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Reading literature as a starting point in the construction of an autoethnographic study on the intersectionality¹

(A leitura da literatura como ponto de partida para a construção de um estudo autoetnográfico sobre a interseccionalidade)

(La lectura de la literatura como punto de partida en la construcción de un estudio autoetnográfico sobre la interseccionalidad)

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ABSTRACT: Autoethnography is an important methodology that allows the expression of dissident bodies. The reading of a literary book and the construction of reading diaries, as a starting point for autoethnographic reflection, is still little explored. Here, I start from the question: what is it to be a gay scientist? Starting from this question and the experience of a teacher the proposal of this study was to perform an autoethnographic analysis reading and interpreting *The life of Galileo* by the writer Bertolt Brecht. To this end, a literary reading journal and an analysis reflecting with theories and these experiences was constructed keeping in mind how the vulnerability of dissident bodies, can be in alliance for the uses and responsible work with sciences. In conclusion, the construction of a 1-year autoethnographic diary of reading a book of literature allowed us to conduct a record, denouement and cultural critique of an important moment, which touches on points of intersectionality, about the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: reading diary as a research method; autoethnography of a scientist; reading diary; LGBTQIAPN+ autoethnography; critique of science.

Resumo: A autoetnografia é uma metodologia importante que permite a expressão de corpos dissidentes. A leitura de um livro literário e a construção de diários de leitura, como ponto de partida para a reflexão autoetnográfica, ainda é pouco explorada. Aqui, parto da pergunta: o que é ser um cientista *gay*? Partindo dessa questão e da experiência de uma professora a proposta deste estudo foi realizar uma análise autoetnográfica lendo e interpretando *A vida de Galileu* do escritor Bertolt Brecht. Para tanto, foi construído um diário de leitura literária e uma análise reflexiva com teorias e essas experiências tendo em mente como a vulnerabilidade dos corpos dissidentes, pode estar em aliança para os usos e trabalho responsável com as ciências. Concluindo, a construção de um diário autoetnográfico de um ano de leitura de um livro de literatura permitiu realizar registro, desenlace e crítica cultural de um momento importante, que toca em pontos de interseccionalidade, sobre o contexto da pandemia de covid-19.

Palavras-Chave: diário de leitura como método de pesquisa; autoetnografia de um cientista; diário de leitura; autoetnografia LGBTQIAPN+; crítica da ciência.

Resumen: La autoetnografía es una metodología importante que permite la expresión de los cuerpos disidentes. La lectura de un libro literario y la construcción de diarios de lectura, como punto de partida para una reflexión autoetnográfica, todavía son poco exploradas. Aquí, parte da pergunta: ¿o que é ser un cientista *gay*? Partindo dessa questão e da experiência de una profesora a propuesta de este estudio para realizar un análisis autoetnográfico leyendo e interpretando “A Vida de Galileu” del escritor Bertolt Brecht. Para tanto, foi construído um diário de leitura literária e uma análise reflexiva com teorias y essas experiências tendo em mente como a vulnerabilidade dos corpos disidentes, pode estar em aliança para os usos e trabalho responsável com as ciências. En conclusión, la construcción de un diario autoetnográfico de 1 año de lectura de un libro de literatura permitió realizar registro, diseño y crítica cultural de un momento importante, que toca en puntos de interseccionalidad, sobre el contexto de la pandemia de COVID-19.

Palabras-Clave: diario de lectura como método de pesquisa; autoetnografia de un científico; diario de lectura; autoetnografia LGBTQIAPN+; crítica de ciencia.

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1 Introduction

There is still little theorizing about the bodies that do science. The study of the producing subjects of this cultural expression can be brought into focus in an attempt to establish a critique and understand the internal dynamics of political, social, and economic negotiations in the production of knowledge. Here I bring a form of study through the autoethnographic analysis of an individual, me – the researcher/teacher – a dissident body inserted in this scientific culture since 2003 in Brazilian society. Here I bring you a method in this analysis I use the reading and interpretation of the literary work *The life of Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht – a methodology of autoethnography through literature reading and analysis – which deals with the scientist’s responsibility in the contemporary world, to weave criticism and help me to reflect about the central question of this research: what is it like to be a homosexual researcher/teacher in Brazilian society? How can using the method of reading, analyzing and writing literature help in the construction of a critique of this issue?

This analysis is divided into three autoethnographic steps. A first autoethnographic stage, of evocative base, contextualizing my place as a researcher and the engagements that are the basis of an epistemological construction. A second autoethnographic stage in which I explain how I read the literary work and wrote a reading journal. A third autoethnographic stage, of analytical basis, in which I perform an analysis of the reading diary. Here, I present a study model that the aim of this study is to present and demonstrate the use of literature reading and the construction of a reading diary as a method in autoethnographic research

2 Stage I – Autoethnography and the preparation to read and write literature

Brazil went through a process of change in science policy at the beginning of the 21st century. This change came with the policies of educational expansion and the incentives for scientific and technological development in the country since 2003 with the governments headed by the “Partido dos Trabalhadores” (PT [*worked party*]). A mass of students had the opportunity to enter the universities and there was a greater flow of funds for science. A new generation of researchers and professors, mainly coming from the working class, had the opportunity to enter the scientific culture. A totally new way of thinking came from public schools, from militancy, from social movements, from sons and daughters of the working class, that started to compose the Brazilian scientific ethos as a consequence of these policies.

I am one of those individuals contemplated by the educational and scientific policies in Brazil. I did my undergraduate, master’s and doctorate in science from this expansion of education. This localized body of mine is specific and specialized. A biological metaphor can define it: in



our immune system, each antibody is produced by the body in a specific way to respond to the aggression of a specific antigen, that is, of a foreign body that penetrates our organism. The specific antibody is an individual molecule that reacts to a singular foreign body in the body. In other words, each antibody molecule is produced specifically for a particular antigen. However, in case of infection or serious aggression to the body, only the set of several different specific antibody molecules in alliance, each produced for a certain specific antigen, for example against a virus or a bacterium, can neutralize the aggressor microorganisms. Here is the metaphor: just as an antibody is a response molecule produced by a system against an aggression, but acts in alliance with other antibodies, my graphical experience is a powerless response in isolation: I am an antibody, that is, my action is in an alliance with other antibodies.

I remember my first contact with the idea of antibody. It was on a public-school biology class day when my biology teacher held the classic blood typing class.

I, seeing the teacher dripping drops of the so-called anti-A and anti-B solutions, my blood drops, extracted from a pinprick on my fingertip, onto a glass slide, asked: “Why did it agglutinate in one drop of blood and not in the other?”. The teacher: “Because in one solution there are antibodies that are specific for antigen A on RBCs and in the other solution there are antibodies for antigen B on RBCs”. I remember being paralyzed when I heard that word “antibody”. It was my chance to find out a little more about that word that I heard a lot in my childhood when I saw my uncles, aunts, parents opening their exams: “Mine has no antibody!” Me: “What are antibodies?”. The teacher: “Oh, very tiny things that the body produces especially for antigen that enters the body. Your body produces a great diversity of them. It is this diversity that fights all infections”. I never forgot that scene in class.

