

# The Privilege of the Pariah

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**Source:** Hannah Arendt, Men in Dark Times, via Brain Pickings

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/04/12/hannah-arendt-men-in-dark-times/>

Humanity manifests itself in brotherhood most frequently in “dark times.” This kind of humanity actually becomes inevitable when the times become so extremely dark for certain groups of people that it is no longer up to them, their insight or choice, to withdraw from the world. Humanity in the form of fraternity invariably appears historically among persecuted peoples and enslaved groups. ... This kind of humanity is the great privilege of pariah peoples; it is the advantage that the pariahs of this world always and in all circumstances can have over others. ...

It is as if under the pressure of persecution the persecuted have moved so closely together that the interspace ... has simply disappeared. This produces a warmth of human relationships which may strike those who have had some experience with such groups as an almost physical phenomenon. ...

In its full development it can breed a kindliness and sheer goodness of which human beings are otherwise scarcely capable. Frequently it is also the source of a vitality, a joy in the simple fact of being alive, rather suggesting that life comes fully into its own only among those who are, in worldly terms, the insulted and injured