

within this continuity enjoyment realizes independence with regard to continuity: each happiness comes for the first time. Subjectivity originates in the independence and sovereignty of enjoyment.

Plato speaks of the soul that feasts on truths.¹ He discerns in rational thought, in which the sovereignty of the soul is manifested, a relation with the object that is not only contemplative but confirms the same (characteristic of the thinker) in its sovereignty. In the meadow that lies in the plain of truth "that pasturage is found which is suited to the highest part of the soul; and the wing on which the soul soars is nourished with this."² What enables the soul to rise to truth is nourished with truth. Throughout this book we are opposing the full analogy drawn between truth and nourishment, because metaphysical Desire is above life, and with regard to it one cannot speak of satiety. But the Platonic image describes, with regard to thought, the very relationship that will be accomplished by life, where the attachment to the contents that fill it provides it with a supreme content. The consumption of foods is the food of life.

3. Enjoyment and Independence

We have said that to *live from something* does not amount to drawing vital energy from somewhere. Life does not consist in seeking and consuming the fuel furnished by breathing and nourishment, but, if we may so speak, in consummating terrestrial and celestial nourishments. Though it thus depends on what is not itself, this dependence is not without a counterpart which in the final analysis nullifies it. What we live from does not enslave us; we enjoy it. Need cannot be interpreted as a simple lack, despite the psychology of need given by Plato, nor as pure passivity, despite Kantian ethics. The human being thrives on his needs; he is happy for his needs. The paradox of "living from something," or, as Plato would say, the folly of these pleasures, is precisely in a complacency with regard to what life depends on—not a mastery on the one hand and a dependence on the other, but a mastery in this dependence. This is perhaps the very definition of complacency and pleasure. *Living from . . .* is the dependency that turns into sovereignty, into happiness—essentially egoist. Need—the vulgar Venus—is also, in a certain sense, the child of $\pi\delta\beta\sigma\delta$ and of $\pi\epsilon\nu\lambda\alpha$; it is $\pi\epsilon\nu\lambda\alpha$ as

¹ *Phaedrus*, 246e.

² *Phaedrus*, 248b-c.

source of *πόσος*, in contrast with desire, which is the *πενια* of *πόσος*. What it lacks is its source of plenitude and wealth. Need, a happy dependence, is capable of satisfaction, like a void, which gets filled. Physiology, from the exterior, teaches us that need is a lack. That man could be happy for his needs indicates that in human need the physiological plane is transcended, that as soon as there is need we are outside the categories of being—even though in formal logic the structures of happiness—*independence through dependence, or I, or human creature*—cannot show through without contradiction.

Need and enjoyment can not be covered by the notions of activity and passivity, though they be merged in the notion of finite freedom. Enjoyment, in relation with nourishment, which is the *other* of life, is an independence *sui generis*, the independence of happiness. The life that is life *from* something is happiness. Life is affectivity and sentiment; to live is to enjoy life. To despair of life makes sense only because originally life is happiness. Suffering is a failing of happiness; it is not correct to say that happiness is an absence of suffering. Happiness is made up not of an absence of needs, whose tyranny and imposed character one denounces, but of the satisfaction of all needs. For the privation of need is not just a privation, but is privation in a being that knows the surplus of happiness, privation in a being gratified. Happiness is accomplishment: it exists in a soul satisfied and not in a soul that has extirpated its needs, a castrated soul. And because life is happiness it is personal. The personality of the person, the ipseity of the I, which is more than the particularity of the atom and of the individual, is the particularity of the happiness of enjoyment. Enjoyment accomplishes the atheist separation; it deformalizes the notion of separation, which is not a cleavage made in the abstract, but the existence at home with itself of an autochthonous I. The soul is not, as in Plato, what “has the care of inanimate being everywhere”⁸; it to be sure dwells in what is not itself, but it acquires its own identity by this dwelling in the “other” (and not logically, by opposition to the other).