I chose to study Biological Sciences to be a biology teacher and to study science, to understand the world and, first of all, unconsciously, to understand myself. I came from a context of a young man born and raised in the 80s of the 20th centuries. At the time, more precisely in the years 1988 and 1989, the world was living the drama of the recent discovery and pandemic of the HIV virus, which caused a devastating and completely new disease that destroyed the immune system of those infected. At the time, the first infected were openly gay men in the United States of America (USA). The American media spread that the HIV virus was a divine punishment and aids was “gay plague”. It was not difficult for this idea to be embraced by the population that was already suspicious and critical of the discussions of individual, racial/ethnic, and sexual freedoms that exploded in the late 1960s around the world and had gained some revolutionary force changing secular customs in society. Civil rights had been won; homosexuality had been depathologized, and



libertarian social movements had gained strength in the macro and micro everyday life of society. The emergence of a virus in the midst of the exponent gay community of the time was a full plate for prejudices. Even with the appearance of scientific evidence that the HIV virus circulated in women and men with heterosexual practices, in blood material for transfusion in hospitals and among injecting drug users, at the time it was impossible to dissolve the crystallization of the stigma of HIV/aids as a disease of homosexuals.

The “logical” relationship in the equation was simple: someone was a homosexual man; therefore, he was promiscuous and infected by the HIV virus. The contamination by the virus, besides the physiological problems it caused, came in the combo of guilt for leading a life considered deviant because of being homosexual. The stigma of the “gay plague” weighed heavily on any subject who perceived his or her homosexual sexuality in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In my generation, the individual, upon becoming homosexual, would hear the following classic questions: “Are you sick?” or “You already got aids, didn’t you?” or “You use condoms, don’t you?”. The same individual also took advantage of advice that perhaps most young heterosexuals have not heard so often: “Take precautions, okay? Aids is around” or “Be careful not to get aids!” For us gays, the advice on the issue of unprotected sex was not about preventing the fear of early pregnancy in girls or the problem of early parenthood, but it was the stigma that being gay meant being a carrier of “a plague”. Homosexuality, already officially disregarded as a disease by international health agencies, was still under the dominance of the ideology of prejudice in mentalities. The sentence was given by the general imagination: as much as homosexuality could no longer be called a disease, it could convey another disease.

I was very young at that time. I had just started to enter preadolescence, but I already felt my body different, my desire different from what others expected, my look at others different. Although I didn’t understand why my look for boys was so much more interesting, the others had already noticed and had already made the discovery in me of something I didn’t even know myself. The names I received were: “faggot” and “gay”. I was already classified by something I didn’t know what it was, but that was in the media and in the discourses of family, family friends, classmates, and teachers. Now, “gay was transmitting the plague”. Terror set in once and for all in the early 1990s when there was a suspicion that the “gay plague” had mysteriously touched my family. A first-degree uncle began to suddenly lose weight and become ill. Sudden weight loss was a sign of “it”, the unpronounceable name of the disease not because it was a disease, but because it carried with it a concept: “gay”” The uncle rushed to get tested and encouraged everyone in the family to get tested for HIV. Uncles, aunts, cousins, older cousins, father and mother all got tested.



Phone calls and more phone calls to each other, “I’m negative and you?”, replies, “I am too”. Relief after relief. “No antibodies to the virus!”, I remember a relative celebrating. “No one was positive” and uncle’s illness was by another factor. “Less bad, right?” an aunt would say, “He’s not gay either”, she would diagnose along with the test results. A mystery in the family still loomed. A second cousin of my mothers who fell ill and died without the cause of death being clearly disclosed excited the rumor wheels. The suspicion was that he “died of aids”, because he traveled a lot to France, to the USA and there was always the suspicion that he might be “different”, that is, in the best translation: gay. To this day it is not known what he died of. His immediate family says it was from a rare type of cancer that quickly consumed him. The more malignant mouths of the family believe it was from aids, because then they couple the cause of death with the conclusion of sexuality.

And that’s how I grew up. On one side discovering that I was homosexual and trying to get rid of the stigma that I was not an “evil”. I actually, I repeat, I entered the Biological Sciences course, in a very unconscious way, in an attempt to launch myself into the knowledge of understanding what this disease was and to convince myself that I was not a “gay pest”. Moreover: perhaps I still wanted to understand and warn others like me, so that they would not feel the pain of prejudice that I felt. It was already in the first year of the Biological Sciences college that I really discovered and assumed myself homosexual; it was there that I made my first admittedly homosexual friends; it was in that first year of the course that I met the LGBTQIAPN⁺³ night of the city of São Paulo; it was in the first year of college that I met my first boyfriend and fell in love with another boy and was reciprocated affectively-sexually; it was in the first year of college that a very close homosexual friend of mine found out that he was positive for HIV and I learned from him that it was not a punishment; it was in the first year of college that I had in the immunology course a class about the biology of the infection; it was in the first year that I went to be a biology teacher in the “Heliópolis” community in the outskirts of São Paulo; and it was in this very first year that I got my first internship in a laboratory to learn about HIV infection and about immunology. As in the Greek tragedy I was not running away from my “destiny”. In the following years I did my master’s, doctorate and post-doctorate in Immunology and became a professor of the discipline. Today I have a line of research in immunology teaching that has as its main objective to build teaching sequences with the immunology thematic allied to social-scientific issues. This interdisciplinarity is an important bridge between scientific knowledge and the LGBTQIAPN+ community.

3 Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Agender/Aromantics, Pansexuals/Polyamorous, Non-Binaries and many others.



The French anthropologist Bruno Latour (1994) in “We were never modern: essays for a symmetrical anthropology” brings the idea of hybrids, pertinent here. For Latour, as researchers, we are hybrids: “For lack of options we call ourselves sociologists, historians, economists, political scientists, philosophers, anthropologists [...] We ourselves are hybrids, precariously installed inside scientific institutions, half engineers, half philosophers, one third educated without us wanting it [...]” (Latour, 1994, p. 9). For the French thinker, in today’s world, there should be no separation between the knowledge of the natural science disciplines, on the one hand, and the humanities, on the other. In this sense, any separation of these spheres can only be the result of a modern illusion. Consider myself as a hybrid or I can still say that I am a researcher-queer mobilizing queer theory to explain researchers like me: strangers, without a defined form, in construction of a body – I add beyond, of an intellectuality –, travelers. For Guacira Louro (2008) such bodies are the “postmodern travelers”, who do not move geographically, but are always on the road of their existence, along the path of a journey in search of self, a construction of existence and above all of a resistance (Louro, 2008). What is important in the queer body-intellect is the possibility of the process.

