

SALLI LOVELARKIN ARTIST

The Instruments May Be Shown, c. 1989

An interdisciplinary performance project based on the subject of international torture.

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The Pope: *Is the whole world coming here?*

The Inquisitor: *Not the whole world, but the best part of it.*

The Pope: *At the very most the instruments may be shown to him.*

The Inquisitor: *That will suffice, your Holiness, Mr. Galileo is well versed in instruments.*

Bertolt Brecht, *Life of Galileo*

Bertolt Brecht's *Life of Galileo* chronicles the latter period of the life of Galileo Galilei, the famed Italian natural philosopher. Persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church for the dissemination of his scientific discoveries, Galileo was brought before Pope Urban VIII in the year 1633. Chief among Galileo's findings was a heliocentric view of the universe, which placed him in direct contrast to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which had long declared that the sun revolved around the Earth.

In the excerpt above, Urban VIII is conversing with his Inquisitor, the cardinal in charge of enforcing Catholic obedience and orthodoxy, and whose methods include torture and death as means of ensuring that institutional obedience. Urban VIII is depicted as a sophisticated and scholarly man, even expressing sympathy and admiration for Galileo at the beginning of the scene. However, spurred by Vatican functionaries, Urban VIII must embody the rigid institution of the church, a political symbol of dogmatic intimidation.

The pope instructs his Inquisitor to force Galileo into recanting his scientific assertions that go against the church. However, the Pope is well aware of the shame and scandal associated with having a globally renowned scientific icon tortured as a means of controlling information. He prudishly cautions the Inquisitor that Galileo is not to be tortured, that at the very most, he may be shown the Inquisitor's instruments of torment.

During his trial by the Inquisition, the fear of being tortured forces Galileo to lie, claiming that he was mistaken in his scientific assertions. He recants his position, and affirms the sun does indeed revolve around the Earth, just as theological tradition insisted, in order to save himself from the perceived bodily danger directed at him by the church.

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Galileo

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_affair

<http://www.seattlepi.com/ae/article/Torture-themes-in-Brecht-s-Life-of-Galileo-1252919.php>