



Politics as a space of the new: Action, freedom and resistance (Arendtian notes)

Politics as the Space of the New: Action, Freedom, and Resistance (Arendtian Notes)

Luís Correia de Sá – PhD candidate in Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra

Summary

This article proposes an intensive reading of the conceptual constellation that structures Hannah Arendt's political philosophy. The analysis focuses particularly on the conception of politics as *the locus originarius* of freedom as *initium*, a space for the emergence and constitution of the common. Through an immanent hermeneutics of the author's major works (articulated with rigorously selected secondary literature), it is argued that politics is not limited to the functional management of social life or the legal-normative order. It asserts itself as an inaugurating *praxis*, founded on plurality and the human capacity to act with others. The distinction between labor, work, and action, the critique of the replacement of the political by the social, the thematization of civil disobedience as an act of establishing a new common world, as well as the negative function of thought—

cogitatio— as a safeguard against the banality of evil—constitute the axes of problematization. The analysis highlights that politics, in Arendtian thought, is inseparable from appearance, contingency, and shared responsibility. The article concludes by highlighting the critical relevance of Arendt's thought to diagnose contemporary forms of desubstantialization of the public sphere and to reconceptualize democracy as a way of life. This, in turn, is based on plural action (*Mitsein*), ethical resistance, and the continuous creation of spaces of freedom (*Erscheinungsraum*).

Keywords: Hannah Arendt; Freedom; Action; Plurality; Power; Thought; Civil disobedience.

Abstract

This article proposes an intensive reading of the conceptual constellation structuring Hannah Arendt's political philosophy. The analysis focuses with particular attention on the conception of politics as the *locus originarius* of freedom understood as *initium*, a space of appearance and constitution of the common. Through an immanent hermeneutic of the author's major works (articulated with rigorously selected secondary literature), it is argued that politics is not exhausted in the functional management of social life or in juridical-normative ordering. It is affirmed as inaugural *praxis*, founded upon plurality and the human capacity to act with others. The distinction between labor, work, and action; the critique of the substitution of the political by the social; the thematization of civil disobedience as an instituting gesture of a new common world; as well as the negative function of thought – *cogitatio* – as a safeguard against the banality of evil, constitute the axes of problematization. The analysis demonstrates that politics, within Arendtian thought, is inseparable from appearance, contingency, and shared responsibility. The article concludes by underscoring the critical relevance of Arendt's thought for diagnosing contemporary forms of de-substantialization of the public sphere and for reconceptualizing democracy as a form of life. The latter, in turn, is founded upon plural action (*Mitsein*), ethical resistance, and the continuous creation of spaces of freedom (*Erscheinungsraum*).

Keywords: Hannah Arendt; Freedom; Action; plurality; Power ; Thought; Civil Disobedience.

1. Introduction

In a time marked by the hypertrophy of *Zweckrationalität* and the growing neutralization of politics (as a field of shared experience), the thought of Hannah Arendt imposes herself as an inaugural gesture of rehabilitation of *praxis* in its irreducible ontopolitical dignity. Against the modern reduction of politics to a technique of government – *ars regiminis* – or the mere apparatus of rational administration of means and ends, Arendt (re)places politics in its original condition: the space of appearance of the human, where freedom and plurality are co-implicated as insurmountable presuppositions of action.

In the wake of a Western tradition that – since Plato! – has privileged *vita* contemplative to the detriment of *vita activa*, confusing freedom with *liberum arbitrium* and politics with dominion or command, Arendt undertakes what could be to name – with Heideggerian resonance – a *Destruktion* of the inherited categories, in view of a new topology of political experience. This ontological (de)construction, however, it does not aim at nihilism, but at a *restitutio in integrum* of the political as a space of new – *das Neue* – and the unpredictable: *Initium ut principium*, founded on the condition anthropology of natality.

It is from this category – *natalitas* – that Arendt conceives of politics (not as simple continuation of the war by other means) as a possibility of interrupting the necessary course of events: ability to start something new, *etwas ganz Neues beginnen*, whose origin is not to be found in historical causality nor in strategic rationality, but in the plurality of agents who act and speak to each other. The political space, thus understood, is not a *locus* of substances or functions, but inter-esse, the relational “between” in which the *facultas agendi* is actualized and becomes visible – *in actu exercito* – by word and action.

This gesture of conceptual (re)foundation acquires its theoretical thickness in the famous tripartition of the *vita activa* – labor, work and action – elaborated in *The Human Condition* (Arendt, 2009), in which the author distinguishes with phenomenological precision the various ways of being in the world:

- the reproduction of biological life;
- the production of a world of things; and, finally,
- action as an irradiation of freedom among men.

