



EDITORIAL

GALILEO GALILEI, By Bertolt Brecht, As a Metaphor for the Continuous Transformational Movement of Thought

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Abstract

The author uses the genesis of the conception of Bertolt Brecht's play "Galileo Galilei" to metaphorize the creative, moving, contradictory, paradoxical thought, determined largely by powerful emotional factors. The Theory of Transformations, a psychoanalytic model proposed by Bion (1963), is called to better understand the transformation, fundamental and defining operation of the psyche, mental life, the possibility of thinking and create, through the binomials PS <-> D and (♀♂), as well as the links L, H, K.

Keywords: Galileo Galilei, Psychoanalysis, Wilfred Bion, Theory of Transformations

Introduction:

"The (in) tranquility that sustains us" could be a more suggestive, ironic, paradoxical title – in short, highly unsaturated, also linked to the uneasiness that comes from the movement and inconsistency of our thoughts and opinions.

Galileo Galilei's life, which includes the famous episode of the scientist's abjuration, is a recurring theme in Brecht's work, who resorted to three complete versions of plays about the Italian scientist. We can say that the theme "Galileo Galilei" traversed at least 18 years of Brecht's life (from 1938 to 1956) and that, in this time, his opinion about the character radically changed three times. Thus, we have three versions of a central and constant theme, the character Galileo. In these central pieces of Bertolt Brecht's work, written between 1938 and 1956, the German playwright chooses paradigmatic situations in Galileo's life to problematize issues that plagued the author and remain current, such as the implications of science and the scientist's relationship with society. The astronomer's experiments put into question not only the fundamental notions of science, but also the worldview and the situation of man on planet Earth (Peixoto, 1974 [1]). 1st version (1938), Danish version, Galileo = heroic figure; 2nd version (1946) American version, Galileo = criminal figure; 3rd version (1954), German version, Galileo = scoundrel figure, antisocial.

1st version: The first version of the text was written in 1938, in his exile in Denmark, when many believed in the irresistible victory of Nazism in Germany. The expectation of a barbaric era was evident, and the author used Galileo's path to address issues that disturbed him emotionally and intellectually (ideologic). Galileo appears as a man of science committed to

knowing the world. He is a heroic figure, concerned with the education of the people and who, therefore, writes in vulgar Italian and not in Latin. In the end, he is a man who does not resist and retracts, for lack of strength to oppose the Inquisition. He is shattered, but he spends his last days preparing new works that would do anything to cross the border and revolutionize science and the world. Brecht thus conveys to his compatriots, who live under Nazism, the idea that it is worth hiding their ideas so that they can later disseminate them (Willet, 1967 [2]).

2nd version: Written at the end of the war (1946), it is marked by the "scandal" of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Brecht rethinks the responsibility of scientists, thus altering the entire end of the piece, changing the initial meaning of the text. According to the playwright, overnight, the biography of the founder of modern physics was read in a different way. Brecht writes: "Galileo's crime is the original sin of the modern natural sciences... The atomic bomb, as a technical phenomenon and as a social phenomenon, is the classic end product of his contribution to science and his failure to society. Galileo's crime was not his retraction, his denial of scientific truth, but the fact that he has robbed science of the core of its social significance" (Brecht, cit. by Crato, 2006). The astronomer knows the discovery of the telescope, prioritizes his personal interests above all else, disregarding the social consequences.

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3rd version: This version essentially follows the previous one, but Galileo's moral condemnation is even more extreme. In this version, his figure becomes "antisocial, and must be shown as a social criminal, a scoundrel" and the scenes are written with that purpose. In one of the new scenes, for example, the astronomer regrets that he once wrote in vulgar Italian, stating that "the language of fishmongers was not appropriate for high things" (Crato, 2006).

The Portuguese adaptation of Brecht's play, *A Vida de Galileu*, that premiered in 2006 and was being shown at Teatro Aberto (Portuguese adaptation by João Lourenço and Vera San Payo), is based more on the second version of the original play, but showing a more multifaceted, more realistic, richer, less cleaved and idealized character, both positively and negatively.

