

DOI:10.14394/eidos.jpc.2024.0024

Marta Faustino
IFILNOVA (Nova Institute of Philosophy)
NOVA University of Lisbon, Portugal
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5492-8539>
martafaustino@fcsh.unl.pt

Do We Need to Choose Between Theory and Practice? On the Place of *Logos* and *Praxis* in Philosophy as a Way of Life

Abstract:

The distinction between theory and practice, as well as their specific role, function, and relevance within philosophy is at the core of most metaphilosophical discussions of philosophy as a way of life (PWL). At the same time, Hadot's emphasis on the practical dimension of ancient philosophy and its alleged privilege of practice over theory is one of the most polemic and controversial aspects of his account of PWL. In this paper I will discuss three alternative ways of interpreting Hadot's characterization of PWL and the roles and functions of theory and practice in his account: John Cooper's, Miranda Vilchi's and Matthew Sharpe's. After critically evaluating each one of these readings, I will present my own view on the matter and conclude with some reflections on the relevance (or irrelevance) of maintaining the opposition between theory and practice in our account of PWL.

Keywords:

philosophy as a way of life, theory-practice, Pierre Hadot, John Cooper, Miranda Vilchis, Matthew Sharpe

1. Introduction

One of Hadot's favorite ways of describing philosophy as a way of life (PWL) is by contrasting it with philosophy conceived as mere theory or discourse, having no transformative effect or impact on the way people live their lives. More than a body of theories, dogmas, and discourses, Hadot argues that, in antiquity, philosophy was essentially an activity, a practice, an exercise, a way of living and existing in the world – a conception of philosophy that he not only ascribes to antiquity, but also normatively contrasts with the way philosophy is conceived of and practiced today. As Hadot claims in his most popular book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, in antiquity philosophy was understood “not as a theoretical construct, but as a method for training people to live and to look at the world in a new way,” that is, as “an attempt to transform mankind.”¹ Far from the “purely abstract-theoretical activity” that characterizes modern-era philosophy, ancient philosophy was “a mode of existing-in-the-world, which had to be practiced at each instant, and the goal of which was to transform the whole of the individual's life” (PW, 265; see also 273). In yet another formulation, “ancient philosophy proposed mankind an art of living. By contrast, modern philosophy appears above all as the construction of a technical jargon reserved for specialists” (PW, 272).

Central as it is in Hadot's description of PWL, this fundamental distinction between theory and practice, as well as their specific roles, functions, and relevance within philosophy seems to be at the core of most metaphilosophical discussions on what philosophy as a way of life is and, more generally, on what philosophy itself is or should be. At the same time, Hadot's emphasis on the practical dimension of ancient philosophy and its alleged privilege of practice over theory is one of the most polemic and controversial aspects of his account of PWL. While most critics agree on Hadot's alleged overemphasis on practice and/or neglect of the crucial importance of theory, reason, and discourse in ancient philosophy, the criticisms are diverse, corresponding to different readings of Hadot's depiction of ancient philosophy and his corresponding

1) Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 107. Hereafter cited as PW with in text parentheticals where appropriate.

description of PWL.² Since determining the specific role and weight of theory and practice in PWL is fundamental for understanding the metaphilosophical model at stake in Hadot's work, I will discuss three alternative ways of interpreting Hadot's characterization of PWL and the respective roles and functions of theory and practice in his account. Firstly, I will analyze John Cooper's reading, according to which Hadot completely neglects the role of theory, reason, and argumentation in ancient philosophy, thus conveying a distorted image of what philosophy is and especially of what philosophy was in antiquity. According to Cooper's interpretation, Hadot presents philosophy as essentially a practice, where theory plays no fundamental role. Secondly, I will consider a more moderate reading of Hadot that sees him as clearly privileging practice over theory, thus only ascribing a secondary role to theory. Miranda Vilchis finds this view equally criticizable, as it does not recognize the central role of theory and truth in ancient philosophy, which should be considered at least as important as practice. Thirdly, I will discuss an alternative interpretation by one of Hadot's advocates, Matthew Sharpe, who contrary to what the various critics claim, argues that in Hadot's description of PWL theory and practice enjoy an equal importance and reciprocal relation. Finally, I will draw some conclusions from the preceding sections, adding some reflections on the relevance (or irrelevance) of maintaining the opposition between theory and practice in our account of philosophy as a way of life.

2. PWL as Mere Practice

One of the most fervent critics of Hadot's reading of Greco-Roman philosophy is John Cooper. Even though adopting Hadot's description of ancient philosophies as ways of life and reaffirming their role as guides to the best human life, in his book *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy*, Cooper fundamentally disagrees with Hadot's understanding of this conception of philosophy and the way in which philosophy could become a way of life for its adherents in antiquity. In Cooper's reading of Hadot, the latter presents philosophy as a practice that, in his view, is not essentially

2) In this paper, I will abstain from making necessary distinctions between "theory," "reason," "discourse," "rational argumentation," and other possible translations of the word *logos*. Instead, I shall discuss the different readings of Hadot's account of PWL in the terms defined by their respective authors. On the different meanings of *logos* and their role in ancient philosophy, see Telo, "Role of Reason".

distinguished from the religious way of life, which he describes as a life led on the basis of a sacred and/or authoritative text, a feeling of conviction that it is the right way to live, and a set of prayers and rituals aimed at intensifying one's conviction and feeling of connection or belonging to a higher power.³ In Cooper's view, what distinguishes philosophy from religion is the commitment to (philosophical) reason, such that a philosophical way of life is, in contrast to the religious one, a life "committed to following philosophical reason wherever it may lead."⁴ This is precisely the element that, according to Cooper, is completely absent from Hadot's account. In his words:

Fascinating and even inspiring though I found Hadot's ideas, his understanding of ancient philosophy, and of in what way it *could* be a full and complete way of life for its adherents, seemed to me to omit virtually altogether the central and indispensable place in philosophy (in Greece and ever since) of rigorous analysis and reasoned argumentation.⁵

Besides completely neglecting the role of theory and reason in ancient philosophy, Cooper claims that Hadot also charges it with elements that are totally foreign to it and imported from religion, most importantly his notion of "spiritual exercises." Indeed, practices that Hadot describes as "spiritual exercises," Cooper contends, belong to a religious context that only starts "contaminating" philosophy in late antiquity, and even then, in a rather sparse and residual form. According to Cooper, there is no evidence that such kinds of practices (or any form of *spiritual* training) were "common or standard even in the Hellenistic schools, much less in ancient philosophy as a whole."⁶ As he argues at length,

Those nonrational practices that Hadot describes as "spiritual exercises" – meditation, self-exhortation, memorization, and recitation to oneself of bits of sacred text, causing in oneself devoted prayerful or prayer-like

3) See Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, 18.