I like the strange. The figure of the devil in Western culture carries the negative imagery of the monstrous. Associating this image with a line of thought contributes to a certain feeling of subversion, something that stimulated the philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend (1924-1994) to build his critique of science. Feyerabend, in an ironic way, uses the monster metaphor for Science to title his book, “Science, a monster” (Feyerabend, 2016, p. 11). The metaphor of science as a monster for Feyerabend is: “[...] with it, the author seeks to illustrate how, as a praxis, scientific activity is heterogeneous, conflicting, disharmonious, fragmented, etc. A monstrous, in short [...]” (Abrahão, 2016). When the French thinker Antoine Compagnon (2010) in “The demon of theory: literature and common sense” uses Baudelaire in “Let us beat the poor!” to valorize the demon, is in the sense of denouncing the powers of a dogmatic and arid literary theory, and in order to show the excess of positive signification of literature itself. Both authors, in different perspectives, advocate for the importance of the democratic relationship between the empirical knowledges of ordinary life, theory, and the sciences. For me, it is also about trying to articulate both spheres, with the critical awareness that the scientist cannot be the possessor of an isolated knowledge, nor can he make an argument of authority out of the ideology of isolation. About this, as a starting point of my intellectual-pedagogical-political place, I also affiliate myself to the movements of literary theory of the 20th century, which highlight the role of the reader, especially the theory of reception, in the construction of a critique of the literary text (Eco, 2002, 2005; Fish, 1992; Iser, 1999, 2002;



Jauss, 2002; Zilberman, 1989). I also affiliate myself with the proposal of articulation between autoethnographies and literary theory (Versiani, 2005) that enables me a theoretical-practical autoethnographic exercise through the writing and analysis of the records in reading diaries. The reading and interpretation of canonical works by dissident and marginalized bodies can be as valid for thinking and critiquing cultures as the already dominant ones made by white, elitized, privileged hetero-cis-normative bodies in the power spaces of academia and intellectual circles.

So, going back to the initial metaphor, and now giving it a better meaning: I am an antibody! I like the phenomenon of the antibody: a highly specific molecule produced in response to a stimulus by another molecule, an antigen, which may or may not be foreign to the body. Each antibody produced in its specificity is important in a collective immune response: it is as if an antibody molecule produced is an individual formed in the immensity of the collective to perform a function in a micro-physics and is significant to a macro-physics. Each antibody molecule produced, just like each individual in society, has a unique narrative, it was stimulated by “specific antigens”, orchestrated by cells of the immune system in a very careful way to then be produced and released for its action in various gears of collective mechanisms in the body.

Just as the immune system produces very diverse molecules all the time, society produces very diverse individuals all the time. Brazilian science has produced, in the last decades, a huge variety of scientists and intellectuals in response to the social, political and economic demands of the country. The specificity of an antibody molecule, as well as of each intellectual, should not be ignored as unimportant. In a given infection it may not be mobilized, but it is certainly being harnessed in another infection by some pathogen that tries or silently enters another part of the organism. What makes our riches in the classroom or when we think about forms of education and teaching are not only the affinities, but the diversity of possibilities for interactions and functions that we can perform. Just like the antibody molecules, so diverse, so specific, so complex, perform the dance of immunity in the bodies, the diverse individuals, thinking about the possibilities of education, can contribute significantly to society. Single, closed-minded, impenetrable blocks with little diversity, only reproducing more of the same are doomed to failure. Just as in the immune system: the production of a single type of antibody molecule does not help fight an infection.

3 Stage II - Autoethnography reading and writing literature

3.1 The construction of the diary and analysis

Brecht's *The life of Galileo* entered my reading world as a teenager. The backbone of



Brecht's text, the intellectual freedom of expression, dredged me into the "estrangement effect" that the author proposed in his theatrical theory. In this text, Brecht represents in dramatic genre a fiction, taking as a basis the biography of Galileo Galilei, a scientist involved in a dispute between science and faith that we can translate today as a dispute between freedom of thought and authoritarianism. The development of the reading process of Brecht's *The life of Galileo* was recorded in a personal journal (Lejeune, 2014) as proposed in other studies (Santos, 2016; Santos, 2020). The process of capturing the construction of interpretation and subjectivity of the reading took approximately one year, during the period from March 2020 to January 2021, in which I recorded my personal, sentimental impressions, analysis and criticism of my own reading process, firstly addressed to me as a form of recording the reality of my subjectivity as "data" for future analysis. In a next analytical autoethnographic layer addressed to the other, I developed in the course of capturing my impressions and memories, performing a general analysis of the diary confronting the reality that surrounds me as a Brazilian researcher and teacher⁴.

3.2 The "estrangement effect": an analysis of the writing of one year of the reading diary about *The life of Galileo*

The "estrangement effect" proposed by Brecht is when the actor in front of the reading and interpretation of the text pauses occasionally in the lines of the text to place his personal criticism on the issue addressed in the text. In other words, it is as if the actor carried out an autoethnographic investigation in front of his audience and together they built a criticism about a certain fact. I faced in this autoethnographic process the reading of the diary as an "actor" immersed in the technique of Brechtian theory, that "the actualization of the text can only be realized through the link that the actor establishes with his own experience (with his daily life)" (Koudela, 2010, p. 18). The importance of this pedagogical detection is in the valorization of how the process of the subjects in contact with the text can open possibilities, along with their world as the criticism, externalized, can echo in the audience in some way of thinking that leads to action. This pedagogical and investigative process corresponds well to the structure of the autoethnographic process itself divided into "process" and "product" (Ellis; Adams; Bochner, 2011). The journal, in this process, especially for me, was a powerful tool that enabled as a researcher a critical "improvisation" of thought.

The "strangeness effect" I felt when reading the 1-year journal entries makes me grasp the

4 The reading diary was published under the title *The noise of the bat's flight*. The complete journal, published and translated english version, is available at: <https://zenodo.org/record/6653212#.YsKyhexByqA>.



main point that permeates my writing from this time: the question of vulnerability in the world. To help me think about this question, I turned to Judith Butler's discussion (Butler, 2018) which I will relate the act of doing Science by scientists as a public and democratic coalition of bodies. Science is an institution of collective culture realized from the sharing of physical spaces and ideas by assembled bodies. This gathering of bodies towards a thinking works as a set of assemblies for the construction, development, claims and deliberations of proposals that we can call scientific practices. That is, scientific practice requires the gathering of bodies on physical platforms of various dimensions. However, with the very fragmentation and individualization of the exercise of doing Science, gathered between the logics of scientific thinking itself and the neoliberal policies of contemporary capitalism, this fragmentation brings the extreme individualization, the precariousness, the exaggerated competition for funds and has as a consequence the vulnerability of the bodies that claim the work with science as a form of expression and as a political action of their existence.

4 Stage II – autoethnography and the analysis of literature reading and writing

4.1 A queer in science: “I am a gay scientist”

It is important to start this step already aligned with Paco Vidarte's theory of “queer ethics” (Vidarte, 2019) by first locating my body as a “queer” body, scientist and teacher, son of immigrants, coming from the outskirts of the city of São Paulo. Given these historical conditions, my critical analysis and exhibition style are not alienated from this perspective. Reading and interpreting *The life of Galileo* in the midst of the greatest health, political, economic, scientific and social crisis of the beginning of the 21st century was not – and is not – done in the neutrality of the location of bodies like mine. Understanding a responsible and critical science as a coalition in solidarity cannot be done from the exclusion of the vulnerability that is in dissident bodies like mine.

