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## IS LIVING AN ART THAT CAN BE TAUGHT?

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**ABSTRACT:** Along with our inordinate emphasis on managing our lives on the basis of impartial principles and rules, we have lost the sense that some of the greatest human achievements are accomplished precisely by going beyond anything that existing rules and principles allow. Along with our fixation on the values of morality and politics, which apply to everyone on the basis of our similarities to one another, we have lost the sense that there are also values that depend on our differences and distinguish us from the rest of the world. Philosophical Individualism is a theory that considers the values of difference and distinction to be of crucial importance to life, and models successful lives on successful works of art. That is what is meant by “the art of living.” But such an art is manifested in the abilities of successful leaders in any field: leadership always requires going at least one step beyond wherever what has been already codified can take them.

THE language and rhetoric of morality are on the verge of taking over the full range of human relations. Collectively, nations and political communities justify their policies, to which moral notions are commonly inapplicable, on moral grounds. That limits the range of accommodations and compromises that are crucial to politics and allows the various sides to represent themselves as morally superior to their opponents, who treat them, in turn, as evil hypocrites and think of themselves as the only supporters of truth and goodness. Individually, perhaps more in the United States but gradually in other countries as well, personal interactions are becoming ever more subject to moral description and evaluation. The rise of “professional ethics” in politics, medicine, business, law and university life is one among many sad indications of our inability to envisage standards of proper behavior toward others unless they are established by means of explicit rules and detailed sanctions. The oxymoronic concept of “ethics laws,” which address not only what is legal within an institution but also what is decent or proper and, sometimes, simply

what accords with etiquette and what doesn't, is now part of everyday life. Many believe that rules and principles should govern even the most intimate personal relations—relations among family members, lovers and friends—and some locate the only values that determine whether a life is worth living or admirable within the domain of morality—a sign of that is the willingness to criticize, denounce, and even refuse to fund the arts when they (as the arts often should) offend one's particular moral sensibilities.

The moral ideal of impartiality and the equal treatment of everyone is a great accomplishment of modernity, and the idea of human rights would never have secured its (so far imperfect) hold on our imagination and practices without the sense that something common and essential to our species ties our own well-being to that of everyone else. But it can't be that such an attitude is appropriate to the whole range of human relationships. The values of morality are the values of our commonalities; they are grounded in our similarities to one another. But they are not the only values there are. There are also values that are grounded in our differences and aspire toward independence and individuality—values that prize one's own way of doing things. We must acknowledge the fact that many factors on which we depend for understanding and evaluating ourselves and our lives are not moral. Which is not to say that they are immoral instead.

Contemporary philosophy, too, has focused primarily on moral values and general rules. And the abstractness of its substantive concerns is often reflected in the impersonality of much philosophical writing, which is modeled on the scientific paper and the legal brief—forms that are suited to detached investigation and aim to suppress the personality of their author. That has made it difficult to classify those who have doubted that these are the only or even the best ways of addressing philosophy as philosophers in their own right, especially since many of them wrote—not accidentally—in styles that differ radically from philosophy's canonical styles. It has encouraged us to think that thinkers like Montaigne, Pascal, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Foucault are quite irrelevant or at best of marginal interest to philosophy as it has developed in parts of Northern Europe, England and America during the twentieth century (Plato, as always, has remained an equivocal exception: in substance, perhaps, with the former, in style, certainly, with the latter).

But this is not the only self-image philosophy has ever had of itself. In ancient Greece and Rome philosophy was considered, and considered itself, not only as a theoretical discipline but also as a discipline for—an art of—living: from Socrates to Boethius, from Plato to Plotinus, philosophy was primarily a τέχνη τοῦ βίου. Unlike, say, doctors or engineers, philosophers lived their philosophy and tried to base their everyday life on their philosophical ideas and commitments. The purpose of their investigations was not merely to learn the truth about the world but, more important, to live their life in harmony with their conclusions.

That conception of philosophy originates in part in Socrates as Plato portrays him in his aporetic works—aporetic, because in them Socrates, although convinced that “the examined life” is best for everyone, is unable to convince others to join him in the pursuit of virtue and wisdom. When people reject his exhortations and go their own way, Socrates can only stand helplessly by—words fail him: he has

no arguments that ensure that others must agree that nothing is more important than “the care of the self”—neither money nor fame nor honor.<sup>1</sup> He has a universalist ideal—the life of virtue should be everyone’s pursuit—but not a universalist method—he has no means for proving that others are logically obliged to follow his lead.

