

## Pariah types and forms of political resistance in Hannah Arendt

*Os tipos Párias e as formas de resistência política em Hannah Arendt*

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### ABSTRACT:

Reflecting on pariah types and linking them to political resistance is the core of this investigation. Political resistance is here understood as both a right and a duty of any human being who finds themselves in a situation of oppression and has their dignity violated. Our aim is to present the characteristics of each figure within the pariah types and to understand the forms of resistance grounded in each of them. Our hypothesis is that each figure carries a specific model of resistance that spans a spectrum extending from laughter and irony to assertive occupation of the public space, although all of them possess strength and significance in their respective contexts. The methodology adopted is textual exegesis, a well established approach in philosophical studies.

KEYWORDS: Pariah types, resistance, politics, Hannah Arendt

### RESUMO:

Pensar os tipos párias e ligar estes a resistência política apresenta-se como o cerne dessa reflexão. A resistência política é tomada aqui como um direito e um dever de cada ser humano que se encontra em

situação de opressão e tenha sua dignidade aviltada. Nosso objetivo é apresentar as características de cada figura dos tipos párias e compreender as formas de resistência ancoradas em cada uma delas. Nossa hipótese é que cada figura traz consigo um modelo específico de resistência que perfaz o arco que vai do riso/ironia a ocupação contundente do espaço público, embora todas tenham sua força e importância em seus contextos. Elegemos como metodologia a exegese textual já consagrada nos estudos de filosofia.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: Tipos párias, resistência, política, Hannah Arendt

## Introduction

When dealing with resistance, we are on shaky ground, as it is not a matter of going into the public arena to demand particular gains or defend causes that do not aim at human dignity and respect for plurality. Therefore, in our understanding, resistance is not equivalent to a struggle for individual satisfaction or group privilege. In this sense, if it is possible to present a filter for the legitimacy of resistance, it finds refuge in public happiness. It is the good of the political community and the preservation of the dignity and political rights of its members that lies at the heart of the matter.

That said, I think it is worth briefly considering the idea of dignity. Dignity in the philosophical tradition takes on some specific approaches, sometimes political, sometimes legal or bioethical, amongst others. In general terms, it concerns the intrinsic value that every human being carries with them. For example, for Kant, dignity is in line with respect for others, treating others as ends and never as means, and in this sense, dignity is taken as something inalienable. In a nutshell, we can assert that for Kant, dignity is a universal attribute of every rational being that imposes unconditional respect and is the foundation of all rights. In agreement with Pereira and Pereira (2014, p. 3, our translation), we can conclude that dignity “is the greatest value that man can have and sets him apart from other beings”. From Kant's perspective, we have that:

In the kingdom of ends, everything has either a price or a dignity. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is raised above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity (Kant, 1998, p. 42-43).

Therefore, when we stated earlier that resistance must be based on the idea of dignity, we were following this line of thinking, but above all, the understanding that can be drawn from Arendt's thoughts on the subject of dignity.

In our view, Arendt's idea of dignity is anchored in the capacity for political action (*praxis*) and belonging to a political community. Here, it is important to understand that, in Arendt's grammar, dignity has no metaphysical or essentialist foundation. Contrary to this, Arendt proposes a phenomenological

analysis of the human condition, and it is in this vein that dignity in Hannah Arendt can be understood as a dignity of action and public space. The idea of resistance that we are operating with here partly takes up what the previous reflections present, but above all it follows Arendt's reasoning as a guide.

Given this, we understand that the pariah types she enumerates in her reflections [*the Schlemiel, the little man, the man of good will, the rebellious pariah*] largely represent forms of political resistance that are quite peculiar to the thinker's formulations and, from our perspective, serve as heuristic figures for modes of resistance that span the arc stretching from laughter/irony to juridical-political confrontation, as exemplified by Bernard Lazare in the historical episode known as the Dreyfus Affair.

Let us, therefore, proceed to elucidate the figure of the pariah, so that we may envision it as a possible paradigm of resistance.

## 1. The Pariah and its Features

The pariah in Hannah Arendt is a figure that aptly expresses the condition of horror experienced by the Jewish people. This is evident, given that the pariah represents the caste of the dispossessed and the unfortunate in the ancient Indian class order. Thus, we are aware of what this category can signify within the social structure. Max Weber (1979) employs this figure in his writings, defining the Jewish people as the pariahs of humanity, or, in other words, as the ideal characterization of the Jewish people. If we seek to understand the category of the pariah in its origin, we encounter the *Dalits* of the Hindu caste system, in whose internal subdivision pariahs stand below all others: they are the subalterns, those who cannot even be touched<sup>1</sup>. They represent, ultimately, the untouchables, the undesirable.

By placing the Jewish people within this configuration, Weber positions the figure of the Jewish pariah as the excluded subject *par excellence*<sup>2</sup>, as one who would suffer the indifference of the nations and peoples with whom he might come to interact. Hannah Arendt adopts this understanding and, in doing so, reshapes it through her own lenses, since she understands the pariah not only as the world's dispossessed but also as a being with a distinct identity. Indeed, the thinker envisions a series of figurations for this pariah that form an arc ranging from the rebellious pariah to the arriviste, to the conscious, to the common and downtrodden, and ultimately to the brilliant and exceptional pariah.

<sup>1</sup> We may recall here what happened to the Jews in the Ghetto of Venice. When closing a deal, they did not follow the local tradition of a hug and a handshake. Instead, they would bow, which sealed and concluded the agreement. In other words, they were subjected to the same condition of impurity (*Cf.* in this study, the section on the Ghetto of Venice).

<sup>2</sup> It must be clarified that although the designation of the Jews as pariahs of humanity has been accepted and recognized as perceptive, it has not been exempt from criticism and commentary. Among these is Kurt Blumenfeld's reflection in a letter to Hannah Arendt, in which he remarked: "Max Weber's thesis that the Jews are a pariah people is brilliant, but not as fair as I once thought, as differences lead to analogies. All in all, it is better to describe a particular case than to create terminology, no matter how seductive it may be, and thereby generate new errors" (*Cf.* Correspondance, 1998, / letter dated November 5th, 1954, our translation).

In our understanding, this reconciliation occurs through resistance and comprehension, wherein the full exercise of thinking, acting, and judging is established on the basis of events, surpassing the notion of process and accepting the world as it is, yet without conceding to its atrocities and horrors.

From this perspective, Hannah Arendt (1994, p. 165-166) asserts that “the result of understanding is meaning, which we originate in the very process of living insofar as we try to reconcile ourselves to what we do and what we suffer”.

