate it in the time of a life. But there exists a third dimension of variation, more fundamental still: that of **registers of existence — levels of reality** within which the subject is susceptible of being interpellated, of responding, and of producing resonance.

Are the appeal of hunger, the appeal of a friend, the appeal of moral conscience, and the appeal of God simply different contents of the same formal structure? Or do they represent irreducibly distinct forms of interpellation, calling for qualitatively different responses and producing incomparable resonances?

Our response is nuanced. The A2R structure remains formally identical across all registers. But registers of existence are not simply juxtaposed: they are ordered according to a **hierarchy of appeals**, that is, according to the increasing depth of the subject's engagement they require. This hierarchy is not a scale of value in the sense that lower registers would be contemptible — each is necessary and legitimate in its own order. It designates rather a **stratification**: each superior register presupposes the inferior registers while surpassing them toward a dimension of meaning that is irreducible to them.

The term hierarchy must be understood in a phenomenological and not a normative sense: an order of depth in the engagement of the subject, not a superior dignity accorded to certain registers over others.

The biological register

The biological register constitutes the foundation of all interpellation: hunger, pain, fatigue, desire, but also pleasure, vitality, bodily impetus, and all the forms of sensory joy through which the body manifests its power of existing. The resonance produced is the **maintenance of life**: an elementary form of meaning, but foundational, without which no other register can open. Foucault was right to emphasize that this register is never purely natural — it is always already traversed by power devices.⁹ But to reduce biological

⁹Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. A. Sheridan, New York, Pantheon, 1977; and *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. R. Hurley, New York, Pantheon, 1978.

interpellation to an effect of power is to miss what is irreducible in it: a suffering body calls, and this appeal precedes all discursive construction.

The psychological register

The psychological register opens where the biological no longer suffices. Appeals take the form of desires, traumas, aspirations, anxieties. Responses mobilize psychic strategies — defenses, sublimations, elaborations — which Freud showed to be largely subtracted from conscious mastery.¹⁰ The resonance produced is the **formation of personality** — the emergence of a singular subjective configuration. It is here that interpellation meets the unconscious: every response is also the fruit of what, within us, responds without our having decided it.

The psychological register is also the one where **self-interpellation** appears: the subject becomes capable of summoning itself, questioning itself, making promises to itself or reproaching itself for certain responses.

The social register

The social register introduces the dimension of collective alterity: norms, expectations, roles, institutional injunctions. Responses oscillate between conformity and resistance. The resonance produced is twofold: outwardly, **reputation** or **status**; inwardly, the construction of what Mead called the social *self*¹¹ — that dimension of identity which constitutes itself in the gaze and reaction of others.

The ethical register

The ethical register marks a qualitative threshold. The interpellations heard there present themselves as demands that solicit the subject beyond its immediate interests alone. The ethical appeal is that of duty, responsibility, justice — and it distinguishes itself from the social appeal precisely in that it can oppose it. The ethical response is a **moral decision** in the strong sense. The resonance produced is **conscience** itself — not as a simple sentiment, but as an interior space where the subject inhabits and evaluates its own responses. Levinas showed decisively that this ethical appeal takes originally the form of

¹⁰Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, trans. J. Strachey, New York, Norton, 1966.

¹¹George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934.

the face of the other — a face that says *thou shalt not kill* before any law has been formulated.¹²

The spiritual register

In spiritual traditions, the spiritual register appears as the level where appeals are interpreted as engaging the ultimate meaning of existence: transcendence, vocation, the absolute — God, the Wholly Other, the Sacred, or simply that which gives meaning to the whole. Responses engage the subject in its totality: faith, quest, conversion, contemplation. The resonance produced designates not a state but an **accomplished relation**, in which the subject discovers itself fully constituted by the appeal to which it has responded.

A further elaboration might lead to distinguishing a proper **aesthetic register**, characterized by the appeals of beauty, of the work, of the sensible form, whose responses and resonances cannot be reduced either to the psychological or to the ethical.

Concrete human existence is always an interpellation across several simultaneous registers, whose richness lies precisely in this simultaneity. If registers of existence are stratified, then **resonance** itself stratifies accordingly — producing resonance within oneself, in others, and in the world simultaneously. It is precisely this that the A2R³ extension will seek to formalize.

