

WHAT EXACTLY IS PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE?

BOUNDARIES, CROSSROADS, DEADLOCKS

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BIOS & ABSTRACTS

JOHN SELLARS is a Reader in Philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London (where he is currently programme lead for Philosophy), a Visiting Research Fellow at King's College London (where he is Associate Editor for the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle project), and a Member of Common Room at Wolfson College, Oxford (where he was once a Junior Research Fellow and is a member of Wolfson's Ancient World Research Cluster). He is also a member of two non-profit organizations aimed at bringing the ancient philosophy of Stoicism to a wider audience, Modern Stoicism and The Aurelius Foundation, and he is currently Chair of Modern Stoicism. He is the author of *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (2003; 2nd ed.

2009), *Stoicism* (2006), *Hellenistic Philosophy* (2018), *Lessons in Stoicism* (2019), *Marcus Aurelius* (2020), *The Fourfold Remedy* (2021), *Barlaam of Seminara on Stoic Ethics* (2022, with C. R. Hogg), and *Aristotle: Understanding the World's Greatest Philosopher* (2023). He is currently using the notion of philosophy as a way of life as a framework to reassess the philosophy of the Renaissance. Recent publications on this include: "Renaissance Humanism and Philosophy as a Way of Life" (*Metaphilosophy* 51/2-3, 2020, 226-43), and "Renaissance Consolations: Philosophical Remedies for Fate and Fortune" (in O. Akopyan, ed., *Fate and Fortune in European Thought, ca. 1400-1650*, Leiden: Brill, 2021, 13-36).

"On the Idea of 'Spiritual Exercises'"

Although the idea of Philosophy as a Way of Life has started to gain wider attention in Anglophone academia, Pierre Hadot's notion of 'spiritual exercise' has not always received so warm a welcome. It has been challenged as a vague, esoteric, and ultimately Christian concept that has been anachronistically imposed back on to ancient pagan philosophy. I shall argue that in fact Hadot did not take the idea from Christian sources such as Ignatius of Loyola. However, a question remains regarding just what 'spiritual' actually means. Are these 'exercises of the soul' analogous to exercises for the body? Would it be better to talk of 'practices of the self' instead? Do the religious connotations of the term 'spiritual' make it an inappropriate term to use? I shall try to tackle all these questions.

ELI KRAMER is an Associate Professor (Profesor Uczelni) at the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Wrocław. He specialises in metaphilosophy (in particular, philosophy as a way of life), intercultural philosophy, philosophy of culture, German and American Idealism, Classical American Philosophy, and Process Philosophy. His work is devoted to developing philosophy as a way of life as a field. He connects this work to his activities in the philosophy of culture and the philosophy of higher education. Alongside Matthew Sharpe and Michael Chase, he co-edits the Brill book series, “Philosophy as a Way of Life: Text and Studies,” which organizes new translations, as well as putting out new studies. They also closely work with Marta Faustino on a number of projects to foster philosophy as a way of life research and practice inside and out of the academy. His first single authored monograph is on the nature and role of the associated philosophical life (as distinct from philosophy as a discipline): *Intercultural Modes of Philosophy, Volume One: Principles to Guide Philosophical Community* (Brill, 2021). He has also co-edited and contributed to collections such as *Philosophy of Culture as Theory, Method, and Way of Life: Contemporary Reflections and Applications* (Brill, 2022), *Rorty and Beyond* (Lexington Books, 2020), and *Contemporary Philosophical Proposals for the University: Toward a Philosophy of Higher*

Education (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). His work has appeared (or will appear) in journals such as *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture, Contemporary Pragmatism, Dewey Studies, Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education, Studies in Pedagogy*, and *Syndicate Philosophy*.

“Speculative Philosophy as a Spiritual Exercise” (co-authored with Laura Mueller)

Many—if not most—if not all—of us have returned time and time again to those great works of philosophy that give us a grand image of our cosmic situation. Sometimes these works even lead us to philosophical *metanoia*, a moment when, after arduous engagement, we are shaken from our dogmatic slumbers and begin to see the world in a new light. We emerge new, perhaps more whole, but certainly different.