It is on this last plane – that of *praxis* – that politics constitutes itself as a horizon of the emergence of singularity, of the unveiling of the “who” instead of the “what”, of irreducibility of the agent to the function or category. “Because of the initiatory nature of the *recién* arrived and beginners, by virtue of birth, men take the initiative, if present the action. (Initium) ergo ut esset, creatus est homo, before whom nullus Fuit («for who had already started, was created by the man, before which he never lived»)", he writes Arendt (2009, p. 201), emphasizing that man is not only born, but is ontologically capable of inaugurating – of breaking the cycle of repetition with a gesture inaugural.

In this sense, politics is carried out only in the presence of others, under the sign of plurality: *Pluralitas conditio* humana. Without plurality, there is no world, only nature or administration; without a common world, freedom degenerates into violence, and action dissolves into management. “The erosion of public space: in seeking conceptual finality, the tradition has embodied a kind of «bypassing» of the political realm, a realm that is actually only sustained by the contingent exchange of opinion by active citizens”. (Buckler, 2011, p. 6): it is not, therefore, a question of freedom as a possession or attribute individual, but as a relational and contingent phenomenon – *eventum* – that always emerges *inter homines*.

Such a conception, however, only reveals its full power when confronted with its own possibility of annihilation. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt, 1962), Arendt diagnoses the destruction of public space, the collapse of plurality and the eclipse of judgment as structuring elements of the totalitarian experience. Politics, there, is not just obliterated – it is replaced by a mechanism of absolute domination that makes freedom itself superfluous. The banality of evil – as revealed in the trial of Eichmann! – emerges not from monstrosity, but from the absence of thought: the abdication of *cogitatio* interruptiva, the basis of responsibility (Arendt, 1963). The absence of world coincides with the absence of language, and both converge in dissolution of the political condition.

The present research therefore proposes to think of politics as a space of the new in Hannah Arendt, examining the articulation between freedom, power and resistance. Such proposal (re)claims (re)conceiving power not as coercive *imperium*, but as shared *potentiality of the age*, emerging from plural being-together; conceiving resistance not as a destructive gesture, but as a *Gründung* – the foundation of a new beginning; and, finally, rehabilitate thought as a condition of judgment and responsibility



public. "Thinking is animated by the principle of plurality and publicness, rather than by a private reason that must be generalized" (Birmingham, 2006, p. 68): this interrogation, which is also suspension (*epoché*) and availability, founds the space of political as a space of meaning.

The relevance of this itinerary is further revealed in its critical force in the face of impasses of contemporary democracies – shaped by depoliticization widespread, by the technocratization of power and the erosion of public spaces of deliberation. Recovering Arendtian thought is not an act of theoretical archaeology, but active resistance to the neutralization of politics and the destitution of freedom. Politics – as a space of the new – it is the fragile, but irrepressible, possibility of starting over: *Initium semper possibile est* – even under the ruins of tradition.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research is rooted in the topology of hermeneutic political philosophy, understood not as an auxiliary or metatheoretical discipline, but as an exercise in pensiveness intrinsic to the political condition itself, in the sense of a *Selbstverständigung im Medium des Gemeinsamen*. The methodology adopted constitutes a reconstruction interpretative-immanent of the Arendtian *corpus*, articulated as meditation phenomenological of the political as *the conditio* ontologica of plural existence.

Any empiricist, statistical or functional-instrumental claim is rejected, because they are structurally incapable of capturing the ontological texture and the inner *sensus* of freedom as a founding *event* of politics. In fact, in its place, it is postulated an exegetical approach that proceeds by *Verstehen* and not by *Erklären*, by mediation reflexive analysis of concepts and not by deductive subsumption of statements. The method is (of hermeneutic-speculative nature) guided not by falsifiability criteria, but by degrees of phenomenal intelligibility and internal coherence of the categories.

The analysis is carried out within a field of conceptual tensions – *Feld der Spannungen* – where the concepts of freedom, action, power, resistance and public space (not as closed entities or deductive systems) as mobile figures of a thought that refuses systematization and that operates according to the principle of irreducible plurality of meaning. It is, therefore, a structural-conceptual, which privileges the *topoi* where Arendtian language presents itself



performatively as a place of thought – *Denken als Stätte der Offenbarung* – and not as a mere description.