V. Pathologies of Interpellation — Disruptions of the A2R Cycle

If the A2R structure is constitutive of human existence, then certain forms of suffering can be reread as **disruptions of the interpellation cycle**. This reading does not aim to substitute itself for clinical approaches to psychic suffering. It claims to illuminate them from another angle: from the relational structure within which the subject is engaged — or from which it is cut off.

The term pathology must be understood in a phenomenological and anthropological sense rather than a strictly medical one: disruptions susceptible of engendering suffering or existential impoverishment, without prejudging their clinical status.

¹²Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. A. Lingis, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1969, Part III: 'The Face and Exteriority'.

Appeal deficit

Appeal deficit occurs when the subject ceases to be the recipient of significant appeals: no one calls me, no one names me, I count for no one. This is not simply loneliness — it is a **subjective destitution**, an exclusion from existence through the drying up of its sources of interpellation. Rosa described under the name of *alienation* this condition of a subject whom the world no longer touches, no longer solicits, leaves indifferent.¹³ Appeal deficit may result either from an effective rarefaction of significant interpellations, or from the subject's incapacity to receive them as such — the suffering then lying not in the absence of appeals but in their inaudibility.

Appeal saturation

Appeal saturation constitutes the symmetrical and typically contemporary pathology: notifications, injunctions, permanent solicitations overlapping without hierarchy or pause. When everything interpellates with the same urgency, nothing can truly call anymore. The saturated subject cannot respond to anything with depth; response becomes reaction, and resonance is impossible for lack of silence. This constitutes a form of **asphyxiation of interpellation**.

Incapacity to respond

The subject receives appeals but finds itself unable to respond: depressive paralysis, Marxian alienation, or what Seligman named *learned helplessness*¹⁴ — the conviction that all response is vain. In all these cases, the **constitutive freedom of the response** is affected. To this incapacity is sometimes added an incapacity to discern among several possible responses: paralysis resulting not from absence of options, but from their excess.

Absence of resonance

The subject responds — it acts, commits, produces — but nothing produces meaning, leaves a trace, reverberates in the world. Rosa described it as the experience of a world grown mute.¹⁵ A response without resonance is a response without future — and an existence without future is an existence in peril. It is nevertheless necessary to distinguish

¹³Hartmut Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration*, trans. J. Trejo-Mathys, Malmö, NSU Press, 2010, pp. 43-67.

¹⁴Martin E. P. Seligman, *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death*, San Francisco, Freeman, 1975.

¹⁵Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, trans. J. Wagner, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2019, Chapter XIV.

the absence of resonance from **deferred resonance**: certain responses remain long silent before producing effects of meaning that only appear after the fact.

A fifth figure might be distinguished: the **irresolvable conflict of appeals**. The suffering there proceeds from the simultaneous existence of several equally legitimate and mutually incompatible appeals. Certain human tragedies are born precisely from this impossibility of responding fully to all the appeals that demand our fidelity.

A society that fails on any one of these three points structurally produces suffering — not by accident, but by anthropological default. Such a perspective opens the possibility of a social critique founded on interpellation itself. Institutions could be evaluated not only according to their efficacy or distributive justice, but also according to their capacity to render possible significant appeals, free responses, and lasting resonances.

VI. Retroactive Temporality — A2R as a Hermeneutic Circle

The canonical presentation of the A2R structure suggests an oriented sequence: Appeal precedes Response, which precedes Resonance. This sequence has an undeniable logical evidence. But this logical evidence does not always — nor even most often — correspond to **the lived order of experience**.

In a great number of existentially significant situations — a vocation, a decisive encounter, a conversion — the subject **acts first**, responds to something it does not yet know how to name, and only later discovers retrospectively the nature of the appeal to which it was responding. The subject then says: *So that is what was calling me. I did not yet know it, but I was already responding.* Retroactivity does not signify that the appeal is produced after the fact by interpretation. It signifies that its meaning is progressively unveiled through the course of response it has elicited. The appeal precedes the understanding of the appeal.