4) Ibid.

5) Ibid., x.

6) Ibid., 20.

states of consciousness and mystical moments – had, and could have, at most a secondary and very derivative function in the philosophical life during the heyday of ancient philosophy.⁷

In sum, for Cooper, Hadot's depiction of ancient philosophy as essentially a practice – and a spiritual one – brings it dangerously close to religion, thus eliminating that which makes it interesting and distinguishable from religion.⁸ In contrast to Hadot, Cooper argues that philosophy was indeed a way of life for (certain) ancient philosophers⁹ because they believed in the power of reason and committed to living their lives on this basis. In Cooper's words, they believed that "only reason, and what reason could discover and establish as the truth, could be an ultimately acceptable basis on which to live a life – and for them philosophy is nothing more, but also nothing less, than the art or discipline that develops and perfects the human capacity of reason."¹⁰ For Cooper, then, a philosophical way of life was, for the ancients (and would be, if there would still be such a life), a life grounded solely in reason, for what distinguishes this tradition of thought from all posterior ones (and also from other practices, such as religion) is the unshakable belief in reason's inherent power to motivate human action.¹¹ In short, it is because ancient philosophers believed in the power of reason and of the truth and knowledge attained through it that philosophy could become a way of life for them – a life of "perfected reason" and hence happy and complete, the "good life."¹²

Against Hadot, Cooper concludes that despite these assumptions that enabled the conversion of philosophy into a specific way of life in most ancient philosoph-

7) Ibid., 22.

8) See *ibid.*: "once pagan philosophy has transformed itself in these ways into something not easily distinguishable from a religion, it no longer has a reason to exist as an alternative to Christianity."

9) Contrary to Hadot, Cooper does not consider that the whole of ancient philosophy was constituted as a way of life, reserving this conception of philosophy to only six ancient schools of thought, that indeed converted their philosophies in ways of life: Socratism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, Skepticism, and Neoplatonism.

10) Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, 6.

11) See *ibid.*, 10–12. See also *ibid.*, 13: "if one's philosophy is to be one's way of life, those who possess the full knowledge that philosophy promises must be moved simply by having that knowledge and through its power (or rather, through the power of their reason so equipped) to live consistently on its basis."

12) See *ibid.*, 14.

ical schools, philosophy itself did not have a significantly different meaning than it does for us today: “for the ancients ... exactly as with us, the essential core of philosophy is a certain, specifically and recognizably philosophical, style of logical, reasoned argument and analysis.”¹³ Hence, for Cooper, it is still on this basis that one should understand the ancient conception of philosophy as a way of life, in the context of which, the practice of what Hadot calls “spiritual exercises” was not only unnecessary but even incompatible with strict philosophy, properly understood:

What was crucial for philosophy (as opposed to religion) as a way of life, all the way through, is that what was to keep you going and keep you living your philosophy was nothing more than your fully developed philosophical, reasoned understanding of what you thought was the truth about human beings and their place in the world. You did not need spiritual uplift and purification, and it would indeed be a serious distraction in most of the ancient philosophical lives... . In fact, no quasi-religious devotional practices, such as Hadot describes, had, or even could have had, anything essential to do with living a life of philosophy, given what philosophy itself, both in antiquity and, in fact, in its whole history, is: an exercise of reason.¹⁴

From the above description, it is clear that Cooper diverges from Hadot, not only in his interpretation of ancient philosophies but also in his understanding of what philosophy is (and should be). Interesting as it is, in this paper I shall not discuss the contrast between these two metaphilosophies (even if they most probably influence

13) Ibid., 17. A similar conception of philosophy is used by Martha Nussbaum to criticize Michel Foucault’s overemphasis on Hellenistic “*techniques du soi*,” which in her view overshadows the fact that philosophy is “an art that deals in valid and sound arguments, an art that is committed to the truth” and thus “fails to confront the fundamental commitment to reason that divides philosophical *techniques du soi* from other such techniques” (Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 5). On similar grounds, Bernard Williams skeptically wonders, while reflecting on Nussbaum’s book: “but can we really believe that philosophy, properly understood in terms of rigorous argument, could be so directly related to curing real human misery, the kind of suffering that priests and doctors and – indeed – therapists address?” (Williams, “Do Not Disturb”).

14) Cooper, “Ancient Philosophies,” 40.

the two authors' different readings of ancient philosophy), and I shall not analyze Cooper's criticism in detail, which others and I have done elsewhere.¹⁵ Rather, I will be exclusively concerned with Cooper's description of Hadot's notion of philosophy as a way of life as a mere practice which totally neglects the role of reason or *logos* in ancient philosophy. Did Hadot conceive PWL as a mere practice, with theory or rational discourse playing no fundamental role? Did Hadot's account "omit virtually altogether the central and indispensable place in philosophy ... of rigorous analysis and reasoned argumentation"?

First, it is important to acknowledge that some of Hadot's passages might indeed suggest this interpretation. In his effort to emphasize the practical dimension of ancient philosophy and the prevalence of spiritual exercises in it, Hadot might seem, at times, to downplay the role of reason, theory, and discourse, implying instead that ancient philosophy was basically (or only) a spiritual practice where discourse played no significant role. In *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, for example, Hadot describes the philosophical life as "equivalent to the practice of spiritual exercises" (PW, 103), and very distinctly claims that "philosophy in antiquity was a spiritual exercise" (PW, 104).¹⁶ Seen from this perspective of the practice of spiritual exercises, Hadot adds, philosophy then appears "*not as a theoretical construct*, but as a method for training people to live and to look at the world in a new way" (PW, 107).¹⁷ In a nutshell, philosophy "is a life, not a discourse" (PW, 279). We find similar claims that intensify the opposition between theory and practice, emphasizing the presence and relevance of the latter to the detriment of the former, in almost every work of Hadot, for, as he explains in an interview with Arnold Davidson, his "main preoccupation has been precisely to show that what was considered to be pure *theory*, abstraction, was *practice* in both its mode of exposition and its finality."¹⁸

15) See especially Ngo, "Cooper vs Hadot;" Grimm and Cohoe, "What Is Philosophy as a Way of Life;" Faustino, "Contamination of Philosophy;" Sharpe, "Drafted into a Foreign War;" Sharpe, "Not the Chrisippus You Read."

16) See also PW, 273: "philosophy in antiquity was an exercise practiced at each instant;" and Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 49: "above all, philosophy was viewed as an exercise of wisdom, and therefore as the practice of a way of life."