Thus, it seems to us that the pariah condition demands an urgent political action and, along with it, a comprehension of the world in the sense of understanding in order to reconcile oneself. That said, it is necessary to overcome the mistake of interpreting comprehension through the lens of forgiveness, since one has nothing to do with the other. Therefore, to understand is indeed to reconcile oneself, but it does not entail forgetting atrocities or granting forgiveness. Hannah Arendt (1994, p. 164) draws attention to the fact that there is little relation between these categories. She writes: “Yet forgiving has so little to do with understanding that it is neither its condition nor its consequence”.

Understanding has no end; it is neither static nor paralyzing. On the contrary, it is unending and yields indeterminate results. Its foremost purpose is to seek, in the world, a possibility of movement and communication so as to establish oneself and confront horror and adversity from a common point, namely, that of a political community. As Aguiar (2009, p. 67, our translation) clarifies, “The spectator is understood, therefore, as a dimension intrinsic to the space and the political action of anyone who opens themselves to the common world”.

The pariah emerges, in Arendt’s perspective, not only as the ideal type of the world’s wretched, but above all as a concept. This is of singular importance, since this figure, historically situated and defined and circumscribed in space and time, is, at the same time, a concept, an idea. It should be emphasized that it is a key idea for understanding what befell the Jews as the excluded and the oppressed.

Thus, the author provides us with a key, in our view, for analyzing various oppressed and excluded groups throughout the world, which would lead us to inquire about the pariahs of our own time. Since the Jew was the pariah of earlier eras, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, “the social pariahs of the nineteenth century were Jews” (Arendt, 2007, p. 140), the pressing question becomes: who are today’s pariahs? However, this is not the focus of our discussion; we note it here only insofar as our author adopts the pariah as a central concept in her analyses and brings it into prominence. She writes:

It is therefore not surprising that out of their personal experience Jewish poets, writers, and artists should have been able to evolve *the concept of the pariah as a human type—a concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind in our day* and one which has exerted upon the gentile world an influence in strange contrast to the spiritual and political ineffectiveness which has been the fate of these men among their own brethren (Arendt, 2007, p. 276, our emphasis).

In noting that artists, poets, and others, drawing on their own experiences, have taken the pariah as a concept, and being herself an intellectual who endured the pariah condition, Arendt appropriates this figure in order to ground her analysis of the Jewish question. Moreover, we understand that she adopts the pariah condition for her philosophy and for politics as a mode of thinking and acting.

Here, it is important to highlight that, in traversing these pariah types, which were extensively described and shaped the imaginary of assimilated Jews, she selects four of them to constitute the figure of the pariah as a heuristic figure of resistance within the context of existence in the world and, in our view, of political existence. Hence the relevance of the pariah mode of thinking for the author's theoretical framework.

The pariah types are figures from literature, cinema, and real life who emerge as affirmations of the political being, each one functioning as a figure of resistance in their own way. All of them, therefore, engage in legitimate actions, although some are more effective and forceful than others. What they sought, however, was to belong to a community, above all, a political community. As Bernstein (1996, p. 33) elucidates, "Arendt is concerned with the kinds of responses and strategies of resistance to the pariah status of Jews as pariah people". Thus, we proceed with the discussion by presenting the pariah types.

### 1.1. *Schlemiel* – The strategy of the comic innocent.

The first type of pariah highlighted by Hannah Arendt is Heine's *Schlemiel*, or wretch. It should be noted that this type of pariah already clearly expresses the idea of resistance to the world, a situation that will also appear in the other figures, but it is with Heine's *Schlemiel* that we already see the pariah's protest against the horror of the world. Hannah Arendt tells us, "it is from this shifting of the accent, from this vehement protest on the part of the pariah, from this attitude of denying the reality of the social order and of confronting it, instead, with a higher reality, that Heine's spirit of mockery really stems (...). *And it is this aloofness of the pariah from all the works of man that Heine regards as the essence of freedom*" (Arendt, 2007, p. 279-280, our emphasis).

Assuming indifference towards the world, the pariah gains access to it. In seeking freedom, he does so as if he were not in the world. Here we have the pariah as an outsider, ultimately as one who, being outside, steps into the world without feeling part of it, because although he desires this, he knows he will be expelled, so he is indifferent to it, even though paradoxically he glimpses belonging to it. It is a tragicomic resistance that *Schlemiel* assumes towards the world, yet he maintains a relationship with the world.

Heine likens the figure of *Schlemiel* to the occult tradition of pariahs. With this comparison, the

poet sought to demonstrate the dissatisfaction experienced by Jews in a world that rejected and denied them as people. In the face of such atrocity, an unconventional ‘weapon’ emerges, namely: innocence (Arendt, 2007, p. 278).

This innocence marks a timid confrontation that aims to please the other person. Heine's pariah is by no means a cunning fighter, nor does he have the courage to face his ills head-on. Thus, his timid and humble posture reveals a common pariah, who well represented “Instead, in its gay, insouciant impudence it is characteristic of the common people” (Arendt, 2007, p. 278). Ultimately, this pariah well represents those excluded from Jewish society, especially the unfortunate who, having neither wealth nor talent, wander around as insignificant beings. No one represents this better than Heine's *Schlemiel*. In Arendt's words:

For the pariah, excluded from formal society and with no desire to be embraced within it, turns naturally to that which entertains and delights the common people. Sharing their social ostracism, he also shares their joys and sorrows, their pleasures and their tribulations. He turns, in fact, from the world of men and the fashion thereof to the open and unrestricted bounty of the earth (Arendt, 2007, p. 278).

In his quest for recognition, Heine's pariah seeks freedom. We understand that by not intensifying his struggle, he ultimately fails to achieve his full potential. Although dissatisfied with the world, he takes it with a ‘laugh’. However, it seems to us that Heine did not give up on this concept and, above all, on this condition. For him, “A man is born free, and he can lose his freedom only by selling himself into bondage” (Arendt, 2007, p. 280). Hannah Arendt highlights this by stating that “Heine vents his anger not only on tyrants but equally on those who put up with them” (Arendt, 2007, p. 280).

That said, in Heine's pariah, we see a restlessness of the occult tradition that reveals itself to the world as a claim. The *Schlemiel* is the innocent and funny character who, dissatisfied with the world, takes it away to smile with it, in the hope of one day inhabiting it.

Having set this out, we now turn to the other pariah type, that Arendt describes as the ‘suspect’ pariah, so called because they are viewed as a potential suspect even when no wrongdoing is ascribed to them. This pariah carries with them a mark of irony and aptly embodies the notion of rejection within the community in which they wish to live. The suspect is always unwelcome.

