

Carry on History

Dear Mr. Galileo Galilei,

It is wonderful to know that you are still alive. In our class, which is taught by Elizabeth Cavicchi----an amazing person and your ally, I come to know you as a person----a person who grew from a son to a young man to a husband to a father; a person who had fear, hesitation, humor, wit, and faith; a person who experienced success, frustration, unjust trial, and trivial ordinary life; a person who achieved unprecedented success in human history and made mistakes as human people unavoidably did; a person who played lute, drew watercolor paintings and enjoyed gardening. I hear the breath of you while we were reading your books; I relive the excitement of you while I was looking at the universe.

Ah, I should introduce myself first instead of introducing you, after all, you know yourself pretty well. I am YY, an incredibly lucky person. I was born in a small town in rural China, attend universities in NN, majored in Preschool Education, yes, this is a major now, if I send you a link about majors, you will be shocked by how things could be cut into so many departments. I hated preschool life when I was a kid and didn't want to witness boring life in kindergartens so I decided to leave and search for enjoyable life. Some people believe life is just boring, while I don't. I am an easy-going and stubborn person. And, yes, I am lucky. I never thought about studying in Harvard or MIT. I thought, "Oh my god, those are schools for genius". Well, for some reasons, such as luck, I am now a master's student in Harvard. It's my school. Forget about its name, forget about genius. The fact is that if I forget about these, more is revealed of the world I am experiencing.

You would agree with me that people tend to believe what they are told instead of what they see. 400 years past. The world we live in might not necessarily be vastly different from yours. Take school for example, everything to learn is written, fixed, and systematic. In my high school textbook, history is written up; history is determined by big figures. The masses ought to follow the creeds provided by a minority of people who master truth. Quite similar to the situation you were facing. Now I realize that history isn't always evolving toward a superior direction. Maybe it stays still. Maybe it backslides. History won't make positive progress for no reason. And the reason, the dynamic of change, lies in our own.

This is what I learned from you. My experience with your experiments gives me tons of unsettled questions, but for sure I know through encountering you that history is carried on by each of us. Science is not a mysterious individual achievement; it is fruit of collective wisdom of various people in and prior to your time. Forget the name of science, it isn't laboratory work. You didn't own a sophisticated lab, did you? You made inventions and drew inspiration from ordinary observations. I feel sorry that I misunderstood you previously. I thought that since my work had nothing to do with science, why bother to get to know the father of science. Now I see no clear-cut boundary between the work of a glass-blower and that of you, between you as an artist and you as a scientist, between 400 years ago and now, between your life and mine.

Keep warm and take care!

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