17) My emphasis.

18) Hadot, *The Present Alone*, 88.

On closer inspection however, taking into account the broader context in which Hadot conceived his notion of philosophy as a way of life, it becomes evident that not only did Hadot *not* neglect the role of reason, theory, and discourse in ancient philosophy, but even recognized their crucial importance in it. In his introduction to *What is Ancient Philosophy?* and elsewhere, when Hadot struggles to define and characterize his notion of philosophy as a way of life (in opposition to the metaphilosophy Cooper and others defend as the only possible way of understanding philosophy's proper nature and function), Hadot underlines that his emphasis on the practical and spiritual end goal of ancient philosophy does not involve neglect of its theoretical counterpart, which he readily acknowledges and even praises.¹⁹ As he clearly states in the essay "Ancient Philosophy: An Ethics or a Practice?," his aim has never been to deny "the existence of a will to coherence or systematization amongst the ancient philosophers," which is evident in "the considerable number of divisions, classifications and hierarchical distinctions that we find in ancient philosophers" and which reveals "this ideal [of systematization]."²⁰ What Hadot tries to do is simply contextualize this undoubtedly complex and fascinating theoretical elaboration within the framework of ancient philosophy, which was significantly different from our own:

Obviously, there can be no question of denying the extraordinary ability of the ancient philosophers to develop theoretical reflection on the most subtle problems of the theory of knowledge, logic, or physics. This theoretical activity, however, must be situated within a perspective which is different from that which corresponds to the idea people usually have of philosophy.²¹

This different perspective that Hadot presents implies the subordination of theoretical reflection to the choice of a particular way of life, which according to him precedes and determines a given philosophical discourse. But philosophical discourse is, in turn,

19) See Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 1–4.

20) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 56.

21) Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 3.

fundamental, as its task is to “reveal and rationally justify this existential option,”²² including the theoretical presuppositions and vision of the world that it implies. Philosophical discourse is, thus, a crucial and integral part of the philosophical way of life²³ and there is a reciprocal relationship of mutual dependency between theory and practice, such that, as Hadot explicitly claims, philosophy is (or was in antiquity) “at the same time and indissolubly, a discourse *and* a way of life.”²⁴

This being granted, we have seen that most of Cooper’s criticism of Hadot is related to the latter’s notion of spiritual exercises, which he considers as being fundamentally opposed to proper philosophical activity and in fact closer to religious practice. Abstracting from their different understandings of what philosophy is, it seems that underlying Cooper’s criticism is also a different understanding of spirituality and consequently, a misunderstanding of Hadot’s conception of philosophy as a spiritual practice. Discussing the notion of spiritual exercises in Hadot’s work at length is beyond the scope of this paper;²⁵ but there are some points I would like to make.

First, Hadot’s conception of spiritual exercises includes a vast array of practices, from attention, meditation, memorization, self-examination, contemplation, training for death, and concentration on the present moment, to reading, listening, researching, the study of the disciplines, self-mastery, and therapy of the passions (PW, 84ff). Hadot classifies these various types of exercises into three different groups, namely: thought or mind exercises (meant to produce a transformation in thought and control the inner discourse), intellectual exercises (meant to provide nourishment for the other exercises), and practical exercises (consisting in the appli-

22) Ibid., 3; see also *ibid.*, 76.

23) Ibid., 5; see also *ibid.*, 76.

24) Ibid., 4. In another formulation, philosophy “always swings between these two poles; the discourse and the choice concerning a way of life” (Hadot, “Qu’est-ce que l’éthique?,” 135).

25) See Faustino, “Contamination of Philosophy,” which constitutes a previous study on the topic and develops some of the conclusions presented below. For other replies to different criticisms of Hadot’s notion of spiritual exercises, see Banicki, “Therapeutic Arguments;” Chase, “Which School;” Chase, “Pierre Hadot and His Critics;” Del Nido, “Pierre Hadot on Habit;” Ferraro, “Philosophical *Mythoi*;” Grimm and Cohoe, “What is Philosophy as a Way of Life;” Ngo, “Cooper vs Hadot;” Sharpe, “Drafted into a Foreign War?;” Sharpe, “Between too Intellectualist and not Intellectualist Enough;” and Sharpe, “Spiritual Exercises and the Question of Religion.”

cation of fundamental rules intended to create new habits) (PW, 84ff). If we pay close attention not only to Hadot's description and classification of spiritual exercises but also to the long, diversified practices he classifies under this designation, it becomes clear that Hadot's notion of spiritual exercises is significantly broader than Cooper implies, and far from restricted to those "quasi-religious devotional practices" to which Cooper reduces Hadot's account of ancient philosophy. They are "spiritual," Hadot explains, not because they have some connection to God, prayer or devotion, but because they imply a transfiguration of perception, involving not only the intellect but one's "entire psychism" and "inner self" (PW, 82, 83). In his own formulation on the essay on the topic,

[Philosophy] is a concrete attitude and determinate life-style, which engages the whole of existence. The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level, but on that of the self and of being. It is a progress which causes us to be more fully, and makes us better... . The object of spiritual exercises is precisely to bring about this transformation... . Little by little, they make possible the indispensable metamorphosis of our inner self.²⁶

Second, even though Hadot does not hold intellectual or cognitive exercises in as high a regard as Cooper and does not limit ancient philosophical spirituality exclusively to these kinds of practices, his extensive list of spiritual exercises explicitly encompasses those "exercises of reason," such as rational argumentation and logical analysis in pursuit of truth, which Cooper considers the core of ancient philosophy (and indeed of philosophy in general). As Hadot explains, strictly intellectual exercises – such as study, reading, research, discussion, rational argumentation and disputation – serve as the "nourishment" for thought or mind exercises. However, in Hadot's broader understanding of spirituality, even activities that appear to be purely intellectual (such as Plato's dialogues, dialectic, the disputation of arguments, etc.) are

26) See PW, 83. See also Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 59: "[T]he ancients considered philosophy as a choice which committed a person's entire life and soul. This is why the exercise of philosophy was not solely intellectual but could also be spiritual."

viewed as spiritual exercises, insofar as they are not merely theoretical expositions of knowledge, but rather take a specific form intended to produce an “effect of formation” in the interlocutor.²⁷

Finally, Hadot’s emphasis on spiritual exercises as central to ancient philosophical practice highlights not only philosophy’s potentiality to transform characters and ways of living but also the difficulty and challenges inherent in achieving such self-transformation. This difficulty seems to be overlooked by Cooper, who does not consider the possibility that, regardless of how rigorously philosophy is supported by rational arguments and proofs, and despite one’s conviction of its truth, it might still fail to directly influence one’s character and way of life. Hadot’s conception of spiritual exercises thus encompasses a wide range of philosophical practices, some of which nonrational and involving not only reason but all the faculties of the individual, the aim of which is precisely to facilitate the translation of theory into lived practice. Theory, rational argumentation, and strictly intellectual exercises are important elements of ancient philosophy, but they are not enough to bring about the radical transformation of one’s inner self and way of living that is at stake in ancient philosophy.²⁸ Theoretical discourse is fundamental, but it must be internalized; it must become inner discourse if it is to shape one’s way of life. Spiritual exercises are precisely those practices that allow an external (theoretical) discourse to become an inner discourse and lived practice. They are intended to strengthen the persuasive force of previously acquired truths (dogmas) and ensure that knowledge is assimilated and internalized, becoming perfectly familiar and connatural, so that they “become ‘nature and life’ within us” (PW, 100).

