

PHENOMENOLOGY OF INTERPELLATION

Triadic Structure, Impediment
and Accomplishment of Address

Call · Response · Resonance

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Analytical Summary

This manuscript proposes a rigorous phenomenological description of the phenomenon of interpellation — that fundamental experience of being addressed by another existence and of finding oneself constituted, by this address, as a responding subject. Against contemporary reductions that dissolve this phenomenon into the registers of behavioural interaction, cognitive processing, or social construction, it defends the thesis that interpellation possesses an irreducible triadic structure: Call, Response, Resonance.

This structure — called the Mahoukou Law — is expounded as an eidetic law in the Husserlian sense: not an observable empirical regularity, but the (conditionally) necessary condition of possibility of every phenomenon we can recognise as interpellation from within lived human experience. Three original contributions to contemporary phenomenology are developed: (1) the triad as co-originary organic structure rather than linear succession; (2) Resonance as an autonomous phenomenological category — condition of intelligibility of the Call-Response dyad rather than a mere added psychological effect; (3) dialogical impediment as an immanent normative category revealing, a contrario, the necessity of the complete structure.

The manuscript proceeds in five parts. Part I situates the phenomenological problem of address and its contemporary reductions. Part II expounds the triadic structure in each of its moments. Part III develops the internal modalities — impediment and accomplishment — as constitutive variations of the structure. Part IV establishes the phenomenological status of the law through eidetic variation and analysis of immanent normativity. Part V confronts the law with the approaches of Lévinas, Ricœur, Merleau-Ponty, and Bourdieu, to show what it owes them and what it adds.

Keywords: *interpellation · triadic phenomenology · Call · Response · Resonance · dialogical impediment · address · Mahoukou Law · eidetic structure · immanent normativity · eidetic variation · conditional necessity.*

General Introduction

The Problem of Interpellation and its Contemporary Reductions

1. The point of departure: an ordinary and fundamental experience

Someone enters a room and says your name. Before you have understood what they want, before you have decided to respond, something has occurred in you: you have been reached. Not informed — reached. Another existence has irrupted into your experiential space and has opened something there that was not present a moment before.

This experience is so ordinary that one risks missing it. And yet it is one of the most fundamental of human existence. To be interpellated — to receive a call that places one under obligation to respond and whose echo transforms the one who responds — constitutes an originary structure of relational life. It precedes great decisions, solemn commitments, lasting relations. It is present in the most everyday: a gaze that seeks ours, an extended hand, a silence that awaits us.

And yet this experience resists conceptualisation. It yields with difficulty to the available theoretical frameworks — not because it is obscure or rare, but precisely because it is too immediate, too lived from within, to be reduced without remainder to categories constructed from without.

2. The three major reductions and what they miss

Three major theoretical traditions attempt to account for the experience of interpellation — each with genuine legitimacy within its own register, each with a structural limit in its capacity to grasp what is phenomenologically at stake.

The interactional reduction

Interactional theories — from Goffman to Watzlawick, from the sociology of exchange to the pragmatics of communication — describe interpellation as an event of social interaction: two agents find themselves in a relation of co-presence, mutually influence each other, and adjust their behaviours in response to reciprocal signals. This description is precise and productive within its register. It allows mapping of exchange structures, identification of regularities, description of communicational dysfunctions.

But it misses something central: the manner in which an interaction is lived as addressed — as coming from someone and destined for someone. In a purely interactional model, two agents mutually influencing each other and two subjects interpellating each other are described by the same categories. Yet lived experience shows an irreducible difference: to be influenced is not to be interpellated. Influence acts on me from without. Interpellation constitutes me from within.

The cognitive reduction

Cognitive theories of communication — from information theory to theory of mind — describe interpellation as a process of reception, processing, and response to information-bearing signals. An agent emits a signal, another receives it, processes it according to their interpretive schemas, and produces a response. This model is powerful for accounting for the informational dimension of communication — for what circulates between subjects in terms of representational content.

But it does not account for the existential dimension of address: the fact that certain signals do not merely inform — they engage. The call of a beloved person is not a signal that informs: it is an address that demands. This difference between informing and engaging is phenomenologically fundamental — and it escapes all description in terms of information processing.

The sociological reduction

Sociological theories — from Durkheim to Bourdieu — interpret what is lived as coming from the other as an internalisation of social norms, an incorporation of objective structures, a projection of collective constraints into the space of individual experience. This perspective illuminates the historically and culturally constructed dimension of our normative sensibilities: why I am interpellated by one form of address rather than another does indeed depend on my social history.

But the genetic explanation does not replace structural analysis. Explaining how the interpellative structure was constituted in the history of a subject does not amount to explaining what this structure is — what constitutes it as such, independently of its history. Moreover, the phenomenon of normative surprise — being interpellated by what no internalisation had prepared — shows that the interpellative structure always exceeds what internalisation can produce.

3. The phenomenological question

In the face of these three reductions, the fundamental phenomenological question can be formulated with precision:

"How can an experience appear as being addressed to a subject — as coming from someone and destined for me?"

This question is not one of what causes an interaction, nor how it is processed cognitively, nor how it is socially produced. It bears on the structure of experience as it gives itself — on what must necessarily be the case for a phenomenon to appear as interpellation rather than as a mere event in the world.

4. The central hypothesis: the triadic structure

This manuscript advances the following hypothesis, developed and defended as an eidetic structure in the Husserlian sense:

Interpellation possesses an irreducible triadic structure — Call, Response, Resonance — whose alteration or interruption at any one of its moments constitutes what we call dialogical impediment. This structure is not an empirical description among others. It is a structure of intelligibility: without it, the phenomenon of address

cannot be thought as such — it slips toward ordinary interaction, signal processing, or social constraint.

The necessity claimed is a conditional necessity — not absolute, not metaphysically dogmatic. It says: for every phenomenon we can legitimately recognise as interpellation from within lived human experience, the triad is a necessary structure, because its contrary produces an internal contradiction, not a mere empirical rarity. This is precisely the type of necessity that phenomenology can legitimately claim.

5. Method: eidetic variation

The method adopted is that of eidetic variation, drawn from the Husserlian phenomenological tradition. It consists in imaginatively modifying the conditions of an experience in order to disclose what cannot vary without the phenomenon ceasing to be what it is. It proceeds not by accumulation of empirical cases — that would be induction — but by attempted suppression: seeking what whose absence produces an internal contradiction in the very definition of the phenomenon.

Applied to interpellation: can one suppress the Call and retain an interpellation? No — without an addressed Call, there is nothing to respond to. Can one suppress the Response? No — without the possibility of Response, the Call remains a dead letter, without phenomenological realisation. Can one suppress Resonance? It is here that the analysis becomes most subtle — and most original. One can imagine an exchange in which Call and Response have taken place without anything being transformed in either of the two subjects. But then something is lacking that retroactively reveals that interpellation has not taken place as such: it occurred at the surface, it did not reach its own depth. Resonance is not an added psychological effect — it is the internal criterion of the accomplishment of the structure.

6. Plan of the manuscript

The manuscript is organised in five parts corresponding to the five moments of phenomenological work.

Part I — The Problem of Address — situates the question within the contemporary philosophical field and expounds the insufficiencies of the three major reductions. It lays the conditions for adequate phenomenological description.

Part II — The Triadic Structure — expounds each of the three moments of the triad: the Call as donation of an address, the Response as constitution of the responding subject, Resonance as internal transformation and condition of intelligibility of the dyad.

Part III — The Internal Modalities — develops impediment and accomplishment as constitutive variations of the structure — not as exceptions to the law, but as a *contrario* revealers of its necessity.

Part IV — The Phenomenological Status — rigorously establishes the eidetic claim of the law through systematic eidetic variation and analysis of immanent normativity. It situates the Mahoukou Law within the contemporary epistemological landscape.

Part V — Critical Discussions — confronts the law with the approaches of Lévinas, Ricœur, Merleau-Ponty, and Bourdieu, to show what it owes them, what it surpasses, and what it brings that is specifically original.

Note on terminology: *We use the term interpellation in its strict phenomenological sense — being addressed by another existence in such a way as to find oneself constituted as a responding subject. This sense is distinct from the Althusserian usage (ideological interpellation) and from the current juridico-police usage. The precision of this sense will be one of the first results of Part I.*

PART I

The Problem of Address

From Reductions to Phenomenological Description

Chapter 1

The Reductions of Interpellation What Existing Theories Miss

1.1 The preliminary question: what is a reduction?

By reduction we do not mean here the phenomenological reduction in the Husserlian sense — the *epoché* that suspends presuppositions in order to return to experience. We mean, on the contrary, what it seeks to prevent: the gesture by which a phenomenon is explained through another type of phenomenon, judged to be more fundamental or more operational. To reduce interpellation to an interaction, to cognitive processing, or to

social internalisation is to explain the experience of address by something that is not itself an address — and thereby to lose what is phenomenologically proper to this phenomenon.

This gesture of reduction is not illegitimate within the registers proper to it. It becomes problematic when it claims to have said everything about a phenomenon of which it has in reality grasped only one aspect. Our task in this first chapter is therefore twofold: to acknowledge what each reduction rightly captures, and to locate precisely what it leaves without description.

1.2 The interactional reduction: what it sees and what it does not

Interactionist sociology — from Erving Goffman to Paul Watzlawick — has produced analyses of remarkable precision on the structures of human exchange. Goffman shows how social interactions are governed by implicit norms of self-presentation, face-maintenance, and mutual adjustment. Watzlawick draws out the pragmatic axioms of communication — one cannot not communicate, all behaviour is communication, exchanges inscribe themselves in recurring patterns.

What these analyses capture is real and valuable: the social and normed dimension of all exchange, the way in which behaviours mutually adjust, the repeatable structure of interactions. What they do not capture: the difference between a mutual adjustment and an encounter — between two agents who co-regulate and two subjects one of whom is reached by the other's presence in a way that cannot be reduced to behavioural adjustment.

This difference is not an emotional surplus added to cold interaction. It is structural: in a genuine encounter, something opens in each subject — a space of possibility that interaction alone does not produce. It is this opened space that the phenomenology of interpellation seeks to describe.

1.3 The cognitive reduction: signal processing vs. the experience of address

Cognitive theories of communication — from information theory to theory of mind — have produced powerful models for accounting for the informational dimension of exchange. In these models, a successful communication is one in which the information emitted by one agent is correctly received and processed by another.

The phenomenological problem is not with this model — it lies in what it implicitly presupposes. It presupposes that what takes place in an interpellation is essentially a transfer of information — that the principal dimension of address is its representational content. Yet phenomenological experience shows that in genuine interpellation, the propositional content is often secondary in relation to the dimension of address itself. What transforms is not always what was said — it is the fact that it was said, by this person, at this moment, in this manner.

Jordan says to Malik: "He was the only one who understood how I think." The informational content of this phrase is minimal — Malik already knew. What reaches Malik is not the information contained in the phrase. It is the fact that Jordan confides this to *him* — to him, now, in this corridor. Address takes precedence over content. And it is address that the cognitive model cannot describe.