## 2.2 The pariah as an eternal suspect: Chaplin's little man

The pariah, as already mentioned, is a being in constant tension with the world. Wanting to belong at all costs and constantly being purged by the world is certainly not a peaceful experience. Living without being able to exist is the maxim of the pariah, that is, inhabiting a geographical area without being able to exercise any rights in it. In this context, we see someone who has resigned themselves to being a

nobody, wandering around the city without being a citizen, suffering from the eternal distrust of everyone. The pariah ends up being a stranger in the world. Not only in the physical world, but above all in the institutional world. So that,

In modern times, the foreigner can be a people without a nation, a nation without territory, an emigrant, an exile, often a refugee who has lost everything, not only geographic space but also the moral and cultural environment (Courtine-Denamy, 2004, p. 43, our translation).

The pariah is, *par excellence*, that stranger in the world who, whether or not he has lost his nationality and, consequently, the right to inhabit his land, will always suffer the certain loss of his moral and cultural dimension. Regardless of whether he still lives in his own country or is in another, he will always be a stranger in the world, because the world will view him with suspicion in any circumstance.

This condition clearly illustrates Hannah Arendt's stance of always presenting herself after leaving Germany as a Jew, and only as a Jew. For her, the return of Jews to Germany would only be possible under a different political configuration. In a letter to Jaspers, she points out that she could only consider such a return after all that had been inflicted on the Jewish people “Mindful of what Germans have inflicted on the Jewish people, we will, in a future German republic, constitutionally renounce antisemitism, stipulating, for example, that any Jew, regardless of where he is born, can become a citizen of this republic, enjoying all rights of citizenship, solely on the basis of his Jewish nationality and without ceasing to be a Jew” (Arendt, 1992, p. 53).

This second pariah, described by Hannah Arendt in her text, brings to light the quality of ordinary people, that is, ordinary men and women. There is nothing extraordinary about him. He is just another member of the pariah crowd. He is another great paradigm of the wretched, the underdog, a *Schelemiel* in fullness. In this vein, Hannah Arendt (2007, p. 286) highlights Chaplin's genius by saying “in Chaplin the most unpopular people in the world inspired what was long the most popular of contemporary figure”. Regarding this figure, Courtine-Denamy (2004, p. 52, our translation) points out: “He too is a *Schlemiel*, who, persecuted by the police, resorts to cunning and subterfuge and triumphs, like David against Goliath”. And Hannah Arendt defines him as the eternal suspect,

In the eyes of society, the type which Chaplin portrays is always fundamentally suspect. He may be at odds with the world in a thousand and one ways, and his conflicts with it may assume a manifold variety of forms, but always and everywhere he is under suspicion, so that it is no good arguing rights or wrongs (Arendt, 2007, p. 286).

Chaplin's little man, Hannah Arendt points out, is persecuted by justice. What does this mean? In our view, it means that the law, which should serve as a protective wall, guaranteeing a safe path,

becomes a threat, an obstacle. However, what is striking, and worth noting as underlying the author's argument, is that this same law, this same justice, does not treat everyone equally. Thus, ordinary people, subordinates, and pariah are, in fact, the targets of this law. In the author's words, "the chronic plight of the little man who is incessantly harried and hectored by the guardians of law and order" (Arendt, 2007, p. 286).

This torment of Chaplin's little man is, in our understanding, the selective persecution by the law of those who do not fit into its bio-political perspective, since they do not conform in appearance, culture, religious rites, sexual behavior, or are simply objectively undesirable. Thus, they must be managed. Being managed implies knowing one's place, which is never a choice or a construction of one's subjectivity. In this case, the place of the pariah is determined by the guardians of the law.

With this imposition, Chaplin's pariah lives a perpetual escape: running, hiding, camouflaging, denying, seeking the basements of humanity to hide himself imposes itself as a lifestyle. The little man, the pariah of ordinary people, is the representation of the persecuted Jew. Judged as a criminal, he is undesirable. We understand that this figure is so relevant today because everything that is said about him, as a Jew, can be said about the 'pariah of today'<sup>3</sup>.

In this sense, Hannah Arendt's pariah emerges as an analytical category, heuristically determined for an analysis of those who live under the persecution of constituted power, even though they have committed no crime whatsoever, being considered fully suspect merely for existing.

Its relevance today, in our view, is crucial, allowing us not only to reflect upon the internal dynamics of the Jewish question but also to use it as a lens through which to discern the intricate paths of those who seek insertion into a political community today and, thus, to have their rights to be and to appear guaranteed. "Since these suspects, as ordinary persons, find themselves in constant conflict with the law" (Arendt, 2016, p. 510, our translation).

From this perspective, Chaplin's pariah closely resembles Heine's *Schlemiel*; however, certain specificities set them apart. While Heine's pariah glimpsed the world of dreams and maintained an identity through it, Chaplin's little man's "world is of the earth" and, as Hannah Arendt emphasizes, it is "hard and real" (Arendt, 2016, p. 286).

The lived reality of the one persecuted by the law, of the eternal suspect, of the daily fugitive, contains nothing visionary or enchanting but is, rather, the expression of the most cruel and treacherous

<sup>3</sup> This situation of legal nonconformity, which pushes many to the margins of society, in our view invites a parallel reading with the experiences of black and poor youth from the outskirts who are constantly faced with violence. It also applies to women, victimized in their condition, and to homosexuals, whose right to exist is violated, as well as to the homeless, today's refugees. There are so many configurations of small human beings who, like Chaplin's little man, appear as perpetual suspects as seen by the guardians of the law, always forced to conform or flee, to hide or deny themselves, for they are invariably viewed as suspects.



form of life, exemplified by Hannah Arendt's figure of the refugee the pariah par excellence for it is the one who enjoys no rights whatsoever and, therefore, is not reached by the law unless such a law is circumvented.

The little man, presented through a tragicomic perspective of existence and who captivated the world through the screens of the seventh art, also takes shape in the real world, and this is precisely what our author seeks to highlight. For just as Heine's *schlemiel*, he carries an innocence that is, however, nothing more than an expression "of the dangerous incompatibility of general laws with individual misdeeds" (Arendt, 2007, p. 286). And this occurs due to his greatest 'offense': that of being a suspect. This very fact represents an existence perceived as a threat to the established order, to the law, here embodied by the guardians of the State [the police], who see him solely through this prism: a potential risk, a sudden threat, a suspect.

Certainly, this condition transcends the figure of the pariah himself. He is simply taken as such and understood within a context much larger than he is. As Hannah Arendt clarifies (2007, p. 287, our emphasis): "There is obviously no connection at all between what Chaplin does or does not do and the punishment which overtakes him. *Because he is suspect, he is called upon to bear the brunt of much that he has not done*".