Brecht used the historical figure of the scientist Galileo to build his character of the scientific universe and expose how the private life of the subject can influence the scientific and political development of science. As I was reading *The life of Galileo* I realized that no matter how much Brecht may have exposed the intimacy of a scientist's life, the author did not make any reference to or explore the theme of Galileo's sexuality nor did he build a character in this sense. The only clue, which is not reliable, is the existence of the scientist's daughter Virginia. I say unreliable because the existence of the character's parentage is not tied exclusively to only one sexual orientation or practice of heterosexuality. However, when the text is put in historical perspective, that of the



mid-twentieth century, a time when this specific point was not yet comprehensively discussed in the field of sexuality, and even more so if we take the perspective of the historical figure of the scientist Galileo Galilei himself, it can be said that Brecht deliberately ignored the issue of Galileo's sexuality. But how do we understand this intention?

It cannot be said that sexuality is totally ignored in Brecht's plays. Katy Phillipps (2000), studying the homosexuality present in Brechtian texts, brings us in "Between the third sex and the third Reich: Brecht early texts" (Phillips, 2000) that Brecht addressed the issue of sexuality, especially homosexuality, in his texts. In his first three texts, the homosexual, and the relationship between two men, was present as a way of confronting the conservative society of the Weimar Republic, which fervently took homosexuality as a deviant behavior. According to Phillipps (2000), the approach to homosexuality in these Brechtian texts is linked to a contesting act by the author as a manifesto of sexual counterculture prevailing in German society at the beginning of the century.

So why did Brecht not involve the exploration of the sexual intimacy of a scientist's life? I raise some hypotheses for this. The absence of the reflection between sexuality and the scientist in *The life of Galileo* is intriguing. Brecht chooses the figure of the scientist Galileo to criticize science for historical and political reasons of science (Fitas, 1998; Muhsin, 2014; Roessler, 2008) since historically there is no evidence of the issues of a possible homosexuality of Galileo. On the contrary, his biographer suggests a heterosexual life and traditional family construction (Geymonat, 1984). Another important point that reinforces this dismissal by Brecht of the issue of sexuality is the choice to take Galileo as the model for the discussion of science and not another scientist of the modern era, for example Leonardo da Vinci, as Sigmund Freud had chosen to explain the sublimation of libido for intellectual creation in his theory of Psychoanalysis in "Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood" (Freud, 1997). Which suggests to me to think that this aspect of the private life of the individual who produces knowledge was not important to Brecht in the architecture of the condition of the scientist in Western society. In other words, the sexuality of the scientist, which makes me understand in Brecht's conception, is not part of the involvement of the structure of the scientist's vulnerability in capitalist society, as proposed in *The life of Galileo*, and such feature is ignored. Or even: it makes me think that the impregnation of the rationalist theory of positivist science in the literary and artistic conceptions of Brecht's theoretical project did not allow space for involvements with this layer of the scientist's private life, which inversely for the Freudian conception of a new scientific proposal of psychoanalysis was essential.

On the other hand, Phillipps (2000) proposes another explanation for the scarcity of the



homosexuality theme in Brecht's texts that helps us to think of another hypothesis for the absence of the theme in *The life of Galileo*. Brecht wrote that during times of persecution and censorship, resistance also lies in camouflaging certain information, for example, intimate information. Various forms of behavior in society were condemned by the prevailing political order. The condition of homosexuality was seen as a deviation from nature, a disease through the lens of eugenics and the social Darwinism imbued in Nazism. A mask hiding homosexuality would be a form of preservation and an exercise of resistance. Recall that during the period 1933 to 1944 the Nazis convicted between 50.000 and 63.000 men for homosexuality and an estimated 5.000 to 15.000 died in concentration camps (Phillips, 2000; Plant, 1986). The declaration of homosexuality could be seen as another way to make oneself an enemy of the government – which is not very different from some governments, for example, the Brazilian one as of 2018. The interpretation we can take from Brecht's text for this erasure, then, would be the very silencing of the character Galileo of his scientific results as a form of protection and resistance in the face of the authoritarianism to which he is subjected. Brecht's Galileo is a character who speaks about the option for silence as a way of preserving life and political resistance. Many homosexuals in the history of humanity have preferred silence about their condition in order to survive and continue their activities. Some have even been legally condemned for "homosexuality", see the story of the Irish writer Oscar Wilde who was denounced and bitterly imprisoned, as he tells himself in "De profundis" of 1897. Just as Galileo abjured his scientific studies, many homosexuals abjure their condition of existence as a way to preserve their peace and their physical life. Brecht's silence on Galileo's sexuality is a metaphor for the silence of many of us.

However, reading with eyes and body in the 21st century, this question does not escape me, because the circumstances are relatively different. Could I, a scientist, today abjure and choose to be silent about my homosexual condition? I will say quickly: never. With the advances in the discussions and claims of the feminist, black, and LGBTQIAPN+ movements at the end of the 20th century, the issue of individuals sexuality should not be ignored as a historical-social factor in the characterization of an analysis. Thus, in reading *The life of Galileo*, in addition to the explicit identification of the scientist's economic, social, and political vulnerability, I add the sexuality of the individual as a break from this silence in associating scientific performance and sexuality. What I bring in this first layer of analysis was the awareness in heeding Paco Vidarte's (2019) call in "Bixa Ethics". That is, in which our LGBTQIAPN+ existence must be put in the first instance and become political subjects as a form of resistance against censorship of our existences. The freedom of intellectual expression, as questioned by Brecht in *The life of Galileo*, is underpinned



by the freedom of existence in the first instance. The freedom of expression of sexualities, as I bring and reinforce, is the basis of freedom of thought and full existence.

4.2 Vulnerability and bodies in alliance

In the condition of homosexual and scientist that I am, I take the knowledge I produce not to be disconnected from the location of my body in the historical-social context (Haraway, 1995) and from my political narrative as a “bixa” subject as already mobilized (Vidarte, 2019), since, the condition of homosexual, in dealing mainly with Brazilian society, puts me in a situation of vulnerability, exclusion and prejudice. Therefore, the condition of vulnerability for being homosexual directly impacts my production of knowledge in how it is produced. The conditions of my knowledge production are directly impacted on how I have access to spaces or if I will have access to these research spaces.

Getting to the spaces of knowledge production for a declared homosexual is first of all coming face to face with his own sexual condition in the world in the first instance. The layers of whether I will be able to get a job, how I will be able to exercise this work, what are the power struggles of machismo and patriarchy in these environments, the prejudices that I may experience, the discriminations that will have to be overcome, are added to the other fragilities, precariousness, and social and economic vulnerabilities of the exercise of doing science. To deny that this condition of existence interferes in the democratic and scientific exercise is to make the work even more precarious and violent. To persist in silencing this layer makes us more vulnerable. To agree that not discussing the explicit approach to Galileo’s sexuality in *The life of Galileo* is just another reflection of the privilege of the heterosexual male individual in the field of intellectual production in the world is to contribute to the maintenance of science as an active arm of capitalism. I understand that adding the issue of sexuality in the private life of the scientist brings another layer of vulnerability to which bodies like mine are subjected in the field of knowledge production.

