

On Freedom, Thought And Technology: A Woman's Perspective

A contemplation by michelle

As a woman, as a thinker, an artist, a social activist, I should have been burned at the stake. Instead, I have access to the Internet. I can write a poem or a story and publish it on this international public space. I have no need to attend cocktail parties and smile to people I do not wish to relate to. I do not have to bear patronizing uncritical comments about my work, or interpret sexual hints. I do not have to meet the right people, express myself in ways which seem acceptable to them, or be where things are supposed to be happening ... I do not have to calculate. I can write ideas and just publish them on forums, chat rooms, blogs, websites ... I can even record audios, and videos, if I like. I can explore the world and any idea I come up with, jointly or knowing it is going to be read. This also means, I can be spontaneous, creative, and wild. I can improvise. Having no castle to guard against reputed experts who turn thinking into a battlefield for promotion, I have no concerns about making mistakes. I can express what I believe, even what I simply suspect. If I realize – or if people's words make me realize – my reasoning or beliefs are wrong, I can simply try again. I am free to explore. Mistakes are a chance to improve. This is the closest to my idea of giving a good use to our intelligence. On the Internet, whether your ideas or projects are finished or not, you can share your words with anybody who is interested in paying attention to them, and you can see them grow, brush them up, also as a result of free interaction. Outside the Internet, people say ideas move the world, but that is usually tolerated only after whoever had them is dead, supposing they ever made it to some arena where they could be rescued from.

As a woman, as a thinker, an artist, an activist, I would have no chances of being mentioned in History books. In this way, it would be as if I had had nothing to offer society, people, in my time and after my death. But look at all

that cyberspace! Non-powerful people have the chance to access knowledge, to share or exchange knowledge, beyond any kind of physical limitation ... History has never been kind -- a loyal portrayer of what was going on. History has systematically ignored numerous intelligent ideas, experiences, achievements. It has kept smiling to the powerful, practiced intensive and extensive silencing, ruthlessly. In contrast, today if you have any contribution to make, you don't need History. You can exploit all of your fundamental freedoms -- the freedom of expression and the freedom of thought, the freedom of association. And by this practice, you can also learn to love and understand the meaning and the value of learning, communicating and evolving, individually and in the good company of other people. This is constructing a different world. Screw History.

Things are happening. You do not have to die or get murdered or be repressed to be able to express yourself publicly and to have people listening to your words. You do not have to force some alien lifestyle into your own, to get the chance to say what you want to say. And certainly, you do not have to make anyone listen to you, because your work will be enjoyed by those who wish to do so. You do not have to be powerful in terms of status, nor financially. This is a fact, and it is different to previous facts. Intelligence, like death, ignores power, and this shows on the Net. It does not matter who you are. What counts is what you say. It's your intelligence what matters. And you do not even need a name to share that.

Therefore, I would certainly say, "I live in Utopia."