1.4 The sociological reduction: genesis vs. structure

Critical sociology — from Durkheim to Bourdieu — has rigorously shown how experiences lived as interior are in reality socially constructed. What I experience as my moral conscience, my sense of honour, my shame or pride is in large part the product of a progressive incorporation of social norms, of an internalisation of objective structures that subsequently present themselves as subjective certainties.

This perspective is irrefutable within its register. It illuminates the historically constructed dimension of our normative sensibilities. But it commits a category mistake in claiming to have said everything about the phenomenon when it has rendered a genetic account of it. Husserl rigorously distinguished the genetic question — how did this phenomenon come to appear in the history of a subject? — from the eidetic question — what is the structure of this phenomenon, independently of its history? These two questions belong to two distinct analyses. One does not absorb the other.

Moreover, sociological reduction encounters a phenomenon it cannot explain without contradicting itself: normative surprise. If all lived normativity were an internalisation, I could only be interpellated by what my incorporated structures had already anticipated. Yet experience — and particularly experience in limit situations — shows that the most transformative interpellations are often those that no incorporation had prepared. The face of a stranger, the unexpected silence of a young person one had believed absent, the

question of a child that disturbs an adult certainty: these are Calls that arrive from where they were not expected.

1.5 What the reductions have in common: the third person

The three reductions share a fundamental formal characteristic: they describe interpellation from outside — in the third person. They describe what happens between agents, within systems, according to mechanisms. They do not describe what it is to be interpellated — from within, in the first person, before all reflection.

It is precisely here that the irreducibility of the phenomenon resides. There is something it is like to be interpellated — an immediate, pre-reflective, lived certainty that precedes all third-person description and that all third-person description seeks, without ever fully succeeding, to encircle. This lived certainty is not a mysterious residue escaping science — it is the phenomenon itself, in its most originary dimension.

"Third-person theories seek to explain interpellation. Phenomenology seeks to describe it — from within, at the level of what is lived. It is not the same task. And because it is not the same task, both are necessary."

*Bibliographical note: This chapter draws primarily on Erving Goffman (*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday, 1959), Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin, Don Jackson (*Pragmatics of Human Communication*, Norton, 1967), Pierre Bourdieu (*The Logic of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Polity Press, 1990; *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. R. Nice, Polity Press, 2000), and Edmund Husserl (*Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, Allen & Unwin, 1931) for the genesis/eidetic structure distinction.*

Chapter 2

Towards a Phenomenological Description of Address Conditions and Method

2.1 Return to experience: the phenomenological reduction

Husserlian phenomenology opens with a fundamental methodological gesture: the phenomenological reduction, or epoché. This gesture does not consist in doubting the reality of the world — it is a provisional bracketing of our theoretical presuppositions,

our perceptual habits, our prior classifications — in order to return to experience as it gives itself, before all interpretation.

Applied to the phenomenon of interpellation, this gesture asks: can we bracket our theories about interaction, cognitive processing, and social internalisation — and look at what gives itself in the experience of being interpellated, before these theories have preformatted it? This is not an abandonment of rigour — it is a different rigour, more demanding in a sense: the rigour that forbids answering before having genuinely looked.

2.2 The three levels of the experience of address

An attentive phenomenological description of the experience of being interpellated reveals three distinct levels, corresponding to the three moments of the triadic structure this manuscript develops.

The first level is the level of the Call: something occurs — not only in the environment, but for me. Something distinguishes itself from the neutral background of my perceptions and arrives at me, is destined for me, addresses me. This level is pre-reflective: I have not yet decided to respond, I have not yet understood what has been addressed to me — yet I am already reached. This is what Heidegger approaches with the notion of the Call (*Ruf*) in *Being and Time* — without going so far as to make it an intersubjective structure.

The second level is the level of the Response: I discover myself as the one to whom this Call was addressed. Not only targeted — but required. A responsibility opens, which I can assume or flee, but which I cannot ignore without positioning myself in relation to it. This is what Lévinas thematises with incomparable depth in his notion of assignment by the face of the Other — without developing it into the third moment we are about to unfold.

The third level is the level of Resonance: if I have genuinely responded — if I have truly recognised myself as the addressee of the Call and engaged in the Response — then something is transformed in me. Not a secondary psychological effect, not an emotion that subsides or intensifies. A modification of my existential structure: I am no longer quite the same subject as I was before this exchange. And this modification is retroactive — it also affects the one who launched the Call. It is this third level that neither

Heidegger, nor Lévinas, nor Ricœur has thematised as an autonomous phenomenological category. It is the properly original contribution of the Mahoukou Law.

2.3 The co-originariness of the three levels

It would be mistaken to understand these three levels as a temporal succession — first the Call, then the Response, then Resonance. The triad is not a sequence. It is a co-originary organic structure: each moment has meaning only through its relation to the other two, and the whole forms a unity whose necessity is structural, not chronological.

The Call is Call only because it opens the possibility of a Response — without this opening, it is merely an event among others, a signal in the flow of the world. The Response is Response only because it is elicited by a Call and because it carries within itself the possibility of Resonance — without this double relation, it is merely a causal reaction. Resonance is Resonance only because it is the transformed echo of what has been called and responded to — it is not any interior modification, it bears the imprint of this particular relation.

This co-originariness has an important methodological consequence: one cannot analyse any one moment of the triad in abstraction from the other two. The Call is already oriented toward the Response. The Response is already inhabited by the Resonance it makes possible. And Resonance retroactively reveals the quality of the Call and Response from which it arose. The phenomenology of interpellation is a holistic phenomenology — it must hold together what analysis is tempted to separate.

2.4 The fundamental distinction: physical event and addressed event

Before unfolding the triadic structure, it is necessary to establish the fundamental distinction on which the entire analysis rests: that between a physical event and an addressed event.

A physical event occurs in the world — it has causes, effects, a spatio-temporal localisation. It may affect a subject — the wind is cold, the noise is disturbing, the light is dazzling. But it does not address itself to a subject. There is no intention, no aim, no excess over the mere physical fact. The subject is affected by it as a body among bodies, not as the addressee of an address.

An addressed event has all these physical characteristics — it occurs in space and time, it has causes and effects. But it has something in addition, of a radically different quality: it is for me. It targets me. It is destined for me. And this destination is not a physical property of the signal — it is a structure of the experience of the subject who receives it as such.

Two acoustic events. The first: a car horn in the street — noise, perhaps irritation, perhaps a reflexive withdrawal. The second: someone in that same street calling my name. Physically, both are acoustic vibrations. Phenomenologically, they have nothing in common. The second stops me, turns me around, opens me to something. It does not affect me as a body among bodies — it reaches me as a targeted subject. It is this difference that the phenomenology of interpellation seeks to describe.

2.5 Why speak of a "law"?

A clarification is required about the status claimed for the structure we are about to expound. We speak of a Law — the Mahoukou Law — and this term calls for justification.

Husserlian phenomenology distinguishes the contingent facts of experience from the necessary essences that eidetic variation allows us to disclose. A phenomenological law, in this sense, is not an empirical regularity — it is not because we have observed numerous interpellations that follow the triadic schema that we affirm the law. The law affirms something stronger: that in the absence of any one of the three moments, one is not dealing with genuine interpellation, but with its simulacrum, its degradation, or its impediment.

The term structure designates here a stable descriptive configuration disclosed by eidetic variation, and not an independent ontological entity. This precision is essential to avoid any metaphysical overstatement: the law does not claim to describe the ultimate structure of the real. It claims to describe the structure of a type of experience — those recognisable as interpellation from within lived experience.

"To call this a law is to say: when this structure is absent, the phenomenon is not what it claims to be. The law is not a prescription — it is a condition of recognition. And it is this difference that makes it a phenomenological law and not a moral ideal."

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on Edmund Husserl (Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, Allen & Unwin, 1931) for the phenomenological reduction, Martin Heidegger (Being and Time, trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Harper & Row, 1962, §§ 54–60) for the Call of conscience, Emmanuel Lévinas (Totality and Infinity, trans. A. Lingis, Duquesne UP, 1969) for assignment by the face, and Dan Zahavi (Husserl's Phenomenology, Stanford UP, 2003) for the method of eidetic variation.

Part I has established the conditions of adequate phenomenological description by identifying what the three major reductions miss and by laying the methodological foundations of the triadic analysis. Part II can now unfold the structure in each of its three moments.

PART II

The Triadic Structure

Call · Response · Resonance

Part I established the conditions of an adequate phenomenological description of interpellation. It posed the question — how can an experience appear as addressed? — and set aside insufficient answers. Part II responds to this question by unfolding the triadic structure in its full phenomenological density. Three chapters correspond to the three moments of the triad: the Call as donation of an address, the Response as constitution of the responding subject, and Resonance as internal transformation and condition of intelligibility of the dyad.

Chapter 3

The Call Donation of an Address

There are mornings when one enters a room and something changes. Not because a spectacular event has occurred. But because someone is there in a certain way — and this way of being there is directed at us. Before this person has spoken, before they have even looked at us, we are reached. Something has given itself as being for us. This is the Call in its most originary arising.

3.1 The Call as phenomenon: what it is and what it is not

The Call, in the sense of the phenomenology of interpellation, is not primarily a word. It may take the form of a word — and often it does. But it is not reducible to one. What makes a word a Call is not its linguistic form — it is its address structure: the fact that it is oriented toward a singular addressee, that it engages the existence of this addressee, that it opens a space in which something becomes possible that was not possible before.

Symmetrically, the Call need not be verbal. A gaze suffices. A particular silence suffices. A gesture — the hand extended or withheld — suffices. A body entering space in a certain way may be a Call. What makes all of this a Call is always the same structure: something gives itself as addressed, as oriented toward me, as opening an obligation — however minimal, however fleeting — to position myself.

► **Phenomenological definition of the Call**

The Call is the way in which a situation is constituted as addressed to a subject: something appears as being "for me", as targeting me in my singularity, as opening the possibility — and the minimal obligation — of a Response. The Call is a phenomenal donation: not a stimulus among others, but an event of existence that constitutes me as addressee before I have decided to be one.

3.2 The three structural properties of the Call

Eidetic analysis of the Call — its imaginative variation to the point where it ceases to be what it is — yields three properties that are necessary and irreducible to it.

First property: singular address

The Call is always addressed to a singular addressee. It does not diffuse through space like a generic signal — it targets someone precise, in their irreplaceable singularity. This singularity of address is what distinguishes the Call from public announcement, advertising, or propaganda: these forms may imitate the structure of the Call, but they do not attain it — they target a profile, a category, a type, not a singular existence.

The singularity of address is experienced by the addressee as recognition. To be interpellated by name is to be recognised as this person and no other. But the singularity of address does not necessarily require a name — it may pass through a gaze that seeks me in a crowd, a gesture directed toward me among others, a silence that addresses me alone within a group. What is essential is this direction: the Call has an aim, and this aim is singular.

Second property: excess over itself

The Call is in excess over itself. It does not reduce to the informational content it may carry — it always carries more than what it says. This excess is constitutive: it means the Call engages the existence of the addressee, not merely their attention. It does not ask

them to process information — it asks them to position themselves, to respond, to be present as a subject and not merely as a receiver.

