Troubling Analogies: Pierre Hadot and the Reconceptualization of Philosophy

Lee David Clarke

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham Trent University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2023

Re-Submitted August 2024

Abstract

The principal aim of the thesis is to redefine what the discipline of philosophy *is*. The thesis argues that with the advancement of globalisation, philosophy as it is currently practiced is losing legitimacy and relevance. In many parts of the so-called 'Western world', philosophy is not applicable to many peoples' lives and consists almost exclusively of the study of the ideas of Europeans and those of European descent, which, whilst more than worthy of the high regard in which they are held, negates the philosophical achievements of the non-West. Due to this, a reconceptualization of philosophy is required, and the framework within which to update the discipline can be found in the work of Pierre Hadot (1922 – 2010).

Hadot rediscovered that ancient philosophy was practiced as a way of life that encompassed the whole person, not just studied as an intellectual discipline. The goal of ancient philosophical thought was to reach a state of inner mental unperturbedness known as *ataraxia*, through physio-intellectual exercises that Hadot termed 'spiritual exercises.' Through a comparison of the Hellenistic Schools (principally Stoicism) and Buddhism, it is argued that this set of ideas brought to light by Hadot, termed the 'Hadot Paradigm' can be found in both the West and East in near identical forms.

The Hadot Paradigm can, with some elaboration of its own ideas, specifically regarding the place of poetry and the poetic, thus act as a suitable foundation upon which a bridge between Asian and Western philosophy can be constructed and sustained, acting as a 'paradigm shift' for philosophy. The contribution of this thesis to the discipline is a valid path towards a modernised, inclusive, and above all enriched formulation of philosophy that will be able to continue addressing the problems of the human condition in a globalised, interconnected world and maintain the title it has held for millennia of 'Queen of the Sciences'.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

I would like to extend my utmost thanks and gratitude to my supervisors Dr Neil Turnbull, Dr Ruth Griffin and Dr Andrew Taylor for all their generous support and assistance with this thesis over the previous four years, I could not have completed this project without them. I'd also like to warmly thank my parents for all their love, encouragement and moral support.

Lastly, I'd like to dedicate this thesis to my sister Laura Hana Clarke (1999-2018)

Contents

Abstract, Copyright Statement and Acknowledgements and Dedications……. 2

Introduction: Philosophy in the Age of Globalisation…….. 4

Chapter I: The Hadot Paradigm……. 35

Chapter II: Poetic Philosophers: How Three Thinkers Disobeyed Plato……. 75

Chapter III: The Poetic as Sustainer……. 108

Chapter IV: Marcus Aurelius' Meditations and the Dhammapada: Eastern and Western 'hypomnemata'……. 145

Chapter V: Zen and the Art of Poetic Philosophy……. 176

Chapter VI: Defending Hadot: A Response to Critiques and Limitations……. 228

Bibliography……. 276

Introduction: Philosophy in the Age of Globalisation

Every historical era is said to be defined by an event, or series of events, that symbolises the *zeitgeist* of that particular time. The eighteenth century, for example is defined by the revolutionary ideas and ideals that emerged out the enlightenment, the twentieth by the struggle between liberalism, fascism and communism. Our current historical era is defined by the cultural effects of globalisation. Globalisation has been defined by many different scholars and there is no standard definition that covers all its aspects. However, what seems to be most essential is globalisation's deterritorializing aspect. In this vein, Jan Aart Scholte (2005, p. 59), for example, defines globalisation as 'the spread of transplanetary – and in recent times also more particularly supraterritorial – connections between people'. This deterritorialization is deemed to have significant cultural, political and ontological effects. As Ali Mohammadi (1997, p. 3) says, globalisation impacts on the way:

> in which, under contemporary conditions especially, relations of power and communication are stretched across the globe, involving compressions of time and space and a re-composition of social relationships.

In this regard, globalisation refers to the process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected in social, cultural, economic, and personal terms. Such a process, however, is not modern, and could even be said to be something natural to human advancement. Even before the so-called 'Age of Discovery' and subsequent European colonisation of areas of Asia, Africa and the Americas, ideas, technology and religious beliefs had for centuries been transported across Afro-Eurasia as a byproduct of trade – and sometimes conquests. Such intercultural exchange was done via numerous conduits such as the famous *Silk Roads* across Eurasia and the conquests of Achaemenid Persia, Alexander of Macedon, and later the legions of Rome, as well as various raiding nomadic peoples.

All of this trade and conquest brought together numerous territories and peoples allowing for easier cross-cultural interactions. The Islamic world later, especially Spain, also served as a key hub for such transference, normally being the in-between for the movement of various commodities and ideas from the Far East and Central Asia through to Europe, after the *Dar al-Islam* was itself influenced by intellectual currents from all three regions, especially Europe in the form of the works of Aristotle. Later, the conquests of the Mongols under Genghis Khan (1162-1227) and his immediate family furthered such cultural and intellectual interactions and exchanges. As Marie Favereau (2021, p. 3) describes it 'For the first time, people and caravans could travel safely from Italy to China'. (See al-Hassan and Hill 1986, Hansen 2012, Starr, 2013, Whitmore, 2015, Vallejo 2022, Faveareau, 2021 and Harl, 2023). All of the preceding should put an end to the view that globalisation is a modern phenomenon and not something that goes back far into human history, even if called by a different name.