In the end, however, Plato has Socrates articulate a different view. He still believes that the life of virtue is the ideal human life. But now he thinks that virtue can be pursued only as part of a more general pursuit, that is, of the knowledge of the whole world—a pursuit he names, for the first time, philosophy. And he also thinks that philosophy has sufficient resources to convince everyone that its pursuit is the best type of life to which we can aspire. This conception is universalist in both content and method. And although Plato’s ancient successors often disagreed about what exactly the right philosophy is, they were at one with him in thinking that it is the only path to virtue and happiness.

But a different vision of Socrates’ conception has also survived in the work of the several modern thinkers whose place within philosophy is often disputed. Their position is complicated because they differ from both their ancestors and their contemporaries. They are neither, like most moderns, theoretical nor, like the ancients, universalist. They practice philosophy as the best way of living their own life but they don’t believe that this is the best life for everyone else as well. Theirs is an *individualist* approach, and it is one of three ways in which philosophy has thought of itself as a way of life. It holds that human life takes many forms, none of which is best for everyone, and refuses for that reason to articulate in general terms what a good life should be. It takes philosophy to lead to an admirable way to live but thinks of that life as only one of many forms a good life can take. It is committed to the idea that no set of values can determine how everyone should live. For that reason, it rejects every view according to which a single set of values, whether they are moral values or any other sort, determines what will count as a good human life.

This kind of pluralism may, and does, seem to many people to be just a form of relativism: my way of life is good for me, your way is good for you, and there’s no point in discussing the matter any further. But philosophical individualism is not relativistic. It doesn’t claim that any life is as good as any other—only that no single human life is best for everybody. In that regard, philosophical individualism is *aestheticist*: it models itself and the forms of life it praises on art, in all its many varieties.

Why art? Because, to begin with, art is pluralistic without being relativistic. There is a contrast here between art and any situation in which the goal is to establish a factual claim, whether in everyday or in scientific contexts. Our goal in these situations is to find the one right answer to our question—Is this podium wooden? Is there such a thing as supersymmetry?—reach consensus, and end the argument. Some scientists and philosophers even believe that there may be a day when we will have a complete, ideal scientific theory of the world—a theory of everything—that will be able to explain every phenomenon and produce universal agreement. The goal here is convergence and unity.

It is not that way with art. We can't even begin to imagine such a thing as an ideal painting that will produce a perfect representation of the world and make all other representations obsolete: the idea is ludicrous. On the contrary, what we prize here is the opportunity to envisage a new way of dealing with the world with line and color, a new movement that adds to our repertory without for that reason reducing the value of everything that precedes it. In art, we welcome the multiplication of possibility, the addition of a new manner of doing things to those of which we are already aware.

That is also a central tenet of philosophical individualism. In that respect, lives are like paintings and modes of life are like genres. In the sciences, discovery and innovation are supposed to bring us *closer* to the truth. In the arts, there is nothing to get *closer* to. What is often said, wrongly, about virtue is actually true of the sciences: there are many ways of being wrong but only one way of being right. In the arts, by contrast, there are many ways of being right, and discovering yet another is a great accomplishment. And so with life: there are many ways of living well, and establishing yet another, expanding the realm of human possibility, is reason for joy and admiration.

But why is this not relativism? Isn't it just to say that any form of life is as good as any other, that there are no standards that allow us to judge which among is better and which is worse than others? It isn't. Although it may be silly to ask whether Raphael, Rembrandt, or Manet is the greater painter, it is not at all silly to claim that Rembrandt is a better painter than Franz Hals, who is a better painter than Jacob van Loo, and that all three are vastly superior to many millions of people, professional and amateur, who have tried their hand at painting during the course of human history, including thousands who devote themselves to portraits of Elvis Presley on velvet. For all these, and many others besides, are art—but like most art, by far its greatest portion, its overwhelming majority, they are also bad art. And we have no trouble saying so. We might sometimes disagree about our orderings but, first, we do make orderings and, second, *we do* disagree, and sometimes we even come to an agreement.