This excess explains why apparently anodyne words may be Calls of considerable intensity. Jordan's phrase — "He was the only one who understood how I think" — has minimal propositional content. But its excess is immense: it says something about Jordan's solitude, about the singularity of his relation to the world, about what he seeks in his relationship with an educator. All of this exceeds what the words say — and it is precisely this excess that makes this phrase a Call rather than simply information.

Third property: dialogical opening

The Call opens a dialogical space — an in-between in which something becomes possible that was not possible before. This space is not physical. It is phenomenological: a structure of reciprocal expectation, a tension oriented toward the Response that has not yet come, an availability that opens in the field of experience. The dialogical space is the spatial form of this suspension.

3.3 The Call and the phenomenological tradition: heritage and surpassing

The notion of the Call is not new in phenomenology. But it has been thematised in a partial manner — each author grasping one dimension while missing the others.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger develops the notion of the Call (*Ruf*) of conscience as the summoning of *Dasein* to its authentic existence. This call has remarkable existential depth — it captures the dimension of imperative, of assignment to oneself. But it is fundamentally solitary and intransitive: the Heideggerian Call does not address an other, requires no intersubjective response, and leaves no place for Resonance as reciprocal transformation. It is a Call without an addressee other than oneself.

Lévinas reverses the tableau: for him, the Call comes from the other — from the face of the Other who assigns me to responsibility before I have been able to constitute myself as an autonomous subject. Lévinas thereby grasps the dimension of intersubjective address that Heidegger left undeveloped. But his Call is unilateral — it always comes from the other toward me, in a radical asymmetry that leaves no room for transformative reciprocity.

The Mahoukou Law integrates these two contributions while surpassing both: the Call is both existentially engaging (Heidegger) and intersubjectively addressed (Lévinas), but it opens onto a structure that exceeds them both — the triad in which both subjects are mutually transformed.

3.4 The missed Call and its forms

Analysis of the Call would be incomplete without analysis of its failed forms — not as exceptions to the structure, but as a *contrario* revealers of what the structure requires.

The first is the orphaned Call: a Call that has been launched but whose addressee has not been reached. Not because the Call was itself insufficient, but because the conditions of reception were not in place — attention was elsewhere, the environment was saturated, availability was lacking. The orphaned Call does not reveal the absence of structure — it reveals the impediment to its realisation.

The second is the simulated Call: a form that imitates the structure of the Call without having its existential reality. Manipulation is the paradigmatic example — it produces the external forms of singular address, of excess over itself, of dialogical opening, while serving an intention that is not that of encounter but of capture. The simulated Call is phenomenologically important because it shows that the structure can be imitated — and that what distinguishes the genuine Call from its simulation is not visible in the form, but in the existential intention inhabiting it and in the Resonance it produces or fails to produce.

"The genuine Call cannot be withdrawn without the one who launched it being themselves affected by this withdrawal. It is this irreversibility for the caller that is the proper mark of existential engagement — and that distinguishes the Call from any formally analogous interaction."

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on Martin Heidegger (Sein und Zeit, §§ 54–60, Max Niemeyer, 1927), Emmanuel Lévinas (Totality and Infinity, chapter III: "The Face and Exteriority", Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), Martin Buber (I and Thou, Scribner, 1970) for the structure of address in the I-Thou relation, and Jean-Luc Marion (Being Given, Stanford UP, 2002) for the notion of phenomenal donation.

Chapter 4

The Response Constitution of the Responding Subject

Lucie approaches Soan in the corridor. He has raised his finger toward the green pictogram — sport. She says: "Are you interested in sport?" She is not reading a protocol. She is not following a procedure. She is taking a risk: that Soan will not respond, that the question will fall into the void, that contact will not be made. This risk — minimal, but real — is the mark of the genuine Response. It engages something of Lucie. It is not determined by what precedes. It is an act.

4.1 The Response as act — not as reaction

The distinction between reaction and Response is at the heart of the phenomenology of interpellation. It is not a distinction of degree — a Response would not simply be a more elaborate or more conscious reaction. It is a distinction of nature.

A reaction is determined by what precedes. It follows the Call according to a logic of conditioning — stimulus, processing, output. It may be correct, adapted, even sophisticated. But it requires no freedom in the strong sense: it is produced by the situation, not chosen within it. This is what protocols, automatisms, and habits produce — reactions that have the appearance of responses but do not engage the subject.

A Response is an act in the full sense of the term: a free gesture by a subject who recognises themselves as the addressee of the Call and engages their existence in this gesture. It implies a choice — not necessarily conscious and deliberate, but real: the subject could have not responded, could have responded otherwise. It is this minimal freedom that is constitutive of the Response — and its absence is what transforms a reaction into mechanism.

► Phenomenological definition of the Response

The Response is the taking of position by a subject who has received a Call and recognises itself, implicitly or explicitly, as its addressee. This taking of position may be of engagement or refusal, of opening or closure, of speech or silence. What constitutes it as a Response is not its content but its structure: it is the act by which a subject positions itself in relation to the received Call, engaging its existence in this gesture.

4.2 Recognising oneself as addressee: the first movement of the Response

The first movement of the Response — often the most difficult, often the most decisive — is recognition: I recognise myself as the one to whom this Call was addressed. This movement is active, not passive: it does not go without saying. In many situations, the addressee of a Call does not recognise themselves as such — they act as if the Call did not concern them, or interpret it as addressed to someone else, or immediately classify it into a category that neutralises its dimension of address.

Cécile is an educator at an IME. Rayan, sixteen years old, enters the embroidery workshop shouting — intense, repeated vocalisations, without words. Cécile intervenes according to protocol: she approaches, offers the habitual deflection object, speaks in a soft and steady voice. She reacts correctly. But she has not recognised herself as the addressee of what Rayan is addressing. She has managed a behaviour — she has not received a Call. The protocol has provided her with a reaction. It has not given her the tools for the Response.

4.3 The quality of the Response: existential engagement vs. formality

Not all Responses are equal. This claim is not a value judgement — it is a phenomenological observation. There are Responses that engage the responding subject, and Responses that maintain the subject at a distance from what is happening. The difference is not measured by verbal elaboration, correctness of content, or warmth of tone. It is measured by something more fundamental: the presence or absence of the subject within their own response.

An engaged Response is one in which the subject is there — not only their function, not only their professional role, not only their well-calibrated automatisms. They are there with what they are — their sensibility, their vulnerability, their capacity to be reached. It is this presence of the subject within their own response that is the condition of Resonance — as we shall see in the next chapter.

A formal Response is one in which the subject has protected themselves from what might reach them. It is correct in form — it says the right things, at the right moment, with the right tone. But the subject is not exposed within it. And it is precisely this non-exposure that prevents Resonance: one cannot be transformed by what one has not exposed oneself to.

4.4 The Response in the phenomenological tradition

In *Oneself as Another*, Paul Ricoeur develops the concept of response capacity (*responsum*) as a constitutive dimension of the subject's narrative identity. The subject is constituted in the narrative response it makes to its own existence and to the solicitations of others. This approach is valuable: it shows the temporal and narrative dimension of the Response — how to respond is also to narrate oneself, to situate oneself in a history, to constitute oneself as someone.

But the Response in the sense of the Mahoukou Law exceeds Ricoeurian narrative capacity in a precise direction: it is not only narrative — it is existential. It consists not only in narrating oneself in response to what happens — it consists in engaging, in risking something of oneself in the gesture of responding. This dimension of risk and existential engagement is what narration alone does not capture.

Lévinas, for his part, grasps this dimension in an incomparable manner with the "Here I am" — the ethical response par excellence, the one that says: I am here, available, responsible before I have chosen to be. But the Lévinassian "Here I am" remains under the sign of radical asymmetry: it always responds to a Call that comes from the other, never to a Call it has itself contributed to constituting. Reciprocity — even asymmetrical — has no place within it.

"To respond is to accept being addressed — to be the one to whom this Call was directed. It is the simplest of decisions and sometimes the most difficult: to recognise oneself as addressee, to expose oneself to what this implies, to risk being transformed by what one receives."

4.5 The bodily Response: beyond the verbal

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the lived body illuminates a dimension of the Response that the verbal register alone risks missing. The body responds before words — and often better than words. A posture that adjusts, a gaze that orients, a tension that releases or intensifies: these are bodily Responses to bodily Calls, and they often constitute the essential of what takes place in the most significant exchanges.

In educational relations with young people whose access to verbal language is limited or absent, this bodily dimension of the Response is not secondary — it is primary. To

respond to Inès's hand seeking Sophie's sleeve, not by speaking of this gesture but by allowing this hand to rest, by slightly adjusting one's posture to signal one's presence — this is a bodily Response to a bodily Call, a Response in the full sense: engaged, singular, irreplaceable.

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws primarily on Paul Ricœur (Oneself as Another, trans. K. Blamey, University of Chicago Press, 1992, studies VI-VIII), Emmanuel Lévinas (Otherwise than Being, trans. A. Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff, 1981, chapter IV), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Phenomenology of Perception, trans. D. Landes, Routledge, 2012) for bodily response, and Hannah Arendt (The Human Condition, University of Chicago Press, 1958) for the notion of action as initiative irreducible to conditioning.

Chapter 5

Resonance Transformation of Lived Experience and Condition of Intelligibility of the Dyad

Isabelle has fifteen years of field experience in an IME. A trainer asks her a question she has never heard posed: "Is there a young person who has truly transformed you — who has made you different from what you were before knowing them?" She thinks of Amine, a young man with severe multiple disabilities, accompanied for six years, who died two years ago. She thinks of what he taught her — not what she had transmitted to him. A patience she did not know she had. A capacity to inhabit the present moment without seeking the objective. A tenderness for forms of life that do not resemble ordinary forms. She had never named this. She did not know it had a name. This chapter names it: Resonance.

5.1 Resonance: the most original contribution of the Mahoukou Law

Resonance is the third moment of the interpellative triad — and the most original contribution of the Mahoukou Law to contemporary phenomenology. It is not a secondary psychological effect added to the exchange once Call and Response have taken place. It is an autonomous phenomenological category, irreducible to the two preceding moments, fulfilling within the structure of interpellation a function that nothing else can fulfil: it is the internal criterion of the authenticity of encounter.

Neither Heidegger, nor Lévinas, nor Ricœur have thematised Resonance as a category in its own right. Heidegger thinks the Call without transformative reciprocity. Lévinas thinks the Call and the Response without mutual transformation. Ricœur thinks the

narrative capacity of response without articulating its resonant dimension. The lacuna is structural — and it is this lacuna that the Mahoukou Law fills.

► Phenomenological definition of Resonance

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 is neither an emotion, nor an affective intensity, nor a mere psychological effect — but the descriptive mark that this modification has taken place. It is retroactive (it affects both subjects, not only the respondent), transformative (it modifies the manner of being in the world, not only behaviour), and often deferred (it reveals itself in duration, not necessarily in the instant of exchange).