In our view, this resembles the exception policies common in the contemporary world. Within these, the figure of the suspect gains prominence in the legal order and occupies the first ranks of those compelled to carry the burden of what they have not done. Thus, they become targets of the

Prevailing paradigm of government in contemporary politics. According to Agamben, this includes *a military order*, issued by G. W. Bush on November 13, 2001, which authorizes, through an act of de facto sovereignty, the *indefinite detention* of non-citizens deemed suspect (Castro, 2016, p. 77, our translation).

To be a constant target of others' distrustful gaze, especially that of the law, was the very situation experienced by Chaplin's pariah, who, finding no guidance in the laws that might serve as boundaries for his path, made these boundaries into a form of subterfuge and circumnavigated them in order to exist (Arendt, 2016, p. 511). Yet circumventing them meant becoming more than an outlaw. He now fell under the category of 'criminal act', and, in the present moment, the law would indeed find him and deprive him of his errant wanderings. The suspect was now under control, for he had transgressed the law.

Therefore, as Courtine-Denamy (2004, p. 52, our translation) points out, Heine's *schlemiel* and Chaplin's little man demonstrate the escape that art offers (...) these two heroes live on the margins of the law and prefer evading it rather than confronting and transforming it: they believe in a pre-social freedom (...), for they have not ascended into the sphere of the political". In our understanding, they have

not attained the level of forcefulness characteristic of the rebellious pariah, which will be addressed later.

### 2.3 Kafka's Pariah: The Man of Good Will and the Desire for Citizenship

Hannah Arendt seems deeply struck by the hidden tradition and the role it played in the context of the Jewish question; indeed, at times she appears almost enchanted by this perspective. We understand the relevance of this, given the literary aspect that exerts such fascination. Our reading, however, perceives that two of these pariahs seem to have captured the author's keen attention most prominently, in other words, they appear to have awakened her analytical gaze more strongly. These are Kafka's pariah and the rebellious pariah.

Given the context of each pariah, the author's perspective is justified. The other types of pariahs previously presented, although significant within the framework of the occult tradition and of the Jewish problematic as a whole, display in their *modus operandi* a certain naivety and, above all, remain detached from the political question itself. These pariahs are, in a way, as previously mentioned, social pariahs, since they still seek a 'particular salvation,' and their strategies of resistance are always removed from the political dimension, as they have not yet ascended to the public sphere.

With the next two pariahs, the man of good will and the rebellious pariah, the one we will now discuss focuses on the political dimension, for it gains relevance here, and resistance aims not only at personal safeguarding but also at the well-being of everyone who finds themselves in this condition of being unwanted by the world. As Bernstein (1996, p. 44) notes, these are committed pariahs who "assuming responsibility requires understanding political realities".

Turning to Kafka's literature in order to perceive in it a pariah of the world is not without purpose. Our author understood that Kafka's writing contained a strong appeal to the political. Kafka may not have introduced an explicitly Jewish character at first, as seen in the earlier figures of Heine and Chaplin, but such a character gradually reveals himself throughout the narrative, both in *The Trial* and in *The Castle*.

In this sense, situations arise in which the figure of the Jew becomes strikingly visible, especially because it is tied to a political issue. It originates from an individual standpoint, yet it addresses a political problem with broader social implications. This ultimately becomes an important hallmark of Kafka's writing, which becomes evident when one refers to the perspective of minor literature, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari,

Minor literature is completely different: its limited space *makes every individual issue immediately tied to politics*. The individual issue, magnified under the microscope, becomes much more necessary, indispensable, *because another story is stirring within it*. It is in this sense that the family triangle connects with other triangles, commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical, which determine its values. When Kafka identifies among the aims of minor literature the purification of the

conflict between parents and children and the possibility of debating it, *this is not an Oedipal phantasm but a political program* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003, p. 39, our translation, our emphasis).

In the figure of Mr. K., the character of *The Castle*, Kafka reveals to the world, through his literature, the situation of a man who desires nothing more than to be a citizen and to enjoy a place within a community, to inhabit it and to belong to it. He seems to have no other goal in life except to establish a permanent foothold in this community. What this pariah wants is a place in the world, and he has chosen this community for that purpose. This is demonstrated in the passage of the novel in which K. expresses,

I can't emigrate - said K. - *I came to this place meaning to stay here, and stay I will.*" And in a spirit of contradiction which he didn't even try to explain he added, as if to himself: - *What could have lured me to this desolate part of the country but a longing to stay here?* (Kafka, 2009, p. 161, our emphasis).

*The Castle* brings to light the story of a wanderer, or more precisely, a traveler. He ends up stopping in an unfamiliar village. Once there, he settles in and is caught sleeping, without having obtained permission, in the village inn. To avoid embarrassment, he points to his supposed mission there, claiming he has been summoned to serve as the surveyor in that place.

The role of surveyor announced by Kafka already appears to us as a sign of the pariah who longs to mark out his place in time and space, in other words, to find a home in the world. Ultimately, it is an attempt to mark and delineate his existence, to measure his own value. It is true that, throughout the novel, K.'s identity remains obscure, and we are given few details for his characterization<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, taking his own words in which he presents himself as such, we allow ourselves to venture the idea of Mr. K. as a surveyor, as the pariah who longs to demarcate his place in the world. Our impression is confirmed by Courtine-Denamy's account, in which she explains:

Indeed, K. is unclassifiable, for he belongs neither to the castle nor to the village; he is nothing. In Arendt's view, this novel illustrates the true drama of assimilation for the modern Jew, who must either seem to belong to the people while in fact belonging to the rulers, or renounce their protection and seek it among the people (Courtine-Denamy, 2004, p. 53, our translation).

The problem of assimilation, therefore, emerges as central to this discussion, because, unlike the pre-political pariah, what Kafka's pariah desires is precisely to be accepted by the village and to be able to live there. However, he is aware that assimilation, even though it represents the shortest path to

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *A ausência da origem em O castelo de Kafka* by Tomaz Amorim Fernandes Izabel, 2012.

belonging to the village, will not be easily accepted by the local leaders.

Thus, we see that a person of good will, who wishes to respond to demands, however burdensome they may be, understands that it is not enough to be assimilated and integrated into the community through these means. It is necessary to be accepted as a citizen. Here a dilemma emerges, the dilemma of assimilation.