This hermeneutic process – rejecting systematic or dogmatic readings – remains faithful to what we could call the internal grammar of plurality that permeates Arendt's entire *oeuvre*. It is not intended, therefore, to establish doctrine, to treat to listen to thought in its own constitutive hesitation, at the points where it is most if it resists conceptual closure. Language is not here a mere garment for the idea; it is *logos* original, inseparable from the world – *mundus communis* – that it makes present. Hence the explicit refusal of any theoretical abstraction that seeks to separate concepts from the situation concrete emergency from which they come.

The textual *corpus* selects the following works by Hannah as primary sources Arendt: The human condition (Arendt, 2009), La disobbedienza civile e altri saggi (Arendt, 1985) and The Origins of Totalitarianism (Arendt, 1962). These are interrogated light of a carefully delimited secondary constellation.

The selection of excerpts follows three hermeneutic-critical criteria rigorously intertwined:

-) conceptual centrality for the architecture of the problem under analysis;
-) interarticulation with other fundamental categories of Arendtian thought, according to the logic of internal interreference;
-) enlightening capacity regarding the dilemmas of the present, especially in what concerns the emptying of public space, the crisis of political action and the erosion of the common.

The (re)reading that takes place here is informed by a constitutive tension between the rigidity of conceptuality and the fluidity of interpretative openness. Both the reductive schematisms as well as anachronistic or functionalist derivations. The Arendt's thought is understood as thought that happens, and not as a system that presents itself. Its textuality is treated as a force field, and not as monument.

In fine, this methodology seeks to restore politics to its original condition: not as a technique of ordering, but as a place of emergence – *Ort des Erscheinens* – of freedom, plurality and responsibility. Thought is here summoned as act of hermeneutic resistance, in fidelity to its ultimate object: politics as *espacium novitatis* (as an ever-reopening possibility of a new beginning!).



3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *Libertas*: Freedom as a Power of Beginning

In the Arendtian categorical horizon, politics reveals itself not as a space of reproduction of order – *ordo rerum* – nor as an art of managing the predictable; configuration- as the ontological *locus of initium*, where freedom, thought not under the negative sign of non-coercion, but rather as *Ursprungsgewalt* – original power of establishment –, is realized as *Anfangshandlung*, an inaugural act that bursts forth from the irreducible plural *Dasein* a state. *Libertas* positive, as *actus non determinatus ab alio*, manifests itself as pure irruption, as an event not subsumable to causality or teleology, resisting the ontological closure of any system.

Arendt places this conception within the scope of *natalitas*, not as a metaphor biographical, but as a matrix structure of the ontopolitical-political: “Con la creación del man, the beginning of this beginning enters his own world, which, of course, is no longer What other way to decide that the principle of freedom was created by creating a man, in the before” (Arendt, 2009, p. 201). This birth is not a mere empirical factuality, but *signum metaphysicum* of the capacity to originate what is not yet – *incipere possession*, dir- would be with Augustine! – to establish the non-derivative, the non-necessary.

Freedom, thus understood, is not in conformity with the classical paradigms of sovereignty, rational will or subjection to law, since they do not constitutes as possession or prerogative, but as *adventus* that bursts into the sphere of common. Indeed, the gesture of action, devoid of fixed *ýýýýý*, operates *ex nihilo*, without containment by what has already been given. It is in this character of non-anticipability that freedom acquires its ontological weight: not as an attribute, but as pure facticity of the new – *facticitas novitatis*.

This non-teleology – far from being a lack! – is a condition of the politician as a space for the manifestation of plurality. Action, devoid of guarantees, is an expression of a freedom that neither commands nor subjugates, but exposes itself in the midst of men – *inter homines*, as Arendt writes –, in the constitutive *exterioritas* of public space: “La action, unlike fabrication, is never possible in isolation; being isolated is Even if you lack the ability to act... the action and the speech are with you plot of the acts and words of other men” (Arendt, 2009, p. 211-212).



sense, freedom is not *the Eigenschaft* of an isolated subject, it emerges from the relationship, constituting itself as *Mitgeschehen*: “If and only if there is gratitude for what remains ineradicably alien and foreign, pleasure rather than grief can be possible – in the company of others. That is the predicament of our common responsibility, which in turn is the guarantor of our right to have rights.” (Birmingham, 2006, p. 131). What is stated here is a common responsibility towards plurality and irreducible otherness (condition to support the right to have rights), articulating gratitude, coexistence, responsibility and rights in a fundamental interweaving of his argument.

In this way, Arendt's rigorous distinction between the modes of *life* is understood active. Labor, subject to the cycle of necessity, and work, which orders means to ends and founds the domain of utility, they lack the creative spontaneity of action. Both reproduce or produce – they do not establish. Freedom, as a *potential inchoative*, it is only updated where there is a possibility of the unforeseen, the contingent, the unrepeatable. Such a space is only constituted in politics, understood *hoc modo* as the sphere of *praxis*, and not as technique or management: *ýýýýýý ýýý ýýýýýý*, gesture and word that burst into plurality and which only become visible there.