Speaking of the modern sense of globalisation, however, traditional ties of family, city and nation have become blurred and sometimes have disappeared altogether. Globalisation is thus characterised by cultural multi-polarity, de-sitedness and cultural disembedding. The existential ties that have traditionally kept individuals linked to their *homeland*, their *site*, have been cut by the globalising process. In terms of culture, for example, what were once separate cultures have been brought into closer proximity and formed into a *hyperculture* that as Korean-German philosopher, Byung-Chul Han (2022, p. 9) writes:

> *de-distances* cultural space. The resulting closeness creates a richness, a corpus of cultural lifeworld practices and forms of expression. The process of globalization accumulates and condenses. Heterogeneous cultural contents are pushed together side by side. Cultural spaces overlap and penetrate each other. This unbounding also applies to time. Not only different sites but also different time frames are *de-distanced* so that the different is placed side by side. The feeling of hyper-, rather than the feeling of trans-, inter-, or multi-, is the most precise expression of today's culture. Cultures implode; that is, they are *de-distanced* into a hyperculture.

This *hyperculture* is increasingly challenging established notions of Western cultural and intellectual hegemony. Western academia has also been similarly challenged by globalisation and there have been many different responses to this. Importantly, since globalisation is bringing the world as a whole into ever closer contact, the centre of gravity of the intellectual world can no longer be assumed to be Western in character; as it has been in much of the modern period. Other regions of the world being increasingly de-obscured and de-mystified as they are brought into a clarity that reveals layers of suppressed significance and importance.

One recent academic response to this issue has given rise to calls for the 'decolonisation' of Western forms of academia and scholarship. In the wake of events such as the *Rhodes Must Fall* campaign in South Africa in 2015 and the *Black Lives Matter* protests in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd in the United States, decolonisation, and correcting racial and historical forms of conceptual and epistemic injustice, have become a prominent issue of concern in both public and academic contexts. Within Western institutions of higher education, scholars have been seeking to identify and undo the legacy of colonialism and 'decolonise their curricula'. In this context, universalising institutions such as the university have come under scrutiny and academics have had to come to terms with the historical role of the university in forms of colonialism predicated on the abolition of conceptual otherness. As Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu (2018, p. 5) write in their introduction to *Decolonising the University*, the Western university has acted as a key site in the nexus of production and institutionalisation of the colonial enterprise, both intellectually and practically. The fact of the university's implication in the colonial project necessitates a response that derives from a purely academic standpoint, as well as from wider society. As one of, if not the oldest continuing academic discipline, philosophy has a key role to play in addressing these issues.

The Challenge to Philosophy

Within this globalising context, philosophy is one subject that is taking centre stage in the debate, on both the public and academic stages, regarding the colonial legacy (see Malik, 2017, Gordon, 2019, Black, 2022 and Gordon 2023). In a strictly academic context, philosophers have tried to address the issue of decolonisation by steering the discipline in line with the general globalising current, albeit in different ways. Analytic philosophers (who are not themselves specialists in forms of philosophy from outside the West), such as A.C Grayling (2019, p. 513) have realised that the gap in knowledge of non-Western schools of philosophy needs to be filled by students of 'serious ideas' sensitive to the 'comparisons and differences' between diverse conceptions of philosophy, 'not least from the point of view of being fascinated by the comparisons and differences between them and Western philosophy, is a requisite for the serious student of ideas, even if access to those in other traditions has always to be achieved via translation'.

One way has been to reassess the legacies of great philosophers whose views, whilst uncontroversial in their own historical and cultural contexts, have recently become problematic. Notable figures from classical Western philosophy such as Aristotle have not escaped the clamour for reassessment, given that he defended the necessity of slavery and went against ideas of human equality (see Callard, 2020). Other philosophers have recognised that, given the increasing geopolitical importance of countries such as China and India, there is a pressing need to learn about their philosophical traditions and ways of viewing the world, as these forms of wisdom can no longer be assessed solely against Western standards of rationality and reasonableness. China and its philosophical traditions pose particular challenges in this respect. Here, Bryan W. Van Norden (2017, pp. 3-4) says the following:

> Chinese philosophy deserves greater coverage by U.S universities for at least three reasons. First, China is an increasingly important world power, both economically and geopolitically – and traditional philosophy is of continuing relevance […] China's current president, Xi Jinping has repeatedly praised Confucius….Having an informed opinion about issues like the preceding is important for understanding China's present and future. How will the next generation of diplomats, senators, representatives and presidents (not to mention informed citizens) learn about Confucius and his role in Chinese thought if philosophers refuse to teach him?