There is much more to say about disagreement in this context but I would like to leave it aside and turn from the evaluation to the creation of admirable works, whether in art or life. Let me quote from a marvelous passage from Nietzsche entitled “One thing is needful”:

To “give style” to one's character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. . . . In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste governed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste!<sup>2</sup>

To the extent that we think of living as an art, style plays the same role in both. An artist's style is like a person's character: it unifies the works of the one and the actions of the other and at the same time distinguishes them from the behavior of others. It is a difficult thing to develop: it requires, Nietzsche writes, “long practice

and daily work” but those who acquire it “enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own.”

Three things are important here. First, style is “a constraint.” It involves rules and practices we must learn to subject ourselves to and which limit the number of choices that can make at any particular point. In limiting them, though, it makes choice possible because the ability to choose anything is in the final analysis the ability to choose nothing. It is for that reason that what some might consider “the tyranny of [its] capricious laws” is, according to Nietzsche, responsible “for all there is or has been on earth of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in art just as in ethics.” It is a constraint that does not constitute a compulsion; it is, on the contrary, a prerequisite of freedom:

Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his “most natural” state is—the free ordering, placing, disposing, giving form at the moment of “inspiration”—and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws precisely then, laws that precisely on account of their hardness and determination defy all formulation through concepts. (BGE 188)

Style is not a compulsion because to have a style is to have internalized its rules in such a way that the choices it presents to us are not dictated from the outside; they are simply our way of doing things. Instead of limiting our power to act on our own, it allows us to express it in the first place.

The second thing to notice is that these rules “defy all formulation by concepts,” which is another way of saying that, as the passage on style says, they are “laws of [one’s] own.” But what kind of laws are these? Why can’t they be formulated through concepts? How can they apply only to the person who follows them? It’s true that they are not rules that can be stated independently. We can’t hold them steady, so to speak, and decide whether to follow them or not, as we do with legal statutes or the laws of grammar. These rules determine how we see things in the first place, they structure our very awareness of our situation and the various possibilities of action it presents. In that respect, they are like the rules that, according to Aristotle, allow the virtuous to *perceive* directly the right kind of action in every situation without being obliged, or able, to consider whether to apply them or not.

Picasso once spent four months (December 1954–April 1955) making fifteen paintings, many drawings, and several lithographs inspired by Delacroix’s two paintings of *The Women of Algiers*. Part of his project was to satisfy both sight and touch, to show what pure sight shows us—one side of a person’s surface, as a figure on the left of his own final version of Delacroix is posed—and what touch allows us to feel—different parts of the body at the same time, depicted in another figure, on the painting’s front and right, who seems to be lying both on its stomach and on its back at the same time. That may have been Picasso’s aim from the very beginning—who knows?—but the question whether it could be done didn’t have an answer until he actually did it, until the picture seemed right to him, and allowed him to leave it alone and go on to other things. The critic Leo Steinberg has traced Picasso’s steps and has described the many paths he took before he reached his goal.

This brings me to my third issue, which is also connected with the expression “a law of their own.” To a great extent, success in this sort of enterprise is measured by the nature of the difference between one’s works or actions and everyone else’s, to what extent they manifest *a single* taste. Style and character individuate: they constitute one’s own way of doing things, one’s own way of living, and art is once again Nietzsche’s model:

Artists seem to have more sensitive noses in these matters, knowing only too well that precisely when they no longer do something “voluntarily” but do everything of necessity, the feeling of freedom, subtlety, full power, of creative placing, disposing, and forming reaches its peak—in short, that necessity and “freedom of will” become one in them.<sup>3</sup>

“We should learn from artists,” Nietzsche writes, “while being wiser than they are in other matters. For with them this subtle power usually comes to an end where art ends and life begins; but we want to be the poets of our life.”<sup>4</sup> And that, for him, is the same as to want to “become those we are—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves.”<sup>5</sup> But to be new, unique, incomparable is, for Nietzsche, to be an individual: “Today the individual still has to be made possible”;<sup>6</sup> “My idea: Goals are lacking, and these must be individuals.”<sup>7</sup>

Such a goal is impossible to achieve, in art or in the rest of life, by following instructions that are generally available, rules that are not to some extent or other of our own making and apply, in their totality, only to us. The reason is that an individual is just someone who differs significantly from the rest of the world. The difference must be significant because everyone is already an individual in a trivial sense. Since no two people ever have the same history, no two people can ever be, strictly speaking, identical—but, contrary to the mantra of American elementary education, which delights in telling us to be proud because every one of our children is, in its word, “unique,” that is no accomplishment. Everybody is in that sense “unique.” What deserves notice, praise, or blame is not difference in its own right but being newly, importantly, strikingly, admirably, unexpectedly (also disturbingly, dangerously, perhaps even barbarically) different from the rest of the world: someone who for one reason or another stands out, in comparison to whom the rest of the world is simply background.