Libertas, in Arendt, is thus a name for the original political condition, a way of being-in-the-world that is not confined to subjective interiority and is inscribed in a public exteriority that makes it possible. Only there does freedom reveal itself as *potentia agendi* (irreducible to the logic of fabrication or the repetition of nature). Only there – in between plural of men! – the political is constituted as a space of the new.

3.2 *Initium*: Political Action and Instituting Power

Political action, in Arendtian thought, is articulated in an ontological grammar which irreducibly distinguishes it from both *poiýsis* – as the manufacture of artifacts according to a purpose – like *technê*, as a domain of repetition and execution subordinate to prediction. Action, *praxis* properly speaking, is the only mode of *vita activa* endowed with ontological dignity, because it is an expression neither of necessity nor of utility, but rather the original capacity to initiate, to establish what is not yet. *Initium ut esset homo creatus est* (Arendt, 2009, p. 201): this formula (of resonance unmistakably Augustinian!) leads human existence back to its inaugural vocation, conceiving Man (not as manager of the world) as its possible founder – *fundator mundi*, one would say.

Deprived of functional purpose and refractory to the teleology of effectiveness, political action emerges as *setzende Kraft* – founding power that establishes discontinuity in the within the shared world. There is no politics without *Anfang*, and there is no *Anfang* without plurality. Buckler aptly observes that “the political, for Arendt, answers to the human condition of plurality” (Buckler, 2011, p. 7). The political, devoid of foundation exterior and anterior, leads back to its own performative iterability – to its *Sich-selbst-stiftende Bewegung* – in which word and gesture continually (re)inscribe themselves as conditions of freedom.

As a non-productive gesture, the action reveals not a “what” but a “who” – bursting into the public sphere as an unrepeatable manifestation of singularity. The freedom ceases to be a metaphysical interior – *proprietas interioris voluntatis* – to become reveal itself as an inter-subjective phenomenon, which only occurs in the presence of others. The Politics, therefore, is not a form of domination nor a means of representation: it is topology of appearing, a field of visibility in which singularity is exposed in plurality – “La human plurality, basic condition of both action and speech, has the double character of equality and distinction” (Arendt, 2009, p. 200). Here, the political subject is not affirms in the solitude of autonomy, constitutes the otherness that founds it and makes it possible.

Visibility emerges as a condition of politics: there is no freedom without space public that welcomes it. Against modernity that hypertrophies the inner self and reifies the autonomy as closure, Arendt insists on the expository character of action. In reading convergent, Paz states: “freedom is positive action in the public sphere of space political. Therefore, Arendt’s conception is that freedom appears in politics” (Peace, 2022, p. 104). Freedom, in this sense, asserts itself as an exposition – *Erscheinung* – that requires the common world and the presence of others as its ontological *a priori*.

In this regime of intelligibility, politics is defined by the act of foundation as such – a contingent gesture whose trace establishes the possibility of continuity. The action is, therefore, *actum fundandi*, but always relational, always exposed to risk and plurality. Freedom, therefore, is only fulfilled in the public space as a *potential instituendi*, and it is in this space that the political, as a space of the new, is inscribed and justifies.

3.3 *Resistentia*: Action, Freedom and Beginning

Within Arendt's categorical architecture, politics does not lend itself to assimilation by traditional normative schemes that – entangled in the duplicity between institutionalism and voluntarism – tend to conceive of politics as a technique of management or manifestation of a homogenizing collective will. Against this tendency, Arendt projects politics as a *phenomenon in apparendo*, a space of visibility shared where freedom is realized not as a state, but as an act, not as substance, but as an emergency – *Ereignis des Erscheinens*. It is an instance of ontological radiation in which power – far from being a monopoly or delegated substance – is configured as a relational, ephemeral phenomenon, sustained only by the presence acting of a plurality. "Power is what maintains the existence of the public sphere, the potential space of appearance between men who act and speak" (Arendt, 2009, p. 223) – therefore, does not subsist where plurality dissolves.

In this regime of intelligibility, action is not an expression of a (pre)existing end nor response to an external imperative – reveals itself as an inaugural gesture that bursts forth from *natalitas* as the ontological structure of the human condition. It is in the fact of being born – I was born, *ergo initium* – which anchors the possibility of freedom as an instituting power. "The miracle that saves the world, beyond the sphere of human affairs, from its normal ruin "natural" is the ultimate term for birth control" (Arendt, 2009, p. 266). "miracle" is the name Arendt gives to the ontology of the new: the emergence of the unpredictable, of the non-derivable, in the midst of a world saturated with repetition and technical determinism. The freedom is not dominion over oneself or over others, it is *potentia instaurandi* – power of outbreak of the not yet given, *Einbruch des Unvorhergesehenen*.