Decolonization agenda-setters are calling for more inclusive forms of conceptuality and ways of knowing. This demands more than bland forms of corporate inclusivity. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres et. Al. (2018, p. 65) write:

> […]far from simply diversifying philosophy and 'including' people of colour in it, decolonising philosophy requires a decolonial turn that touches on all the various aspects of philosophy as a field and as a practice.

They go on to write that simply introducing more diversity to philosophy is not enough, because doing only this could be likened to window dressing; to cutting the leaves of a dead tree without striking at its root. The problem is that much of the commonly accepted view of philosophy as a wholly Western phenomenon, the sole product of Ancient Greece, derives from the colonial era and from colonial mindsets. As Peter J Park (2013, p. 1) writes, the exclusion of Africa and Asia from the story of philosophy told in the West is in historical terms, quite recent, only having taken place from the late eighteenth century onwards.

From this, we can see that this philosophical exclusion of the non-West derives from the colonial era. That is not to say, of course, that every philosopher who believes these statements is a pro-colonialist, far from it. However, the idea that philosophy is necessarily Greek in provenance has become part of intellectual common sense, so much so that the result has been the exclusion of many ideas and intellectual currents from outside of Greece and regions influenced by its culture. The Western colonial enterprise was often based on the

idea of extending ‘civilisation’ to native populations. Built into this mission was the stance that those populations, unlike Europeans, ‘lacked’ rationality since being rational was seen as necessary in the creation of a true ‘civilisation’. Therefore, the Greek rationalist tradition that began with Aristotle and Plato became part and parcel of colonialism as it was used to ‘educate’. Everything seen as non-rational was therefore excluded, although as stated, this presumption about the lack of reason in non-Europeans was often already viewed as fact by default.

Recently, scholars of comparative philosophy have begun to take note of this. Bret W. Davis (2020, p.28) is one such contemporary Western scholar who has written about the exclusion of Eastern, specifically Asian, philosophy. In his view, ‘Asian philosophical traditions are not only frequently forgotten, they also have often been intentionally excluded.’ More generally, the blatant exclusion of non-Western philosophical traditions, even when it has been acknowledged that cultures outside the Euro-North-American orbit have their own long-established traditions of thought, has given rise to stereotypes that still abound about them. Specifically Asian traditions, from countries such as India, China, Japan and others, are regarded as being ‘spiritual’, ‘mystical’ and ‘religious’ unlike the ‘scientific’ and ‘rational’ Western philosophical tradition. As Sophia Rose Arjana (2020, p. 12) summarises the current, stereotypical thinking: ‘The Orient’s magic and spirituality is presented as the antithesis to the modern West and its post-Enlightenment commitment to rationality and logic’.

Such inaccuracies regarding Indian philosophy, for example, have begun to be contested in recent years. Thomas McEvilley (2002, p.650), the author of a large comparative study of Greek and Indian philosophy called *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, says the following about comparisons of Indian and Western philosophy:

> Because of its longstanding connection with religion, and the particularly overpowering presence of Hinduism, Indian

> thought has often been regarded in the West as something other than – and implicitly less than – philosophy, something that lacks the autonomy and abstraction of pure philosophy.

Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach and Leah Kalmanson (2021, p.3), following McEvilley, agree that many now-common views about both Asian and Western philosophical traditions are simply incorrect and that 'even a cursory study of recent world history indicates that ideological reasons have been largely instrumental in driving this supposedly neat bifurcation' between philosophical perspectives from the opposite ends of Eurasia.

We can see that many philosophers are indeed attempting to right the wrongs revealed by the decolonising current. It may be said that individual thinkers have always tried to engage with the world outside of the academy, but philosophy as a whole discipline has not. This is shown by its rushed effort to reassess itself and its foundations, including its famous thinkers in the wake of relevant political events. This lack of disciplinary engagement with wider society, however, has led to a second, related challenge to Philosophy: its perceived lack of relevance and practicality.

Philosophy is often dismissed as irrelevant or impractical, outdated or superfluous in a world more focused on the progress of science and technology. It has been characterised as such by scientists like Steven Hawking who said at a 2011 conference that 'philosophy is dead' (see Harman 2012) and Neil Degrasse Tyson who said in an episode of Nerdist Podcast that Philosophy was 'useless' and 'can really mess you up' (see Levine 2014). Philosophy is thus facing a crisis of legitimacy in our current climate, philosophy is distant, sometimes, absent, from wider public life.

Of course, philosophy has the potential to achieve actual, measurable societal change, as well as to improve peoples' lives. For philosophy to maintain, and regain, its relevance as a discipline in our modern globalising world that is challenging established hierarchies and

embracing practicality, it must do so the same. Philosophy should the wider world as well as with the decolonisation agenda, which shall remain our focus. Such a task is anything but a 'quick fix' and will require profound rethinking and changes, including modifying our very conception of what philosophy is: A reconceptualization.