Surely, *this* is the reason we ask even our bachelor’s students to read these heavy tomes; *this* is the reason we ask students—whose focus, attention, and literacy is usually not up to the task—to read Kant’s *Critiques*, Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Whitehead’s *Process and Reality*, Nagarjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Plato’s *Timaeus*, or Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The “learning experience” is not in simply knowing the conclusions, or the parts of the arguments. We have intuitions that reading these texts are transformative for us. But those intuitions are generally just that; the work that training speculative thought does is difficult to categorize and organize, to say the least. We end up with variations of the parental “eat it

because it's good for you" defense for making them digest such ruffage.

The transformative nature of speculative philosophy suggests it should be treated as a kind of "spiritual exercise". To help us better survey the purposes, structure, and benefits of this spiritual exercise, in this presentation we draw on Donald Philipe Verene's *Speculative Philosophy* and Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. We elucidate how and why engaging with these onerous, taxing, and heavy—physically and metaphysically—tomes of speculative philosophy qualify as a kind of spiritual exercise. This exercise leads to a peculiar and essential kind of self-knowledge, self-perception, and freshness of vision.

JORDI CRESPO is a Ph.D. in Philosophy, Epistemology, and History of Culture (Unica, 2017). His dissertation revolved around the *Anonymus Londiniensis*, a papyrus of medical content in Greek from the 1st century CE. Before that, he had coursed other related studies to this field: a MA in Ancient Philosophy (UCD, 2013); a MA in Classics (UCM, 2012); and a MA in History of Religions (UAB, 2005). In addition to this, he has worked for four terms as an associate lecturer of different subjects in Philosophy at the Department of Humanities for the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona. The most part of the research he has conducted to the moment falls in the fields of philosophy and medicine in Antiquity. However, his

interests go beyond the Antiquity and prove also broader than the aforementioned disciplines: evidence of that are the research lines of the clusters in which he takes part: « Influence of Greek Ethics on Contemporary Philosophy » (AUM) and «Eidos: Plato and Modernity» (UB). This combination of interests in particular was precisely what pushed him to get close to Philosophy as a Way of Life (PWL), and to realise that it is into this trend where he feels intellectually comfortable and where he is willing to direct his effort.

“From Galen to Loyola: Some Remarks about the Foundations and Scope of Philosophy as a Way of Life”

As it is devised, by way of introduction my exposition will first address the abbreviation ‘PWL’ which is commonly used to make reference to ‘Philosophy as a Way of Life’. After that, five different points will be brought into discussion; five constants which whomever having taken an interest in Philosophy as a Way of Life would have come across. They will come endorsed with quotations extracted from the *Eloge de la philosophie antique*, the inaugural speech that P. Hadot gave at the Collège de France in 1983 on the occasion of taking up the Chair of *Histoire de la pensée hellénistique et romaine*. These five points will be expounded as follows: the bonds between philosophy and philology; the worth of enquiring on the work of some less solicited authors in PWL; some issues involved in the making of the theoretical frame of PWL; a reflection on the use that modern psychology makes of ancient philosophy; and finally, an attempt to set the boundaries of a

philosophic way of life as a commitment to truth, a concern about death, and a disregard for material goods.

ELETTRA STIMILLI is Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy at the Sapienza University of Rome. She directs the editorial series “Filosofia e Politica” and “MaterialiIT” by the Italian publishing house Quodlibet. She is also part of the scientific committee of the Bloomsbury book series “Political Theologies” and of the Editorial Board of the Journal “Political Theology”. She authored numerous essays that revolve around the relationship between politics and religion, focusing on contemporary thought. Her publications include *The Debt of the Living* (Sunny Press, New York, 2017; ed. it. 2011); *Debt and Guilt* (Bloomsbury, London, 2018; ed. it. 2015); *Jacob Taubes. Sovranità e tempo messianico* (ed. it. 2004, 2019, forthcoming in English by Bloomsbury); *Filosofia dei mezzi. Per una nuova politica dei corpi* (Neri Pozzi, Vicenza, 2023).

