



# In Search of the Good Life: A Pedagogy for Troubled Times

*Fred Dallmayr*

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## **In Search of the Good Life: A Pedagogy for Troubled Times** Fred Dallmayr

The great German novelist Thomas Mann implored readers to resist the persistent and growing militarism of the mid-twentieth century. To whom should we turn for guidance during this current era of global violence, political corruption, economic inequality, and environmental degradation? For more than two millennia, the world's great thinkers have held that the ethically "good life" is the highest purpose of human existence. Renowned political philosopher Fred Dallmayr traces the development of this notion, finding surprising connections among Aristotelian ethics, Abrahamic and Eastern religious traditions, German idealism, and postindustrial social criticism.

*In Search of the Good Life* does not offer a blueprint but rather invites readers on a cross-cultural quest. Along the way, the author discusses the teachings of Aristotle, Confucius, Nicolaus of Cusa, Leibniz, and Schiller, in addition invoking more recent writings of Gadamer and Ricoeur, as guideposts and sources of hope during our troubled times. Among contemporary themes Dallmayr discusses are the role of the classics in education, proper and improper ways of spreading democracy globally, the possibility of transnational citizenship, the problem of politicized evil, and the role of religion in our predominantly secular culture.

Dallmayr restores the notion of the good life as a hallmark of personal conduct, civic virtue, and political engagement, and as the road map to enduring peace. *In Search of the Good Life* seeks to arouse complacent and dispirited citizens, guiding them out of the distractions of shallow amusements and perilous resentments in the direction of mutual learning and civic pedagogy -- a direction that will enable them to impose accountability on political leaders who stray from fundamental ethical standards.

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