5.2 The three irreducible properties of Resonance

First property: retroactivity

Resonance is retroactive — it affects the caller, not only the respondent. This is what fundamentally distinguishes it from the Response: the Response goes from the respondent toward the caller, in return for the Call. Resonance returns upon the caller and transforms them in turn. The triad is not a linear back-and-forth — it is a circuit in which both subjects are transformed by their passage through the relation.

This retroactivity has an important phenomenological consequence: the one who launches a genuine Call takes an existential risk — not only the risk of having their request refused, but the risk of being themselves transformed by the relation they open. It is this risk that distinguishes the genuine Call from the simulated one: manipulation seeks to transform the other without allowing itself to be transformed. Genuine interpellation exposes both.

Second property: existential transformation

Resonance is transformative — it modifies the existential state of both subjects. Not their behaviour in a given situation, not their representations of a particular object, but their manner of being in the world — their availability to certain experiences, their sensibility to certain forms of presence, their relation to themselves and to alterity.

This distinction — existential transformation vs. behavioural modification — is decisive. A behavioural modification is situational: it changes what the subject does in a particular

context. An existential transformation is structural: it changes the manner in which the subject receives all analogous contexts. After her relation with Inès, Amandine did not learn to remain silent with Inès — she learned to remain silent. This shift from the particular to the structural is the mark of existential transformation.

Third property: deferred temporality

Resonance is often deferred — it does not necessarily reveal itself in the instant of the exchange, but in what the exchange has left behind. It is recognised retrospectively, when something in present experience reveals a transformation whose beginning cannot be seen but whose effects can be observed.

This deferred temporality is both a phenomenological property and an epistemological challenge. It is a phenomenological property because it corresponds to the manner in which existential transformation actually operates — not in the instant of a decision, but in the duration of a maturation that exceeds the moment of exchange. Demanding that Resonance be observable in real time is to apply to an existential and temporal phenomenon a criterion designed for instantaneous and measurable phenomena — precisely the error phenomenology seeks to avoid.

5.3 Resonance as the condition of intelligibility of the dyad

Beyond its three proper properties, Resonance fulfils within the triadic structure a function that its position as third moment might obscure: it is the condition of retroactive intelligibility of the Call-Response dyad. Here lies its most radical contribution to the phenomenology of interpellation.

Without Resonance — without the possibility of reciprocal transformation — one cannot distinguish an interpellation from a mere exchange of information, nor an engaged Response from an automatic reaction. Resonance is what retroactively reveals that the Call was a Call and not a signal, that the Response was a Response and not a reaction. It is the internal criterion of the genuineness of encounter.

This reversal is philosophically important. One might think Resonance depends on the Call and the Response — that it comes after and follows from them. That is chronologically true. But structurally it is not: it is the possibility of Resonance that retroactively constitutes the Call as Call and the Response as Response. Without this possibility, the Call was merely a signal and the Response merely a reaction. Resonance

is thus both the third moment of the structure and its retroactive condition of possibility — which is why the triad is organic rather than linear.

"An encounter without Resonance retroactively reveals that no genuine interpellation had taken place — but a simulation of interpellation. Both subjects exited exactly as they had entered. This is the formally complete and existentially empty triad — the most precise diagnosis of what is lacking in so many institutionally correct interactions."

5.4 Resonance and Rosa's notion of Resonanz: a necessary distinction

The notion of Resonance in the Mahoukou Law naturally enters into dialogue with the Resonanz developed by sociologist Hartmut Rosa in his critical theory of modernity. For Rosa, resonance designates a relation to the world characterised by mutual affect and transformation, as opposed to alienation — the modern condition of indifference and rigidity in the face of the world's solicitations. Rosa's resonance is a quality of the relation to the world in general.

The two notions must be rigorously distinguished, while acknowledging their kinship. Rosa's Resonanz is a sociological and critical category — it describes a broad and diffuse type of relation to the world, opposed to alienation. Resonance in the sense of the Mahoukou Law is a phenomenological and structural category — it designates a constitutive moment of the structure of a determinate experience, precise and localisable. It is narrower and more precise: it qualifies the transformative echo proper to the interpellative event itself, not a general quality of the relation to the world.

5.5 Resonance in limit situations

Analysis of Resonance would be incomplete without examination of its limit forms — situations in which Resonance is impeded, truncated, or of particularly intense quality. These limit situations are not exceptions to the structure — they are its most powerful revealers.

Impeded Resonance: when Call and Response have formally taken place without anything being transformed in either of the two subjects. This is the most insidious form of

dialogical impediment because it may pass for a successful relation — the exchange has taken place, the forms have been observed, no one has been hurt. But both subjects exit the exchange exactly as they entered it. The relation was correct, and nothing more. This is the description of what Buber called the I-It register applied to intersubjective relation.

Deferred Resonance in mourning: when one of the parties to an interpellation disappears — through death, separation, distance — Resonance may continue to occur on the survivor's side, but in a manner henceforth unilateral and irreversibly unfinished. What the Mahoukou Law reveals about mourning: to grieve is to learn to live with a structurally unclosable triad. The work of mourning is precisely this work of inhabiting a structurally open triad — and of finding, within this very opening, a form of fidelity to the relation that has taken place.

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on Hartmut Rosa (Resonance: A Sociology of our Relationship to the World, trans. J. Wagner, Polity Press, 2019), Martin Buber (I and Thou, Scribner, 1970), and Donald Winnicott (Playing and Reality, Routledge, 1971) for the deferred dimension of transformation. The distinction between phenomenological Resonance and sociological Resonanz is developed further in the founding article of the Mahoukou Law (Christian Mahoukou, 2026).

Part II has unfolded the triadic structure in its full phenomenological density. Part III can now examine the internal modalities of this structure — impediment and accomplishment — as constitutive variations revealing a contrario the necessity of the complete structure.

PART III

The Internal Modalities

Impediment and Accomplishment of Interpellation

The triadic structure describes interpellation in its most coherent form — Call recognised, Response engaged, Resonance produced. But ordinary experience shows that interpellation does not always give itself in this way. It knows internal variations — forms in which the structure is engaged without reaching its complete articulation. This Part III develops these variations as constitutive modalities of the structure — not as external exceptions to the law, but as a contrario revealers of its necessity.

Chapter 6

Dialogical Impediment Immanent Normative Category

The meeting for Théo's project lasts forty-five minutes. The team discusses his objectives, his progress, his difficulties. His parents listen, nod, sign. No one asks what Théo experiences — what he loves, what makes him happy or sad. No one asks what his repeated retellings of the same television scene mean. The Call of Théo — permanent, insistent, dressed in words and body — is not received as a Call in this room. It is treated as symptom, as data, as file. The triad is formally present. It is existentially absent. This is dialogical impediment.

6.1 Definition and phenomenological status of impediment

Dialogical impediment is the most original normative contribution of the Mahoukou Law to the phenomenology of interpellation. It designates any situation in which the triadic structure Call · Response · Resonance is structurally blocked, diverted, or simulated — without thereby disappearing as structure. Impediment is not the absence of interpellation: it is an interpellation that has failed its own law.

► **Definition: dialogical impediment**

Dialogical impediment designates any situation in which the triadic structure of interpellation is engaged without reaching its complete articulation. It may affect each of the three moments — the Call, the Response, or Resonance — and constitutes an internal modality of the structure, not an external exception to it. To say there is dialogical impediment is to say that an interpellation has failed its own law — and this designation is not merely descriptive, it is normative in the phenomenological sense.

Impediment is normative in a precise sense: it does not judge the subjects involved according to an external moral standard. It says something about the phenomenon itself — that the interpellative structure has not accomplished what it was constitutively oriented to accomplish. It is an immanent normativity: the norm arises from the structure of the phenomenon, not from a prescription coming from outside.

This immanent normativity has an important philosophical consequence: dialogical impediment can serve as a critical criterion without being a moral judgement. It does not say that the educator is guilty for not having received Rayan's Call — it says that something was lacking in the structure of their exchange. This distinction between phenomenological critique and moral judgement is decisive for the practical use of the category.

6.2 The three forms of impediment according to the moment of the triad

Dialogical impediment may arise at each of the three moments of the triad — and each form has its own phenomenology, its characteristic causes, and its recognisable manifestations.

Impediment at the level of the Call

Impediment at the first level occurs when what might be a Call fails to constitute itself as such — either because the emitter cannot launch the Call in its genuine form, or because the conditions of reception do not allow it to be received as address.

► **Call impediment — form 1: the insincere Call**

The address is formulated, but without genuine existential engagement. Manipulation is the paradigmatic case: it produces the external forms of the Call — the singularity of address, the apparent excess, the simulated opening — while serving an intention that is not that of encounter but of capture. The manipulative Call is an orphaned Call from

birth: it is not addressed, it is directed. It aims to produce an effect, not to open a dialogical space.

► **Call impediment — form 2: the saturated Call**

When Calls multiply infinitely — in environments of informational overload, in institutions where every moment is required by a simultaneous solicitation — each individual Call loses its structure as a singular event. A Call that is everywhere is no longer anywhere. Saturation neutralises the singularity of address: there is no longer a singular addressee, there is only a saturated receiver. This is plethoric impediment — the most characteristic of the digital age.

► **Call impediment — form 3: the Call not received as Call**

The Call is launched — genuinely, singularly, with its constitutive excess. But the addressee does not receive it as address: they classify it as symptom, behaviour, or data to be processed. This shift — from address to symptom — is one of the most frequent impediments in medico-social institutions. Rayan's problem behaviour contains a Call. It is received as an incident to be managed. The Call does not arrive.

Impediment at the level of the Response

Impediment at the second level occurs when the Call has been received — at least partially — but the Response is lacking in its dimension of existential engagement.

► **Response impediment — form 1: refusal to recognise oneself as addressee**

The addressee perceives the Call but refuses — consciously or not — to recognise themselves as the one to whom it is addressed. They act as if the Call concerned someone else, or as if it did not concern them in this particular situation. This refusal may be a protection — against the vulnerability that recognition implies — or an incapacity — a structurally absent availability. In both cases, the Call remains without respondent.

► **Response impediment — form 2: formal response without engagement**

The addressee recognises themselves as addressee and formulates a response — but this response is not a Response in the sense of the triad. It is correct in form, adapted to the context, professionally irreproachable — and existentially empty. Malik says to Jordan: "I understand that you are suffering. It is hard to lose someone you love." These words are apt. They do not engage Malik. They do not receive what Jordan has offered. This is Response impediment through technicism.

► **Response impediment — form 3: delegated response**

In strongly protocollary digital or institutional environments, the Response may be delegated to a system, procedure, or automatism — which removes precisely what makes it a Response: the engaged subject. A response produced by an algorithm,

however sophisticated, has the form without the essence — the existential act is missing. It is a phantom-response: it occupies the place of the Response without fulfilling its function.

Impediment at the level of Resonance

Impediment at the third level is the most insidious — because it can give the impression that everything went well. Call and Response have formally taken place. And yet nothing has been transformed in either of the two subjects.

