

THE THREE CANONICAL DEFINITIONS

The triadic structure of interpellation (known as the Mahoukou Law)

Terminological Reference Document · Christian Mahoukou · 2026

Formulations stabilised following two dialogues with a HDR phenomenologist · Version 2 — 8 May 2026

Preliminary Note

This document records the three canonical definitions of the triadic structure of interpellation (known as the Mahoukou Law), as stabilised following a critical dialogue with a HDR phenomenologist. *The term structure designates here a stable descriptive configuration disclosed by eidetic variation, and not an independent ontological entity.* These formulations supersede all previous formulations on the same notions and are henceforth to appear consistently throughout the corpus. They serve as the *reference text* for all publications, journal submissions, and academic presentations.

The document specifies, for each definition, *what it definitively excludes* and *what it includes and stabilises* — so as to render impossible any psychologising, moralising, or metaphysical drift that earlier formulations left open.

A fourth section specifies the terminological decision regarding the use of the word "law" in academic publications.

I. Resonance

Canonical definition

"Resonance is the phenomenological index of a structural modification of the subject's relation to itself, to the other, or to the situation — a modification through which interpellation leaves a trace in the very horizon of relational lived experience. It designates neither an emotion, nor an affective intensity, nor a mere psychological effect of interpellation, but the descriptive mark that this modification has taken place."

What this definition definitively excludes

Resonance is NOT an emotion. It is NOT an affective feeling, however deep or lasting. It is NOT an observable behavioural change. It is NOT a measurable psychological effect. It is NOT a "result" of interpellation added secondarily to the structure as a contingent surplus.

Any formulation presenting Resonance as "what one feels after an intense interpellation" or as "the emotional impact of a significant exchange" is to be abandoned. Crucially: Resonance is the *phenomenological index* of a structural modification — not the modification itself. This precision prevents any substantialisation of Resonance as a mysterious inner force.

What this definition includes and stabilises

Resonance designates a **structural** modification — that is, a change in the very *form* of the subject's relation to the relational world, not in the content of that relation. It is not that the subject thinks or feels things differently — it is that the subject *is-in-relation* differently. The modification bears on the horizon of lived experience, not on the contents that populate it.

Resonance is the **irreducible third moment** of the triadic structure — not a secondary effect or a contingent result. Without the possibility of Resonance, what precedes ceases to be a genuine interpellation: it is a signal or a transaction. Resonance is thus the condition of retroactive intelligibility of the Call-Response dyad.

Note on the three former statuses of Resonance

The canonical formulation above resolves the earlier oscillation between three statuses: (1) existential transformation, (2) criterion of authenticity, (3) accomplishment of structure. These three aspects are now unified in the notion of the *phenomenological index of a structural modification of the horizon of relational lived experience*: the modification is existential (it touches the mode of being), it is a criterion (its absence reveals that the interpellation was simulated), and it accomplishes the structure (without it, the triad is formally empty). The canonical definition integrates all three without dissociating them.

II. The immanent normativity of interpellation

Canonical definition

"The normativity of interpellation is neither moral nor axiological. It designates the internal coherence required for an experience to be recognisable as interpellation by the subject itself."

What this definition definitively excludes

The normativity of interpellation is NOT a moral obligation (it is not "wrong" to fail to respond to a Call). It is NOT an axiological value (interpellation is not "good" or "bad"). It is NOT an external prescription imposed on the phenomenon from a pre-established ideal. It is NOT what the subject "ought" to do according to an external law.

In particular: the expression "*what ought to be*" is to be banished from academic publications, as it induces a deontological normativity foreign to phenomenology. It must be systematically replaced by:

"that without which the phenomenon ceases to be recognisable as such"

What this definition includes and stabilises

The normativity is **immanent**: it arises from the internal structure of the phenomenon itself, not from an external prescription. It says *that without which the interpellative phenomenon ceases to be recognisable as interpellation* — that is, a norm of internal phenomenal coherence, analogous to what makes a triangle without three angles not a deficient triangle but simply a non-triangle.

This immanent normativity is what allows the triadic structure to exercise a **critical** function without exercising a **prescriptive** one. It allows one to say: "Here, the interpellation has failed its own law" — without saying: "The agent acted wrongly." It is a phenomenological critique, not a moral judgement.

III. The conditional necessity of the triadic structure**Canonical definition**

"The triadic structure is not affirmed as an absolute necessity of the real, but as a conditional necessity of phenomenological recognition: for an experience to be identifiable as interpellation, it must be describable in terms of the moments of Call, Response, and Resonance."

What this definition definitively excludes

The triadic structure does NOT claim absolute or metaphysical necessity of the real (it is not affirmed that reality "is" necessarily triadic, nor that interpellation is a cosmological law). It does NOT claim absolute transhistorical or transcultural universality in the sense of a fixed essence holding for all possible beings. It does

NOT claim to refute empirical descriptions of social interaction by sociology or psychology.

The triadic structure does not replace Popper's criterion of falsifiability — it operates in a different register (eidetic rather than empirical), which Husserlian phenomenology rigorously grounds.

What this definition includes and stabilises

The necessity is **conditional**: it holds *for every experience we can legitimately recognise as interpellation from within lived human experience*. Within this domain and under this condition, the structure is necessary — because its imaginative suppression produces an internal contradiction (there is no longer an interpellation, but a signal, a transaction, or a constraint).

Conditional necessity is distinct from two regimes with which it must not be confused: (1) logical-formal necessity (which holds independently of all experiential content); (2) empirical regularity (which describes what frequently occurs). It occupies the register of *conditions of possibility of a type of experience* — a transcendental register in the broad sense, without presupposing a transcendental subject.

IV. Terminological decision on the word "law"

Formulation adopted for academic publications

In all texts intended for academic publication, the reference formulation will henceforth be:

"the triadic structure of interpellation (known as the Mahoukou Law)"

and no longer *"the Mahoukou Law"* alone. Philosophical content precedes the proper name. Description precedes proclamation. Structure precedes law.

Why this decision is adopted

The word "law" alone creates, in an academic context, an expectation of strong necessity, universality, and transhistorical stability that phenomenology cannot strictly sustain without exposing the corpus to accusations of implicit metaphysics or pseudo-scientificity. The adopted formulation **neutralises these expectations** without abandoning any of the content: it shows that what is primary is the descriptive structure, and that the name "Mahoukou" is an assumed singular anchoring — not a claim.

This decision does not diminish the corpus. It **protects** it and makes it **publishable**. What will sustain this work philosophically is not the name but the solidity of its distinctions — Call, Response, Resonance, impediment, accomplishment, immanent normativity, conditional necessity. If these elements are precisely stable and transmissible, the name will follow naturally.

Usage across different types of texts

- **Academic publications (articles, journals, proceedings):** "the triadic structure of interpellation (known as the Mahoukou Law)"
- **Founding texts of the corpus (manifesto, founding article):** "the Mahoukou Law" is permitted, with a note explaining the academic formulation
- **Non-academic contexts (educational, practical, IME/IMP):** "the Mahoukou Law" and the triad "Call · Response · Resonance"

These three canonical definitions serve as the stable terminological reference for the entire corpus. They were developed in dialogue with a HDR phenomenologist and incorporate those formulations that improve the phenomenological precision of the work. Any future reformulation must be measured against these definitions.

Call · Response · Resonance

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