4. Need and Corporeity

If enjoyment is the very eddy of the same, it is not ignorance but exploitation of the other. The alterity of the other the world is is

⁸ *Phaedrus*, 246b.

surmounted by need, which enjoyment remembers and is enkindled by; need is the primary movement of the same. To be sure, need is also a dependence with regard to the other, but it is a dependence across time, a dependence that is not an instantaneous betraying of the same but a suspension or postponement of dependence, and thus the possibility to break, by labor and by economy, the very thrust of the alterity upon which need depends.

In denouncing as illusory the pleasures that accompany the satisfaction of needs Plato has fixed the negative notion of need: it would be a *less*, a lack that satisfaction would make good. The essence of need would be visible in the need to scratch oneself in scabies, in sickness.* Must we remain at a philosophy of need that apprehends it in poverty? Poverty is one of the dangers the liberation of man breaking with the animal and vegetable condition risks. In need the essential is in this rupture, despite this risk. To conceive of need as a simple privation is to apprehend it in the midst of a disorganized society which leaves it neither time nor consciousness. The distance intercalated between man and the world on which he depends constitutes the essence of need. A being has detached itself from the world from which it still nourishes itself! The part of being that has detached itself from the whole in which it was enrooted disposes of its own being, and its relation with the world is henceforth only need. It frees itself from all the weight of the world, from immediate and incessant contacts; it is at a distance. This distance can be converted into time, and subordinate a world to the liberated but needy being. There is here an ambiguity of which the body is the very articulation. Animal need is liberated from vegetable dependence, but this liberation is itself dependence and uncertainty. An animal's need is inseparable from struggle and fear; the exterior world from which it is liberated remains a threat. But need is also the time of labor: a relation with an other yielding its alterity. To be cold, hungry, thirsty, naked, to seek shelter—all these dependencies with regard to the world, having become needs, save the instinctive being from anonymous menaces and constitute a being independent of the world, a veritable *subject* capable of ensuring the satisfaction of its needs, which are recognized as material, that is, as admitting of satisfaction. Needs are in my power; they constitute me as the same and not as dependent on the other. My body is not only a way for the subject to be reduced to slavery, to de-

* Cf. *Philebus* 46a.

pend on what is not itself, but is also a way of possessing and of working, of having time, of overcoming the very alterity of what I have to live from. The body is the very self-possession by which the I, liberated from the world by need, succeeds in overcoming the very destitution of this liberation. We shall return to this further.

Having recognized its needs as material needs, as capable of being satisfied, the I can henceforth turn to what it does not lack. It distinguishes the material from the spiritual, opens to Desire. Labor, however, already requires discourse and consequently the height of the other irreducible to the same, the presence of the Other. There is no natural religion; but already human egoism leaves pure nature by virtue of the human body raised upwards, committed in the direction of height. This is not its empirical illusion but its ontological production and its ineffaceable testimony. The "I can" proceeds from this height.

Let us again note the difference between need and Desire: in need I can sink my teeth into the real and satisfy myself in assimilating the other; in Desire there is no sinking one's teeth into being, no satiety, but an uncharted future before me. Indeed the time presupposed by need is provided me by Desire; human need already rests on Desire. Need has thus the time to convert this *other* into the *same* by labor. I exist as a body, that is, as raised up, an organ that will be able to grasp and consequently place itself, in this world on which I depend, before ends technically realizable. For a body that labors everything is not already accomplished, already done; thus to be a body is to have time in the midst of the facts, to be *me* though living in the *other*.

This revelation of distance is an ambiguous revelation, for time both destroys the security of instantaneous happiness, and permits the fragility thus discovered to be overcome. And it is the relation with the other, inscribed in the body as its elevation, that makes possible the transformation of enjoyment into consciousness and labor.

5. Affectivity as the Ipseity of the I

We are catching sight of a possibility of rendering the unicity of the I intelligible. The unicity of the I conveys separation. Separation in the strictest sense is solitude, and enjoyment—happiness or unhappiness—is isolation itself.