“Philosophy as a Way of Life Between Spiritual Exercises and Critical Practices”

The aim of this intervention is to focus on the intellectual relationship between Foucault and Hadot, which is particularly interesting for defining philosophy as a form of life. In the first part it is at stake the comparison between

the two authors. The second part discusses the role of philosophy as critical practice, in the footsteps of Foucault, and not as a search for universal structures, as it is in Hadot, despite his interest in philosophical knowledge as a spiritual exercise.

Leonard J. Waks is Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership at Temple University, USA. He was Distinguished Professor of Educational Studies at Hangzhou Normal University from 2018-2021. Waks attended the University of Wisconsin (B.A philosophy, 1964; Ph. D. philosophy 1968) and taught philosophy at Purdue University and Stanford University. He taught educational studies at Temple University and earned an Ed.D. in Organizational Psychology from Temple and a professional psychotherapy certificate from the Albert Ellis Institute in 1984. Waks is the author of *Education 2.0: The Learningweb Revolution and the Transformation of the School* (Paradigm, 2013), and *The Evolution and Evaluation of Massive Open Online Courses: MOOCs in Motion* (Palgrave, 2016), as well as numerous scholarly articles and book chapters. He is a past president of the John Dewey Society, and has been awarded the Dewey Society's Lifetime Achievement Award. He is founding editor of the journal *Dewey Studies*.

“Philosophers: Academic Professionals or Life-Guiding Sages?”

In this talk I offer a distinction between philosophers as academic professionals – as scholars – and as sages offering wise guidance in living. Academics address fellow scholars. By contrast, sages have audiences of non-professional but interested – and often spiritually ill – individuals.

Academic professionals have specialized academic training leading typically to a doctorate – a license to teach in a university. These professionals deliver a curriculum, with essential reference to a body of literature (including, of course, the wisdom literature generated by sages). Plato and Aristotle were the academic professionals of their time. Their contemporary counterparts include the many anglo-american and continental philosophers populating university departments – including some who have turned their attention to philosophy as a way of life. By contrast, Socrates and Jesus, Epictetus and Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha were Sages. The authors of the Upanishads, of the Dhammapada, of Genesis and Exodus, were sages.

For me, the question of philosophy as a way of life is at first instance about whether PWL practitioners are primarily academic professionals or sages – or both. Are PWL philosophers offering scholarship of concern primarily to other academic philosophers – or perhaps to philosophically-trained readers prepared to handle erudite presentations and nuanced discussion – and to university philosophy students? Or are they offering sage life guidance for concerned lay people, drawn from their

philosophical reflections and their grasp of various wisdom traditions?

PAWEL ODYNIC is a lecturer (universitetsadjunkt) in Religious Studies at Karlstad University, Sweden. He holds a PhD in Indology (UU) and three MA degrees in Philosophy (UAB), History of Religion (UAB) and Indian Philosophy and Religion (BHU). His research interest covers the area of Classical Indian philosophy in Sanskrit, particularly Advaita Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivism, Modern Indian philosophy in English and Hindi, as well as South Asian religions. He is also interested in cross-cultural approach to philosophy as a way of life (PWL). Pawel is the author of *Engaging Advaita: Conceptualising liberating knowledge in the face of Western modernity* (2018) and “Rethinking Advaita Within the Colonial Predicament: the ‘Confrontative’ Philosophy of K. C. Bhattacharyya (1875-1949)” (2018).

“Philosophy as a Way of Life Around the Globe: The case of Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949)”

In recent years, the Anglophone reception of Pierre Hadot’s work on Greco-Roman philosophy as a way of life has inspired many scholars across the globe to rethink the nature of philosophy and to explore some of the core implications of his thesis. It is well known that Hadot

argued that classical Western philosophy was a way of life (*manière de vivre*) oriented toward the attainment of wisdom (*sophia*), which brought peace of mind (*ataraxia*), inner freedom (*autarkeia*) and cosmic consciousness. For him, philosophical life in antiquity consisted therefore in philosophical discourse as well as a set of spiritual exercises aimed at self-transformation.