A New Foundation – Beyond Western Rationalism

If we are to take these strictures with the requisite degree of seriousness, we must completely overhaul philosophy as a discipline and readdress our notions of what philosophy actually *is.* We need to create a new, more inclusive, global conception that encompasses as many traditions of thought as possible that can speak to, as well as address the contemporary issues of today, as well as ancient philosophical questions. The key question now is: How exactly is this to be done? A path that addresses and solves every issue that is bound to be raised by such a project would be an impossible undertaking. It is a task that the global philosophical community has to embark on together. But no matter how daunting the task ahead seems, one thing is clear: The foundation for this new conception of philosophy cannot be based on traditional conceptions of Western rationalism.

To demonstrate the rationale behind this decision, an example from the history of philosophy will suffice. In medieval Baghdad, Muslim, Jewish and Christian philosophers and theologians engaged in constant intellectual and religious debates. Unlike debates between adherents of the same religion, these cross-faith discussions could not be done in the same way; none of the three groups could use their own sacred texts as the basis for a discussion. A Muslim could not convince a Christian or a Jew of the truth of Islam by citing the Koran because neither Christians nor Jews accepted the Koran as revealed scripture. Likewise, a Christian could not cite the New Testament, which to Jews, was not valid and to Muslims was corrupted. Lastly a Jew could not propose using the Hebrew Bible because to their

Muslim opponents, it was again, corrupted and to Christians, it was valid; but had been superseded by the New Testament. Due to this, debaters had to find something that all three faiths could agree on to act as a firm foundation for healthy debate. They found their point of convergence in the works of Aristotle, who adherents of all three faiths regarded very highly. Scholars did not just trust blind faith and saw it as necessary to prove that their beliefs could be supported with rational foundations. Aristotle's works thus functioned perfectly as a secure framework for inter-faith discussions (see Gutas, 1998, p. 158 and Griffith, 2008, pp. 106-119)

The reason for using this scenario is that, in a similar manner, Western rationalism is unable to necessarily be extended to philosophical traditions from other parts of the world because rationalism was not the main conduit via which they conducted philosophy. That is not to say that these traditions were somehow 'less rational' than Western ones, for philosophers in these regions also made use of reason in philosophical analysis. It is also not to say that *all* forms of philosophy, from whatever geographical region do not share many substantial commonalities. But it is to say that that many forms of philosophy that arose independently of Greece did not base their whole philosophical enterprise on reason, as Greece, and later Western traditions, did. Thus, as in Baghdad, there is a need to find a new, more inclusive basis, on which to base and extend a reconceptualised philosophy.

If Western rationalism were used as the foundation for a globalised, decolonised conception of philosophy, it would cancel out traditions that had very different philosophical ideas to the West. Such ideas include indigenous forms of philosophy such as that of the Aztecs (*Mexica*) and their metaphysical monism (Maffie, 2018), the Maya and their view of 'embedded personhood' (Mcleod, 2018) and the New Zealand Māori, and the fact that they see no separation of 'space' and 'time' within their worldview. (Stewart, 2021). It also would

include Zen Buddhism, which, as we will see later, views logical, rational analysis as an impediment to the experience of reality and the realisation of enlightenment. All of these preceding traditions did not base their philosophical opinions (solely) on rationalism, but they are still just as intellectually complex and sophisticated as Western traditions are. A revamped conception of philosophy based solely and principally on Western rationalism, which is almost entirely theoretical in nature, and devoid of a strong practical element, will also only lend further support to the idea that philosophy is too outdated a subject to really address today's world and the issues that people face and increase its lack of legitimacy.

The Solution – And its Problems…

A suitable foundation for a new, global view of philosophy that addresses, and potentially solves, the issues outlined above must be common to both to all forms of philosophy in order to facilitate genuine dialogue, as well as being able to seriously address the relevant philosophical issues of our own era. It is proposed that the common denominator across diverse philosophical traditions is the fact that philosophy has been or is not viewed as separate from daily life, in fact philosophy is seen as a way of life in itself. That idea is no more clearly expressed than in the work of French historian of philosophy, Pierre Hadot (1922-2010)

Pierre Hadot, as he relates in later interviews (2009/2011, pp. 1-36) was born into a mixed Franco-German family and trained originally at the behest of his devoutly Catholic mother, to be a priest. During his training, he learned ancient Greek and Latin, and acquired a love of Greco-Roman antiquity. When he decided to leave the priesthood, he studied and taught the texts of the Neoplatonist founder, Plotinus (204/5 CE – 270 CE) and came to realise that ancient philosophy had originally been practised as a way of life (Gk: βίος), not simply as an academic pursuit. But what exactly does this concept refer to?

Today, philosophy is seen as the quintessential academic subject. Innumerable definitions of it have been proposed over the centuries, and to examine them all in the detail that they require would be almost impossible. However, definitions of the word given by philosophers themselves, principally focus on the idea that philosophy is an attempt to answer the fundamental questions of reality and existence, primarily using rational and logical analysis. Looking at recent definitions of philosophy, to paraphrase Bertrand Russell (2004, p. 1), who wrote a comprehensive history of Western philosophy in the twentieth century, philosophy is something 'between theology and science'. It appeals to reason, as science does rather than authority but also attempts to answer questions of which certain knowledge is sometimes unattainable, as in theology.