Hannah Arendt is clear that this was the situation of the modern Jew, who found himself torn between maintaining his identity and thus being at the mercy of all kinds of prejudice and racism motivated by hatred and irrationality. Or deny their identity and assimilate, thereby enjoying the protection of the powerful. However, this assimilation did not guarantee them any political right; simply by becoming “indistinguishable,” in this case, they would enjoy the protection of the rulers. Therefore, this would be a fragile protection that could be withdrawn at any moment. Mr. K. understood that this was his situation: a dilemma. In the words of Hannah Arendt,

No better analogy could have been found to illustrate the entire dilemma of the modern would-be assimilationist Jew. He, too, is faced with the same alternative, whether to belong ostensibly to the people, but really to the rulers—as their creature and tool—or utterly and forever to renounce their protection and seek his fortune with the masses (Arendt, 2007, p. 291).

*The castle* thus symbolizes, for the Jews of Western Europe, the impossibility of being accepted as Jews by humanity as a whole (Courtine-Denamy, 2004, p. 53, our translation). *The castle*, in Hannah Arendt's view, expresses this perspective well. What the pariah willingly wishes is to belong to a political community and express his citizenship within it.

Thus, belonging to the world always has implications for the pariah. Once involved in this dilemma, he is either expelled from the world or accepts it under certain conditions. Much of this dilemma has to do with the difficulty Kafka's pariah has in adjusting, since he not only faces the impasse, but also accepts it. In other words, the dilemma is attributed to him, while at the same time he embraces it. For to escape it means taking one of two positions: either to be more among the people and have no protection, or to be under the tutelage of the rulers.

Both situations are uncomfortable, so he accepts the dilemma, as he wants neither. If possible, reason leads to a third way: that of citizenship, that of the recognition of political rights. However, his citizenship was fragile; he was nothing more than a disposable person, an unwanted person, an uncomfortable stranger in the middle of the village. As Hannah Arendt interprets it,

K. (as the hero is called) is a stranger who can never be brought into line because he belongs neither to the common people nor to its rulers. ("You are not of the Castle and you are not of the village, you are nothing at all.") To be sure, it has something to do with the rulers that he ever came to the village in the first place,

but he has no legal title to remain there. In the eyes of the minor bureaucratic officials his very existence was due merely to a bureaucratic "error," while his status as a citizen was a paper one, buried "in piles of documents forever rising and crashing" around him. He is charged continually with being superfluous, "unwanted and in everyone's way," with having, as a stranger, to depend on other people's bounty and with being tolerated only by reason of a mysterious act of grace (Arendt, 2007, p. 290-291).

This configuration expresses the situation of the modern Jew, since this was the drama of those who were immersed in the process of assimilation. According to Peixoto (2016, p. 190, our translation), "this corresponds to the most basic demands of belonging, as a member of a legally organized community". In this sense, Mr. K. is nothing more than the common man who longs only for what everyone else has: rights. Peixoto, in this vein, highlights "The desire to belong to a group and exercise the rights and duties that come with it are characteristic aspects of the character K". And, we might add, therefore, of the Jews who sought these rights.

All of this places, in our understanding, Kafka's pariah before a political decision. Such a decision demands from him more than mere indignation, for it requires a series of actions. First, he must overcome any *naïf*<sup>5</sup> thinking that ingenuously believes assimilation will save him. Second, he must adopt a critical stance and act in opposition to the village authorities, and therefore against the constituted power that imposed upon him such a condition of segregation.

From this perspective, he must "demonstrate that he possesses a sense of responsibility and the willingness *to confront* an unjust regime, thereby showing the village's inhabitants that it is possible *to resist the law of the Castle*" (Courtine-Denamy, 2004, p. 53-54, our translation, our emphasis). We understand that this stance places Kafka's pariah squarely within the political sphere. Here, faced with what he must confront as someone undesirable, he does not resort to dream or irony, but rather comes to terms with the world. He steps into the public realm and engages in discussions concerning the implementation of his rights.

At this point, the certainty that these rights will be granted is not what is at issue. The strength of the opposing power is well known. The question that arises, in our view, drawing from Hannah Arendt's writings, is that resisting is necessary, and that resistance is a constitutive right of the human being.

In Lafer's interpretation (1988, p. 188, our translation), this view gains support, as he states: "I believe (...) that for the intelligibility of the theme of resistance, the fulcrum of the matter lies in the idea of a reciprocity of rights". He further adds: "If the legislator may claim the right to be obeyed, the citizen

<sup>5</sup> It is a form of spontaneous and naive expression, generally associated with the art of self-taught individuals who lack technical training in the arts. In our context, naive thought represents the ingenueness that must be overcome.

may likewise claim the right to be governed wisely and by just laws”.

This posture of resistance on the part of Kafka’s pariah, in our understanding, also finds support in the political and legal theory of influential thinkers who devoted themselves to this topic. We may cite, for example, Étienne de La Boétie, an untiring defender of this right, who even affirmed that outside of it there remains only conformity. Thus he denounced: “The support for tyranny coming from the very men who, enchanted by the figure of the monarch, provided the energy that he transformed into force and violence” (La Boétie, 1987, p. 06, our translation).

In this direction, Hannah Arendt’s argument is clear. Although in the figure of the pariah this defense of resistance remains in a ‘germinal stage’. It would later gain prominence in her most widely disseminated work, *Crises of the Republic*, where she affirms that “civil disobedience can serve both necessary and desired changes as well as preservation and restoration” (Arendt, 2004, p. 69, our translation). This brings us back to what the willing pariah sought, that is, a change in his political status and the restoration of his rights as a human being and as a Jew.

The right to resist goes hand in hand with the duty to resist. Without this, humanity loses its quality as it also loses its dignity. However, reaching an understanding with the world, seeking citizenship in it, enjoying the right to act and speak, and thereby safeguarding the possibility of resistance is not an easy task. This is especially true when oppressive power systematically seeks the annihilation of the other. Thus, the right and the duty to resist become imperative, since refusing them is a refusal of the world and of any reestablishment of citizenship within it.

The political and legal settlement sought by Kafka’s man of good will is, in Hannah Arendt’s view, a strong indication of the type of human required for communal life, namely one who judges and acts in accordance with the events that are presented through the tragic character of existence. Always seeking, as a human being of action, a rightful place in the world, as Arendt states.

He is, in a word, the typical man of goodwill. He demands no more than that which constitutes every man's right, and he will be satisfied with no less. His entire ambition is to have "a home, a position, real work to do," to marry and "to become a member of the community." Because, as a stranger, he is not permitted to enjoy these obvious prerequisites of human existence, he cannot afford to be ambitious. He alone, he thinks (at least at the beginning of the story), must fight for the minimum-for simple human rights, as if it were something which embraced the sum total of all possible demands. And just because he seeks nothing more than his minimum human rights, he cannot consent to obtain his demands-as might otherwise have been possible-in the form of "an act of favor from the Castle." (Arendt, 2007, p. 292).