For better or worse, though, it is impossible to specify what counts as new, important, admirable, or barbaric in terms that are both general and informative. If we could, we would in effect have rules, instructions, “laws” we can follow in order to become individuals. But that is impossible, since to follow such rules, far from giving *ourselves* laws, is to obey laws set down by another. In that case, success can’t be more than reproducing something that has been already accomplished. But a reproduction is just what becoming an individual is not: the undertaking is self-undermining.

It’s true that just as someone can teach us how to make a painting, how to write a short story, how to compose a sonata, we can also be taught how to go about life in general: that’s what rearing, socialization, and education are all about. There are in fact definite general rules and practices that we must follow if we want to

produce a recognizable work of art or function as members of society. Those are “the capricious rules” Nietzsche claims one must obey “over a long period of time and in a single direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality.”\But this something, which makes living on earth worthwhile will always lie at least one step beyond such general rules. Uniqueness and individuality involve breaking some of those rules or inventing new ones and going in a direction that couldn’t possibly have been predicted beforehand: predictability negates innovation. On their own, however, neither breaking rules nor inventing them can on their own affect the quality of what is produced: the intervention must be, as we say, creative, original, or justified in some other way. But creativity, originality, and justification can no more be specified in general and informative terms than significance, strikingness, or barbarity. “Paint the barn” tells me what to do but may result in an aesthetic atrocity; “Paint a beautiful barn,” on the other hand, is at best an inspirational slogan, not sound advice—and certainly not a rule that anyone could possibly follow.

Suppose, then, that the basic principles of painting I learned in art school are not enough for me: I want to do better. So I ask my teacher how to paint a great picture and my teacher—after laughing at me—holds up a late Rembrandt self-portrait: “That’s how you do it,” she says. So, I am to paint like Rembrandt. How to go about it? If I take my goal to be to produce a painting that is just *like* Rembrandt’s portrait, I will certainly fail to produce a great picture: I will only make a copy—something that is, by definition, neither new nor valuable. Success requires that I aim to paint a picture that is *as good as* Rembrandt’s. I would still have to copy his portrait but my goal would not be to reproduce his picture but to learn about his mode of painting from it, from other works of his, and from the works of other painters. Having gradually incorporated (internalized) what I learn from them, I might—if I am talented, work hard enough, and have considerable luck—produce something worthwhile. But if I do, my work, whatever else it may be, will also have to be significantly *different* from my models’ work in ways that neither I nor anyone else could imagine until I brought them into being. To the extent that my work is successful, it must manifest features and abilities that are distinctly my own, as Rembrandt’s work expresses what is most specific to him. That may have been what Montaigne had in mind when he described himself as a person “who learn[s] better by contrast than by example, and by flight rather than by pursuit.”<sup>8</sup> Only those works that are importantly *different* from Rembrandt’s can survive comparison with his because only they are, in the relevant sense, *like* his: one has to become different from one’s models in order to imitate their accomplishment and produce something that is significant and admirable in its own right. But what will make my work significant and admirable is exactly what my teacher—or anyone else—could never tell me. To paint like Rembrandt, when that refers to an accomplishment and not an imitation, is precisely *not* to paint like him. There is a paradox here, of which Nietzsche was aware: “*Imitators*—A: ‘What? You want no imitators?’ B: ‘I do not want people to imitate my example; I wish that everybody would fashion his own example, as I do.’ A: ‘So?’”<sup>9</sup> One can be

taught how to paint portraits, write novels or make shoes—but not how to write good novels, paint significant portraits, or make excellent shoes. Such things, as Socrates intimates (though not in regard to shoes), may perhaps be learned but they certainly cannot be taught. Art, including the art of living, can be taught; good art, including the art of living, cannot.