► Resonance impediment — form 1: the triad empty in its reality

The exchange has apparently taken place. Both subjects exit exactly as they entered — in their manner of being in the world, in their availability to the other, in their sensibility. Nothing has moved. This is the formally complete and existentially empty triad — the facade dialogue, the accompaniment without encounter, the correct and dull relation. This form of impediment is perhaps the most widespread in contemporary societies.

► Resonance impediment — form 2: confusion of Resonance and reverberation

Resonance is confused with reverberation — visibility, immediate emotional intensity, the number of people reached. A speech may reverberate through an entire room without having resonated in a single existence. An article may be shared ten thousand times without having transformed a single reader. Reverberation measures diffusion. Resonance measures transformation. To confuse the two is to miss what is essential.

► Resonance impediment — form 3: progressive anaesthesia

The repetition of the same exchanges, overexposure to the same Calls, and the acceleration of interactional flow produce a progressive anaesthesia: the subject ceases to be reached by what should reach them. Not through ill will — but because the capacity to be transformed has been progressively blunted by saturation. Anaesthesia of Resonance is not primarily a moral failing; it is a structural pathology produced by institutional and technological conditions ill-adapted to the nature of the interpellative phenomenon.

6.3 Impediment as a contrario revealer

Dialogical impediment fulfils within the structure of the Mahoukou Law a fundamental epistemological function: it is an a contrario revealer. By naming precisely what is lacking in each form of impediment, it reveals in negative what the complete structure requires. It is the same logic as pathology in medicine: it is not despite illness that one understands the body — it is also through illness.

This revelatory function has a methodological consequence: dialogical impediment is not a secondary or peripheral category in the Mahoukou Law. It is constitutive of the law itself — it belongs to its definition as an internal modality of the structure, not an external exception. The law describes interpellation in its accomplished and in its impeded forms — and it is this double description that constitutes its eidetic character.

"Dialogical impediment is not external to the triadic structure. It is an internal modality of it. Interpellation includes within itself the possibility of not fully accomplishing itself. This possibility is not accidental, but structural."

6.4 Critical applications: the institution as producer of impediments

The category of dialogical impediment finds its most fertile applications in the critical analysis of institutional structures — those organisations that, without intending to, systematically produce conditions unfavourable to genuine interpellation.

Medico-social institutions illustrate this dimension with particular clarity. The quantitative overload of educators produces Response impediment — attention dispersed among too many simultaneous solicitations cannot existentially engage in a singular response. The rapid rotation of teams produces Call impediment — the young person progressively learns that their Calls have no stable addressee, and ceases to launch them. Pressure on short-term measurable results produces Resonance impediment — it is deferred, not measurable in real time, and thus rendered invisible by dominant evaluation tools.

In political philosophy, the same category allows analysis of institutional structures that organise the structural absence of Resonance between governors and governed — those organisations in which citizens' Calls are registered (elections take place, petitions are received) but in which nothing is transformed in either party. The formally complete and existentially empty triad is also a political pathology.

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on the three founding texts of the Mahoukou Law (Christian Mahoukou, 2026), on Michel Chauvière (Trop de gestion tue le social, La Découverte, 2007) for institutional impediments, on Hartmut Rosa (Social Acceleration, trans. J. Trejo-Mathys, Columbia UP, 2013) for temporal saturation, and on the works of Claude Lefort (The Political Forms of Modern Society, MIT Press, 1986) for the political dimension of impediment.

Chapter 7

The Accomplishment of Interpellation Stabilised Structure and Reciprocal Transformation

Lucie and Soan. Six months after the first day in the corridor — after the raised finger toward the green pictogram, after Lucie's question, after the slight nod. Soan now seeks Lucie's gaze before beginning a new activity. This minuscule gesture says something immense: he has an anchor in this IME. He has someone to whom his Calls arrive. The triad has accomplished its work — silently, in duration, without anyone having programmed it. This is accomplished interpellation.

7.1 Definition and structure of accomplishment

If impediment designates the incomplete forms of the triadic structure, accomplishment designates its stabilised forms — those in which the triad reaches its complete articulation and produces the reciprocal transformation that is its own criterion of genuineness. Accomplishment is not a final state reached once and for all — it is a process, a quality of relation in duration, an orientation toward which the relation is moving.

► Definition: the accomplishment of interpellation

Accomplished interpellation is that in which the Call is recognised as singular address, the Response is existentially engaged by a subject who recognises themselves as addressee, and Resonance produces a real transformation in the existential state of both subjects. Accomplishment is not the perfection of exchange — it is the effectivity of reciprocal transformation, however minimal, however deferred, however difficult to perceive in the instant.

7.2 The phenomenological conditions of accomplishment

The accomplishment of interpellation cannot be decreed — it can be favoured. It is the fruit of phenomenological conditions that can be identified with precision and that constitute practical orientations for those who seek to create the spaces in which genuine encounter is possible.

First condition: availability to the Call

The first condition of accomplishment is the availability of the addressee to receive the Call as Call — and not as signal, symptom, or data to be processed. This availability is an active posture: it presupposes that the addressee has suspended their presuppositions

(the Husserlian epoché applied to relation), that they are present to what gives itself rather than to what they expect, and that they have maintained an openness to being surprised — reached by something they had not anticipated.

This availability is not an innate character trait. It is a competence — what we have called interpellative competence in our work on the educational relation — that is cultivated, developed, and maintained provided institutional structures allow it. It is threatened by overload, fatigue, and pressure for immediate results. It is nourished by supervision, practice analysis, and unassigned time.

Second condition: existential engagement of the Response

The second condition is that the Response be carried by a subject who engages — not only their function, not only their role, but what they are. This engagement does not imply fusion or the abandonment of necessary distance. It implies that the responding subject accepts being addressed — accepts being the one to whom this Call was directed — and takes on the risk of transformation that this recognition implies.

This condition is perhaps the most difficult to sustain over time — because it exposes. And repeated exposure, without adequate regeneration devices, leads to the Resonance exhaustion we described in the previous chapter. To train for engaged Response is to train for existential engagement — not to abandon professional boundaries, but to be authentically present within them.

Third condition: sufficient time

Resonance is deferred — it does not occur on demand, in the programmed instant of an exchange. It takes time. It presupposes that the Call and Response have had time to inhabit each other, that the encounter has had time to deposit something in both subjects, that this deposit has had time to reveal itself.

This temporal condition is structurally threatened by the logics of contemporary acceleration — in institutions, in digital exchanges, in organisational cultures that value immediate reactivity at the expense of deferred depth. The accomplishment of interpellation requires an active resistance to this acceleration — not out of nostalgia for a slower time, but because the very nature of the phenomenon demands it.

7.3 The forms of accomplishment: from minimal Resonance to transformative encounter

The accomplishment of interpellation does not take a single form. There is a spectrum of accomplishment — from minimal Resonance to deep transformative encounter — and all its forms are phenomenologically significant.

Minimal Resonance: a slight modification in the availability of one or both subjects — a slightly different attention, a slightly expanded sensibility, a slightly displaced certainty. It is not spectacular. But it is real, and it is the beginning. Soan who turns his head slightly toward Lucie in the corridor — that is minimal Resonance. And it is immense, if one knows how to read it.

Ordinary Resonance: the type of transformation that occurs in educational, therapeutic, and friendships relations that have duration and quality. Both subjects change progressively — in their manner of relating to each other, in their representations of themselves and the world, in their availability to certain forms of experience. These changes are difficult to isolate — they are the fruit of a thousand small exchanges of which none was decisive taken individually, and the whole of which has changed everything.

Transformative Resonance: encounters that structurally modify the trajectory of a subject — that durably and irreversibly reorient their manner of being in the world. These encounters are rare, but phenomenologically undeniable. What Amine produced in Isabelle. What a patient sometimes produces in a therapist. What a philosophical text produces in a sufficiently available reader. These are not extraordinary events — they are ordinary interpellations that have met extraordinary conditions of reception.

7.4 Accomplishment as horizon and as criterion

The accomplishment of interpellation fulfils within the Mahoukou Law two distinct and complementary functions.

As horizon, it designates what every interpellation is oriented toward — not as an ideal final state to be attained, but as the direction of the structure. Every interpellation tends toward its accomplishment — toward the reciprocal Resonance that would signal that an encounter has taken place. This horizon is always possible — even in the most difficult

relations, even in the most constrained contexts. It is never guaranteed. But it is always open.

As criterion, accomplishment — and its absence — allows evaluation of the quality of a relation without recourse to external standards. Not: does this relation comply with protocols? But: does this relation produce Resonances? Is something being transformed in both subjects over the course of their exchanges? These questions are not measurable in real time — but they are recognisable in duration. And it is precisely this deferred recognisability that is the phenomenological criterion adequate to this type of phenomenon.

"The accomplishment of interpellation is not an inaccessible ideal reserved for great encounters. It is the ordinary direction of every genuine relation — visible in the simplest gesture, the briefest silence, the most discreet presence, as long as they carry within them the engagement of one subject toward another."

7.5 Synthesis: impediment and accomplishment as the double structure of the law

The two chapters of this Part III form a double structure that is at the heart of the Mahoukou Law: interpellation always gives itself in one or other of these modes — impeded or accomplished — and these two modes are complementary and co-constitutive.

Impediment reveals in negative what the complete structure requires. Accomplishment reveals in positive what the structure can produce. Together they describe the full phenomenological totality of the interpellative phenomenon — not as a disembodied ideal form, but as a living structure whose concrete forms vary between two poles: the triad empty in its reality and the transformative encounter.

This double structure is what makes the Mahoukou Law a phenomenological law rather than a simple description of positive experience. It does not describe only what happens in interpellation when it succeeds — it also describes what happens when it fails, and why this failure is phenomenologically significant. It is in this double description that its immanent normative claim resides: not an external norm imposed on the phenomenon,

but the norm the phenomenon itself carries within itself as the criterion of its own accomplishment.

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on Donald Winnicott (Playing and Reality, Routledge, 1971) for the notion of potential space as condition of accomplishment, Mikhail Bakhtin (The Dialogic Imagination, trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981) for dialogicity as structure of accomplished exchange, and Hans-Georg Gadamer (Truth and Method, trans. J. Weinsheimer & D. Marshall, Continuum, 2004) for the fusion of horizons as hermeneutical form of Resonance. For the institutional dimension of the conditions of accomplishment, see the founding article of the Mahoukou Law and the philosophical manifesto (Christian Mahoukou, 2026).

Part III has developed the internal modalities of the structure — impediment and accomplishment — as constitutive variations revealing the immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law. Part IV can now rigorously establish the phenomenological status of this law — through systematic eidetic variation and analysis of immanent normativity.

PART IV

The Phenomenological Status

Eidetic Variation and Immanent Normativity

The three preceding parts have exposed the triadic structure, described its internal modalities, and applied its categories to concrete domains. It remains to establish rigorously the phenomenological status of the Mahoukou Law: what type of law is it? What is the nature of the necessity it claims? In what sense is its normativity immanent rather than external? And how does it situate itself within the contemporary epistemological landscape? These questions are developed in two chapters — one devoted to the method of eidetic variation, the other to immanent normativity.