In fact, what Hadot conceives of as spiritual exercises does not seem to be far from what Cooper describes as “ways of getting oneself to understand the real meaning and implications of philosophical arguments and philosophical positions, to fix them in one’s mind and make oneself ready to apply them smoothly to situations of life as they may arise.”²⁹ Even though Cooper acknowledges that the “intellectual training required to live philosophically” is an important part of ancient philosophy, he emphasizes that “there is nothing at all ‘spiritual’ in Hadot’s sense of the term” because such exercises “have

27) See Hadot, PW, 89–93; *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 177–78; and *Selected Writings*, 58–59.

28) On this point, see Ngo, “Cooper vs Hadot,” 29ff.

29) Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, 402 n. 4.

no affinity with St. Ignatius's meditations on sin and on the passion of Christ."³⁰ Given that Hadot explicitly denied St. Ignatius' influence or any religious root in his conception of "spiritual exercises,"³¹ Cooper's divergence from Hadot in this respect seems to be largely based on a misreading of his account. This, in turn, seems to stem primarily from Cooper's significantly different metaphilosophy and narrower conception of the term "spiritual." As shown, in Hadot's broader understanding of spirituality, pure exercises of reason, theory and rational argumentation are not only present but also necessary (even if not sufficient) to translate philosophical discourse into lived practice.

3. PWL as Primarily Practice

A second, more moderate reading of what Hadot had in mind when he described ancient philosophy as a way of life recognizes that, for Hadot, the philosophical way of life in antiquity involved both practice (spiritual exercises) and theory (philosophical discourse). However, practice was decidedly more important than theory, to such an extent that philosophical discourse played only a secondary and less important role. As Miranda Vilchis puts it, "Hadot advocated the stronger idea that, although discourse was still necessary, its importance was minor compared to that of practice."³² More concretely, he describes Hadot's account as follows:

The two elements that compose the ancient philosophical way of life are practice and discourse. The first is the key component. It is itself composed of choosing a way of life and doing spiritual exercises... . The second element is discourse... . Its role was only to justify and support the practice of spiritual exercises, and therefore of a philosophical way of life... . Therefore, ancient philosophy is mainly a form of life. Philosophers are persons living peculiar lifestyles that they have chosen independently of theory. The way of life determines discourse, but not vice-versa.³³

30) Ibid., 402 n. 4.

31) See Hadot, *The Present Alone*, 92ff.

32) Miranda Vilchis, "The Place of Discourse," 421.

33) Ibid., 421.

Even though praising the way Hadot emphasized an important trait of ancient philosophy that significantly and rightly distinguishes it from contemporary philosophy (the importance of living a good life and the role philosophy played in enabling it), Miranda Vilchis considers that Hadot “overestimates the living component and does not sufficiently appreciate the vital role of theory in philosophy.”³⁴ By prioritizing practice over theory, Hadot ends up, according to Miranda Vilchis, “downplaying and dismissing the importance of discourse.”³⁵ Against Hadot, Miranda Vilchis argues that despite the relevance of living philosophically for the ancients, philosophical knowledge and the indissociable pursuit of truth had an “equally, and perhaps primordially, relevant role and status ... in the lives of philosophers,”³⁶ for, as he adds, “knowledge, or at least approximately true and justified belief, is indispensable for living the philosophical way of life.”³⁷ The priority of practice over theory is thus criticizable because, in his view, theory and practice enjoyed an at least equal significance in ancient philosophy – as exemplified by the figure of Socrates, which the author uses to illustrate his point. As Miranda Vilchis claims, “living philosophically was crucial for the ancients, but so was the pursuit of truth and a deeper understanding of reality.”³⁸ Emphasizing the vital, practical role of ancient philosophy to the detriment of its theoretical component and its pursuit of knowledge and truth does not, as such, do full justice to what was at stake in ancient philosophy, where according to Miranda Vilchis both theory and practice played a fundamental and, at least, equally important role. As he concludes, “philosophy was essentially composed of theory and practice for the ancients. Living according to reason was important but no more than rationally knowing the world and our place in it.”³⁹

34) Ibid., 419.

35) Ibid., 424.

36) Ibid., 419.

37) Ibid., 428.

38) Ibid., 419.

39) Ibid., 428. Another version of the same criticism is presented by Hélder Telo, who, similarly to Miranda Vilchis, criticizes the way in which “reason ... plays a secondary role in their [Hadot’s and Foucault’s] accounts of ancient philosophy” (Telo, “On the Role of Reason,” 207). While Hadot’s emphasis on the practical and performative component of ancient philosophy, as well as his notion of philosophical training and exercise, reveals an important aspect of ancient philosophy, the secondary role ascribed to *logos* ends up, according to Telo, obscuring the core of ancient philosophy and the way in which all this training and exercise was in fact primarily related to reason (ibid.).

Different to Cooper, then, Miranda Vilchis accuses Hadot, not of completely neglecting the role of theory and reason (*logos*) in his account of philosophy as a way of life, but simply of not recognizing the central (and primary) role they played in ancient philosophy: a role that the author considers, contrary to Hadot, as at least as important and central as practice. As in the previous case, I shall not discuss this criticism in detail, but rather evaluate whether this reading of Hadot's depiction of PWL is accurate. Did Hadot conceive of PWL as primarily a practice, neglecting the central role of reason, theory, and truth in ancient philosophy? Did he ascribe a secondary and hence minor role to theory and discourse compared to practice? If so, in what sense?