Political action – an inaugural gesture – is articulated in a structural duplicity: it is *praxis*, because it takes place among men and aims to constitute the shared world; it is *physis*, as a spontaneous outburst that derives neither from a plan nor from calculation. This character two-faced removes the action from any possibility of administrative or functionalization transcendental spiritualization. Arendt rejects both extremes: that of politics as technique, and that of politics as a worldless moral ideal. It is on

this plane that *resistentia* offers itself as a possible name for freedom understood as irreducibility to repetition and the norm. Resisting, here, is not simply oppose, but establish – make something that the order did not foresee burst forth, found without a model, acting without a plan. It is an action that, while not being violence, is also not



conforms to legality; which, while not being a destructive rupture, also does not integrate with schemes of institutional reproduction. Resistance is, in this context, an extreme expression of freedom as a power of beginning – *resistentia est potentia instituti*.

Freedom, thus (re)conducted to its ontology of appearance, founds politics as a space of creative resistance, of that which, upon emerging, breaks the succession of causalities and establishes a new world, even if precarious. In this sense, politics is always the topology of a possible miracle – the sphere where, as an act, the new can to happen.

3.4 *Politiké*: Appearance, Plurality and Potentia

Politics, as a specifically human phenomenon – *idion tou anthrōpou* –, is not configured as an institutional derivation nor as a normative arrangement endowed with functional exteriority. It manifests itself as an original condition of appearance in the world, that is, of manifestation of the “who” and not of the “what”. In Arendt, politicality does not is exhausted in the logic of command, nor is it confused with the instrumentality of government: is, fundamentally, a space for the revelation of the singular – *Ort der Offenbarung des Einzigartigen* – which bursts into the between, into *the inter homines*, as a contingent expression of plural freedom. In this sense, power does not preexist as possession or structure, but constitutes itself as a performative effect of co-presence, sustained by the interaction of word and gesture – the human being appears not as a function, but as someone who acts and reveals (Arendt, 2009, p. 22).

Plurality – not being reduced to mere empirical factuality or tolerable multiculturalism – operates as *a conditio ontologica sine qua non* of its own intelligibility of the political. The human is plural or it is not political – this is Arendt’s thesis. The freedom, therefore, is not the prerogative of the isolated individual, but a manifestation that depends on the presence of others as a condition of its public existence. “The main difference between slave labor and free and modern work is not based on what worker has personal freedom – freedom of movement, economic activity and personal inviolability –, meaning that he is admitted into the public sphere and is fully emancipated as a citizen” (Arendt, 2009, p. 238). Public space is not a setting nor support; it is a form of the world – *Weltform* – whose fabric is constituted by coexistence of the different. Politics does not generate differences, it is made of them.



Steve Buckler, with hermeneutic precision, observes that the Arendtian gesture implies not a reform of the institutional framework, but rather an ontological reconstruction of the being political, shifting the center of gravity of politics from the plane of normative will for the performativity of appearing: “a recognition of the way in which our more recent experiences may change the political world and our understanding of it – and how Arendt seeks to incorporate this recognition into her conception of how to go about political theory” (Buckler, 2011, p. 55). Politics, understood in this way, is not based on contract – *pactum subjectionis* – except in the exposed and vulnerable presence of those who act together. And it is precisely this contingency of presence – and not the rigidity of structures – which constitute the unfounded foundation of power.

In this framework of intelligibility, political power – *potentia agendi* – is not confused with *potestas* as hierarchical dominion or delegated sovereignty. Potency, in Arendt, it is always relational, always fragile, and it is precisely in this fragility that lies its founding force. Resisting, politically, is sustaining the space where this power can continue to happen. Resistance is not a reaction, but a creation – *actus foundation* of a shared world. “Isolation may be the beginning of terror... its hallmark is impotence insofar as power always comes from men acting together, «acting in concert” (Burke); isolated men are powerless by definition” (Arendt, 1962, p. 474): the power, as co-potentia, is born and perishes with co-action. There is no politics without this compossibility of action, and there is no freedom without this common world sustained by plural appearance.