More recent definitions have tended to follow the general conceptual lines established by Russell. A.C Grayling (2019, p. xv) writes that 'through almost all of its history, "philosophy" had the general meaning of "rational enquiry"…' and Richard Seaford (2020, p.7) writes: 'I define 'philosophy' as the attempt to explain systematically, and without relying on superhuman agency, the fundamental features of the universe and the place of human beings in it.'

It is often assumed that philosophy has always possessed these general features and that it has remained static throughout its history, never really changing in response to the context surrounding it. In the modern era, studying philosophy in university courses principally consists of the study of canonical philosophical texts and responding to them through rational questioning and critique. Some scholars think that this situation is merely a continuance of tradition, that this has always been what philosophy has meant since ancient times. As Mauro Bonazzi (2023, p. 77) writes about the consequences of the 'decentralisation of philosophy'

during the early Roman imperial period, philosophical study consisted of 'the exegesis of what were regarded as authoritative and truth-bearing texts'.

However, despite this view of philosophy, as a discipline focused on reason, logic and textual analysis from the ancient period onwards, we know that philosophy was not always seen in this vein, especially during the ancient Greco-Roman era that Bonazzi mentions. Hadot reintroduced the idea that ancient philosophy was conceptualised not just as something to be studied in an academic setting, but also seen as a practical way of life[1] (Gk: βίος).

In the context of the Hadot Paradigm, philosophy was supposed to completely transform the individual's way of viewing and being in the world. Its goal was inner peace or tranquillity (Gk: *ἀταραξία*/*ataraxia*). The philosophical schools of antiquity all had this goal but taught different ways of achieving it. They all also shared the view that humans, in their common-sense, everyday existence are living inauthentically. As Hadot (1995, p.83) writes:

> It is a concrete attitude and a 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 process which causes us to *be* more fully and makes us better. It is a conversion which turns our entire life upside down, changing the life of the person who goes through it. It raises the individual form from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by consciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life in which he attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace and freedom.

The means by which one achieved *ataraxia* and became free of the passions according to Hadot was through doing what he called 'spiritual exercises' (Fr: *exercices spirituels*). These physical exercises included such acts as meditation, constant attention (Gk: *prosche*) to one's personal conduct, reflection on the impermanence of life, constant writing down and repetition (Gk: *hypomnemata*) of a particular school's teachings, imagining oneself seeing the

[1] Despite his earlier characterisation of ancient philosophy quoted above, Bonazzi (2023, p. 167) writes regarding Neoplatonism: 'As is widely known, the ancients has always conceived of philosophy as a way of life; in late Neoplatonism, this practice translated into life choices deeply marked by the religious dimension'.

earth from above, etc. The exercises were supposed to help reinforce what was known intellectually to be true in a practical manner so that it changes our inner character. Paraphrasing Stephen R. Grimm and Caleb Cohoe (2020, p. 243), spiritual exercises 'allow us to assimilate what we have judged as true and to practice it in different contexts so that it becomes second nature'. There is much more to say about the practical element of spiritual exercises, but before that, we should examine one more part of the Hadot Paradigm, indeed where such spiritual exercises would have been taught: The philosophical school.

The Philosophical 'Total Institution'.

For Hadot, as we have seen, philosophy possessed a practical, existential element that is very different to how the discipline is viewed and classified within modern academic institutions, where the theoretical takes precedence over the practical. Institutions of philosophy, however, which Hadot calls 'philosophical schools' are central to his ideas. He says that the key to interpreting ancient philosophical writings is to situate them within the historical and material context of the philosophical school in which they were written. Crucially, however, he also adds that in contrast to our modern institutions of philosophy, the *raison d'etre* of ancient philosophical schools was not simply to inform students about the theoretical side of philosophy, but to show them how to live:

> We know that it is often extremely difficult to follow the thread of ideas in ancient philosophical writings…In order to explain this phenomenon I gradually came to observe that it was always necessary to explain the text in light of the living context in which it was born that is to say the concrete conditions of life of the philosophical school in the institutional sense of the word. In antiquity, the priority of the school was never to disseminate a theoretical, abstract knowledge as we do in our modern universities.

These schools could take a variety of forms including physical places or simply be a word to refer to a group of philosophers who lived a particular mode of life and believed in a specific

set of philosophical doctrines that distinguished them from other groups. Again, ancient schools thus included a lived, as well as a theoretical element to their pedagogical projects unlike in modern universities in which the lived side is almost entirely absent. One famous school of the Hellenistic period was the Garden of Epicurus where, as Diogenes Laertius (2019, p. 497) relates, Epicurus' friends 'flocked to him from all sides and lived with him in his garden as Apollodorus says…living very frugally and simply'. Although this was not the case for all schools, the practice of students at a school living with their teacher for their studies evidently continued throughout antiquity. In 232-233 C.E, Theodore, a young man passed through the city of Caesarea in Palestine on the way to modern Beirut to study Roman law and ended up staying and studying with the Christian philosopher, Origen of Alexandria (185 - 253 C.E) for five years (see Löhr, 2010). Later still, the Neoplatonist Porhyry (2018, p. 21) originally from Tyre, now in Lebanon, writes in his *Life of Plotinus* that he 'was with him for this year and the following five years without a break – for I came to Rome a little before the end of Gallenius' first ten years in power'.