Firstly, it is evident that Hadot would disagree with the thesis sometimes suggested by Miranda Vilchis (and obviously by John Cooper), according to which theory and rational discourse are the primary aim or most important component of philosophy (in antiquity or ever). Hadot very explicitly claims that practice, lived practice, was the end goal of ancient philosophy, discourse being a means to this end and, as such, subordinate to practice. As he claims in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, "theory was never considered an end in itself," but rather "clearly and decidedly put in the service of practice" (PW, 60) or, more concretely, "of the philosophical life" (PW, 267). In this sense and coherently, Hadot insists that "philosophical discourse must be understood from the perspective of the way of life which it is both the expression and the means."⁴⁰ But does the fact that Hadot does not consider theory or discourse an end goal imply that they were less important or relevant than practice for ancient philosophers?

I have already implied in the last section that this is not the case, but we can now delve into it in more detail. As we have already seen, in the introduction to *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* Hadot claims that indeed "philosophy is above all a way of life, but" – and this *but* must be emphasized – "one which is *intimately linked to philosophical discourse*."⁴¹ Aware of the misunderstanding that his emphasis on practice could generate, in an essay titled "Ancient Philosophy: An Ethics or a Practice?," Hadot clarifies that one must not conclude that philosophical discourse "is not itself

40) Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 4.

41) *Ibid.*, my emphasis.

a crucial part of philosophy.”⁴² On the contrary, Hadot emphasizes that “philosophy is ... a way of life which brings with it, integrally, a certain mode of discourse,” which, in turn, “plays a vital role in the philosophical life.”⁴³ Consequently,

They [philosophical discourse and the philosophical life] are ... incommensurable – but also inseparable. There is no discourse which deserves to be called philosophical if it is separated from the philosophical life, and there is no philosophical life unless it is directly linked to philosophical discourse.⁴⁴

Moreover, in the aforementioned essay, Hadot claims that there is a relation of dependency of the former on the latter, such that philosophy as a way of life not only requires but even “*presupposes* the existence of a highly systematic theoretical discourse.”⁴⁵ This highly systematic theoretical discourse must not be understood as a purely intellectual construction conceived independently of its practical consequences, as, according to Hadot, it aimed to gather the different dogmas of the school, presenting them in the most concise and articulated form and facilitating their memorization and application in each situation of the philosopher’s life.⁴⁶ The aim of theoretical and systematic discourse was, thus, in Hadot’s words, that of “producing an effect upon the soul of their listener or reader,”⁴⁷ and this is why even theoretical discourses, systematic constructions and, in general, written texts can, in Hadot’s view, be considered spiritual exercises. Philosophical activity and progress, however, always imply a certain form of discourse, for as Hadot points out, “the philosopher, who himself practices

42) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 69.

43) Ibid., 69.

44) Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 174.

45) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 60, my emphasis.

46) See for example Hadot, PW, 267: “Philosophical discourse was not systematic because it wanted to provide a total, systematic explanation of the whole of reality. Rather, it was systematic in order that it might provide the mind with a small number of principles, tightly linked together, which derived greater persuasive force and mnemonic effectiveness precisely from such systematization. Short sayings summed up, sometimes in striking form, the essential dogmas, so that the student might easily relocate himself within the fundamental disposition in which he was to live.”

47) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 61.

philosophy, cannot act upon himself and others except through discourse.”⁴⁸ In another formulation, “when we wish to teach philosophy and invite people to practice it, we are obliged to use discourse”⁴⁹ and, indeed, the philosophical way of life is nothing but the internalization and assimilation of the theoretical discourse into one’s own inner discourse, letting philosophical discourse go, as Hadot says, “from exteriority to interiority.”⁵⁰

This is why philosophy as a way of life is deeply dependent on and indeed presupposes a highly rigorous systematic theoretical discourse, even if it is not reduced to it and does not see it as its sole task or end goal. As Hadot emphasizes, under influence of the Stoics, there is a fundamental difference between philosophy and philosophical discourse: while philosophical discourse contains (complex and elaborate) theories on logic, physics and ethics, philosophy consists in living logic, physics and ethics (see PW, 69). In other words, when it comes to philosophy, the aim is not simply to elaborate, study or discuss systems of logic, physics, and ethics, but to live according to that incorporated knowledge. As Hadot explains, in that passage from philosophical discourse to philosophy, “we no longer study logical theory – that is, the theory of speaking and thinking well – we simply think and speak well. We no longer engage in theory about the physical world, but we contemplate the cosmos. We no longer theorize about moral action, but we act in a correct and just way” (PW, 267).

Hadot thus rejects the common assumption that ancient philosophers offered ways of living because their ethics were more developed than the other parts of philosophy: practice must not be reduced to the ethical part of philosophy because “lived philosophy is not limited to the practice of moral duties,” but “also involves a control of the activity of thought and cosmic consciousness. Lived philosophy is thus a practice or a way of life which embraces all human activity.”⁵¹ As a consequence, the frontier between theory and practice should not be situated between ethics and the other parts of philosophy, but rather within each part of philosophy, each containing a theoretical

48) Ibid., 69.

49) Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 138.

50) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 69.

51) Ibid., 68–69.

discourse *and* its practical application, including their spiritual exercises to facilitate the transition from theory to lived practice.

In fact, when it comes to philosophy, both the distinction between theory and practice, and the division of philosophy into parts seem annulled, for philosophy is “an exercise of virtue and wisdom” and, as such, “a single [or unitary] act, renewed at each instant.”⁵² For this reason, Miranda Vilchis is certainly incorrect when claiming that for Hadot philosophy “was more a practice than a discourse, more a mode of life than of wisdom,”⁵³ because mode of life and wisdom are not oppositional poles; indeed, wisdom requires *both* discursive theory and lived practice. Logic, physics and ethics are interrelated and equally important virtues that mutually implicate each other: one cannot be exercised without the others and “it suffices to practice one to practice all of the others.”⁵⁴ For the same reason, philosophy is an activity that necessarily involves both theory and practice as equally relevant and mutually implicated components that cannot exist independently: without practice, theory is just discourse about philosophy, not proper philosophy; but without theory there is no practice either as each school is founded on a certain philosophical discourse and justified by it (even if its original impulse is a non-discursive choice for a certain mode of life). Both theory and practice, rational pursuit of the truth and way of life, are essential and intrinsic components of philosophy and, in Hadot’s conception of philosophy as a way of life, the elimination or neglect of one of them risks leaving us with something that could no longer be understood as philosophy. In this sense, Miranda Vilchis rightly claims that “theory and the mode of life are not distinguishable in the way required for theory to play a minor role”⁵⁵ – but, contrary to his assumption, Hadot would certainly agree on this point. As Hadot himself concludes, philosophy “always swings between these

52) Ibid., 68; see Hadot, PW, 267. See also Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 68: “in this unified act of philosophizing, logic, ethics, and physics are not really distinguished, except on the basis of their different relations to their specific objects: the world, human beings and one’s own thought.” See also Hadot, PW, 268: “in Stoicism, as in Epicureanism, philosophizing was a continuous act, permanent and identical with life itself, which had to be renewed at each instant.”