Chapter 8

Eidetic Variation and Conditional Necessity The Status of the Mahoukou Law in the Philosophical Landscape

8.1 What is a phenomenological law?

The Mahoukou Law presents itself as a phenomenological law. This term calls for precise justification — not to evade the demand for rigour, but to situate exactly the type of necessity this law claims and the type of method that grounds it.

Husserlian phenomenology rigorously distinguishes two types of propositions: propositions of fact (Tatsachen) and propositions of essence (Wesensaussagen). The former describe empirical regularities — events that occur, observable correlations, measurable frequencies. The latter describe necessary structures — what must be the case for a phenomenon of a certain type to give itself as such. A phenomenological law, in this precise sense, is not an empirical law.

► **Definition: phenomenological law in the Husserlian sense**

A phenomenological law is an eidetic structure — a (conditionally) necessary structure whose complete imaginative variation reveals that without which a phenomenon cannot be what it is. It is not derived from the repeated observation of particular cases — it is a condition of possibility, not a regularity of fact. To affirm that interpellation obeys the triadic law Call · Response · Resonance is to affirm that in the absence of any one of these three moments, one is not dealing with genuine interpellation but with its simulacrum, its degradation, or its impediment.

8.2 The method: eidetic variation and imaginative suppression

The method by which the Mahoukou Law establishes its eidetic claim is Husserlian eidetic variation. It does not proceed by induction — accumulating cases in order to derive a generalisation — but by imaginative suppression: it seeks what cannot be absent without the phenomenon ceasing to be what it is.

Let us apply eidetic variation to each of the three moments of the triad.

Imaginative suppression of the Call

Can I imagine an interpellation without an addressed Call? The attempt immediately produces an internal contradiction: without a Call, there is nothing to respond to — there is no addressee, no opened dialogical space, no orientation toward the other. What subsists is not an interpellation without a Call — it is a reaction to a stimulus or an interior monologue. The suppression of the Call does not produce an impoverished variant of interpellation — it produces a phenomenon of a different type. The Call is therefore necessary.

Imaginative suppression of the Response

Can I imagine an interpellation without the possibility of a Response? Here again, the attempt is revealing: without the possibility of a Response, the Call remains a dead letter. Something has occurred — a signal, an injunction, a constraint — but not an interpellation. Interpellation structurally requires an addressee who can position themselves — respond, refuse, flee. This possibility of positioning is constitutive of the phenomenon. To suppress it is to transform interpellation into unilateral constraint.

Imaginative suppression of Resonance

Can I imagine an interpellation without any possibility of reciprocal transformation? It is here that eidetic variation is most instructive — and most subtle. One can imagine an exchange in which Call and Response have taken place without anything being transformed in either of the two subjects. This exchange has formally taken place. But eidetic variation reveals that something is lacking that would allow one to speak of genuine interpellation rather than a mere exchange of information. What is lacking is precisely Resonance — and its absence retroactively reveals that the Call was not truly a Call and the Response not truly a Response. The suppression of Resonance does not produce an impoverished variant of interpellation — it reveals that the two preceding moments were merely forms without substance.

8.3 Conditional necessity: neither absolute nor empirical

Eidetic variation produces a necessity of a precise type that we have named conditional necessity. Its status must be specified with rigour — both to defend the eidetic claim of the law and to avoid any metaphysical overstatement.

Conditional necessity says: for every phenomenon we can legitimately recognise as interpellation from within lived human experience, the triad Call · Response · Resonance is a necessary structure — because its contrary produces an internal contradiction, not merely an empirical rarity. This necessity is conditional because it is indexed to a condition: lived human experience as we can recognise it. It does not claim absolute, transcultural, transhistorical necessity holding for every being capable of interpellation including hypothetical non-human beings.

This conditional necessity is distinct from two regimes of necessity that must not be confused with it. It is distinct from logical-formal necessity — that of the principle of non-contradiction, which holds independently of all experiential content. It is also distinct from empirical regularity — which describes what frequently happens in experience without being able to say what must necessarily be present. Conditional necessity occupies a third register: that of the conditions of possibility of a type of experience — a register that is transcendental in the broad sense, not in the strictly Kantian sense.

► Conditional necessity — precise position

The Mahoukou Law claims a conditional, not absolute, necessity. It says: for every phenomenon we can recognise as interpellation from within lived human experience, the triad is a necessary structure — because its contrary produces an internal

contradiction. It does not say: there necessarily exist interpellations in every possible universe. It says: wherever there is interpellation in the phenomenological sense, there are necessarily Call, Response, and Resonance — or the impediment of one of these moments, which reveals a contrario their necessity.

8.4 Confrontation with the Popperian criterion of falsifiability

The Mahoukou Law has been submitted to the Popperian criterion of falsifiability in one of its founding texts. It is worth briefly revisiting this confrontation here, within the broader context of the exposition of the law's epistemological status.

Karl Popper developed his criterion of demarcation between science and non-science in terms of falsifiability: a theory is scientific if and only if one can conceive of an observation that would put it in default. This criterion presupposes that the theory submitted for evaluation operates within the register of observable empirical regularities. Phenomenology, which operates within the register of eidetic structures and conditions of possibility of experience, does not fall within its scope.

To directly confront the Mahoukou Law with the Popperian criterion without methodological precaution would constitute what Gilbert Ryle called a category mistake: attributing to a reality belonging to one logical category the properties of a reality belonging to a different category. To ask whether the Mahoukou Law is falsifiable in the Popperian sense is to pose the same incorrect question as asking whether the Pythagorean theorem is falsifiable.

That said, the Popperian demand contains a legitimate challenge: a law that claims universality must be able to account for cases that appear to resist it. The response the Mahoukou Law provides is precisely the notion of impediment: a Call without a Response is not a counterexample to the law — it is a deficient modality of the triadic structure, which presupposes the structure in order to be thought as deficient.

8.5 The three validity criteria proper to the Mahoukou Law

In place of the Popperian criterion — ill-adapted to its register — the Mahoukou Law calls for three proper validity criteria, which we formulate here in their most precise form.

First criterion: eidetic coherence

The triadic structure must form a coherent whole without internal contradiction: the three terms must articulate in such a way that each is intelligible by its relation to the other two, and that the imaginative suppression of any one produces a contradiction in the definition of the phenomenon. This criterion has been verified by the eidetic variation conducted in the preceding sections.

Second criterion: structural universality

The triadic structure must hold for every phenomenon we can recognise as interpellation — independently of its particular content, its cultural form, its intensity, its context. This criterion is verifiable by expanded eidetic variation: the interpellation between a physician and their patient, between two friends, between an educator and a young person with a disability, between a believer and what they perceive as divine call — all these forms instantiate the same triadic structure, though in radically different contexts.

Third criterion: heuristic fertility

The Mahoukou Law must generate new distinctions and questions — a Lakatosian criterion of progressiveness transposed into the phenomenological register. A sterile theory is epistemologically suspect even if it satisfies the first two criteria. The heuristic fertility of the Mahoukou Law is measured by the ensemble of new distinctions it has produced: orphaned Call, simulated Call, plethoric impediment, phantom-response, truncated Resonance, confusion of Resonance and reverberation, irreversibility of the Call for the caller, interpellative competence, accomplishment as horizon and as criterion. These distinctions did not exist in the literature prior to the formulation of the law.

"The Mahoukou Law is a phenomenological law in the conditional Husserlian sense — an eidetic structure with conditional necessity. This is not an excessive claim. It is a precise definition. And this precision is what allows it to be simultaneously rigorous and fertile."

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws on Edmund Husserl (Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, Allen & Unwin, 1931; Phenomenology as Rigorous Science, in Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy, trans. Q. Lauer, Harper & Row, 1965), Karl Popper (The Logic of Scientific Discovery, Hutchinson, 1959; Conjectures and Refutations, Routledge, 1963), Imre Lakatos (The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes, Cambridge UP, 1978), Gilbert Ryle (The Concept of Mind, Hutchinson, 1949) for the notion of category mistake. For the confrontation between phenomenology and Popperian epistemology applied to the Mahoukou Law, see: Christian Mahoukou, "The Mahoukou Law under the scrutiny of Popperian epistemology", 2026.

Chapter 9

The Immanent Normativity of Experience What the Structure Requires of Itself

9.1 The problem of normativity in phenomenology

Normativity is a classical problem of phenomenology — and one of its most acute points of tension with the analytic tradition and the empirical sciences. Phenomenology describes experience as it gives itself — but can it, from this description, derive norms? And if it does, where do these norms come from? Are they in the phenomenon itself — or projected by the observer who believes they can read them in the phenomenon?

This problem was posed with precision in the dialogue with a phenomenologist who submitted the Mahoukou Law to close critique: "How can a descriptive structure contain a norm without your already introducing an axiological interpretation of the phenomenon?" The answer developed in this dialogue constitutes the foundation of this chapter.

9.2 The fundamental distinction: eidetic normativity vs. axiological normativity

The first necessary clarification is to distinguish two types of normativity that tend to be conflated in contemporary philosophical debate.

Axiological normativity is external normativity: it says what is good, desirable, or right. It comes to be applied to a phenomenon from the outside — it judges it according to a standard independent of its own structure. Kantian deontological ethics is normative in this sense: it prescribes rules that hold independently of the content of particular actions.

Eidetic normativity is internal normativity: it says what must be the case for something to be what it is. It is not a judgement brought to bear on the phenomenon from outside — it is what the phenomenon requires of itself in order to be fully what it is. A triangle whose angles do not sum to 180 degrees is not a bad triangle — it is a non-triangle. The norm is constitutive of the definition, not prescriptive of behaviour.

► The immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law

The Mahoukou Law is normative in an eidetic, not axiological, sense. It does not say that genuine encounter is good or desirable — it says that without the three moments of the triad, the phenomenon is not what it claims to be. The norm is not added to the description — it is inseparable from it. Dialogical impediment is not a failure to comply with an external moral rule: it is a failure to meet the immanent normative structure of interpellation itself.

9.3 Immanent normativity and the Humean objection

Hume's classical objection — one cannot derive an ought from an is — appears to strike any claim to derive a norm from a description. But this objection presupposes that description and norm belong to two radically separate registers. Husserlian phenomenology shows that there exist phenomena whose internal structure contains its own norm — constitutively normative phenomena.

This type of phenomenon is not rare — it includes all phenomena defined by their function or their accomplishment. A promise that does not bind the one who makes it is not a bad promise — it is a non-promise. A logical argument that does not respect the principle of non-contradiction is not a bad argument — it is a sophism. An interpellation without possible Resonance is not a bad interpellation — it is a simulation of interpellation. In all these cases, the norm is constitutive of the definition of the phenomenon — and the Humean objection does not apply, because there is no passage from is to ought: there is recognition of what the phenomenon is constitutively oriented to be.

9.4 Normativity as criterion of immanent critique

The immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law has an important practical and critical consequence: it grounds a phenomenological critique of contemporary forms of interaction that devitalise interpellation. This critique is not external — it does not judge contemporary practices from a pre-established ideal. It is internal: it measures practices against what the phenomenon requires of itself.