This phenomenon — the **retroactive temporality of interpellation** — reveals the constitutive hermeneutic dimension of A2R. The sequence ceases to be a simple causal chain and becomes a **circle of understanding**: the resonance produced by the response retrospectively illuminates the appeal that was at the origin — an appeal not yet fully understood at the moment it was received.

Appeal (received but not yet understood) → Response (engaged) → Resonance → Reinterpretation of the appeal → Appeal reread and deepened

This is no longer a line, but a **hermeneutic spiral**, not only interpretive but also generative — a structure in which each cycle of understanding deepens and reconfigures preceding cycles without annulling them.

It is necessary to distinguish resonance from signification. An experience may resonate before being understood, just as it may be understood without producing genuine resonance. The retroactive temporality of interpellation is precisely the movement by which resonance and understanding tend progressively to converge.

Dilthey had intuited that understanding of existence obeys a circular logic: one understands the whole of a life only from its parts, and the parts only from the whole.¹⁶ Heidegger's projective understanding — for whom existence always understands itself from the possibilities it anticipates — deepens this intuition. Gadamer radicalized it: all understanding is a **fusion of horizons**¹⁷ — the horizon of the past and the horizon of the present fusing into a new understanding possible at neither moment taken in isolation.

It is not only the appeal that is reconfigured by this fusion; it is also the subject itself. To understand differently the appeal received often means becoming other than the one who had initially responded to it.

Ricœur provides the most precise conceptual tool: **narrative identity**.¹⁸ A life is not understood as a succession of juxtaposed instants, but as a narrative whose meaning progressively emerges through emplotment — *mimesis* — linking episodes into a signifying whole. **The meaning of an interpellation is never entirely given at the moment it is received.** All existence is, in a profound sense, an **interpretation in progress** — an open work whose meaning is refined without ever definitively closing as long as life endures.

We propose to designate this dynamic as the **hermeneutic spiral of interpellation**: the process by which responses and their resonances progressively reconfigure the

¹⁶Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, trans. R. Makkreel and F. Rodi, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

¹⁷Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D. Marshall, New York, Crossroad, 1989, Part III.

¹⁸Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. III, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988; and *Oneself as Another*, Study VI.

intelligibility of received appeals. The past is therefore never entirely closed: it remains available to new understandings prompted by the resonances of the present.

Spiritual traditions have often held that certain resonances remain unfinished within the time of a life. The paradigm of interpellation does not settle this claim; it shows only that its formulation becomes intelligible once existence is understood as an open dynamic of appeal, response, and resonance.

VII. The A2R³ Extension — Resonance Within Oneself, in Others, in the World

Not every consequence of a response is necessarily a resonance. We reserve this term for effects that durably transform a subject, a relationship, or a world of meaning.

The third moment of the triad — Resonance — is not a simple moment. It is itself a triadic structure, comprising three simultaneous and mutually irreducible dimensions. We designate this extension by the acronym **A2R³**, where the exponent indicates that Resonance unfolds along three distinct axes: **resonance within oneself, resonance in others, and resonance in the world.**

This extension does not concern the three moments symmetrically. Appeal and Response remain analytically unitary. Resonance, by contrast, possesses a particular property of diffusion that deploys it simultaneously in several directions. It is this capacity for propagation that justifies its internal differentiation.

Resonance within oneself

Resonance within oneself designates the interior transformation produced in the subject that has given a response. Every authentic response modifies the one who gave it: it deepens self-understanding, reconfigures interior dispositions, displaces the existential center of gravity. This is what the spiritual tradition has named — conversion, maturation, growth, sanctification — and what contemporary psychology designates as post-traumatic development or personal growth.

Interior resonance does not always take the form of change. It may also manifest a deeper **fidelity to oneself**, when the response given reveals an orientation already present but not yet perceived.

Resonance in others

Resonance in others designates the wave of propagation that every response produces in the relational space of the subject. No response is ever closed upon itself: it affects, transforms, and in turn interpellates those who are its witnesses or recipients. This is precisely what Buber designated as the fundamental structure of the I-Thou¹⁹: the authentic response opens a space of reciprocity in which the other is itself transformed and, often, summoned to respond in turn. Resonance in others is thus **generative of new interpellations** — introducing a dimension of **infinite propagation** of appeal cycles.