The I is not unique like the Eiffel Tower or the Mona Lisa. The unicity of the I does not merely consist in being found in one sample

only, but in existing without having a genus, without being the individuation of a concept. The ipseity of the I consists in remaining outside the distinction between the individual and the general. The refusal of the concept is not a resistance to generalization by the *τόδε τι*, which is on the same plane of the concept—and by which the concept is defined, as by an antithetical term. Here the refusal of the concept is not only one of the aspects of its being, but its whole content; it is interiority. This refusal of the concept drives the being that refuses it into the dimension of interiority. It is at home with itself. The I is thus the mode in which the break-up of totality, which leads to the presence of the absolutely other, is concretely accomplished. It is solitude *par excellence*. The secrecy of the I guarantees the discretion of the totality.

This logically absurd structure of unicity, this non-participation in genus, is the very egoism of happiness. Happiness, in its relation with the "other" of nutriments, suffices to itself; it even suffices to itself because of this relation with the other: it consists in satisfying its needs and not in suppressing them. Happiness suffices to itself through the "not sufficing to oneself" proper to need. The lack in enjoyment, which Plato denounced, does not compromise the instant of sufficiency. The opposition between the ephemeral and the eternal does not convey the true meaning of sufficiency, which is the very contraction of the ego. It is an existence *for itself*—but not, initially, in view of its own existence. Nor is it a representation of self by self. It is for itself as in the expression "each for himself"; for itself as the "famished stomach that has no ears," capable of killing for a crust of bread, is for itself; for itself as the surfeited one who does not understand the starving and approaches him as an alien species, as the philanthropist approaches the destitute. The self-sufficiency of *enjoying* measures the egoism or the ipseity of the Ego and the same. Enjoyment is a withdrawal into oneself, an involution. What is termed an affective state does not have the dull monotony of a state, but is a vibrant exaltation in which dawns the self. For the I is not the *support* of enjoyment. The "intentional" structure is here wholly different; the I is the very contraction of sentiment, the pole of a spiral whose coiling and involution is drawn by enjoyment: the focus of the curve is a part of the curve. It is precisely as a "coiling," as a movement toward oneself, that enjoyment comes into play. And now one can understand in what sense we were able to say above that the I is an apology: whatever be the transfigurations this egoism will receive from

speech, it is for the happiness constitutive of its very egoism that the I who speaks pleads.

The breach of the totality that is accomplished by the enjoyment of solitude—or the solitude of enjoyment—is radical. When the critical presence of the Other will call in question this egoism it will not destroy its solitude. Solitude will be recognized in the concern for *knowing*, which is formulated as a problem of origin—inconceivable in a totality. To this problem the notion of causality can bring no solution, since it is precisely a question of a *self*, a being absolutely isolated, whose isolation causality would compromise by reinstating it in a series. The notion of creation alone will be commensurate with such a question, respecting at the same time the absolute novelty of the I and its attachment to a principle, its having been called in question. The solitude of the subject will be recognized also in the goodness in which the apology issues.

The upsurge of the self beginning in enjoyment, where the substantiality of the I is apperceived not as the subject of the verb to be, but as implicated in happiness (not belonging to ontology, but to axiology) is the exaltation of the *existent* as such. The existent would then not be justiciable to the “comprehension of being,” or ontology. One becomes a subject of being not by assuming being but in enjoying happiness, by the interiorization of enjoyment which is also an exaltation, an “above being.” The existent is “autonomous” with respect to being; it designates not a participation in being, but happiness. The existent par excellence is man.