It is, therefore, in the recognition of politicality as a contingent exposure to alterity that anchors Arendt's critique of the Western tradition of sovereignty. *Politiké*, as conceived here, it is a phenomenological field of co-appearance, a space of difference instituting, where freedom is shown as a shared event – *Gemeinsames Geschehen*. Plurality is not noise: it is the raw material of freedom and a condition of possibility of the political world.

3.5 *Cogitatio*: Judgment, Memory, and the Banality of Evil

In Arendtian thought, radical evil is not configured as an explosion demonic of the negative, nor as a conscious transgression of the moral norm. Its true possibility – more disturbing and structural – manifests itself in the form of suspension of *cogitatio* – that is, the abdication of the faculty of thinking. With the figure



paradigmatic of Eichmann – the bureaucrat of obedience without conscience – Arendt leads the analysis of evil back to an unexpected topology: not that of cruelty, but that of emptiness; not that of transgression, but that of thoughtlessness. The banality of evil, thus formulated, does not denounce an excess, it denounces an absence – absence of judgment, of critical, interruptive presence: *Abwesenheit des Denkens*.

Thinking, under this theoretical configuration, is not a speculative activity aimed at production of positive knowledge, nor is it Kantian deliberation subordinated to maxims universals. Thinking is, for Arendt, an act of suspension – *epokhê* – before the automatisms of the world. *Cogitatio* mobilizes itself as *gegenständliche Zerstörung* – destruction directed against crystallized meanings –, creating a hesitation that prevents ethical collapse.

Responsibility, in this post-metaphysical matrix, is no longer anchored in a universalist morality, nor does it derive from legal systems external to the subject. It emerges from the need to respond – *respondere ad mundum* – in a singularity concrete, without guarantees or absolutes. Arendtian ethics offers no foundations, it imposes/ demands a watchful presence. Birmingham, in exploring this ethics of ruleless judgment, states: “Arendt's political understanding of the human being insists on the transformation of the time of self-interest to the temporality of public happiness and its promise of shared pleasures. This, in turn, allows her to reformulate the solidarity of humanity and its predicament of common responsibility” (Birmingham, 2006, p. 128). problem does not lie in guilt; it lies in the demand for a response. Ethics is not anchored in fundamentals, it projects itself as an unavoidable phenomenological presence.

In this context, *cogitatio* is linked to memory as a condition of judgment, and not as a collection of past facts. He who gives up thinking also gives up memory and, therefore, the possibility of evaluating the present in light of a shared world. The totalitarianism, in this sense, does not begin with the extermination camps – a manifestation final and extreme –, begins with the erosion of the faculty of judgment – *Zerstörung des Urteilens* – the spread of thoughtless functional obedience, the trivialization of obedience, the atomization of the individual and widespread depoliticization.

Education, understood from this perspective, transcends the transmissive function, establishing itself as a propaedeutic condition of judgment. Arendt rejects the instrumentalization of training as technical or doctrinal training. The task of education is, at least, on the contrary, establish a world where thinking is possible, where hesitation gains time, and where judgment can interrupt the march of the inhuman. The absence of critical thinking

generates available subjects – *formbare Masse* – perfectly compatible with the totalitarian devices. Where there is no *cogitatio*, there is no politics; where there is no politics, there remains just functionality: the world without world.

3.6 *Natalitas*: Foundation, Beginnings and Resistance

At the heart of Arendt's conception of *politiké* – the ontological space of freedom – a category as discreet as it is decisive emerges: *natalitas*. This is not restricted to a rhetorical image or a humanist inflection of physical birth, the *natalitas* designates the ontopolitical structure of human existence as a possibility of principle – *Anfangskraft*. “It is an approach that corresponds with a recognition of the central category of «natality» in respect of human action: a recognition that each of us enters the world as a unique individual, carrying with us the promise of something new and unprecedented” (Buckler, 2011, p. 53). In the author's words: “El hecho de que el man being capable of action means that it is up to him to wait for the unexpected, that he is capable to accomplish it infinitely improbable. And this, in turn, is only possible because each man is singular, so that with each birth something singularly new enters the world” (Arendt, 2009, p. 202). It is this inaugural character – *anfänglich* – that qualifies political action as a true manifestation of the human: the *initium*, as an act, is the very substance of the political, not its consequence: “Arendt's theoretical reformulation of the fundamental right to have rights emerges out of her reflection on the initium inherent in the ontological event of natality that makes every human being a beginner” (Birmingham, 2006, p. 36).