While Hadot himself pointed out that the notion of philosophy as a way of life could be found beyond the limits of Greco-Roman antiquity in medieval and modern periods of Western culture, few scholars have endorsed recently that this notion of a philosophy as a way of life could be extended beyond the boundaries of Western culture. Despite its appeal, however, the prospect of thinking about philosophy as a way of life across cultures and philosophical traditions is still very young, and it remains to be seen what exactly such cross-cultural engagement with PWL could offer to academic scholarship.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to this cross-cultural adventure by engaging with one major figure in modern Indian philosophy, the Bengali philosopher Krischnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875-1949). I will go on to argue that Bhattacharyya's intention in writing his masterpiece *The Subject as Freedom* was to outline a new and special branch of philosophy, which he called *transcendental* or *spiritual psychology*, by conceiving a philosophy of self-knowledge on the model of the Vedāntic *manana*. This consideration will lead me to suggest that, as a masterpiece of modern Indian philosophy, *The Subject as Freedom* was meant, in the last analysis, to be read and enacted as a kind of manual for introspective meditation,

leading its readers through rigorous philosophical reflection to self-transformation and the attainment of self-knowledge in a modality of knowing beyond philosophical thinking. In other words, I will argue that Bhattacharyya's transcendental psychology is best understood as entailing a philosophical way of life in that it requires a deep commitment to conceptual thinking about subjectivity as well as a subsequential call to a spiritual exercise of introspection that aims at self-transformation and the disclosure of the subject as free from objectivity.

ANTÓNIO DE CASTRO CAEIRO (Lisbon, 1966) is a professor at Faculty of Social Sciences/ New University of Lisbon and belongs to the Investigation Unity IFILNOVA. He is an essayist and translator. He obtained his doctorate in Ancient Philosophy with the thesis "The Areté as a Extreme Possibility of the Human, Phenomenology of Praxis in Plato and Aristotle" (1998), He teaches at FCSH since 1990. He's working on Ancient and Contemporary Philosophy. He was Visiting Scholar at USP (São Paulo), USF (Florida) and Oriel College (Oxford). He translated Pindar's Pythical Odes (Quetzal, 2010) and the Olympic Odes (Abysmo, 2017). Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (Quetzal), The Fragments of Dialogues (INCM, 2014) and The Lost Constitutions (Abysmo, 2018). He also published the essays Saint Paul: "Apocalypse and Conversion" (Aletheia, 2014) "One Day is not every Day" (Abysmo, 2015)

and recently in the UK “Reflexions on Everyday Life” (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019). The Scientific Fragments of Aristotle (Abysmo, 2022).

“Philosophy—On ‘Doing’ One’s Way of Being”

According to Socrates, making philosophy is making music. What does this mean? We find a possible answer in Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In his courses on philosophy of nature, he interprets Jakob von Uexküll’s concept of *Umwelt* as a melody. How is it possible to reduce non-acoustic contents (optical: colours, shapes and figures; haptic: tactile textures, flavours, tastes and fragrances) to sounds, or musical notes, that make a melody? Does the connection between melody and nature make natural beings musical notes? Are the parts of each being anatomical notes of the melody that each being is as such? Is the relationship between the being that we are (or any animal subject is) and the beings that appear to it a dance? The thesis we study here follows the reduction, or rather the restoration, of a content to a musical sign. Thus, each point of each being, each being, isolated and in a constellation with other beings, is reduced to a “note” sign in a scale, with a duration, pitch and volume. Melody, rhythm and harmony are higher “structures” that express and give to “understand” the meaning of nature’s being. Also, every human being, every living being, animal and plant, has a subjective “biological” interiority. The inner world of every living subject and the objects in the outer world are comprised in an atmosphere, a musical *Umwelt*. The human lives in a musical element or atmosphere.

HÉLDER TELO is currently a research fellow at Praxis: Centre for Ethics, Politics and Culture (University of Beira Interior). He earned his PhD from Nova University of Lisbon in 2018 after writing a thesis on Plato's critique of unexamined life. An important part of his doctoral research was conducted at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (where he was a doctoral fellow at the Collaborative Research Center 1015 Muße/Otiose Leisure) and Boston College. Following his PhD, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Nova Institute of Philosophy (Nova University of Lisbon), where he developed a research project on the art of living and the individual relation to truth in Plato and contemporary thought. His work explores topics such as metaphilosophy, the desire for truth, care and emotions in philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Scheler, Heidegger, Hadot and Foucault. His most recent publications include "Plato's Philosophical Mimesis: On the Pedagogical and Protreptic Value of Imperfection" (*Schole*, 2022) and "The Care of Others in Marcus Aurelius' Meditations" (in *Philosophy of Care – New Approaches to Vulnerability, Otherness and Therapy*, Springer, 2021).