Philosophical schools, then, were fundamental to the philosophical life as they were the environment in which a philosopher began and continued the journey towards an attainment of *ataraxia* through spiritual exercises, a true ontological transformation. Many of these students would then go off and found their own schools, as Aristotle did with the Lyceum. Within the context of a school, with others, a student learned to see life and to live in a different way, to overcome many of the ailments of the human condition. In this way, these schools, as well as the philosophical life in general, were profoundly un-egalitarian, philosophers were taught. at least in their way of living, to regard themselves as separate from the 'masses' who continued to persist in delusionary enslavement to their untamed emotions. Ancient schools of philosophy were an ancient equivalent of what American sociologist, Erving Goffman (2022, p. xi) calls a 'total institution' which he defines as:

> a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.

Now, students at ancient schools were not physically 'cut off' from wider society in the same way as medieval Christian monks, for example. Anyone could visit a school to sit in on the lectures and discussions without having to stay there indefinitely and some schools did not have a physical building. However, the students could be described as at least intellectually and culturally demarcated from wider society due to their way of living and viewing the world. In this manner, students at an ancient philosophical school were indeed 'enclosed' for 'an appreciable period of time' as Goffman says.

Like Goffman's other examples of total institutions, asylums, prisons, military barracks and other such settings, a philosophical school also sought as its goal to remake the self of the individual student, as mentioned above, but not in a negative sense, for the remaking of the self, the transformation of the soul through the practice of spiritual exercises would lead to inner tranquillity. The philosophical school, then, is an important part of the Hadot Paradigm, for it is the key background context, not only for comprehending the composition of philosophical texts, but also for understanding the teaching of spiritual exercises. Learning how to perform such exercises formed part of a communal pedagogical enterprise that was itself part of a 'total institution' that combined the practical and theoretical aspects of philosophy. Now, we turn again to Hadot's concept of spiritual exercises, and its important revealing of the practical aspect of philosophy, acknowledged in schools of Greco-Roman philosophy, but neglected in our own era.

Spiritual Exercises and the Body

We have seen that in the context of the ancient philosophical school, as well as in Hadot's wider view of philosophy, that along with intellectual study, spiritual exercises were essential

to living philosophically. Again, they reveal that a practical side of philosophy has always been present; a side that, as we have seen, is in dire need of recognition and renewal. If one merely knew about philosophical teachings theoretically, but did not practice them, one could not be called a philosopher. Hadot's work, then, shows us that ancient philosophy drew upon the unique symbiotic relationship between the intellectual and the practical that is often forgotten or glossed over. The principal target for philosophical conversion and transformation was always the soul of the individual. As Caroline Vout (2023, pp. 66-67) writes, for Greco-Roman philosophers, and society in general, 'it is the soul, and not the body that "maketh the man"', the soul is what makes human beings individuals and constitutes their 'essence'. It is a person's soul, their sense as subject viewing the external world as object in the form of their inner thoughts, feelings and way of thinking that were to be trained and gradually changed by such a philosophical way of life.

However, crucially, this focus on the soul did not therefore automatically entail that the body itself played no part. As already stated, spiritual exercises had to be performed physically, as regular exercises do, or they would have no tangible effect. Going further, the body of a philosopher became an important tool via which the inward transformation of the soul could be physically demonstrated and somewhat 'proved' to others in an outward manner. Epictetus in his *Discourses*[2] writes of the importance of possessing a healthy body because as Gevaert (2017, p. 214) summarises 'people won't have much confidence in a skinny philosopher, for he has to prove the benefits of his (philosophical) way of life with his body'. John Sellars (2009. pp. 18-19) gives a clearer example of this when he writes how something as trivial as the beard of a philosopher acted as a signifier to which form of life that they followed:

> For example, the Cynics, who preached strict indifference to external goods and social customs, sported the longest and dirtiest beards. The Stoics, who argued that it is acceptable to

[2] 3:22, verses 86 – 89

> prefer certain external goods so long as they are never valued above virtue, also sported long beards, but engaged in occasional washing and trimming for purely practical considerations. The Peripatetics, who following Aristotle, believed that external goods and social status were necessary for the good life together with virtue, took great care of their beards, carefully trimming them as was appropriate for a member of the traditional Greek aristocracy.