Vulnerability makes me feel the world with more intensity, which leads me, as a matter of survival, to think about reality with more objectivity. In my case I am in the LGBTQIAPN+ community, which suffers a diverse spectrum of violence, precariousness, and vulnerability. Another within the world of scientific work and education to which the instability of the profession added to the devaluation by the State and Brazilian society make vulnerability more keenly felt. During this year of research and reading of *The life of Galileo* I felt and perceived the vulnerability of the social conditions that may have driven me to a greater criticism of the reality that surrounded me. It was by feeling and paying attention to the vulnerability of my figure as a subject and researcher that I



used it as a springboard for the indignation that is expressed in how I was associating the reading of Brecht's work to reality and weaving the critique of the text and the context beyond catharsis. As an effect of Brechtian estrangement, I perceive vulnerability as one side and indignation as another side of the same coin. This "vulnerability-indignation" coin is as Butler will propose us as one of the forms of resistance (Butler, 2018). That is, vulnerability can be taken beyond an individual psychological condition, but as a political action in coalition with a collective. And, I realize, that Brecht's *The life of Galileo* is also about resistance.

Vulnerability is a theme of thought in Butler who develops the idea of the position of "vulnerability as a form of activism or as that which somehow mobilized in the form of resistance" (Butler, 2018, p. 137). The philosopher works with the idea of the assemblies proposed by Hannah Arendt and the meetings held by the population in the form of public demonstrations of political action. In this way, for Butler, vulnerability is not only linked to the forms of precariousness of a life, but how these vulnerable bodies can come together in solidarity as a form of resistance. Advancing the proposal about assemblies, and displacing the idea romanticized by Arendt as pure political action, Butler advocates that the condition of vulnerability of bodies, physically, socially, and politically, can be a driver of this political action from an individual to a collective form. That is, vulnerability felt as individual is not dismissed and should be taken into consideration as a way to open up to the world in solidarity with other bodies in the same situation.

Colligating the call that Vidarte makes in "Bixa as political subject" (Vidarte, 2019) and Butler's "Bodies in alliance" (Butler, 2018) it is not difficult to understand that vulnerability can be a potent instrument of political action to discuss LGBTQIAPN+ bodies in science making. I have always realized that the body of the subject producing knowledge does not carry importance in the field of scientific thinking. What matters is the cold distancing between subject and object. Haraway discusses this question of importance when she brings the knowing in these bodies (Haraway, 1995). For me, this point is central to my production of knowledge, because it is from a personal experience that I launch into science that I want to understand the biological world around me. There would be no researcher's career and scientific contributions to this point if my sexuality were not in question. Contrary to Galileo's stance in Brecht's text in silencing himself to resist, here I speak of sexuality as vulnerability as part of the gears of resistance. If Brecht's Galileo was constructed as a symbol of resistance via giving in, in my analysis of the diary I speak of homosexuality as the opposite form of this way of resistance: not giving in to this truth of existence.

Brecht's Galileo is an economically and socially vulnerable subject. He does not get a



salary and professional stability to ensure his and his family's livelihood; he witnesses political disputes that hinder the progress of his research, so he cheats to get money to continue his research. Which leads me to ask whether the vulnerability of Galileo in Brecht's text, and which I transport to my personal experience, would Brecht's Galileo be a critique resulting from the precarization of work in science? What are the necessary conditions for a scientist to develop his activities without having to resort to unethical competition for his research?

Edgardo Lander (2008) brings the important discussion about neoliberalism and its policies in science and how the scientific exercise is dependent on this economic policy. The scientist cannot produce if he is not financed, if he is not located in a good physical space, with adequate working conditions. All this dependence is linked to financing from public and private institutions that have clear interests in what will be produced and in the results that will be obtained by the scientist. The results generated generate profits and position them in more power for the financier. Whether it is the State or the private institution, the objective benefit is the generation of profit or goods for power. Thus, the spaces of scientific production have become spaces of competition between researchers, restricted research groups that are fragmented and disconnected from each other in disputes for funding. The romanticism of the internal logic of the knowledge produced as put forward by Thomas Kuhn (1997), for example in "The Structures of Scientific Revolutions", is often left in the background. A group or a specific researcher is seen as a good professional based on the volume of articles they can produce and how the results of these articles can be transformed into profit and positions of power and influence in front of other groups. The neoliberal logic of science is not tied to just untangling the laws of nature during scientific processes as Latour & Woolgar (1986) describe in *Laboratory life*, but is how what is produced can generate profit, power, and status. Brecht's Galileo in creating the narrative of the telescope to achieve money and a position of power obeys this logic. We, in reducing our work to production numbers, production rates to meet the political demands of the international scientific market, that is, the scientific demands and desires for power of countries in the northern hemisphere, obey, in double, the same logic.

Freedom of expression is threatened when what prevails is neoliberal contamination in science. The spaces of knowledge production in the world need to be reviewed so that the original idea of sharing and solidarity in communion of science against the oppressions of the world needs to be reestablished. This idea is in line with the proposal of Butler's discussion that reflects on the important aspect of the physical environment for the development of a collective that a gathering of people in defense of common ideas needs physical platforms for action, which can follow the



traditional physical space of the streets or in more contemporary times the social networks. In both circumstances the important thing is the support that can bring bodies together. It is important to note that intellectual activity is no exception to the rule. Science is a collective institution that feeds on the exchange of gathering bodies, as forms of manifestations, on platforms. Scientific ideas, results, and discussions depend on physical structures to be executed. The shattering or denial of these conditions can prevent the birth and circulation of ideas and claims. I go further: the power of scientific truths can remain only in the hands of a small group of people.

In this way, the fragmentation of the spaces of knowledge production, seeing knowledge and its production as a way to express profit and power, prevents the gathering of bodies for a collective manifestation. By making the work of a mass of researchers precarious, throwing them into informal jobs and without physical and social conditions of exercise, the gathering of bodies in favor of a cause or idea is hindered. How can we not cling to the supply of vaccines from one, two, or just three large pharmaceutical companies in the world? How can we not look with indignation that we are dependent on one, two, or just three powerful pharmaceutical industries that produce vaccines against covid-19 when we see that the Brazilian scientific potential accumulated over decades is fragmented, precarious, and poorly used? The neoliberal plan in science, as Lander²⁹ points out, intentionally produces social, political, and economic inequalities inside and outside the scientific space. This does not escape us from thinking that Brecht's Galileo touches on this angle that the scientist's social and economic precariousness and vulnerability is a way to silence expressions of thought that may come to collapse the politically established. In Brecht's play, Galileo is only "promoted" – go to another position in another institution and earn a better salary – when he "agrees" with the State's policy. The state, for its own benefit, wants to control what can and cannot be produced. To silence Galileo, the State puts him in isolation for years without paper, books or other forms of communication. This scene that Brecht writes, we believe serves as a warning to what the philosopher of science, Paul Feyerabend (2011), briefly brings in *Science in a free society* that science should be controlled, funded and regulated by civil society in assemblies and not by private institutions or the state itself that will use science in their interests, while in fact, science as a public institution should serve the interests of civil society.