"Philosophical Dogmas or Questions? A Defense of Philosophy as an Inquisitive Way of Life"

The aim of this paper is to compare two different interpretations of philosophy as a way of life (PWL). Based on a general definition of PWL, according to which philosophy should deeply transform the way we live, I contend that PWL is often understood in light of the idea that there is a set of dogmas, doctrines, arguments and even a worldview that should guide our life – and that we then need practices and spiritual exercises to implement these doctrines in our life. This model fits relatively well with some of the main Hellenistic schools, such as the Stoic and the Epicurean school, but it does not apply equally well to other philosophers. Thus, I propose a different model – one in which philosophy is primarily defined by questions and problems and not by doctrines that should guide one's life. According to this view, philosophical discourse is primarily interrogative and questions themselves can be seen as spiritual practices, insofar as they can transform our way of being.

To clarify this model of PWL, I will start by considering what defines questions (and particularly philosophical questions) as a form of discourse and as a spiritual practice. Then I will consider the way they can influence life and even how life can be essentially defined by philosophical questioning. Finally, I will consider the implications of this inquisitive understanding of PWL for the task of mapping PWL throughout the history of philosophy, and argue that it can translate either into a more restricted map of philosophers who understood philosophy as being essentially an inquisitive way of life or into a broader map of PWL that is not exclusively focused on philosophy as an inquisitive way of life, but nevertheless places a greater

emphasis on the inquisitive stages and practices of philosophical texts than is normally done in the context of PWL scholarship.

FÁBIO SERRANITO is Lecturer in Ancient Greek Literature and Culture at the University of Leeds. He specialises in Ancient Greek philosophy and thought (widely construed), with particular emphasis in topics such as love, madness and sanity, care and neglect, ways of life and happiness and the good life. He was awarded my PhD in 2015 by NOVA University of Lisbon, with a dissertation on the concepts of madness and lucidity in Plato's *Phaedrus*. His most recent publications include "Μανία and ἀλήθεια in Plato's *Phaedrus*" (*The Classical Quarterly*, 2020) and "(Mis)understanding ἐπιμέλεια ἀρετῆς (care for virtue) in Plato's *Euthydemus*" (in *Philosophy of Care – New Approaches to Vulnerability, Otherness and Therapy*, Springer, 2021). He is currently working on a monograph on the antinatalist gnostic tradition in Antiquity: not to be born is the best for humans.

"Philosophy as a Way of Life as a Matter of Life and Death: An Aristotelian Take on a Current Debate"

Aristotle's place within philosophy as a way of life (PWL) is a surprisingly contentious issue. As a contribution to this debate, I start this paper by engaging in dialogue with

Sellars 2017. While I reject the idea that motivation is a defining factor of PWL, motivation provides a useful frame to think about how PWL is not a spontaneous or automatic endeavour, but rather the result of adoption or acquisition. In short, it helps us think about how and for what reasons one might make the transition towards PWL from another way of life or from an “unorganised”, spontaneous and undefined way of living (if there is such a thing). In this paper, I propose to look at this issue by examining evidence that has not attracted a lot of scholarly attention: book 1 of Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics*. In this book, Aristotle presents the most developed exposition of his version of the traditional doctrine of the three *bioi*: pleasure-seeking, political and philosophical. But in *Eudemian Ethics* 1.5, this doctrine is associated with another traditional idea, the wisdom of Silenus: “the best is not to be born, the second best is to die as quickly as possible.” The connection is complex and easy to miss – in fact, it is usually overlooked or dismissed in scholarship. But my position is that it is key to understand what is going on in *Eudemian Ethics*, and, especially, to understand the place the three *bioi* might occupy in Aristotle’s ethical thinking. In this passage we find the issue of happiness merging with the question about what makes life worth living. In particular, this passage provides us with an example of how PWL can be understood as a matter of life and death. Aristotle invites us to engage in a thought-experiment: imagine that we can choose to be born or not; taking as a starting point that, by default and in normal circumstances, it is best for humans not to be born, is there any possibility in life that might overcome the reluctance to be born? For the sake of what would one

