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*The face and the mask*

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All living beings are in the open, they show themselves and communicate with one another, but only humans have a face, only humans make their appearing and their communicating of themselves to other humans their own fundamental experience, only humans make of the face the place of their own truth.

What the face exposes and reveals is not something that can be said with words, formulated in this or that significating proposition. With their faces humans unconsciously put themselves on the line, it is with the face, before the word, that they express and reveal themselves. And that which the face expresses is not solely how an individual feels, it is first of all their opening, their exposing and communicating themselves to other humans.

For this reason the face is the site of politics. If there isn't an animal politics, this is solely because animals, who are already always in the open, do not have a problem with exposing themselves, they dwell simply in it without caring. It is for this reason that they are not interested in mirrors, in the image as such. Humans, conversely, want to recognize and be recognized, they want to own their image, they look for their own truth in it. In this manner they transform the open into a world, on the terrain of an incessant political dialectic.

If humans had to communicate only and solely information, always this or that thing, there wouldn't properly be a politics, but solely an exchange of messages. But since humans must first of all communicate with one another their own openness, meaning a pure communicability, the face is the very condition of politics, that upon which everything that humans say to and exchange with one another is founded. In this sense the face is the true city of humans, the ultimate political element. It is by looking at each other in the face that humans recognize each other and are passionate about one another, they perceive similitude and difference, distance and proximity.

A country that decides to renounce its own face, to cover with masks the faces of its citizens everywhere is, then, a country that has cancelled by itself every political dimension. In this empty space, subjected at every moment to a limitless control, individuals now move about isolated from each other, having lost the immediate and sensible foundation of their own community and who can only exchange messages directed to a name that no longer has a face. To a name that no longer has a face.