When the I is identified with reason, taken as the power of thematization and objectification, it loses its very ipseity. To represent to oneself is to empty oneself of one's subjective substance and to insensibilize enjoyment. By imagining this anaesthesia limitless Spinoza conjures away separation. But the joy of this intellectual coincidence and the freedom of this obedience mark a cleavage line in the unity won in this way. Reason makes human society possible; but a society whose members would be only reasons would vanish as a society. What could a being entirely rational speak of with another entirely rational being? Reason has no plural; how could numerous reasons be distinguished? How could the Kantian kingdom of ends be possible, had not the rational beings that compose it retained, as the principle of individuation, their exigency for happiness, miraculously saved from the shipwreck of sensible nature? In Kant the I is met with again in this need for happiness.

To be I is to exist in such a way as to be already beyond being, in happiness. For the I to be means neither to oppose nor to represent something to itself, nor to use something, nor to aspire to something, but to enjoy something.

6. The I of Enjoyment Is Neither Biological Nor Sociological

Individuation through happiness individuates a "concept" whose comprehension and extension coincide; the individuation of the concept by self-identification constitutes the content of this concept. The notion of the separated person which we have approached in the description of enjoyment, which is posited in the independence of happiness, is to be distinguished from the notion of person such as it is fabricated by the philosophy of life or of race. In the exaltation of biological life the person arises as a product of the species or of impersonal life, which has recourse to the individual so as to ensure its impersonal triumph.⁴ The unicity of the I, its status as a conceptless individual, would disappear in this *participation* in what exceeds it.

The pathos of liberalism, which we rejoin on one side, lies in the promotion of a person inasmuch as he represents nothing further, that is, is precisely a self. Then multiplicity can be produced only if the individuals retain their secrecy, if the relation that unites them into a multiplicity is not visible from the outside, but proceeds from one unto the other. If it were entirely visible from the outside, if the exterior point of view would open upon its ultimate reality, the multiplicity would form a totality in which the individuals would participate; the bond between persons would not have preserved the multiplicity from addition. In order that multiplicity be maintained, the relation proceeding from me to the Other—the attitude of one person with regard to another—must

⁴ Cf. for example Kurt Schilling, "Einführung in die Staats- und Rechtsphilosophie," in *Rechtswissenschaftliche Grundrisse*, ed. by Otto Korellreuter (Berlin, 1939). According to this book, typical of racist philosophy, individuality and sociality would be events of life that proceed individuals and create them for better adaptation, in order to ensure life. The concept of happiness, with the individualness it evokes, is lacking in this philosophy. Want—*Not*—is what threatens life. The State is but an organization of this multiplicity, in view of making life possible. To the end the person—even the person of the leader—remains at the service of life and of the creation of life. The principle of personality proper is never an end.

be stronger than the formal signification of conjunction, to which every relation risks being degraded. This greater force is concretely affirmed in the fact that the relation proceeding from me to the other cannot be included within a network of relations visible to a third party. If this bond between me and the other could be entirely apprehended from the outside it would suppress, under the gaze that encompassed it, the very multiplicity bound with this bond. The individuals would appear as participants in the totality: the Other would amount to a second copy of the I—both included in the same concept. Pluralism is not a numerical multiplicity. In order that a pluralism in itself (which cannot be reflected in formal logic) be realized there must be produced in depth the movement from me to the other, an attitude of an I with regard to the Other (an attitude already *specified* as love or hatred, obedience or command, learning or teaching, etc. . . .), that would not be a species of relationship in general; this means that the movement from me to the other could not present itself as a theme to an objective gaze freed from this confrontation with the other, to a reflection. Pluralism implies a radical alterity of the other, whom I do not simply *conceive* by relation to myself, but *confront* out of my egoism. The alterity of the Other is in him and is not relative to me; it *reveals* itself. But I have access to it proceeding from myself and not through a comparison of myself with the other. I have access to the alterity of the Other from the society I maintain with him, and not by quitting this relation in order to reflect on its terms. Sexuality supplies the example of this relation, accomplished before being reflected on: the other sex is an alterity borne by a being as an essence and not as the reverse of his identity; but it could not affect an unsexed me. The Other as master can also serve us as an example of an alterity that is not only *by relation* to me, an alterity that, belonging to the essence of the other, is nevertheless visible only from an I.