In this reflective framework, resistance is not understood as a negative refusal. nor as a destructive gesture. It is a *potentia fundandi*, an instituting principle that breaks the reproduction of the same and establishes a space where freedom can reappear. The gesture of resistance does not aim at reversing domination, but at establishing a another space. In this sense, “action carries within itself a creative power, a force of initiation that enables the continuity of public life. It is in the construction of the binomial permanence–innovation that action manifests itself” (Silva; Silva, 2011, p. 2). Freedom is *actus constituens* – not as legal formalism, but as political performativity of plurality.

However, the condition of this *fundare* is always threatened by the logic of administration, through the technocratic colonization of public space that converts the political

in mere management of the necessary – *Verwaltung des Notwendigen*. Arendt diagnoses the modernity as the dissolution of the distinction between the social and the political: when the necessity invades the possible, politics degenerates into function, and freedom becomes in marginal exception. In this sense, “public space, as well as public freedom, were reduced to the pre-civilized state” (Ferreira, 2017, p. 212). Where there is no *spontaneitas*, there is no *res publica* – only predictability and neutralization of contingency.

Civil disobedience emerges, then, as a political gesture par excellence – in to the extent that it reinscribes it in its original foundation. It is an insurrection not against the law, but in favor of its reappropriation as a common work. Arendt is explicit: “The introduction of civil disobedience into our political institutions potrebbe establishes the migliore remedy against this ultimate impotence of control giurisdizionale” (Arendt, 1985, p. 87). Its character is refounding: it is an *instaurare* that does not aim at nihilism, but at reactivating the link between acting, judging and the world. Resisting is to found.

This reconceptualization of freedom requires, correlatively, the reinterpretation of rights. They do not precede political membership, nor are they supported by the metaphysics of subject: they are contingent effects of the capacity to act with others – *actus communis*. “The reduction of politics to the sphere of necessity has ended up leading to the disposability of life turning people not into citizens fighting for freedom, but into mere consumers of abundance with technological advances, reducing human beings to disposable beings within the process of massification” (Sampaio, 2016, p. 17). The statelessness, as a loss of *jus civitatis*, constitutes the paradigm of non-appearance: the disintegration of the *public persona* and, consequently, of humanity itself politically conceived.

To found, in this context, is not to build fixed structures, it is to establish a space of permanence where freedom can emerge and reappear – *Raum des Erscheinens*. Authority, therefore, is not coercion, but a formal condition of appearance; and tradition – as *Überlieferung* – only maintains legitimacy if it remains as an opening, not as an imposition. The total absence of authority does not emancipate: dissolves the world in *atomistic Vereinzelung* – a dispersion that annihilates the *res publishes*.

Thus it is understood that *natalitas* – a founding category – not only introduces the new in the world, but imposes – as a political imperative – the task of keeping the possibility of beginning. To found is to resist; to resist is to restart.

4. Final Considerations

The present investigation – structured under the sign of an immanent hermeneutics and conceptually intensive – made it possible to unveil the internal fabric of the *ars politica* in Hannah Arendt, whose conceptual architecture does not rest on legal axioms or institutional schemes, but about the restoration of politics to its status as original event – *locus of libertas in actu*, of non-subsumable plurality and of emergence of the *initium*. Politics is not reduced to a system of administration of needs or a technical device of governmental rationality, acquires dignity ontological as a space of appearance, word and action, where men reveal themselves as *irreducible singularities* and establish, in co-presence, possible worlds.

The hermeneutic journey through *La condición humano* (Arendt, 2009), *La disobedience civile e altri saggi* (Arendt, 1985) and *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt, 1962), articulated with the exegetical contributions of Birmingham (2006), Buckler (2011) and others, showed that Arendt's break with the Western political tradition consists in the displacement of sovereignty as *Grundkategorie* to a conception of power as *potentia inter homines* – performative, ephemeral, constituent – that can only be actualizes in the plurality of joint action. It is a silent categorical revolution, but radical: power as a relationship to be realized.

In this constellation, resistance and civil disobedience emerge (not as arbitrary rupture) as a political reconfiguration of *virtus civilis*, where public space is reappropriated as *fundamentum libertatis*. Arendt is unequivocal: “the disobedience civile, as long as it expresses a political impulse, it does not respond to a rift of political obligations and a wealth of its property to the right” (Arendt, 1985, p. 15). Disobedience, understood as an ontopolitical gesture, does not aim the denial of law – intends its resignification in the light of judgment and justice.

Freedom, without being reduced to introspective free will, is realized in visible exteriority of plurality. It is not a metaphysical essence, it is assumed as event – *Ereignis* – whose existence depends on the presence of others, on the space of appear, from the common world. The *conditio humana* is not abstract universalism: it is exposed concreteness – “the Tierra is the very fifth essence of the human condition” (Arendt, 2009, p. 4).