53) Miranda Vilchis, “The Place of Discourse,” 425.

54) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 68.

55) Miranda Vilchis, “The Place of Discourse,” 425.

two poles: the discourse and the choice concerning a way of life”⁵⁶ or, in another formulation, “philosophy is, above all, a mode of life, which includes a certain mode of discourse as one of its integral parts, without being reduced to it.”⁵⁷

4. PWL as Equally Theory and Practice

The last reading I would like to discuss in this essay is a response to several critics of Hadot, which can be found in various papers published by Matthew Sharpe, particularly the one I will focus on: “What Place Discourse, What Role Rigorous Argumentation? Against the Standard Image of Hadot’s Conception of Philosophy as a Way of Life.”⁵⁸ Among the scholars currently working on Hadot and philosophy as a way of life, Matthew Sharpe is undoubtedly the one who has taken the various criticisms of Hadot’s work most seriously. Addressing these criticisms is important, in Sharpe’s view, not only to promote a better understanding of philosophy as a way of life but also to ensure it is taken seriously in the current academic and philosophical milieu.⁵⁹ While responding not only to Cooper’s, but also to Nussbaum’s and William’s similar readings (or, in his view, misreadings), of Hadot’s account of ancient philosophy, Sharpe tries to demonstrate that emphasizing the role of practice in ancient philosophy does not necessarily imply diminishing the importance of reason and rational argumentation – and, in fact, according to his reading Hadot does not do it, recognizing instead the vital importance of both components in ancient philosophy:

Hadot maintained that there is an inescapably vital role for philosophical argumentation in philosophy as a way of life in the ancient schools – while proposing that the ancient philosophers also recommended extra cognitive “spiritual exercises” to facilitate students’ living certain kinds of lives.⁶⁰

56) Hadot, “Qu’est-ce que l’éthique?,” 135.

57) Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 36.

58) See also Sharpe, “Not the Chrisippus You Read,” “Drafted into a Foreign War?,” and “Spiritual Exercises and the Question of Religion.”

59) See Sharpe “What Place Discourse,” 32.

60) Ibid.

Throughout his article, Sharpe emphasizes the fundamental role that reason played in Hadot's account of ancient philosophy, while not diminishing the importance spiritual exercises played in it as well. As Sharpe claims, it is one thing to say that "ancient philosophy *included* and prescribed non- or extra-cognitive exercises to habituate students," and another thing to say that "philosophical discourse (about logic, physics, ethics, politics, metaphysics, theology ...) had *no* place [whatsoever] in ancient thought."⁶¹ According to Sharpe, while Hadot emphatically endorsed the first claim, he has never defended the last one. Indeed, Sharpe insists that there is nothing in Hadot's metaphilosophical conception of philosophy as a way of life that prevents "rational systematization being central"⁶²: on the contrary, as we have seen, this conception of philosophy even *presupposes*, as Hadot claims, "the existence of theoretical discourses which are very systematic."⁶³ As Sharpe argues, theoretical discourse was central to Hadot's reading of ancient philosophy inasmuch as what was intended was to master and transform one's inner discourse through the theoretical discourse of each school, which should not only be understood and apprehended, but also incorporated and applied to the different situations in life.⁶⁴ In Sharpe's formulation:

Philosophy as a *bios* in no way negates the defining import of rational argumentation and discourse in philosophy. Everything remains in place. It is just that Hadot stresses that, for the ancients, philosophical discourse needs to be fully internalised, not simply assented to in abstraction, if the practical and normative implications of its theoretical claims about the world are to be integrated into a person's life... Guardrails against *akrasia*, Hadot's spiritual exercises represent the habituating conduits necessary to make the theoretical conquests of the philosophical discourse into the lived realities of students' changed ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, faced with the countervailing forces of habit, convention, and the passions.⁶⁵

61) Ibid., 38–39.

62) Ibid., 40.

63) Hadot cit. in *ibid.*, 40.

64) See *ibid.*, 41–42.

65) Ibid., 47.

The systematization of the different theories and precepts of each school, along with traditional philosophical tools such as dialectics and disputation, made this ultimate goal easier and, as such, were themselves conceived as spiritual exercises. They were important not only as a means of discovering theoretical truths but also as a way to produce a radical break with common habits, attitudes, and patterns of behavior that Hadot describes as the radical conversion to a new (philosophical) way of life.⁶⁶ This ultimate goal in no way diminishes the place and role of theory, systematization, rational argumentation, and truth in ancient philosophy. As Sharpe concludes, Hadot's emphasis on spiritual exercises (including non- or extra-cognitive activities) "just did not and does not commit him to downplaying, dismissing, distorting, or denying ancient philosophers' specific discursive means and practices, or their systematic theoretical goals (at least the goals of the dogmatic, non-sceptical schools)."⁶⁷ In Sharpe's reading of ancient philosophy, then, theory and practice assume equally important and central roles, maintaining a reciprocal relation in which neither component can be dispensed with.

It is difficult to contest Sharpe's well-argued and documented demonstration of the equally relevant roles of theory and practice in Hadot's conception of philosophy as a way of life, which aligns with the interpretation I have tried to defend throughout this essay. However, for the sake of clarity, it is important to emphasize one crucial aspect that, even though implied, is slightly overshadowed in Sharpe's account, namely: while both theory and practice are important – and indeed equally important – in Hadot's account of philosophy as a way of life, there is, in fact, a primacy of the latter over the former. Not in the sense that the latter is more relevant than the former, but because, as emphasized in the previous section, the latter is an end in itself, while the former is only a secondary or intermediate end (that is, a means to an end) and, as such, is always thought of as subordinate to and at the service of this final end. As Hadot formulates, theory or philosophical discourse was "only one element of philosophical activity," intended to ground the particular way of life and spiritual exercises of each philosophy – but was never considered an end in itself

66) See *ibid.*, 52.

67) *Ibid.*, 53.