Resonance in others does not always take the form of adherence. A response can arouse opposition, refusal, or conflict. Resonance here designates every significant transformation of the relational field, whether convergent or antagonistic.

Resonance in the world

Resonance in the world designates the transformation of collective and historical reality produced by every response engaged with sufficient depth and persistence. Certain responses continue to resonate centuries after the death of the one who gave them — a philosophical work, a founding act, a spiritual witness. Arendt had intuited this dimension in distinguishing *labor*, *work*, and *action*²⁰: it is in action — the response engaged in the public space — that the subject leaves a durable trace in the fabric of the common world.

It is necessary to distinguish the trace left in the world from the heritage effectively transmitted. Every response produces traces; only certain ones become heritages capable of continuing to generate interpellations beyond their original context.

To act is to produce resonance in the world — a resonance whose waves of propagation always exceed the intentions and lifespan of the one who acts.

No response is ever closed upon itself. Every authentic response simultaneously produces three types of waves — interior, relational, worldly — whose temporalities, reaches, and effects are mutually irreducible.

These three dimensions of resonance do not necessarily coincide. A response can produce a profound interior transformation without significantly modifying the world; conversely,

¹⁹ Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. W. Kaufmann, New York, Scribner, 1970.

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, Chapters IV and V.

certain historically decisive responses can leave their author interiorly torn. The analysis of the **divergences between forms of resonance** constitutes one of the major stakes of a fully developed anthropology of interpellation.

This reformulation makes of the paradigm of interpellation a **dynamic theory of the formation of human worlds**. Human worlds are not pre-existing backdrops: they are **the sedimented product of resonances accumulated** by the responses that subjects have given, throughout history, to the appeals that have constituted them.

A → Rp → Rs³

(Appeal → Response → Resonance within oneself / in others / in the world)

canonically designated: A2R³

with the hermeneutic precision acquired in Section VI:

Rs³ → Reinterpretation of the appeal → Appeal reread and deepened → new cycle

The A2R³ structure is at once a **structure of analysis** and a **generative structure** — accounting for the manner in which individual existences articulate themselves into collective worlds through the propagation and sedimentation of resonances.

Conclusion — Human Existence as an Architecture of Interpellations

The journey accomplished in this text had as its point of departure a question simple in appearance, but decisive for the future of the paradigm of the anthropology of interpellation: how can a structure as general as the triad Appeal-Response-Resonance account for the diversity of human existences without dissolving into abstraction?

The A2R structure now appears not as a uniform schema applied indiscriminately to all human situations, but as a fundamental form capable of differentiating itself according to a plurality of regimes without ever losing its own unity. The universality of interpellation is not that of a fixed identity; it is that of a structure sufficiently deep to welcome within itself the diversity of human worlds.

The exploration of milieus showed that all existence unfolds within appeal fields that select what can be heard, responded to, and recognized. Even situated, even shaped, even conditioned, the subject remains capable of responding.

The analysis of life stages revealed that the triad itself possesses a temporal dynamic. Childhood appears as the privileged time of the received appeal; youth as that of founding responses; adulthood as that of assumed resonances; old age as that of their retrospective interpretation.

The study of registers of existence permitted recognition that not all appeals engage the subject with the same depth. The subject appears as the being capable of simultaneously inhabiting several levels of reality and responding to appeals whose demands do not merge.

The examination of the pathologies of interpellation showed that human suffering can often be understood as a disruption of the circulation between appeal, response, and resonance. A human existence suffers not only from its interior wounds; it also suffers when the fabric of interpellations that connects it to the world is torn.

Reflection on retroactive temporality revealed that existence is not understood according to a simple linear succession of events. It is only through the resonances produced by its commitments that the initial appeal progressively unveils its meaning. The A2R structure is animated by a genuine **hermeneutic spiral** in which responses and their resonances ceaselessly reconfigure the intelligibility of received appeals. The human being is not only

a historical being; it is an **interpretive being** that continually returns to what it has lived in order to deepen its meaning.

The A2R³ extension illuminated that no response is ever closed upon itself. Every response transforms a subject, modifies a relational field, and leaves a trace in the common world. Thus unfold, throughout history, innumerable chains of interpellation where the responses of some become the appeals of others.

