

My Favorite Philosopher Is Me

Don't get me wrong: there are plenty of people who are wiser than me. There are plenty of thinkers and writers more profound. There are plenty more original (I'm certainly influenced by lots of philosophers – some whom I don't even know).

There's just not anyone else who can do my thinking – and living – well for me. And isn't that what philosophy is supposed to be for?

I've long been of the opinion that there's something wrong if philosophy is just a game of referencing long-dead thinkers or reading indecipherable academese. It is probably a good thing to know the philosophers who have been influential on the mainstream (and alternative streams) of ideas, but knowing someone else's idea is not the same as seeing the truth of an idea for yourself. Philosophy isn't something that happened – it's something that is happening, all the time. Even when knowledge is rationally received, it takes that little bit extra – often from personal experience – before it can become real.

If I'm going to engage with philosophy, I'm going to have to do it on my own two feet. I have to make the mistakes, have the regrets, live with the confusion (and the wonder), and test the ideas in my own world. And so I have to root for myself to do more and better philosophy, and I have to thank myself for what I've learned so far, even as I pay substantial thanks to the much wiser and more erudite teachers who started me down the path.

So yeah, while I may be no one else's favorite philosopher (I shouldn't be) – and while no one else may think of me as a philosopher (they probably shouldn't) – I'm still my own favorite.

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