(see PW, 60).⁶⁸ What was crucial was the practice of this theory – the effort to translate it at each instant, in every action and behavior, into one’s way of life.⁶⁹ This leads Hadot to ultimately claim that “the essential element of philosophical life is, indeed, non-discursive, to the extent that it represents a choice of life and a will to live in a particular way, with all the concrete consequences that this choice implies in everyday life.”⁷⁰

As Sharpe rightly points out, this in no way diminishes the relevance and role of theory and rational argumentation in Hadot’s account. However, it is the primacy of practice over theory that distinguishes Hadot’s conception of philosophy from other possible models, not only the most rigid ones that see theoretical speculation, rational argumentation, and systematization as the only object and goal of philosophy, but also more moderate ones that see room for eventual practice and application of philosophical theories and doctrines, but place theory and practice in a neutral position between each other or see practice as an optional consequence or possible application of theory in one’s actions and life. In contrast, for Hadot, the practical goal is the very origin of, and justification for, theoretical elaboration, which ends up justifying a given (philosophical) way of life, but that would not exist if the aim of living a philosophical life and the existential option of living a particular way of life was not there in the first place, instigating the conversion that originates and determines philosophical activity.⁷¹

68) Even Aristotle, who could be seen as an exception to this rule, is interpreted by Hadot as prioritizing a way of life – in his case, the “‘theoretical’ way of life” (Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, 80). Although Aristotle regards knowledge an end in itself, his conception of philosophy extends beyond a purely theoretic pursuit (as opposed to a practical one), insofar as the pursuit of knowledge involves a “way of life which consists in devoting one’s life to this mode of knowledge” (ibid., 81). On the distinction between “theoretic” and “theoretical,” see Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 71–73. For a detailed discussion of Aristotle in the context PWL, see Sellars “Aristotle and Philosophy as a Way of Life.”

69) See for example Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 75: “Certainly, there cannot be philosophy without the inner and external discourse of the philosopher. However, all the philosophers about whom I have talked considered themselves as philosophers not because they developed philosophical discourses, but because they lived philosophically.”

70) Ibid., 69.

71) It is also this primacy of practice over theory that, in Hadot’s view, makes philosophy as a way of life particularly relevant and capable of competing with the prevailing model in contemporary academies. More than the theoretical constructs of ancient philosophy, it is mainly its diversified spiritual exercises that can be particularly useful today. See Hadot, PW, 281ff. On the contemporary relevance and utility of spiritual exercises, see for example Banicki, “Therapeutic Arguments;” Chase, “Which School;” Chase, “Pierre Hadot and His Critics;” Deroche, “Living Mindfully Through Crisis;” Favara-Kurkowski, “Reclaiming Time Aesthetically;” Giamarelos, “Contemporary Pursuits;” Pavie, “Ancient Spiritual Exercises.”

Using a Stoic metaphor that Hadot quotes several times in his work (see e.g. PW, 267),⁷² just as the aim of a carpenter is not simply to learn a discourse about the art of carpentry, but to acquire the skill that enables him to build a house, in philosophy as a way of life what is at stake is not to learn a discourse about philosophy but to acquire the skill that enables one to live well, that is, philosophically. In order to actually build the house, it is fundamental that the carpenter becomes acquainted with the art of carpentry, without which a house would never be built (even if, one might assume, some practical trial and error must have preceded any theory or established art of carpentry).⁷³ Similarly, the theoretical discourse that underlies the art of living is essential, since it would not be achievable without a theoretical basis (even if, again, the theoretical discourse emerges already as a justification of a given mode of life). But on the other hand, the only reason why the carpenter cares about the discourse on the art of carpentry is his need to build a house, without which the discourse would be empty, vain, meaningless, and purposeless. I believe it is on these terms that we should understand the relationship between theory and practice in Hadot's model of philosophy as a way of life: theory is fundamental in order to live a philosophical life, but apart from this intent, philosophical discourse is just as empty, vain, meaningless, and purposeless as the art of carpentry would be without a house ever being built.⁷⁴

5. Conclusion

When discussing Hadot's metaphilosophical model of philosophy as a way of life, it is common to speak of a supposed opposition between theory and practice, as if Hadot had characterized philosophy as a practice rather than describing it as a theory (or discourse), as it is commonly understood today. Hadot sometimes expressed himself in ways that suggest this reading, and in their effort to emphasize the practical dimension of ancient philosophy, or philosophy's vital and self-transformative potential, scholars

72) See for example Hadot, *Selected Writings*, 64.

73) I'm thankful to Matteo Stettler for sharing this insight with me and for helping me to further develop this metaphor regarding the relationship between theory and practice in ancient philosophy.

74) See *ibid.*, 59 (referring himself especially to the Hellenistic period): "philosophical discourse is only undertaken as a means for the soul to procure *ataraxia* or inner peace."

working in his wake might also have contributed to this simplified vision of Hadot's account of philosophy as a way of life. Hadot's most fervent critics, such as John Cooper, appear to endorse this reading, further intensifying the opposition by asserting that philosophy is, has always been, and must necessarily be, a rational discourse or an exercise of reason (and nothing else), that is, a theory (and not a practice).

But do we really need to choose between theory and practice? Does it make sense to discuss (and even worse, decide), whether philosophy is or should be a theory or a practice? Independently of our answer to this question, Hadot does not seem to ask us to make this choice. As I hope to have shown, his account of philosophy as a way of life accommodates both theory and practice as central and essential components of philosophy (both in antiquity and generally), his only point being that we ought not to reduce philosophy to mere theory. While this little word "mere" is often forgotten or neglected by critics of Hadot, as well as his advocates – and, one must acknowledge, sometimes by Hadot himself – it is decisive and makes the difference. Philosophy is and has always been a certain form of theory or discourse. There is no doubt about that, and Hadot does not seem to contest it. However, and this is what Hadot emphasizes, at its origins and for a good part of its history, philosophy was not only, not simply, not merely a theory, but *also* a practice, an art of living, a way of living, that is, a perfect combination between theory and practice. Hadot further emphasizes that this combination was not constituted by the accumulation of one after the other, as if practice would somehow be added to the theory, as a mere application of theory. What he tries to stress is that philosophy is in fact a unitary act, where the difference between theory and practice is somewhat annulled or subsumed – indeed, in Hadot's account of philosophy as a way of life, theory and practice are united, giving rise to a different entity which is simultaneously neither of them and both: philosophy.