This possibility, however, is fragile and reversible. The totalitarian drive – understood in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* – is mobilized by direct violence, by annulment of plurality, by the suppression of judgment and by the dissolution of the public sphere as a shared world. Totalitarianism is, in this sense, the ontological negation of politics – abolition of appearance, institutionalization of absence, annihilation of the new. Arato (2002, p. 473) accurately observes that the work remains as an instrument privileged critic to understand contemporary forms of domination, even in formally democratic regimes.

It is in this topology that thought – *cogitatio* – presents itself as a condition negative of both morality and politics. It is not about applying norms, the what is called for is the interruption of automation. The Eichmann case is paradigmatic: not there is monstrosity in the gesture, but emptiness in the thought. The absence of *cogitatio* makes judgment impossible (Arendt, 1963). It is in the suspension of thought that evil becomes banal – if automates, empties, executes.

Education goes beyond the pedagogical function and becomes a political imperative inaugural. Educating is not about forming useful citizens, it is about preparing the space for judgment and reopening the possibility of thinking in times of opacity. “Politics needs to guarantee the space of appearance of citizenship and freedom” (Sampaio, 2016, p. 21)...political exclusion is not mere injustice: it is the annihilation of the Human.

The triad *cogitatio*, *praxis*, *potentia* structures the fundamental grammar of modern political responsibility. Kanatli (2017, p. 102) insists that real freedom demands overcoming the alienation that prevents acting together, while Buckler and O'Sullivan point to the eventive nature of power. Power is neither *habitus* nor device: it is an event, it is a shared presence in action.

Finally, the investigation signaled that the policy is now threatened by processes of structural desubstantialization: technocratization, virtualization, aestheticization of power. The obscuration of the public sphere dissolves the difference between what appears and what is administered. Arendt's critique of the invasion of the political by the social remains relevant: contemporary democracy often does not go beyond the management of what is necessary (Arendt, 2009), and the political event gives way to functional repetition.

A full reading of the works and commentators allowed us to understand that the politics – from the Arendtian perspective – is not a given, but a historical and ontological. It does not impose itself: it is grounded. Its foundation requires recognition of plurality as wealth, action as revelation and power as continuous creation.

Against technocratic disenchantment, Arendt proposes an ontology of the beginning again (not under the sign of utopia!) – one that can be seen as a real possibility of re-founding the world.

His philosophy, rooted in the abysmal experience of the 20th century, resonates with a unprecedented intensity in the face of the challenges of the 21st century, calling us to reflect ethics of responsibility towards the world. Arendtian thought is, therefore, gesture and legacy: gesture of resistance against the collapse of the political, legacy of a freedom which is only fulfilled in the plural.

References

ARATO, Andrew. "Dictatorship Before and After Totalitarianism." Social Research, vol. 69, No. 2, Hannah Arendt's The Origins of Totalitarianism: Fifty Years Later, Summer 2002, pp. 473-503.

ARENDT, Hannah. Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. New York: The Viking Press, 1963.

ARENDT, Hannah. The Human Condition. Translated by Ramón Gil Novales. Barcelona: Paidós, 2009.

ARENDT, Hannah. La disobediencia civil e altri saggi. Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1985.

ARENDT, Hannah. The origins of totalitarianism. New York: Meridian, 1962.

BIRMINGHAM, Peg. Hannah Arendt & human rights: the predicament of common responsibility. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

BUCKLER, Steve. Hannah Arendt and political theory: challenging the tradition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

FERREIRA, Luiz Alexandre. Public space and citizenship: contributions from Hannah Arendt. *Sapere aude*, Belo Horizonte, v. 8, no. 15, p. 211-226, Jan./Jun. 2017.

KANATLI, Mehmet. The Concept of Freedom in Hannah Arendt's Political Thought. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2017.

O'SULLIVAN, NK Politics, totalitarianism and freedom: the political thought of Hannah Arendt. *Political Studies*, Oxford, vol. 21, no. 2, p. 183-198, 1973.

PAZ, Anderson Barbosa. Friedrich Hayek and Hannah Arendt in contrast: freedom of politics or freedom in politics? *Peri Magazine*, Florianópolis, v. 14, n. 2, 2022.

SAMPAIO, Leandson. The social question and the recovery of politics in Hannah Arendt. *Polymatheia – Philosophy Journal*, Fortaleza, v. 9, n. 14, 2016.

SILVA, Ricardo George de Araújo; SILVA, Napiê Galvê Araújo. The recovery of politics: action and public space according to Hannah Arendt. *Griot – Journal of Philosophy*, Amargosa, BA, v. 3, no. 1, 2011.