Accordingly, we understand the life that the willing pariah seeks will come as an achievement and not a gift. It will result from his commitment in the arena of political struggle, the pursuit of rights, and

constant resistance. This resistance marks an awakening from the dream and a passage beyond innocence, recalling the earlier pariah figures.

To our understanding, it should be clarified that the act of resisting does not coincide with achieving success in what is claimed. At times the desired result will appear, at others times it will not. However, as Hannah Arendt clearly states, the example of struggle and portrayal of action carry significant political value. This was Hannah Arendt's interpretation of Kafka's hero, so much as asserting that,

But though his purpose remained unaccomplished, his life was far from being a complete failure. The very fight he has put up to obtain the few basic things which society owes to men has opened the eyes of the villagers, or at least of some of them. *His story, his behavior, has taught them both that human rights are worth fighting for and that the rule of the castle is not divine law and, consequently, can be attacked.* He has made them see, as they put it, that "men who suffered our kind of experiences, who are beset by our kind of fear ... who tremble at every knock at the door, cannot see things straight." And they add: "How lucky are we that you came to us!" (Arendt, 2007, p. 295, our emphasis).

Thus, resistance, even by falling short of its initial purpose, is not entirely a wasted effort, since it always leaves behind a seed of awareness and a potential for the pursuit of political rights. We understand that underlying the author's view is a key lesson of her political theory, namely that action defines the political role of human beings in the world. In this sense, we maintain that resistance in defense of rights represents the most complete expression of such action. Such assertion is made because we understand that Hannah Arendt interpreted the struggle of the pariah as so, for "She will adopt the theme of rebellion, the call for Jews to act, to resist" (Courtine-Denamy, 2004, p. 60, our translation).

The next type of pariah Hannah Arendt describes is the rebellious or conscious pariah. This figure earns that name because it refuses to accept its condition. He is not a rebel aiming at upheaval but someone who deliberately engages in the struggle for his political rights even while aware of the obstacles. Like Kafka's man of good will, he moves beyond the prepolitical stage of resistance and steps into the public sphere, which in our view sharpens this stance. Bernard Lazare offers a clear example of this figure.

## 2.4. The rebellious pariah and its dimension of political resistance.

When addressing the rebellious pariah, we aim to highlight that we do so by considering its figure through Hannah Arendt's understanding of politics, since we recognize that much of what she later defends in her most renowned work s already present in *The Jewish Writings*, and, at this notable instance, in the figure of the rebellious pariah, embodied through Lazare<sup>6</sup>, and “fired Arendt's imagination” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 16). We understand that The discussion of the notion of politics is already present here, albeit in an embryonic form.

Thus, by examining the figure of the rebellious pariah in Hannah Arendt's political viewpoint, we aim to highlight key aspects of her theory. Therefore, it entails examining this context [the hidden tradition] through a perspective that frames the Jewish question as a backdrop, with the figure of the rebellious pariah standing out as an expression of resistance. Accordingly, themes such as courage, freedom, and resistance emerge in our discussion as heuristic stances for what we seek to develop.

First and foremost, it is necessary to be clear that Hannah Arendt envisions a grassroots politics, that is, one that is mundanely situated and pluralistically established. Hence, we understand a conception of politics that emerges from the real needs of people, through their places, histories, struggles, and webs of relationships. It does not, as many have traditionally pointed out, arise from the realm of ideas or from the enlightened minds of a few exceptional individuals.

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<sup>6</sup> For Hannah Arendt, Bernard Lazare is a model to be followed by all pariah Jews. Firstly because he identified himself as such, though not just any pariah, but a rebellious one. Hannah Arendt highlights (2007, p. 338) that “he took his place as a conscious Jew, fighting for justice in general but for the Jewish people in particular”. Secondly because of his courage and coherence, and thirdly because he understood that the struggle of the pariah Jew should occur both on the external level against antisemitism and, above all, on the internal level against the Jewish caste that used the impoverished Jew as a way of easing its conscience through almsgiving and thus keeping them under their control. The author underscores that “Lazare came to realize that the real obstacle in the path of his people's emancipation was not antisemitism. It was ‘the demoralization of a people made up of the poor and downtrodden, who live on the alms of their wealthy brethren, a people revolted only by persecution from without but not by oppression from within, revolutionaries in the society of others but not in their own’” (Arendt, 2007, p. 340). Lazare's critical and rebellious stance earned him adversaries and enemies of all sorts, even within Judaism itself, a fact noted by Hannah Arendt in a footnote in which she states that “when negotiations were started for founding a large-scale daily, the Jewish backers always made it a condition that Bernard Lazare should not write for it” (Arendt, 2007, p. 341). Overall, the conscious pariah, because of his rebelliousness, does not step into human affairs in order to be agreeable. On the contrary and in a prophetic tone, he announces and denounces, as is characteristic of the prophetic tradition within Judaism, and as this tradition shows, the prophets gained enemies of every kind, that is, across the entire spectrum of power and class. The Book of Amos exemplifies this. In it the prophet who gives the book its name conveys a “message of solidarity with the poor as well as condemnation of pride”. In chapter 2:7, Amos, in the finest style of Jewish prophecy, denounces actions contrary to social justice (Cf. Ecumenical Bible, 1995, p. 648-649, our translation). In this sense, scholars of the Old Testament consider the eighth century BCE as the golden century of prophecy in Israel. In the brief span of half a century four prophets of great stature operated, alongside Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah one century later, who synthesized the issues at play and highlighted *three fundamental aspects*: “*The Social aspect which deals with the situation of those marginalized and oppressed by the system; The Political aspect which plays a major role in this period due to serious national and international circumstances; and The Religious aspect which is expressed in the worship of foreign gods and in the false idea of God fostered by a vain ritual*” (Cf. Nascimento, 2011, p. 258, our translation, our emphasis). From this perspective Lazare was described, by Péguy, in a footnote highlighted by Hannah Arendt, as follows “in this great crisis for Israel and the world the prophet was Bernard Lazare” (Arendt, 2007, p. 341).



For our author, politics is closely connected to human affairs, conceived as life established within a community and entirely bound up with it. In Hannah Arendt's view, politics emerges spontaneously among people who take their demands into their own hands and engage with the world within the bounds of their historical-political circumscription. As Bernstein clarifies,

And her primary concern had been to understand Jewish politics – or, rather, the failures of Jewish politics. It was her reflections on this phenomenon that initially led her to advocate a politics from below, a politics that emerges spontaneously among people who assume responsibility for their actions. This strand in her thinking, which first emerged in her analysis of Jewish politics, persisted and oriented her thinking when she turned to analyzing the meaning of politics in *The Human Condition* (Bernstein, 1996, p. 31-32).