Bion [3], in *Elements in Psychoanalysis* (1963) described a conscious activity present in the creative process consisting of the continuous oscillation between a dispersal mental state (PS) and an integrative state (D). This thought function was named PS <-> D. In the creative process, thinking involves the dismantling of previous opinions and theories, with the development of new opinions and theories. By changing the way of thinking, the continent must be dissolved before it can be reshaped, and this effort has the feeling of something "shattering". The Bionian process of PS <-> D, the function of thought consisting of the continuous oscillation between a dispersal mental state (PS) and a security mental state (D), is clearly visible through the constitution and destruction of three consistent and structured opinions of Brecht on Galileo.

In addition to stating ♀♂ as founding elements of mental activity, Bion (1963) also spelled out the links that can unite ♀ with ♂: H (hate), L (love) and K (knowledge). The bond indicates the quality of the dominant emotional experience, the basic emotion that dominates the encounter. They therefore refer to the link between the self and the object (Grotstein, 2007) as well as the link between internal objects (Amaral Dias, 2010 [4]).

Let us then identify the models of the meeting between Brecht's mind (♀) and the thoughts about Galileo (♂), seeking to clarify the basic emotion that presided over each of these meetings.

We saw earlier that, in the first version (Danish), Galileo is thought of as a "heroic figure", both as a human being and as a scientist, and it is evident that the dominant bond is L (love and admiration). As for the desire to know him, the bond K is present in its negative form, K-, as it knows only a part of the character;

In the second (American) version, corresponding to a first transformation of the continent, in which Galileo is thought of as a "criminal figure", "selfish", the dominant bond is clearly H (hate). The desire to know comes in the form of K- (avoidance of knowledge, Green, 2013 [5]) due to the fragmentary perception of Galileo, splitting what should not be separated.

In the 3rd version (German), the second transformation, in which Galileo is thought of as a "despicable figure, scoundrel",

the bond that presides over the union ♀♂ is K- (indifference, contempt, Grotstein, 2007 [6]).

Only in the Portuguese version is Galileo described with more realism, moderation, complexity and depth, that is, as a total object, with the dominant bond being K + (desire to know), evidencing that only in this version is there a true tendency to move, to know the truth about the figure of Galileo (K-> O) and that the mind is clearly in a depressive position (D).

The analysis of the three plays by the playwright Bertolt Brecht about Galileo Galilei shows us that the thoughts about that character underwent transformations and were dictated essentially by strong emotional charges, changing according to the quality of the emotions, L or H, and this finding puts us before the great and eternal question of the importance of emotions, feelings and effects in the determination of thoughts and our opinions about people, situations, or topics important to us. The human being is a constantly changing being, and changing our minds is a part of life. As if opinions were an emotionally invested idea. We are not the ones who have an opinion, but it is the opinion that has us. Some illustrations of the primacy of feelings over thoughts:

- Chorus of the opera *Rigoletto* (1851) by Giuseppe Verdi:
La donna è mobile (The woman is unstable
qual pluma al vento like a feather in the wind
muta d'acento she changes her feelings
e di pensiero. and thoughts.)
- António Lobo Antunes [7] (writer): "Then we confuse the reasons why we like or dislike the piece. There are many affective elements. It is very difficult to judge. The person is mistaken for the piece and the piece for the person. If a person is nice, I am much more likely to enjoy what they do." (Actual, 2017, p. 14-15).
- Advertisement: (TV - shopkeeper of Terceira Island, Azores): "This is the best cheese in the world, because it's the one from my hometown" (followed by objective justifications, rationalizations).
- Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925 and 1926): It is evident that Hitler's ideological program and worldview, with its key components being the destruction of the Jewish people and the acquisition of living space at the expense of Russia, more than being a result of rationality, comes from an aversion that bordered on fixation, from a hatred so deeply entrenched that it could only have been grounded in deep fear.
- Sigmund Freud [about the impulses of aggression and hatred not having disappeared and remaining repressed in the unconscious mind, awaiting the opportunity to become active]: "Our rationality is weak and dependent on affective forces that it ignores, and we are all compelled to behave [and think] in a smart or stupid manner according to repressed emotional imperatives."

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