This immanent critique may be exercised in several directions. It may be applied to institutions — as we have done in preceding chapters — to identify structures that systematically produce dialogical impediments. It may be applied to technologies — to analyse the way in which digital environments transform the structure of Call, Response,

and Resonance. It may be applied to professional practices — to distinguish what, within medico-social, educational, or therapeutic accompaniment, favours the accomplishment of the triad or produces its impediment.

In each of these cases, the immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law provides a precise criterion — not: is this good or bad? but: does this create the conditions in which a Call can be launched and received, a Response engaged, a Resonance produced? This question is both more modest and more radical than the moral question: more modest because it does not claim a complete ethics; more radical because it touches on the very structure of the conditions of genuine encounter.

9.5 Immanent normativity and the simultaneous triple freedom

We established, in the critical dialogue with our phenomenologist interlocutor, that what is exclusively proper to interpellation — what distinguishes it from every other first-person subjective experience — is the tripolar structure of freedom: three freedoms simultaneously engaged and irreducible. This is a major structural indicator, not the exclusive definitive criterion.

The immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law articulates directly with this structure. If interpellation structurally requires three simultaneous freedoms — that of the caller who could have not called, that of the respondent who can refuse, and that of Resonance which may not come — then any structure that suppresses one of these freedoms produces an impediment. An institution that imposes Calls (without the caller inhabiting them existentially), that constrains Responses (without the respondent freely recognising themselves as addressee), or that short-circuits Resonance (without leaving time for transformation to operate) — such an institution is, in the precise phenomenological sense, a structural producer of dialogical impediments.

This articulation between immanent normativity and simultaneous triple freedom grounds the broadest critical scope of the Mahoukou Law: it allows evaluation not only of particular exchanges, but of institutional structures, technological environments, organisational cultures — everything that organises the conditions in which human subjects encounter or miss each other.

"The immanent normativity of the Mahoukou Law does not prescribe how one must encounter. It says that without which encounter cannot take place. It is not the same thing — and this difference is everything."

9.6 The Mahoukou Law in the contemporary phenomenological landscape

This chapter may close by situating the Mahoukou Law within the landscape of contemporary phenomenology — not to classify it, but to show where it inscribes itself and where it innovates.

It inscribes itself within the Husserlian tradition through its method — eidetic variation — and through its ambition — to disclose a structure of intelligibility of experience that is neither empirical nor metaphysically dogmatic. It inscribes itself within the Lévinassian tradition through its centring on alterity and responsibility — but surpasses it by thematising the transformative reciprocity that Lévinas had not developed. It inscribes itself within the Ricœurian tradition through its attention to the capacity of response — but surpasses it by thematising Resonance as an irreducible third moment.

It innovates by proposing an organic triadic structure — non-linear, co-originary, immanently normative — that had not been thematised as such in the phenomenological tradition. And it innovates by developing the notion of dialogical impediment as an immanent normative category — allowing a phenomenological critique of contemporary forms of interaction that devitalise encounter without formally abolishing it.

It is in this double sense — assumed tradition and genuine innovation — that the Mahoukou Law claims a place in the contemporary phenomenological landscape: not as a rupture with tradition, but as the accomplishment of a lacuna that tradition had left open.

Bibliographical note: This chapter draws primarily on Edmund Husserl (Phenomenology as Rigorous Science, 1965), Emmanuel Lévinas (Otherwise than Being, trans. A. Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), Paul Ricœur (Oneself as Another, trans. K. Blamey, University of Chicago Press, 1992), David Hume (A Treatise of Human Nature, book III, Oxford UP, 2000) for the classical objection on normative derivation, and Axel Honneth (The Struggle for Recognition, trans. J. Anderson, Polity Press, 1995) for immanent normativity in the Hegelian tradition. For the notion of immanent normativity in the context of the Mahoukou Law, see the Philosophical Manifesto of Christian Mahoukou (2026).

Part IV has established the phenomenological status of the Mahoukou Law with the rigour that a law claiming the eidetic register demands. Part V can now confront the law with the great approaches of the phenomenological tradition — to show what it owes them, what it surpasses, and what it brings that is specifically original.

PART V

Critical Discussions

Lévinas · Ricœur · Merleau-Ponty · Bourdieu

The Mahoukou Law inscribes itself within a philosophical heritage it recognises, enters into dialogue with, and surpasses at precise and localisable points. This Part V conducts these dialogues systematically — not to show that the tradition was wrong, but to identify exactly where the Mahoukou Law begins where the tradition stops. Four major interlocutors: Lévinas for alterity, Ricœur for narrative identity, Merleau-Ponty for embodied perception, Bourdieu for sociological critique.

Chapter 10

Lévinas and Alterity From Assignment to Resonance

10.1 The Lévinassian contribution: alterity as originary ethical structure

Emmanuel Lévinas is the closest interlocutor of the Mahoukou Law within the phenomenological tradition — and the one whose surpassing is most decisive. His work constitutes the soil on which the phenomenology of interpellation puts down its deepest roots.

The fundamental contribution of Lévinas is to have shown that the relation to the other is not primarily a cognitive relation — a subject knowing an object — but an ethical relation: the face of the Other assigns me to responsibility before I have been able to constitute myself as an autonomous subject. This assignment is pre-originary: it does not result from a choice, a contract, or a decision — it constitutes me as a responsible subject before any decision.

In *Totality and Infinity* (1961) and *Otherwise than Being* (1974), Lévinas develops with incomparable depth the structure of the Call — without ever naming it as such, but by describing its essential dimensions: the singularity of address (the face addresses me, me and no other), excess over itself (the face places me under obligation beyond what it says), ethical opening (the face opens infinite responsibility). The Mahoukou Law fully acknowledges this contribution: its phenomenology of the Call is Lévinassian in its fundamental inspiration.

10.2 The Lévinassian limit: radical asymmetry and the absence of Resonance

But Lévinas stops exactly where the Mahoukou Law begins. His philosophical architecture is built on a radical and irreducible asymmetry: the other always dominates the self, responsibility is infinite and non-reciprocal, Buber's I-Thou reciprocity is explicitly refused. For Lévinas, I respond to the Call of the other — and this other does not respond to my Call in return, because reciprocity would be a form of symmetry that would neutralise the transcendence of alterity.

This radical asymmetry has a decisive phenomenological consequence: it renders impossible Resonance in the sense of the Mahoukou Law. Resonance is a reciprocal transformation of both subjects — it presupposes that both are affected, that both change in their manner of being in the world, that something emerges from the relation that belongs to neither of them separately. In the Lévinassian structure, this reciprocity is structurally excluded: the self is transformed under the effect of the Other's Call — but the Other is not transformed in this relation.

Moreover, Lévinas thinks the Call and the Response — but does not thematise what happens after the Response. His "Here I am" is the figure of the Response par excellence — availability, responsibility, engagement. But this "Here I am" says nothing about what, in this very availability, transforms the one who offers it. Resonance — the trace left in the responding subject by the very fact of having responded — is absent from Lévinassian phenomenology.

Lévinas and the Mahoukou Law

► **Contribution:** The Call as originary ethical structure of alterity. Pre-originary assignment by the face of the Other. The irreducible singularity of address. The constitutive excess of the Call over all informational content.

► **Limit:** The radical asymmetry that excludes transformative reciprocity. The absence of thematisation of Resonance as transformation of the responding subject themselves. Interpellation thought as unidirectional — from the other toward me — without possibility of return.

► **What the Mahoukou Law adds:** Resonance as irreducible third moment that transforms both subjects, not only the respondent. Asymmetrical reciprocity — not the symmetry Lévinas rightly refused, but co-transformation within difference. The triad as organic structure that includes the transformative return upon the caller.

Bibliographical note: Emmanuel Lévinas, Totality and Infinity (trans. A. Lingis, Duquesne UP, 1969); Otherwise than Being (trans. A. Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); Ethics and Infinity (trans. R. Cohen, Duquesne UP, 1985). For the confrontation between Lévinas and Buber on reciprocity, see the chapter "Dialogue" in Discovering Existence with Husserl and Heidegger (trans. R. Cohen & M. Smith, Northwestern UP, 1998).

Chapter 11

Ricœur and Narrative Identity From Response Capacity to Resonance

11.1 The Ricœurian contribution: the Response as narrative self-constitution

Paul Ricœur occupies a particular position in the phenomenological tradition: he is the one who has most developed the dimension of Response — without ever naming it explicitly as such. In *Oneself as Another* (1990), he develops the concept of attestation and ipse-identity: the subject is constituted in the narrative response it makes to its own existence and to the solicitations of others.

The Ricœurian contribution is twofold. On the one hand, it shows that the Response is not an isolated act in an instant — it inscribes itself in a narrative, a story the subject tells of itself and within which each particular response takes on meaning. On the other hand, it develops the notion of promise as the paradigmatic form of engaged Response: to promise is to constitute oneself as someone who responds — who maintains a continuity between what they say and what they do, between what they are and what they commit to.

This narrative dimension of the Response is valuable — and the Mahoukou Law fully acknowledges it. It allows us to understand how the Response inscribes itself in duration,

how it progressively constitutes the identity of the responding subject, how each particular response is carried by a history of prior responses and orients a history of future responses.

11.2 The Ricœurian limit: narrative without Resonance

But the Ricœurian approach presents a structural limit from the standpoint of the Mahoukou Law: it thinks the Response from the responding subject — from their capacity to narrate themselves, to maintain a narrative identity across time, to assume responsibility for their commitments. In doing so, it misses the properly intersubjective and transformative dimension of the Response.

The Response in the sense of the Mahoukou Law is not only a narrative self-constitution — it is an existential engagement in a relation that transforms both subjects. The Resonance this Response may produce is not a property of the narrative the subject makes of themselves — it is an emergence of the relation itself, exceeding what either of the two subjects could produce alone in their own narrativity.

In other words: Ricœur thinks the Response from within a subject who narrates themselves. The Mahoukou Law thinks the Response from the between-two of two subjects who mutually transform each other. It is not the same thing — and it is precisely Resonance that makes the difference.

Ricœur and the Mahoukou Law

► **Contribution:** The narrative dimension of the Response and the constitution of ipse-identity in the gesture of responding. The promise as paradigmatic form of engaged Response. Attention to the temporality of the Response — how it inscribes itself in a self-narrative.

► **Limit:** Centring on the responding subject alone — without thematisation of what the Response produces in both subjects. The absence of Resonance as the trans-subjective dimension of transformation. Narrative as the exclusive form of Response — which leaves in the shade its non-narrative, bodily, and silent forms.

► **What the Mahoukou Law adds:** Resonance as trans-subjective dimension of the Response — what emerges from the relation and belongs to neither subject separately. Existential transformation as something beyond narrative constitution. Attention to non-verbal forms of Response — bodily, gestural, silent — that escape narration.