To this end, the notion of resistance as a fundamental political stance in Hannah Arendt's thought will be highlighted as a necessary response to the extreme situations that emerge from social coexistence. In addressing resistance, we will foreground the figure of the conscious pariah, who rebels against the world, so aptly embodied by Bernard Lazare.

Here is Hannah Arendt's perspective on the political phenomenon: to fight for freedom<sup>7</sup>. It is as if, at every moment, she calls our attention to the fact that “whoever remains silent, in a sense, consents” (Arendt, 2004, p. 79, our translation), thus there is only one course of action: to resist. This is what Bernstein (1996, p. 38) alludes to when he emphasizes that, in treating the role of the Jew, Hannah Arendt draws attention to the responsibility of the Jew, asserting, “The Jews must become aware of their political responsibility”.

This is the posture of the rebellious pariah who, by virtue of being conscious, undertakes the challenge of claiming their political rights, even at the cost of rupturing the comforts of private life, in order to engage with the world.

#### 2.4.2. The Pariah Mode of Being and Engagement with the World: Resistance

We cannot approach the discussion of the pariah without considering the Jewish question in our author's thought. Hannah Arendt, being Jewish, had to live with this condition in her life; for her it never appeared as a matter of profound difference, but simply as a difference.

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<sup>7</sup> For Hannah Arendt, freedom constitutes the very meaning of politics. Thus, freedom expresses the pariah's mode of acting, one committed to the world through action and speech. In this sense, freedom stands in opposition to necessity, that is, to that which imposes itself as something that could not be otherwise and is tied to the social and the economic. Western tradition has persistently conflated this conceptual pair. As Aguiar cautions, “In almost all Arendtian texts, the idea appears that Western tradition, especially in modernity, ceased to link politics with freedom and instead came to associate it with necessity” (Aguiar, 2012, p. 39, our translation).

That said, the Jewish question places the Jew upon the stage of history and propels them into the world to engage with it. In this context, being Jewish meant confronting all the problems, rejections, and persecutions imposed by antisemitic practice<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the figure of the Jew appears split into two distinct modes of confronting their political problems, which surface under the aegis of persecution and crimes of every kind: the pariah and the *parvenu*. The *parvenu* was the assimilated Jew who, faced with life under perennial risk, opted for social recognition, even at the cost of freedom and, consequently, of politics. The *parvenu* yields to the logic of necessity which, in its ontological violence<sup>9</sup>, imposes itself and finds ready acceptance among many.

The opportunistic practice of personal self-preservation was not the exception but the rule. Many sought private solutions and submitted to conversion to Christianity, others strove to become exceptional Jews by virtue of their scientific or cultural brilliance, these attained recognition, yet seemed to live under the stigma of continually denying what they were<sup>10</sup>. In this vein, Hannah Arendt maintains that the attitude adopted by the *parvenu* and by the wretched pariah in some measure entails responsibility for their situation, insofar as they refused to resist and to fight for their rights. Hannah Arendt states:

Politically speaking, every pariah who refused to be a rebel was partly responsible for his own position and therewith for the blot on mankind which it represented. (...) The decisive factor was not the *parvenu*; neither was it the existence of a ruling caste which-whatever complexion it might choose to assume-was still very much the same as that of any other people. Immeasurably more serious and decisive was the fact that the pariah simply refused to become a rebel (Arendt, 2007, p. 285, our emphasis).

For Hannah Arendt, the stance to be adopted is one of confrontation in the face of extreme situations and, like the Greek hero, to occupy the public space [the battlefield] and engage with the world, since the world is agonistic in character and this demands both a confrontational posture and a requirement to coexist and enter into dialogue.

<sup>8</sup> The theme of antisemitism was significant in Arendt's research, particularly in the short texts that addressed the subject around the 1930s and 1940s of the twentieth century. It also occupied her most renowned works, most notably *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), in which she states that "they had hardly been noticed by either learned or public opinion because they belonged to a subterranean stream of European history where, hidden from the light of the public and the attention of enlightened men, they had been able to gather an entirely unexpected virulence" (Arendt, 1989, p. 21, our translation).

<sup>9</sup> Necessity is characterized by an innate violence, for it is in its nature to impose itself upon us without regard for alternatives. Necessity is the hallmark of biological life, which does not question the possibility of feeding, maintaining hygiene, or resting. In this domain, necessity simply asserts itself. It is intimately linked to the biological reproduction of life and centers on the perspective of the *laborans* animal. The *parvenu*, in our view, exemplifies this through his arriviste choice of personal self-preservation: he sought to look after himself to the detriment of something greater: freedom.

<sup>10</sup> It seems that this was the condition Rahel Varnhagen experienced, who throughout her life made enormous efforts to conceal or deny her Jewish identity: "The thing which all my life seemed to me the greatest shame, the bitterest misery and misfortune – having been born a Jewess – this I should on no account now wish to have missed" (Arendt, 1997, p. 3).

Resistance, for Hannah Arendt, does not entail violence but rather an engagement with the world in its political dimension, for “politics is the appropriate form and *locus* of resistance” (Aguiar, 2004, p. 252, our translation) and “it is the possibility of resistance that constitutes human freedom” (Arendt, 1993, p. 283, our translation).

Another relevant aspect to highlight is the linkage of the idea of resistance to the realm of law. Thus, in relation to the world and to the political problems it poses, resistance always emerges as a way of struggling for the establishment of rights. However, this struggle does not proceed primarily from a formal framework, as often occurs within the liberal juridical prerogatives of modernity, but in a substantive manner, that is, one that reaches real people in real places with real needs.

In this vein, the figure of the rebellious pariah is significant and uniquely important for the constitution of freedom and for confronting the world and its risks. The rebellious pariah knows that there is a price to be paid for freedom. After all, when they step into the public scene their ‘who’ will come to light, that is, the deeds they perform will be revealed to others, and this revelation entails acceptance and rejection in response to the discomfort generated by proposing dissidence to what had been crystallized, especially when that which is crystallized is oppression, the absence of freedom, and the desire for total domination. Here, dissidence is resistance and the occupation of the public sphere from the perspective of securing rights. Thus, we encounter the dislodging of a domination in favor of freedom, a situation that will bring the discomfort and unease of being an opponent.

The rebellious pariah, so well expressed in the person of Bernard Lazare through his active occupation of public spaces, aptly represents this dissidence against crystallized injustice<sup>11</sup>. In our view, the rebellious pariah is the key figure in the struggle within the Jewish question and, one might say, the key figure in Hannah Arendt’s political philosophy.