This journey will likewise have accomplished an unexpected displacement. The paradigm of interpellation presented itself, at its origin, as a theory of the constitution of the subject. But the A2R³ extension and the analysis of crossed resonances have revealed something more ample: a **theory of the relational genesis of human worlds**. The center of gravity has shifted — from the isolated subject toward the dynamics of propagation, from constitution toward transmission. A2R is no longer solely a theory of interpellation; it becomes a theory of the manner in which human worlds are constructed from responses that continue to resonate.

At the close of this journey, a more general intuition takes shape. The human being reveals itself as a being originally constituted by the interpellations it receives, the responses it engages, and the resonances it inhabits. Its identity is not a possession; it is a history of responses. Its freedom is not the absence of bonds; it is the capacity to respond within the very bonds that constitute it. Its world is not an exterior backdrop; it is the living sedimentation of resonances accumulated by generations of respondents.

To exist, henceforth, is not simply to be. It is to be called, to respond, to make resonate, and to become in turn a source of appeal for others.

Human worlds are woven of accumulated responses. They are the always unfinished history of the resonances left by those who responded to the appeals that constituted them.

And it is perhaps in this infinitely resumed history of the appeal, the response, and the resonance that there may be glimpsed one of the most profound forms of what it means to be human.

Postface — An Open Research Agenda for a General Anthropology of Interpellation

The preceding text constitutes the first systematic deployment of the open research agenda identified in the monograph presenting the Paradigm of the Anthropology of Interpellation. But this work merely opens a research program whose scope exceeds this first text. We indicate here, without claiming exhaustiveness, the projects that the anthropology of interpellation is called to invest in its further developments.

Freedom and responsibility in the space of response. If every response presupposes a margin of interpretation and refusal, the question of the freedom of the interpellated subject remains open. How to think a freedom that is neither the arbitrariness of a subject without attachments nor the simple execution of received determinations? This project engages a deepened dialogue with contemporary ethics, from Jonas to Ricœur, by way of theories of moral agency.

Chains of interpellation and transmission. The A2R³ extension introduced the idea that a subject's responses become appeals for others. How do chains of interpellation form? Which responses become heritages capable of continuing to call beyond their original context? This project opens toward a philosophy of tradition, collective memory, and symbolic debt.

Institutions as crystallizations of resonances. Institutions — familial, scholastic, religious, political, juridical — can be understood as durable crystallizations of collective responses to historical appeals: not merely structures of power or regulation, but stabilized forms of resonance that continue to orient appeals and configure possible responses.

A politics of interpellation. What forms of social organization, what public policies, what democratic institutions are best able to multiply significant appeals, create spaces for free response, and enable the conditions for authentic resonance? This project engages a dialogue with contemporary political philosophy — from Rawls to Honneth, by way of Arendt and Fraser.

A theology of the appeal. How does the paradigm of interpellation enter into dialogue with the great religious traditions — biblical, Quranic, Buddhist, animist — in their manner

of thinking the divine appeal, vocation, the response of faith, and the resonance of grace? This project is perhaps the one carrying the most original developments of the paradigm, particularly in the African context and in the dialogue of cultures.

An aesthetics of interpellation. How does art interpellate? What response does it demand? What resonance does it produce — within oneself, in the spectator, in culture? This project engages a philosophy of art and creation founded on the A2R structure.

A comparative anthropology of regimes of interpellation. Appeal fields vary according to cultures and epochs. A comparative anthropology would permit the description and understanding of how different cultural formations render certain appeals audible or inaudible, differently configure spaces of response, and valorize distinct forms of resonance.

These projects are not independent. They form the network of a coherent research program, articulated around a common conviction: human existence is fundamentally structured as a history of received appeals, engaged responses, and inhabited resonances. To deploy this conviction in all its theoretical and practical amplitude — such is the task this paradigm has set itself, and to which the texts to come intend to contribute.

To cite as: Christian Mahoukou, "Regimes, Ages and Registers of Interpellation. Toward a Differential Phenomenology of the A2R Structure", First Development of the Open Research Agenda of the Paradigm of the Anthropology of Interpellation, 2026.