The feeling of political and social helplessness from the writing of the diary – year 2020⁵ –, and that it did not fade away, was real. My intellectual production could have been compromised if I had actually lost my job at that time as I saw many of my colleagues lose it. The cut of research

5 The reading diary was published under the title *The noise of the bat's flight*. The complete journal, published and translated english version, is available at: <https://zenodo.org/record/6653212%22%20/1%20%22.YsKyhexByqA>.



grants, layoffs of professors in private educational institutions, the stampede of students from private university courses for having lost grants or for lack of money to continue their studies was gigantic. In Brazil recently, the Brazilian government cut the resources destined to science by 92%. The rapid results of the Sciences are being demanded, but there is no investment or continuity in the existing programs. What has happened and what continues is the precarization of intellectual and scientific work and its performance platforms: the Brazilian universities. In this whole process the civil society is distanced enough from the scientific decisions, because there is an almost absence of scientific discussions from the general population. How to interfere if you don't know what happens? Or when you are only the target of the technological and immediate results, when you are alienated from all production processes? Again, Feyerabend's thought about the freedom of society with science is important to us (Feyerabend, 2011). The freedom of a society is conditioned to its coalition with the production of knowledge. However, we must ask: how to have such a refined decision making when the State is throwing, as in the situation in Brazil, the population of millions of Brazilians to the basic food insecurity of the lines of food waste and bones in butcher shops?

The history of science in Brazil does not escape authoritarianism. It is a history of the transplantation of ideas from outside and not of the development of a sovereign science. This becomes clear in the deep investigation made by Ana Maria Fernandes (1990) in her book *A construção da ciência no Brasil e a SBPC* in which the researcher brings us that the idea of science in Brazil is developed through the military model in the 1960s with the military dictatorship, that is, Science in Brazil was not developed as an idea of progress of the country, but as an idea, which had already been developed during the Second World War, of science linked to military development. Remembering once again the classic case: we cannot forget all the monetary, social and political value involved in the development of the atomic bomb in the USA during the Second World War. All this leads us to conclude that science in Brazil was built by a spirit of authoritarianism and as an instrument of the State apparatus for exercising control over the population, critical spirit and independent science were not on the topics of scientific policies then and even less so now. The importation of technologies and ideas from the countries of the northern hemisphere were the structures of the formation of Brazilian scientific thought and remain until today in the Brazilian scientific culture. Scientists in the most diverse research institutes are evaluated according to the number of publications in foreign journals and validating ideas that come to us, that is, the greater the impact of the publication in the international journal, the greater the "value" of our research. Scientific journals in Brazil are despised or not developed. The important thing is to have the



validation of the foreign look on your ideas in the third world laboratory. The purchase of ideas and technologies from the northern hemisphere is part of the scientific and intellectual game. If it was made in the northern hemisphere, it has validity, we can acquire and reproduce the ideas here and achieve good evaluations for the World Bank and IMF reports. The idea of the chloroquine drug, which does not work for the treatment of covid-19, was no different in Brazil. President Bolsonaro transplanted this treatment idea without any respect to science. The scientists, distant here from the dialogue with society, totally tied to the State, without strength to contain this parallel infection.

I have witnessed the contradiction of the Brazilian culture with science become evident in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic. While it was the moment of valorization and overcoming of the problematic via all the scientific structure built for years, what is seen is the explicit and live dismantling of science and all scientific culture. Brazilian science has been reduced, transmitted by the cameras and live by the media, to kidnapping and partisan and electoral dispute. This issue of governmental denialism, obscurantism, and autocracy in the role of Science in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic is another moment of estrangement that I had in the reading and analysis of the work *The life of Galileo* and the diary, but besides the very distancing from the production of Science I was – we were – still distant from each other, unable to occupy the physical platforms of protest.

We continue to ask ourselves: is this fragmentation of scientific work grounded only in the political and economic plan for science or does it have a foundation collected within scientific logic itself? This vulnerability of scientific and intellectual work that I bring, is a symptom, translated into guilt, as Butler (2018) brings about the guilt of the worker in self exploitation, which in science can still be reinforced by the very development that this institution took throughout the twentieth century, which made it lose the collective spirit for an individual performance. What I mean is that Science has incorporated in its methods and internal dynamics the individualism and competitiveness desired by neoliberalism. That is, scientific practices are taken only as individual performances and not as forms of collective achievements, that is, there is a confusion of the individual in the epistemology of science with the neoliberal individualism in doing science.

I believe that after one year of reading and analysis my movement of thinking is important to understand what one will feel so that what one will feel is not destructive and vulnerability is used in favor of resistance and not as a form of elimination.

4.4 The “Galileo’s complex”

This notion of coalition is not passed on to us during scientific training. I realize this when



Brecht discusses his text when he brings in the character of Andreas and Ludovico. Andreas is the son of the maid and Ludovico the son of an elite. Both are touched by science. To one is given the value of how science is done methodologically, to the other science is passed off as a power play. Of course, that about the power game stays in the hands of the elite. To Andreas Science is passed on as a method by Galileo. This is the Achilles tendon of the educational and scientific public policy programs that the Lula and Dilma governments (2003 to 2016) in Brazil have installed: Science as an instrumental value and only technical construction in society and not as an exercise of freedom and cultural criticism.

I clarify this criticism. Like so many other young fellow scientists, researchers one thing had been spliced into another, one graduate school with another, and so it had been. Until then I knew that I wanted to work with science, knowledge, culture, and to be a teacher. That all this desire to work with knowledge could be connected with socially important issues in any of the fields. As a working-class subject, the only way was to grab the opportunities, few of them, that would arise from the offer of a grant here in a specific theme from someone already a professor, or from the availability of openings in the laboratory or research group. Rare are the times in which a scientist, mainly in the beginning of his or her career in Brazil, develops or has the opportunity and freedom to develop, in a university laboratory or research institute, his or her own ideas without the “supervision” of the ideas of someone else who has been there for a long time and has experience, or perhaps it is more appropriate to talk about power relations, necessary for the development of research. The newcomers in the career, no matter how good and valid their ideas may be, have to fit in, “submit” to the research line of the laboratory head, or no research is done. Often research projects are designed to answer the questions of the head of the group, not the researcher at the master’s and doctoral levels. The researcher enters as a “student” to develop his or her dissertation or doctoral thesis and obtain the degree at the end.

The presence of graduate students can be used for the development of parallel projects, generating more published articles, more participations in congresses and, as a consequence, increasing the production rates of the laboratory or research group to raise the scarce financial resources made available by the Brazilian State to finance research. The intense detachment of the student in the development of his own research generates a confusion of place. The implicit idea is that there is a feeling of gratitude, on the part of the student, to the research group, for the opportunity; on the part of the laboratory members and managers, in many cases, there is the strange feeling of altruism for having opened the laboratory doors so that the student can fulfill his “dream” of becoming a master or a doctor in a country as brain-depleted as Brazil. In this mess,



the precious labor of the young scientist is used for the production of knowledge without him knowing for what real purposes, public or private, it will serve; on the side of the senior researcher, the student contributes to the production of data that will become articles, for the scores in the spreadsheets and reports for the funding agencies, which thus guarantee current and future funding of grants for other students and even people's research productivity grants.