Philosophical individualism is incapable of giving general guidelines for how one should live, admits that this is so, and does not consider it a shortcoming. Montaigne, more than anyone else, makes that clear when he says that “I . . . wish to make a show only of what is my own, and of what is naturally my own”—his own, that is, though based on his having “made a bunch of other people’s flowers, having furnished nothing of my own but the thread to tie them.”<sup>10</sup> These philosophers provide examples of how a life can be lived, but to imitate their example, in parallel to the arts, is to live a life that is distinctly our own. That is why I called them aestheticist.

But they are aestheticist in a further sense as well because they not only provide *accounts* of different ways of life, but each establishes and *exemplifies* a distinct, unforgettable, and unrepeatable way in which life can be lived. These philosophers stand out not only for the significance, depth, or even the truth of their ideas (which is, naturally, the subject of continuing dispute) but also for the personalities that emerge through their works. The portrait of “Michel” that emerges from Montaigne’s *Essays* matters as much to philosophy as his skepticism, his stoicism, and his stunning humaneness toward the “primitives” his contemporaries tried to “civilize”—and succeeded in exterminating. It matters not only what Montaigne believes, but *who Michel is*. And who Michel is matters although it is neither desirable nor even possible for anyone else to be like him—a fact he knows and celebrates: “What I write here is not my teaching, but my study; it is not a lesson for others, but for me.”<sup>11</sup>

Such a project, however, could not succeed unless the writings in which these unusual characters are expressed are themselves distinct and unusual in style, marking in that way their authors’ differences from the more widely shared styles and approaches of theoretical philosophy as well as from the styles of one another. But what sort of philosophy *is* it that aims—perhaps primarily—at providing instances of admirable lives that are not and cannot be models for others to follow? What can it hope to accomplish? What is its *point*? Here, too, the parallel with the arts holds good.

As in the arts we can judge that a work is admirable without having to think that there is a best work or artist by which all others are to be judged, so it is with life as well. And as in the arts we rejoice when a new possibility, a new way of doing something well, is revealed, so in this sort of philosophy the proliferation of admirable characters and modes of life, the expansion of human possibility, is a source of delight.

George Eliot was right: “The growing good of the world is dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.”<sup>12</sup> We owe deep respect to these nameless people: but the fact remains that



they *are* nameless and our respect and gratitude toward them are collective and impersonal; it takes nothing short of the imagination of a George Eliot to depict the life of someone who might have belonged among them. If, however, we admire—and we do—features that make some people different from one another; if we value—and we do—not only the bonds that tie us together, but also the features that make us stand apart; if we honor—and we do—the exceptional figures whom we commemorate in monuments either of our or their own devising (“I have erected a monument more durable than bronze,” Horace said of his poetry—III.30)—then philosophy, if we continue to think of it merely as abstract reflection and general description and limit its domain to the values of morality, is doomed to remain blind to a vast source of life’s sense and value.

A question is bound to come up at this point: does the sort of philosophy I have been examining *constitute* an admirable life or does it merely *depict* one? Did Nietzsche actually live the kind of life he praises in his works (how else could it be shown that such a life is possible?) or is the character who emerges through his work merely a will-o’-the-wisp? The problem is serious because, since no one else can live the life our philosophers praise, we can resolve it only by asking whether a philosopher’s own life belongs to the mode of life described in his works. And here there is danger of a huge gap emerging between philosophy and actuality. Nietzsche, for example, who describes his thought as “a passionate history of his soul” (placing himself with Plato, Spinoza, Pascal, Rousseau, and Goethe and in contrast to Kant or Schopenhauer) led a life that most people consider deeply depressing—modest, unfulfilled, plagued by illness, loneliness, and lack of recognition—and quite unlike the life and personality he praises in his works. When he calls himself “dynamite” and “a destiny” in *Ecce Homo* (itself not a haphazard title), many hear the ravings of incipient madness. His life has seemed so pitiful to one contemporary author that he confesses he wouldn’t wish the life that Nietzsche lived on anyone, not even Rousseau! I myself once thought that “in engaging with his works, we are not engaging with the miserable little man who wrote them but with the philosopher who emerges through them, the magnificent character these texts constitute and manifest.”<sup>13</sup>