choose to be born? The possible answers that survive the corrosive effect of the antinatalist stance are the three *bioi*, with the implication that philosophy is one of the possible candidates not only for what constitutes happiness but also for what makes life worth living. Aristotle, therefore, puts forward the radical possibility of philosophy not only being a way of life, but one of the ways of life (if not the only one) that justifies our being alive at all.

MATTHEW SHARPE teaches philosophy at the Australian Catholic University, having completed his PhD in Philosophy and Social Theory at the University of Melbourne, and MA in Policy Studies at the University of Tasmania, and a Diploma of Counselling at the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors. He is the author of six books, including *The Other Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and Self-Estrangement* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), *Philosophy as a Way of Life: History, Dimensions, Directions* (with M. Ure, Bloomsbury, 2021), and *Camus, Philosophe: To Return to Our Beginnings* (Brill, 2015/16). He is co-translator of Pierre Hadot's *Selected Writings. Philosophy as Practice* (with F. Testa, Bloomsbury, 2020). He is co-editor of the Brill series on "Philosophy as a Way of Life, Texts and Studies". Over the years, he has edited ten edited collections and journal editions, as well as being the author of numerous articles in leading-rank journals and book chapters on philosophy, social and critical theory.

Since 2010, his focus has increasingly become classical receptions and philosophy as a way of life, with a focus on the work of Pierre and Ilsetraut Hadot.

“Philosophy as a Way of Life, the System, and the Advent of the Research University: Contributions Towards an Unwritten Chapter of the History of PWL”

This essay takes its bearings from Hadot’s singling out of the moment of German idealism, and the foundation of the modern research university (first of all, that of Berlin in 1809), as especially significant in the history of the eclipses and recurrences of PWL in the West. Proffered as a draft for an as-yet-unwritten, decisive chapter on the history of PWL, it will closely examine the texts by Schleiermacher, Fichte, Humboldt and Schelling that Hadot mentions *en passant* in “Enseignement ancien et moderne de la philosophie” (Hadot 2020, 149-178; cf. 305-322). These texts represent studies of great significance for the history of PWL, the paper suggests, insofar as they are philosophical reflections on the university, its necessity and its purpose, as well as metaphilosophical reflections more specifically on philosophy, its nature and role, within the universities. In part 2, we will show how Hadot’s claim that these texts inaugurate a subordination of philosophy to the state, even in its qualified form, needs to be revised. What stands out is rather the attempt, sketched already in Kant (1794), of trying to grant philosophy a new autonomy within the modern university, as the sole faculty ideally governed by reason alone, not by external authorities. In part 3, we will critically pursue Hadot’s

comments linking the advent of the modern research university with the construction of philosophy as a system. Our argument contra Hadot is that the classical idealistic texts on the university also each envisage philosophy as implicating a form of pedagogy and *Bildung*. Our argument with Hadot, is that this *Bildung* is nevertheless subordinated to the pursuit of systematic, pure, or absolute knowledge in ways which pave the way to today's *ça va sans dire* expectations around what serious philosophy must always be (that is, theoretical, written, publishable in peer reviewed formats, to be read only by other experts or tertiary students). In conclusion, we proffer several observations raised by our analysis, concerning Hadot's presentation of the idea of university philosophy as a philosophy of civil servants, teaching other civil servants, and how it relates to the longer history of, and continuing contemporary research on, PWL.

MATTEO JOHANNES STETTLER is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at Deakin University (Australia). He collaborates with the research groups “Philosophy as a Way of Life,” of the Pontificia Università Gregoriana of Rome, and “Forms of Life and Practices of Philosophy” (particularly the “Art of Living” line of research) of the NOVA Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA) of Lisbon, which he visited for a few months in 2022. In co-authoring with Prof. Matthew Sharpe, Stettler has published

specialistic articles for *Classical Receptions* and *Philosophy Today*; his work has also appeared on *Aevum*, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, and *Foucault Studies*. His latest publication, 'Thoreau's Stoicism in *Letters to Various Persons: The Spiritual Direction of Harrison Blake*' is forthcoming on *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Matteo is also an Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy at the Lorenzo de' Medici International Institute of Florence (Italy).