I, with no strong family tradition in science or other opportunities that could take me to that place, had to grab the opportunity to take on the narrative of being a student coming from a public school that with great cost was managing to reach the ivory tower of knowledge. Perhaps the anguish of the “blackout of historicity” when it came time to write my memoirs, for example, to apply for a place at the university is a consequence of the epistemic void I found myself in. What did I want to study in that area of knowledge to be a balm for my “wound” in my soul that had led me to science? After all, what was mine, what had I produced of knowledge, and what was the Other's, someone else's wound, that I had incorporated in my narrative? Science policies in Brazil, especially, have not yet incorporated Latour's hybrid subject as an expression of 21st century science¹. The serious thing that I notice is that at the moment that we need a mass of hybrid individuals to form solidary and critical coalitions in science, what we have is a mass of scrapped brains and “de-platformed” for the exercise of science. In the first instance, by the blatant political misuse of science by Brazilian political leaders in the case of vaccines. Secondly, by the issue of individual freedoms and the collectivity that the subject of immunizers raises.

The dispute that took place between the governor of São Paulo and the president of the Republic over the beginning of vaccination in Brazil, which I report in my diary, is not in favor of solidarity, but for a biopolitics, that is, the control of elections and dispute of power by the control of bodies. The population is in vulnerability due to the expansion of the spread of a deadly virus throughout the world. The most tangible solution is the vaccine. Whoever delivers the solution most deftly will manipulate the bodies in the public space. Science, then, enters as an important instrument of political use. In the first instance it is easy to think that Science is delivered in an innocent way to be used as an instrument of electoral political dispute. Dependent on the money coming from the State, scientific institutions and scientists join power so that they can receive funding, continue their research, and the exercise, often individual, power of the scientist who is being funded at the moment. This generates, within the scientific space itself, a scandalous social and economic inequality in which some areas of knowledge receive more money than others that are relegated to the dispensable. This game of interests is not exclusive to neoliberal or extreme right-wing policies, but also in the hands of progressive governments. It is worth remembering that



during the government of Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT) (2010-2016), the "Science without Borders" program exclusively privileged the natural sciences and technology with the argument that the country's development was linked to technical development. Researchers in the humanities were denied the full opportunity to compete for and benefit from the program in this way. As a transit between the frontiers of natural sciences and humanities I could witness the economic abyss between the areas.

Still facing this dependence on state funding or even private initiative, the scandals of the contradictions of the positioning of science in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic were felt. Some important facts happened in this sense after the end of the journal. One of them was the announcement of the achievement of the arrival of a robot in the soil of the planet Mars and celebrated by the whole world. Millions of dollars have been invested for years for such an achievement of a robot that will stay for about two years on the Mars soil. No doubt it is a great achievement and such a scientific endeavor has its importance for the development of technologies for mankind. For example, a simple example, from the man's mission to the moon in the 60's-70's was originated the microwave oven that years later reached the most diverse homes of the world population. Such space missions of literally astronomical figures are important even for understanding the emergence of epidemics by microorganisms on planet Earth. The investigation of microscopic life on other planets and pieces of asteroids can bring important answers about the origin of microorganisms on our planet of arrival of these beings from space. Such research signals great progress for humanity. Had there not been all the financial investment, beginning in the 1980s, in the biology of HIV retroviruses, would we have been able to think of various forms of vaccines so quickly at the time of the covid-19 pandemic caused also by another type of retrovirus? The question goes in another direction, that of the misuse of this power of science.

Still in the field of Astronomy, in the year 2021, in the midst of a pandemic in which there is still no glimpse of a significant drop in deaths around the planet, the first trip into space manned only by civilians was celebrated. In a first moment the celebration is valid for the same arguments clinging to progress and technology transfer to the everyday life of populations or beyond: the possibility of civilians gaining the outer space in the 21st century. Once the emotion is over and the situation is analyzed with a little more proximity, it is impossible not to mobilize indignation and to notice once again the vulnerability in the face of the situation, and to perceive that at the same time that science shows itself to be on the side of the legitimate interests of humanity, it is also affiliated to the dark interests of capital. The latent questions are: who are these civilians who crewed this glorious mission? How was the financing of this feat? The answer to the first question



is that most of the few passengers on this mission were crewed by US billionaires who individually financed millions of dollars each of their tickets. Noteworthy that one of these billionaires is the owner of the Amazon.com business network, an online product sales network that has significantly increased its profits and its stock market value as of 2020 during the covid-19 pandemic with online sales, the so-called e-commerce, as a result of the social distancing of the world's populations.

The question that arises makes the technical importance of the expedition to space melt, but the ethics so defended by science itself sprout: was this really the time to endorse the trip of billionaires to space while people are dying from an uncontrolled disease in the world? Is it morally acceptable for a group to finance its pleasure of only 11 minutes in space to the tune of millions of dollars while countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe are in line to buy vaccines or are dependent on leftover donations from the USA, Canada, France and other powerful nations because they cannot afford to buy vaccines for their populations from the big pharmaceutical companies? At this point Science morally finances the precarization of lives, which should be worth living as Butler puts it (Butler, 2018). The real "Intellectual Imposture", as Sokal & Bricmont (1999) charge in the postmodern era on the fields of knowledge, is not in the layer of relativism of scientific technical and methodological possibilities, which are intact even with every critique of postmodernity vide the technologies of astronomy and vaccines, but in the cynicism of yet another layer of negationist, this time, the negationist of science itself that I articulate again with Butler (2018): what lives really matter to be lived? This is not a new question and one that Science and scientists have not encountered before. One of the most iconic examples is the discovery of nitrogen as part of the cycle of plant fixation and development that was applauded and celebrated as promising for Agronomy. The use of nitrogen then in crops would enhance agriculture and food production and was seen as a way forward in large-scale agricultural production of plant foods for the world's population and an end to hunger on the planet. And it was. Agricultural production, after this discovery, increased significantly, but did not move an inch in the percentages of ending hunger on the planet, because agricultural food production and its availability still continued to be available and poorly distributed on the planet. Still, nitrogen technology was hijacked for the development of chemical weapons, used in wars of the 20th century and the decimation of thousands of lives in an industrially organized way. Another example is the classic atomic bomb in which the entire framework of atomic physics was harassed, recruited the best brains, in exchange for salaries, personal awards, and political prestige, to build an instrument of mass destruction (Parker, 2018). I conclude that clearly there are more Brechtian Galileans in the laboratories of the world than one can imagine.