While this may help to dispel concerns related to an alleged neglect of reason, truth, theory, or discourse in Hadot's account of philosophy as a way of life, it also denounces as non-philosophical conceptions of philosophy that reduce it to a set of abstract doctrines with no practical counterpart or impact in one's life. Using a claim that John Sellars borrows from Tom Stern, which I believe Hadot would endorse, all philosophy worthy of the name includes both theory and practice and involves both a pursuit of truth and knowledge and a desire to transform one's life and way of

being in the world.⁷⁵ Eliminating or neglecting one of the components is giving up philosophy altogether, for, paraphrasing Sellars, whoever does philosophy well “shall always end up with both.”⁷⁶

Acknowledgement

This work was funded by national funds through the FCT–Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., under the Norma Transitória DL 57/2016/CP1453/CT0042, IFILNOVA’s Programmatic Project UIDP/00183/2020 and the Exploratory Project “Mapping Philosophy as a Way of Life: An Ancient Model, A Contemporary Approach” (2022.02833.PTDC).

I’m grateful to Gianfranco Ferraro, Michael Chase, Matteo Stettler, and Lucas Nascimento Machado for their insightful comments and suggestions on a previous version of this paper.

75) See Sellars, “What Is Philosophy as a Way of Life,” 48–49, 53.

76) Ibid., 53.

Bibliography:

Banicki, Konrad. "Therapeutic Arguments, Spiritual Exercises, or the Care of the Self. Martha Nussbaum, Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault on Ancient Philosophy." *Ethical Perspectives* 22, no. 4 (2015): 601–34.

Chase, Michael. "Pierre Hadot and His Critics on Spiritual Exercises and Cosmic Consciousness: From Ancient Philosophy to Contemporary Neurology." In *Hadot and Foucault on Ancient Philosophy: Critical Assessments*, edited by Marta Faustino and Hélder Telo, 137–62. Leiden: Brill, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004693524_008.

—. "Which School of Ancient Greco-Roman Philosophy is Most Appropriate for Life in a Time of COVID-19?" *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 5, no. 1 (2021): 7–31. <https://doi.org/10.14394/eidos.jpc.2021.0002>.

Cooper, John. "Ancient Philosophies as Ways of Life." *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values: Volume 32*. Edited by Mark Matheson. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2013.

—. *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691138602.001.0001>.

Del Nido, Daniel. "Pierre Hadot on Habit, Reason, and Spiritual Exercises." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 46, no. 1 (2018): 7–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12205>.

Deroche, Marc-Henri. "Living Mindfully Through Crisis: Searching for Life Advice in the 'Philosophy-Medicine' of Buddhism." *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 5, no. 1 (2021): 50–69. <https://doi.org/10.14394/eidos.jpc.2021.0004>.

Faustino, Marta. "A Contamination of Philosophy by Religion? Reassessing Hadot's Notion of Spiritual Exercises." In *Hadot and Foucault on Ancient Philosophy: Critical Assessments*, edited by Marta Faustino and Hélder Telo, 115–36. Leiden: Brill, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004693524_007.

Favara-Kurkowski, Monika. "Reclaiming Time Aesthetically: Hadot, Spiritual Exercises and Gardening." *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 5, no. 2 (2021): 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.14394/eidos.jpc.2021.0014>.

Ferraro, Gianfranco. "Philosophical *Mythoi*: The Birth of Spirituality from the Nature of Things." In *Hadot and Foucault on Ancient Philosophy: Critical Assessments*, edited by Marta Faustino and Hélder Telo, 89–114. Leiden: Brill, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004693524_006.

Giamarelos, Stylianos. "Contemporary Pursuits of Philosophy as a Way of Life." *Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy* 12, (2018): 131–36. <https://doi.org/10.5840/wcp23201812347>.

Gould, James. "Becoming Good: The Role of Spiritual Practice." *Philosophical Practice* 1, no. 3 (2005): 135–47.

Grimm, Stephen, and Caleb Cohoe. "What is Philosophy as a Way of Life? *Why Philosophy as a Way of Life?*" *European Journal of Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (2021): 236–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12562>.

Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. Edited by Arnold Davidson. Translated by Michael Chase. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell, 1995.

—. *The Present Alone Is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson*. Translated by Marc Djaballah. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

—. "Qu'est-ce que l'éthique?" *Cités* 1, no. 5 (2001): 129–38. <https://doi.org/10.3917/cite.005.0127>.

—. *The Selected Writings: Philosophy as Practice*. Translated by Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2020.

—. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Michael Chase. Cambridge: Belknap, 2004.

Miranda Vilchis, Rogelio. "The Place of Discourse in Philosophy as a Way of Life." *Metaphilosophy* 53, (2022): 418–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12576>.

Ngo, Trung. "Cooper vs Hadot: On the Nature of Hellenistic Therapeutic Philosophy." *Noësis Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy* 19, no. 1 (2018): 24–32.

Nussbaum, Martha. *The Therapy of Desire. Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Pavie, Xavier. "Ancient Spiritual Exercises in Contemporary Philosophy. Actualization of Philosophy as a Way of Life." *Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy* 10, (2018): 127–31. <https://doi.org/10.5840/wcp23201810261>.

Sellars, John. "Aristotle and Philosophy as a Way of Life." In *Hadot and Foucault on Ancient Philosophy: Critical Assessments*, edited by Marta Faustino and Hélder Telo, 338–58. Leiden: Brill, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004693524_017.

—. "What is Philosophy as a Way of Life?" *Parrhesia* 28, (2017): 40–56.

Sharpe, Matthew. "Between Too Intellectualist and Not Intellectualist Enough: Reading Pierre Hadot via Julia Annas." *Journal of Value Inquiry* 55, (2021): 269–87. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-021-09815-z>.

—. "Drafted into a Foreign War? On the Very Idea of Ancient Philosophy as a Way of Life." *Rhizomata* 8, no. 2 (2020): 183–217. <https://doi.org/10.1515/rhiz-2020-0009>.

—. "How It's Not the Chrisippus You Read: On Cooper, Hadot, Epictetus, and Stoicism as a Way of Life." *Philosophy Today* 58, no. 3 (2014): 367–92. <https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday20145225>.

—. "Spiritual Exercises and the Question of Religion in the Work of Pierre Hadot." *Religions* 14, no. 8 (2023): 998. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14080998>.

—. "What Place Discourse, What Role Rigorous Argumentation? Against the Standard Image of Hadot's Conception of Ancient Philosophy as a Way of Life." *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, Special Volume: *Self-Cultivation: Ancient and Modern*, (2016): 25–54.

Telo, Hélder. "On the Role of Reason in Ancient Philosophical Practice: An Intellectualist Reframing of Hadot's and Foucault's Approach." In *Hadot and Foucault on Ancient Philosophy: Critical Assessments*, edited by Marta Faustino and Hélder Telo, 205–29. Leiden: Brill, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004693524_011.

Williams, Bernard. "Do Not Disturb." *London Review of Books* 16, no. 20 (October 1994). Available online at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v16/n20/bernard-williams/do-not-disturb>.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.