“Intellectual felicity’ in the Latin Averroists: Exploring the Limits of Hadot’s Metaphilosophy in the Middle Ages”

The reception of Hadot’s work on the tradition of spiritual exercises among historians of medieval philosophy has rarely produced the results that one would have reasonably hoped for. For starters, medievalists have often criticized Hadot’s early thesis of a medieval decline of the ancient notion of ‘philosophy as a way of life’ – and rightly so – but they usually failed to register the important revision to which Hadot subjected his thesis after his encounter with Domański’s works in the 1990s. More importantly, it has so far gone entirely unexplored what the post-1990s Hadot’s acceptance of some interpretative positions currently debated by historians of medieval philosophy might itself mean for his conceptualization of the ancient notion of ‘philosophy as a way of life.’ In the present revisitation of the historiography on the medieval notion of ‘intellectual felicity,’ I thus hope to be able to, first, provide a corrective to the understanding that so many medievalists still seem

to have of Hadot's contribution to the study of medieval philosophy, and, second, show how the current debates raging in medievalist circles might point us towards some of the possible limitations with Hadot's understanding of 'philosophy as a way of life' in and beyond the Middle Ages.

GIANFRANCO FERRARO is born in Messina, Italy. His current research focuses on forms of conversion, approached through several points of observation (philosophical, literary, theological, political), particularly through the studies of Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot. On this topic he wrote several essays particularly concerning Foucault, Nietzsche, the history of utopian thought, and is also working on a theoretical volume. He is currently coordinating the research thematic line on "Conversion, education and global pedagogical utopias" at the Center for Global Studies at the Universidade Aberta (Lisbon, Portugal), where he is also a PhD Candidate on Global Studies with a research project on the ancient roots and the modern influence of Ignatius of Loyola's "Spiritual exercises". Previously, he studied Philosophy in Italy (Pisa) and France (EPHE, Paris), where he obtained his PhD in Philosophy with a thesis on the notion of asceticism in Nietzsche, Weber and Foucault, and was FCT post-doc Fellow in Portugal. He is founder and editorial director of the international journal *Thomas Project: A Border Journal for Utopian Thoughts*. He co-edited (with Marta Faustino)

the book *The Late Foucault. Ethical and Political Questions* (Bloomsbury, 2020) and (with António Caeiro) the volume *Formas de conversão. Filosofia, política, espiritualidade* (Abysmo, 2023). He is coordinating (with José Eduardo Franco) the *Global History of Utopias*. He has also translated into Italian modern and contemporary works of the utopian tradition.

“Philosophical Spirituality and PWL: The Academic Word Between a Utopia *Without Condition* and the Risks of a *Passive Revolution*”

According to Hadot and Foucault, PWL can be described as a form of spirituality, as a practice the aim of which is to transform the forms of living. Today, PWL researchers are committed to transforming the current crisis in the academia into an opportunity to make this practice available also in contemporary universities and curricula. Is this utopia realizable? Modern Academia was based upon the State's very aims, whereas, today, neo-liberal Academia is ruled by the Market's aims. If Nietzsche was critical about the possibility of integrating his philosophical practices into the academic models, Bourdieu and Macherey remind us that Universities always tried to absorb the outsider practices and discourses in order to legitimate their social stability. Against the danger of submitting humanistic and philosophical practices to alien rules and limits, Derrida proposed the utopia of a university “without conditions” and Macherey defended the practice of a free speech in the universities. Which are the requirements for PWL's current challenge – as a form of

philosophical spirituality and pedagogic innovation – to realize Derrida's and its own purposes? How to avoid what can be referred to Gramsci's notion of "passive revolution", that is, a merely apparent transformation of the academic word, through an illusory innovation and a more concrete marginalization of philosophical and critical practices?