Science policy, first of all, has failed even to protect societies from vulnerabilities. Giorgio Agamben, at the very beginning of 2020 when Italy was devastated by the pandemic, tried to hastily understand the pandemic situation. In a series of articles Agamben, made into a digital book – e-book (Agamben, 2020), argued that there is no pandemic, but a continuation of the plan of a state of exception, which he has advocated for years in his philosophy, planetary of dismantling the forms of democratic manifestations and individual freedom. Such advocacy has elicited fierce criticism and identify Agamben’s thinking in negationist alignment with that of far-right governments of Donald Trump in the US and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and flirt with a lack of empathy for the piles of dead and morbid humans derived from the massive infection of the virus around the world. Fratessi (2020) understands that Agamben’s position is attached and limited to his own philosophy of self-explanation by the same theoretical framework and does not carry out the amplification of the critical vision beyond his own ego. Pinto Neto (2021), on the other hand, goes in the direction of denouncing the absence and consideration of a biology in Agamben’s biopolitical philosophy. Both are correct when they criticize Agamben’s explicit adherence to scientific negationist. Agamben fails to see the pile of bodies, the exponentially growing graves throughout the world’s cemeteries, and the overcrowding of hospitals and ICU sectors around the world, *id est*, the virus exists and the pandemic is a truth. On the other hand, they forget that Agamben was hasty in claiming that the pandemic does not exist. The philosopher tried to explain himself that the plague he refers to is in the framework of the plague of the state of exception and not in the biological field. With the passage of almost two years from the beginning of the pandemic nightmare what we see is another use of the viral infection to create the Agambenian state of exception: the instrumentalization of negationism in favor of science itself.

This example is present in my diary, which I describe without realizing it yet, when I believe in the purity of the negationism of Jair Bolsonaro’s president and government. The belief, shared collectively with the Brazilian population, is that the plan of biopolitics and necropolitics of the Bolsonaro government is grounded in the pure and ideological negationism of science that materializes in the ideology of “herd immunity” and the “silver bullet solution” of the distribution of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine as a form of treatment. A Brazilian Senate Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) was installed in early 2021 to investigate the government’s omissions and deliberations during the pandemic unravels beyond the “simple” defense of herd immunity as a government strategy to combat the pandemic and the denialism of mass vaccination to contain the outbreak of the virus throughout Brazil. They bring to light a scheme of corruption and bribery in the sale and purchase of vaccine doses, that is, vaccines would only be bought by



the government if there was a negotiation through middlemen – what became known as the life of every Brazilian is worth a dollar. The heat of Agamben’s analysis³⁵ did not allow us to see, right away, that the denialism fought by science was being used as a smoke screen in a kind of denialism of denialism. Perhaps now we can agree with Agamben that pandemic, as a politics, does not really exist. What does exist is only the negationism of lives worth living in favor of a power plan of a real and planetary State of exception that performs in the removal of the coalitions of bodies, the formation of assemblies, the precarization of educational, university, scientific processes and human relations. When Brecht talks about the plague and Galileo’s isolation, he was dialoguing with the need to form collectives to democratize knowledge and thoughts. Galileo’s joy in being isolated, and even mine during the 2020 quarantine, as a legitimate possibility of freedom of work production and thinking in a way we contribute to the ideology of the negationism of the plague and further foment the precarization of our intellectual and scientific work that should be exercised in the collective, in the “assembly” modus, democratic and public and not isolated and disjointed with the meetings of bodies in platforms of claims as Butler proposes. In a way Butler (2018) and Agamben (2020) converge in this sense when we look at both proposals of analysis taking the expression of the freedoms of individual bodies in the composition of the spaces of collectivity.

I do not escape this experience of covid-19 in touching the government’s political ideology in corporeality and in early 2021 I contract the covid-19 virus. The most striking thing about going through this infection with this virus is how we become imbued with a guilt implanted by state policy. It’s clearly in this passage that I am seized by guilt and anguish about what this process of infection will be like. And at the same time taken by a guilt of what my share of participation in this process of infection that the negationist policies of the government in question implant in us. What’s my responsibility as an intellectual in this process? The feeling of guilt for an individual failure that in truth is nothing but a symptom of a failure of the absence of policies that aim at a life worth living and not a policy of producing more vulnerabilities or the “uberization” of life (Antunes, 2020). Such a notion helps us think about what we have come to call the “Galileo Complex”: the dilemma encountered by a scientist-intellectual between the limits of the contamination of private desires and needs and the public responsibility with the knowledge that is produced for a coalition in solidarity in the world. Are we, as scientists, caught in a complex between personal survival and collective political action? One way out is the possibility of further development of political antibodies for freedom of expression in the world and against fascism and neoliberalism.



5 Final considerations

The use of literature reading as a way to propel the construction of an evocative and analytical autoethnography through the creation of a methodological instrument of record, the reading diary. Autoethnographic research starts from an open point and there is no possibility of putting an end point. In other words, autoethnography is a “live” research process that occurs when one realizes that something can go through the analyses and take the space of what could already be considered as given. From this phenomenon other possibilities can then open up and other analyses can emerge. The opportunity to explore and deliberately decentralize “crystallized subjects”, as Versiani (2005) brings us, makes autoethnographic activity a path without return, a position in the political and epistemic disputes for narratives and a plural way of placing them in the agora as possibilities of existences. The important point of the researcher stance in autoethnography is the choice of alliances and coalitions (Butler, 2018) that the self-reporting subject who decides to enter the epistemic dispute makes. This was the strategy of resistance I decided to opt for using as fuel the exposure of my vulnerability as a way to draw attention to other silenced vulnerabilities. I chose, in the first instance, to ally myself with Brecht, who exposed his alliance with Galileo’s story, something that allowed me to understand, reflect openly, and propose a discussion about the non-neutrality of science in the construction of knowledge. This question was not new and had been in the hot seat for more than half a century. However, Brecht’s “literary testament” with this text came to me and allowed me an interpretation, a temporal “estrangement”, usable in the construction of another text, itself in dialogue with a certain reality that may raise the identification of some more similar to me, which may produce other practices or forms of resistance. This act of estrangement by reading Brecht’s Galileo prompted my practice of resistance through the writing of a year-long journal, a genre that Lejeune (2014) defines as “traces of an existence”, and allowed a topic, or not, of discussion to open up about scientific practice, the responsibility of scientists in societies, and the ways in which dissident bodies produce knowledge. Or how the knowledge produced is, yes, perfume of a localized body – to ally myself with Haraway (1995). The effect of estrangement when conducting research using autoethnography as a methodology is collective and does not belong only to the research subject. It is precisely because I know my place in the scientific world that I believe in the potential of doing an autoethnographic: there are dozens of other bodies like mine that have meaningful world experiences and brilliant thoughts, but are silenced. The opportunity to do an autoethnographic research enables these bodies to be inspired, to recognize themselves, and that their voices can be heard and validated. When Brecht proposed his pedagogy of the “estrangement effect” with epic theater, the proposal was that the working class would not



only have a cathartic experience in front of the performance, but would be stimulated to critique. What I did in my thesis was to expose my estrangement that Brecht's *The life of Galileo* text aroused in me. In this sense, the possibility of my autoethnographic cut consists in provoking other effects of estrangement in dissident bodies like mine. Thus, the importance of my reporting myself as a research object lies not in my fame or scientific or literary importance, but in the democratic and plural possibility that all bodies matter. Or, I return to those who question, are there any bodies in the world that are disposable?

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