The use of the body as a philosophical tool, did not always have to be direct, or involve a physical demonstration to be effective. The late antique Neoplatonist and mathematician, Hypatia (350/70-415 C.E), was admired by contemporaries for living according to the philosophical principles she professed. One way in which she did this was her practice of chastity. Due to a common Neo-Platonist stance of the soul being more important than the material body, Hypatia refused to indulge in sexual relations in order to show her commitment to this idea. She refused the advances of many male admirers and kept her celibacy until her murder in 415 C.E. (see Watts, 2017 pp. 104-105 and Bradatan, 2015, p. 89) Hypatia then also used her body to profess her way of life, but unlike the practice of spiritual exercises, Hypatia chose to do this in essentially a negative sense, not by what she did with her body, but by what she did *not* do.

Either way, the effect achieved was still the same and Pierre Hadot shows us that despite philosophy being principally regarded as a discipline of the mind, in order to a function as a true way of life that encompassed all of the human condition, the physical, practical element of philosophy is something that could not be neglected. As Bradatan (2015, p. 86) writes, philosophers must turn their bodies ‘into a means of philosophizing. Their flesh must become a live inscription of their philosophy’. Hadot’s work supports the idea that in antiquity, that was exactly what philosophers attempted to do daily. The Hadot Paradigm, with its focus on spiritual exercises, thus amounts to a reinvigoration of the practical elements of the philosophical project.

Why Hadot?

Before we move onto some of the issues that need to be smoothed over in The Hadot Paradigm, and now that the basics of its ideas have been laid out, it remains to be said why this set of ideas was chosen over others. Admittedly, The Hadot Paradigm is, or at least derives from, 'The West', which matters when my thesis seeks to stop Western intellectual hegemonic imposition over traditions from outside it and as such, justification is required.

Hadot's ideas add an element of practicality to philosophy in the form of conceiving of philosophical schools as ways to live that included spiritual exercises. Thus, it expands our current understanding whilst still allowing enough of it to remain so as not to represent a complete and utter rupture, which may be alienating. Most other paradigms lack this emphasis on the practical and are only theory-based, but it is vital that some physical element is returned to philosophy to ensure it is more relevant to peoples' lived experiences.

There are other stereotypical misconceptions, for instance that philosophy is completely separate from all other fields of knowledge and that traditions from outside of the Euro-North American cultural sphere, are not as rational, or as logical as their Western counterparts. The Hadot Paradigm actively disputes these ideas. It shows not only that Philosophy has developed in tandem with other fields, such as religious studies, politics and literary studies, and thus should engage with them, but also that Western Philosophy in its heyday of the Greco-Roman era rarely stuck within the finely demarcated boxes imposed anachronistically around it by some modern philosophers.

This knowledge will result in an *equalising* of philosophy, both in the sense of showing that philosophy is linked intimately with other fields of academia but also by showing that this mixture, which occurred in multiple philosophical traditions does not mean that it can also not be philosophically rigorous.

The Hadot Paradigm was chosen because it is also evidence-based. Hadot formulated his ideas about philosophy from reading the extant texts themselves and reacting accordingly. He did not try to fit the content from the texts into a pre-conceived mould, thereby distorting them, but developed his ideas only after reading them. His argument for a philosophical way of life is thus supported by a form of evidence which affords it academic legitimacy.

Similarly, when one examines other philosophical traditions that lie outside of the Western world, there are already indigenous beliefs and practices that parallel Hadot's conception of Greco-Roman philosophy. There is really no need to square a circle by 'forcing' other philosophical traditions into the Hadot Paradigm, because they are already there. My thesis will make a case that we can compare Buddhism and the Greco-Roman schools, mainly Stoicism, through The Hadot Paradigm. It will demonstrate that both Greco-Roman schools and Buddhist schools conceived of a lived philosophy in the same fundamental way. The point of allowing the emergence of these commonalities is to show those that may doubt the philosophical robustness, or even the validity of 'philosophy' outside of the West that in many ways, there are more similarities than differences. Therefore, we should recognise the contributions of all of these traditions.

Although Buddhism will be the focus as the main Asian tradition under investigation, it is not just Buddhism that fits neatly into Hadot's conception of philosophy. For example, Chinese Neo-Confucians in the words of Angle and Tiwald (2017, pp. 133- 157) practiced a form of 'self-cultivation', the success of which was seen in 'helping us to improve ourselves, such that we have access to rarified states of heartmind and sagely facility in handling the complex world of human relations'. As with Greco-Roman philosophy, the Neo-Confucians also sought a higher mental state, one of sagehood, and reached this goal by spiritual exercises that included rituals, self-monitoring, meditation, 'reverential attention' and reading the Confucian cannon.