*Bibliographical note: Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (trans. K. Blamey, University of Chicago Press, 1992, studies VI–VIII on promise, responsibility, and attestation); *Time and Narrative* (trans. K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, 3 vols, University of Chicago Press, 1984–1988); *Memory, History, Forgetting* (trans. K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, 2004).*

Chapter 12

Merleau-Ponty and Embodied Perception The Body as First Site of Interpellation

12.1 The Merleau-Pontian contribution: intercorporeality as substrate of interpellation

Maurice Merleau-Ponty brings to the phenomenology of interpellation something that no other author in the tradition can bring: the bodily dimension of all relation. His concept of the lived body — the body as subject of experience, not as object of knowledge — and his notion of intercorporeality — the direct, pre-verbal communication between two bodies sharing the same space — constitute the phenomenological substrate of the triad.

The Merleau-Pontian contribution allows us to understand how the Call can be launched and received before words — in the gaze, in the posture, in the quality of presence of a body in space. It allows us to understand how the Response may be bodily — a postural adjustment, an approach or withdrawal, a tension that releases or intensifies — without being any less engaged than a verbal response. And it allows us to understand how Resonance may operate in the bodily register — as a modification of sensory availability, of kinaesthetic sensibility, of the relation to touch and proximity.

This bodily dimension of the triad is particularly valuable for situations in which access to verbal language is limited — situations of severe disability, trauma, great age, any relation in which the body precedes and exceeds words. Merleau-Pontian phenomenology provides the Mahoukou Law with its incarnate dimension — without which the triad would risk remaining an abstract structure.

12.2 The Merleau-Pontian limit: perception without normativity

But Merleau-Ponty, precisely because he centres his analysis on perception and intercorporeality, does not develop the normative dimension of interpersonal relation. Perception for him is essentially descriptive — it describes how bodies mutually perceive,

co-regulate, and co-constitute each other in shared space. It does not say what must happen in this co-presence for something like genuine interpellation to take place.

The Mahoukou Law needs Merleau-Ponty to think the bodily substrate of the triad — but it cannot be content with him alone to think the immanent normativity of the interpellative structure. Merleau-Pontian perception is a necessary condition of interpellation — it is not its sufficient structure. What is lacking is precisely what the triad adds: the existential engagement of the Response and the reciprocal transformation of Resonance.

Merleau-Ponty and the Mahoukou Law

► **Contribution:** The lived body as the first site of all relation. Intercorporeality as direct, pre-verbal communication between two embodied presences. The bodily dimension of the Call and the Response — what passes through the body before words. The richness of non-verbal forms of address and reception.

► **Limit:** The absence of immanent normativity in the phenomenology of perception. Intercorporeality described without thematising what makes it an interpellation rather than a simple co-presence. Existential engagement and transformative Resonance remain without formulation within this framework.

► **What the Mahoukou Law adds:** The immanent normativity that distinguishes ordinary co-presence from genuine interpellation. The existential engagement of the Response as what makes a bodily adjustment an act. Resonance as transformation that intercorporeality makes possible but does not necessarily produce.

Bibliographical note: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception (trans. D. Landes, Routledge, 2012, especially Part II on the lived body); The Visible and the Invisible (trans. A. Lingis, Northwestern UP, 1968) for the notion of flesh; The Primacy of Perception (Northwestern UP, 1964) for intercorporeality.

Chapter 13

Bourdieu and Sociological Critique Genesis vs. Eidetic Structure

13.1 The Bourdieusian contribution: the social construction of dispositions

Pierre Bourdieu is the interlocutor who best embodies the sociological objection to the eidetic claim of the Mahoukou Law. His work constitutes a systematic critique of philosophies of the subject that ignore the social conditions of production of subjective

experiences. His notion of habitus — the ensemble of durable dispositions incorporated through socialisation — shows how what we experience as intuitions, feelings, and immediate certainties is in reality the product of an invisible social learning.

The Bourdieusian contribution to the understanding of interpellation is real and must not be underestimated. It shows how the concrete forms taken by the Call — the manners of addressing, the privileged channels, the contents recognised as interpellative — vary according to social contexts, cultures, and class positions. It shows how interpellative competence — the capacity to launch and receive Calls — is unequally distributed socially. It shows how dialogical impediments are often produced by relations of symbolic domination exercised in and through ordinary exchanges.

13.2 The Bourdieusian limit: genetic reduction

But the Bourdieusian approach presents a structural limit with respect to the Mahoukou Law: it conflates genetic analysis with structural analysis. It can show how a particular concrete form of Call is socially constructed — but it cannot account for the structure of the fact of being addressable itself.

This distinction — genesis vs. eidetic structure — was developed in the chapter on immanent normativity. We can reformulate it here more precisely in dialogue with Bourdieu. The Bourdieusian habitus explains the content of a subject's interpellative sensibility — the forms of Call to which they are disposed to respond, the channels they privilege, the registers in which they recognise themselves as addressee. It does not explain the structure of the fact of being constituted as an addressable subject — a being to whom one can address oneself and who can be placed under obligation. This structure is the condition of possibility of all internalisation — it precedes habitus and makes it possible.

Moreover — and this is perhaps the most decisive argument — Bourdieusian sociological critique cannot account for the phenomenon of normative surprise: being interpellated by someone or something that one's incorporated social dispositions would have led one to ignore or reject. This phenomenon shows that the interpellative structure always exceeds what habitus has constituted — and that genuine Resonance is often what arrives from where it was not expected.

Bourdieu and the Mahoukou Law

► **Contribution:** The social construction of the concrete forms of Call and Response. The unequal distribution of interpellative competence according to social positions. Analysis of dialogical impediments produced by relations of symbolic domination. Critique of the illusions of the sovereign subject who ignores its social conditions of production.

► **Limit:** Genetic reduction that conflates the explanation of the genesis of a disposition with the analysis of its structure. The inability to account for the phenomenon of normative surprise. The absence of a distinction between the socially variable content of interpellative sensibility and the universally necessary structure of the fact of being addressable.

► **What the Mahoukou Law adds:** The distinction between genesis and eidetic structure — the former belonging to sociology, the latter to phenomenology. The structure of addressability as the condition of possibility of all social internalisation — and thus as what sociology presupposes without being able to ground it. The conditional necessity of the triad as what sociological reductionism cannot eliminate without contradicting itself.

*Bibliographical note: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (trans. R. Nice, Polity Press, 1990); *Distinction* (trans. R. Nice, Harvard UP, 1984); *Pascalian Meditations* (trans. R. Nice, Polity Press, 2000); *Language and Symbolic Power* (trans. G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Harvard UP, 1991). For the confrontation between phenomenology and sociological critique, see Bernhard Waldenfels (*Order and Disorder*, 1998) and Dan Zahavi (*Subjectivity and Selfhood*, MIT Press, 2005).*

Synthesis of Critical Discussions What the Mahoukou Law Owes its Interlocutors — and What it Adds

The four dialogues conducted in this Part V converge toward a single conclusion that can now be formulated in its full precision.

The Mahoukou Law is indebted to each of its four interlocutors for an irreplaceable dimension. Lévinas gives it the ethical depth of address — pre-originary assignment by the face of the Other. Ricœur gives it the narrative dimension of the Response — the constitution of self in the gesture of responding. Merleau-Ponty gives it the bodily substance of the triad — intercorporeality as the substrate of all interpellation. Bourdieu gives it critical lucidity about the social conditions of the concrete forms of Call and Response.

But to each of them, the Mahoukou Law adds something they had not thematised. To Lévinas: Resonance as irreducible third moment and the asymmetrical reciprocity he rightly refused. To Ricœur: the trans-subjective dimension of transformation — what emerges from the relation and exceeds the narrative of each. To Merleau-Ponty: the immanent normativity that distinguishes co-presence from interpellation. To Bourdieu:

the eidetic structure of addressability as the condition of possibility of all social internalisation.

"The Mahoukou Law does not arise against tradition — it arises from the encounter between tradition's contributions and the lacunae they leave open. It is the structure that their intuitions were seeking and that none of them had yet formulated in its organic unity."

General Conclusion

Interpellation as the Lived Structure of Relational Existence

1. What this manuscript has accomplished

This manuscript departed from a question that is simple in appearance and radical in its demands: what makes an experience appear as addressed? What distinguishes, within lived experience, the fact of being reached by a Call from the mere fact of receiving a stimulus? And what makes certain encounters transform those who traverse them, while others leave them exactly as they were?

The proposed answer — the triadic structure Call · Response · Resonance — is not a simple answer. It is a structure: a coherent ensemble of necessary conditions whose organic articulation constitutes the condition of possibility of all genuine interpellation. This structure has been exposed in its phenomenological density (Part II), in its internal variations (Part III), in its epistemological status (Part IV), and in dialogue with tradition (Part V).

2. The three original contributions

Three original contributions to contemporary phenomenology may be drawn from this work.

The first is structural: the triad Call · Response · Resonance constitutes an eidetic law of every genuine interpellative event — organic and co-originary structure, non-linear succession, whose eidetic variation reveals conditional necessity.

The second is categorial: Resonance is established as an autonomous phenomenological category, irreducible to the mere Response and revelatory of the genuinely transformative character of encounter. It is both the third moment of the structure and its retroactive condition of intelligibility — what reveals that the Call was a Call and the Response a Response.

The third is normative: dialogical impediment is thematised as an immanent normative category — not an external moral judgement, but the norm that the phenomenon carries within itself as the criterion of its own accomplishment. This normativity grounds a phenomenological critique of contemporary forms of interaction that devitalise encounter without formally abolishing it.

3. What the Mahoukou Law opens

Three areas remain open from this work, which this manuscript has only begun to sketch.

The first is the area of clinical phenomenology: a phenomenology of interpellation in situations of care, educational accompaniment, therapeutic relation — situations in which the structural asymmetry between subjects does not suppress transformative reciprocity but profoundly modifies its forms.

The second is the area of digital phenomenology: an analysis of the transformations that digital environments impose on the structure of Call, Response, and Resonance — the algorithmised Call, the pre-formatted Response, Resonance confused with reverberation. This area is urgent in the context of the digital revolution.

The third is the political area: a phenomenology of interpellation in the relations between institutions and citizens, between governors and governed — an analysis of institutional structures that systematically produce dialogical impediments and of the conditions in which genuine political interpellation could be restored.

4. The status of the work: between tradition and innovation

This manuscript inscribes itself within the phenomenological tradition while surpassing it. It enters into dialogue with Husserl on method, with Heidegger on the structure of the Call, with Lévinas on the asymmetry of responsibility, with Ricoeur on the narrative capacity of response, with Merleau-Ponty on the bodily dimension of relation, with

Bourdieu on the social construction of interpellative sensibility. In each case, it acknowledges the contribution — and adds what these traditions had not yet thematised.

What it adds is always the same: the resonant moment, its structural necessity, and the normative analysis of its accomplishment or impediment. It is a modest addition in its formulation — a third moment, one more category, one more distinction. And it is a considerable addition in its implications: it transforms the phenomenology of interpellation from a phenomenology of the dyad into a phenomenology of the triad — from a description of relation into a description of the transformation that relation produces.

"Interpellation is the living structure of relational existence. Every time two existences genuinely encounter each other — one calls, the other responds, something is transformed in both — the Mahoukou Law is at work. Not as a theory applied from without. As a lived structure from within."

Call · Response · Resonance

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Finis coronat opus

The end crowns the work — but here, the end is not a closure. It is an opening.

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