We can affirm this on the basis of our author, who in her writings highlights Lazare’s stance toward assimilated Jews, in which he and all others are called to assume this confrontation; she writes: “His fight for freedom is part and parcel of that which all the downtrodden of Europe must wage to achieve national and social liberation” (Arendt, 2007, p. 283).

The rebellious pariah assumes such a condition in the face of the facts presented, therefore in the face of real history. They are not seeking an idealistic solution based on what ought to be; on the contrary, they consider the question as it is. The conscious pariah, in Hannah Arendt’s perspective, is the political

<sup>11</sup> The Dreyfus case illustrates this, especially in Lazare’s defense of him, which was ultimately misunderstood, since Jews have historically found it difficult to recognize that the Jewish question has a focus beyond religion or culture. Arendt notes, “One of the most unhappy facts in the history of the Jewish people has been quite precisely this: that only their enemies, and virtually never their friends, understood that the Jewish question was first of all a political question” (Arendt, 1951, p. 78, our translation).

individual, the revealer of deeds and actions, the being thrown into the world to make sense of it. Thus, the rebellious pariah, by virtue of being conscious,

enters the arena of politics and translates his status into political terms, he becomes perforce a rebel. Lazare's idea was, therefore, that the Jew should come out openly as the representative of the pariah, "*since it is the duty of every human being to resist oppression.*" He demanded, that is, that the pariah relinquish once and for all the prerogative of the schlemiel, cut loose from the world of fancy and illusion, renounce the comfortable protection of nature, and come to grips with the world of men and women (Arendt, 2007, p. 284, our emphasis).

That said, the rebellious pariah differs from Heine's pariah, insofar as the pariah represented by Lazare sees in the forcefulness of confrontation the path toward finding a place in the world. The risk here, however, is to construe the rebellious pariah as a mere rebel. This is not the case.

It is therefore necessary to clarify that the rebellious pariah is one who resists within the public sphere. Their action is grounded in speech and in appearing on the public stage, oriented toward a public happiness. This should not be confused with the posture of liberation characteristic of extreme situations, in which violent action has a place and aims to free men and women from their condition of poverty or political oppression. Such liberation, however, does not imply freedom. Freedom is expressed in the resistance manifested through speaking and acting in the arena of human affairs. Outside this sphere, we have liberation, which does not entail freedom, although, as André Duarte cautions, in Hannah Arendt one must remain aware that, in order to understand her work, it is necessary "to relate and distinguish concepts" (Duarte, 2013, p. 39, our translation), recognizing the boundaries that separate them. Yet these boundaries are neither rigid nor impenetrable; rather, they allow for points of contact and establish relations without collapsing into one another or losing their specificity.

That said, the bitterness of the Jew in the face of the world is undeniable, however, this bitterness is not the motive behind Lazare's action, and consequently that of the rebellious pariah, but rather the desire for freedom. Yet this freedom will not come from dreams or goodwill; it will come through the legitimate occupation of the agonistic space, namely the public sphere, a concept later so clearly articulated by Hannah Arendt.

Thus, conscious pariahs are historical *personae* who, by debating and re-debating their condition, sought to transform the world from which they had been expelled. It is true that some did not go to the utmost political extreme. Nevertheless, forceful figures such as Bernard Lazare emerge, he brought the Jewish question onto the public stage. The pariah, in this context, appears as "a nonconformist who rejects the constraints of society in order to remain outside it" (Arendt, 2004, p. 52, our translation).

When treating the figure of the rebellious pariah in the context of the Jewish question, it seems evident that the conceptual pair of freedom and necessity is being strained. These concepts appear to

take shape and gain significance in the postures of the two principal figures we examine, namely the arriviste *parvenu* and the rebellious pariah. Each, in its own way, confronted the condition of the persecuted, the nobody of history, and the subject deprived of rights.

The *parvenu* accentuated a posture of personal self-preservation and understood that, to escape the ‘curse’ of being Jewish, any effort or strategy was worthwhile so long as his private interests were ultimately preserved. As Bernstein observes (1996, p. 17), the *parvenu* is nothing more than a ‘social climber’. Accordingly, in many cases the *parvenu* assimilated into the Christian world and into the society in which he lived, denying himself the right to be who he was and thereby avoiding direct confrontation with a society that found it difficult to accept him as a Jew.

In contradistinction to this stance emerges the figure of the rebellious pariah, who, according to Hannah Arendt, embodies freedom. The rebellious pariah is neither a rebel without cause nor a rebel without commitment; on the contrary, they are someone who, having been struck by injustice and political degradation within the human world, inhabits that world consciously and confronts it with the aim of transforming the political space and securing rights.

However, these are not merely formal rights, reduced to the mere form of law and social recognition, but substantive rights, here understood as political rights: that is, rights that actually reach real persons in the public arena of life. Thus, freedom, as the supreme expression of politics, is lived and aspired to even from the standpoint of enduring resistance, with the aim of guaranteeing a free life conceived as a qualified political life<sup>12</sup>.

### Final considerations

Considering political resistance as relevant to the preservation of the public sphere and as adherence to a democratic principle, namely, participation in and occupation of the public sphere, we understand that this work has provoked a necessary discussion in that direction.

The pariah types presented here, following Arendt’s pathways, are important models for reflection. We call them pathways because Arendtian grammar invites us to think and thereby to read our time, situating ourselves within the singular situations in which each person is located and engaged. In this sense, a pathway is a possible route rather than a compulsory track. That said, we assert that the pariah figures emerge as heuristic icons for reflection and, to some extent, as guides for our action.

Political resistance against oppression, the terror of violence, and authoritarian silencing appears as necessary and advances both as a right and as a duty. It is a right because every human being is entitled

<sup>12</sup> Here, we refer to the important distinction identified by Agamben in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, where, drawing on Aristotle, he highlights the difference between a merely natural life and political life. Citing Aristotle, he states: a life “born with regard to life, but existing essentially with regard to the good life” (Agamben, 1998, p. 10).

to the prerogative of resisting any situation that affronts their dignity. It is a duty because, politically, it imposes itself as a condition for guaranteeing belonging to a community and, morally, it arises as an obstacle to evil.

Finally, this reflection did not aim to exhaust the topic of political resistance; on the contrary, our intention was to stimulate debate in the light of Hannah Arendt and to provoke, to some degree, discomfort with apathetic stances toward forms of oppression and injustice, whether totalitarian or those attenuated within the complex interior of neoliberal societies that have captured life under the aegis of management and reduced it to a mere biopolitical experience. Thus, resistance is a political act grounded in courage and in love of the world, as Hannah Arendt taught us.

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