That was a terrible mistake. The view that Nietzsche’s life was terrible, like the distinction between “the miserable little man” and “the magnificent philosopher—the “life” and “the work”—depends on taking “the life” to be everything that belongs to someone’s biography except their work, as if the work is a less important part of life than the bills, the meals and casual conversations, the illnesses and disappointments that are the inevitable accompaniments of every human life. It is an even worse mistake when one is, like Nietzsche, so devoted to the work that he subordinates the rest of his life to it. No, the work is an integral part of a philosopher’s life: you cannot think of Nietzsche’s life without including everything he wrote within it. But does a life that includes not only Nietzsche’s difficulties, diseases, pains, and disappointments but also his essays, his poems, his books as well as their significance and their influence on philosophy and culture for well over a century since his death—is such a life quite as terrible as it seemed at first? Didn’t Nietzsche garner all his strengths and marshal every accident of circumstance, even

his weaknesses, in the service of his most important task—creating a body of work that declares that a life that garners every strength and marshals every accident of circumstance, even one’s weaknesses, in the service of one’s most important task is the most admirable life of all? Why wasn’t that a very good life indeed?

Philosophical individualism is aestheticist also because it considers extra-moral values to be crucial to the quality of life. I take the values of morality, as I said at the beginning, to rest on our commonalities—actual or hoped for—and to tend toward universality and impartiality. But they aren’t the only values there are. Another set of values rests on our differences from one another and is neither impartial nor universal. These values, most clearly found within the arts, aspire to distinction and individuality, and however deeply we admire a particular manifestation of them, we are under no obligation to accept it as our own. Just as, although I love Proust, I don’t believe that everyone else should love him as well, so I can admire Nietzsche’s mode of life without wanting in any way to have a life of my own that is, on an obvious level, like his. Philosophical individualism depends essentially on articulating a notion of the good life that imposes no obligation on others to follow it: there is no obligation to try to live like the people who have succeeded in living well nor, indeed, to try to live in their way at all. If a life of morality is what you want, no one is going to stop you. No one has an obligation to become an artist—of any sort. The existence of these two kinds of value, however, makes it possible for them to clash. And when they do, when beauty and virtue conflict, it is not at all clear that the moral values, as many believe, must always take precedence.

Perhaps, then, the effort to establish and express an original and individual approach to life has several features in common with the arts. But what about it makes it distinctly a philosophical project? Is it limited to figures like Socrates, Montaigne, and Nietzsche or are Aeschylus, Rembrandt, and Proust also engaged in it? How, in fact, is a philosophical life different from every other activity—not just artistic but also scientific, political, military, philanthropic, or even commercial—that, when practiced successfully, results in an admirable life? The answer is that a philosophic life revolves around two questions—What is it to live well? And How is it possible to do so?—and that the effort to answer them is taken to be itself an indispensable part of the good life.

When Socrates said that the question that mattered to him was how one should live, he introduced a conception of how one *could* live, a way of life whose goal—to live well—was to be reached through an examination of that very goal, that is, through an examination of what it is to live well. It is primarily the reflective and self-referential character of Socrates’ project—the mutual interpenetration of thought and action—that gives his legacy its specifically philosophical character. To be sure, once his original questions raised others, in the areas we have come to know as “metaphysics,” “epistemology” or “ethics,” which are considered independently philosophical, it is often sufficient to say that asking such questions is enough to make a life philosophical. But it is not—because a life devoted to asking philosophical questions is not necessarily a philosophical life, not unless

asking these questions leads to a life that is guided by them and by the answers one may give them.

Someone can always teach us what questions have been already asked and what answers they have received. But no one can teach us—though the philosophers of the art of living may show us—how to give them a role in our life and, especially, how we can do it well.

## NOTES

1. Plato, *Apology* 29d–e.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), sec. 290.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), sec. 213.
4. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 299.
5. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 335.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 546.
7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1968), sec. 269.
8. Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), *Essays*, III. 8: “On the art of discussion,” p. 703.
9. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, sec. 255.
10. Montaigne, *Essays*, III. 12, “Of physiognomy,” p. 808.
11. Montaigne, *Essays*, II. 6, “Of practice,” p. 272.
12. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), p. 838.
13. Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 234.