Neo-Confucianism, then, also evidently conceived of philosophy in the same manner as did The Hadot Paradigm. We can say the same for other comparisons of diverse philosophical systems. Toshihiko Izutsu (1983, pp. 474-476) in his comparison of Islamic Sufism and Chinese Taoism, says that in both traditions, man must achieve a 'spiritual rebirth' and engage in various exercises to nullify the presence of the conscious ego to reach an 'extraordinary tranquillity', which again sounds very similar to Hadot's ideas. Gregory Shaw (2024 pp. 10/58) in his book *Hellenic Tantra* compares the theurgic Neo-Platonism of Iamblichus with the Indian Hindu tantra tradition. Shaw says that theurgic rites are 'perhaps, more a way of life than a set of doctrines', which we know from Hadot's remarks also. Shaw also goes onto describe the 'powers' theurgists and tantric adepts attempted to achieve, which were the result of what he calls 'exercises':

> The development of such powers is the result of exercises designed to transform the mind and the body, and adepts in yoga who attain these powers are known as *siddhas* (perfected ones). Platonic theurgists were Hellenic *siddhas*. These Platonic adepts practiced mental disciplines and physical purifications that allowed them to incarnate the activity of the gods.

We can see then that Shaw's comparison, also of a Greco-Roman and Indian tradition respectively, would fit almost perfectly within the parameters established by the Hadot Paradigm. Both philosophical traditions spoken of by Shaw were practiced as ways of life, included certain physical exercises and were aimed at attaining a spiritual state, like *ataraxia*. Hadot's work is already familiar to Shaw, and Hadot also mentions Iamblichus. However, the same cannot be said for Tantra. Therefore, Shaw's work further supports the case that many other traditions not covered within this thesis are more than comparable using Hadot's conception of philosophy.

This is why, despite the undeniable fact that The Hadot Paradigm is a Western one, its usage is *not* a continuation of the same hegemonic, forced imposition of Western systems and ways of thinking on different systems of thought. It is neutral as it does not presume the superiority

of any one system over another. it simply looks at the system in question to see if it bares similarities with its overall approach to conceptualising philosophy, if it does, it partakes in further examination. The point, however, is that there is no changing or twisting of any philosophical system to 'fit'. The tradition is allowed and encouraged to speak for itself in its own conceptual and cultural language and entirely on its own terms.

The Hadot Paradigm is not mentioned, nor involved, yet the traditions discussed above still fit within it. Thus, the Hadot Paradigm is the complete opposite of any past occurrence of Western intellectual colonialism. Whilst aiming for understanding and a type of convergence, it respects diversity and advocates the acceptance of a globalising world like ours where wisdom is multiply located. The Paradigm thus obligates Western philosophical traditions to reexamine their supposed philosophical and disciplinary superiority, as well as the traditional view of the philosopher as solitary contemplative, it is thus a challenge to the order that this thesis seeks to disrupt, not a continuation.

Lastly, all critiques and scrutiny of my approach in this thesis are expected and welcome. But it must be conceded by any critic who questions the suitability of the Hadot Paradigm for its Western origin, that any paradigm used will have been made by someone with a particular background which they will bring to bear on their work. Despite the influences of diverse traditions on my mindset, this is no different with me. It would take an immense about of time and energy to learn how to think in a very different intellectual paradigm, that's if it were even possible in the first place. Therefore, it is much more effective if I do the best I can with the skills, knowledge and intellectual background that I currently possess.

My thesis does not intend to be anything like the final say on any of these topics. The idea is for scholars who are trained in other cultural and intellectual paradigms to also eventually come into the fold and make their own contribution towards changing our discipline. This thesis aims to be a small contribution in this cause, and it is best done applying The Hadot Paradigm.

The Poetic Bridge

There are problems with Hadot's ideas, however, which will have to be addressed to use them as the foundation for a new conceptuality. The first major problem is that Hadot's approach is centred almost exclusively on Western traditions of philosophy and whilst he does mention other traditions in his writings, he does not devote much time to them. His approach will thus have to be expanded significantly if it is to function as an effective unifying apparatus for new philosophy. The second issue, then, is how exactly to expand Hadot's ideas in a way that allows us to apply them to traditions outside their immediate milieu whilst still ensuring that they maintain their integrity? This first issue will be addressed later in the thesis. However, the second issue already has a potential solution.

Whilst Hadot does sufficiently explain the concept of philosophy as a way of life and provides an interesting picture of the scale of this view of philosophy across the Greco-Roman world, he fails to mention how philosophy as a way of life is sustained and spreads. What enabled it to reach all corners of such a wide geographical area, and once it did, how was it able to remain for so many centuries? Once we solve this, we can see how best to expand it further still.

When speaking about his intellectual influences in a speech he gave in 1993, Hadot (2020, p.34) says that chief among them was the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein and his idea of 'language games'. Hadot writes that 'the philosopher is always indeed, within a certain

language game: that is to say situated in [the framework of] a form of life or a certain attitude'. However, what exactly is the nature of the language game that the philosopher inhabits in Hadot's view? Hadot (2011, pp. 140-141) hints at an answer in later interviews and that answer seems to be poetry. Indeed, he says that the link between the philosophical life and poetry is so strong, that poetry could even be considered a spiritual exercise in itself:

> This is why we can say in general that art, poetry, literature, painting and even music, can be a spiritual exercise. The best example is the work of Proust, because his search for lost time is an itinerary of consciousness, which thanks to the exercise of memory, discovers the sentiment of its spiritual permanence.

Whilst Hadot made this and other similar statements that demonstrate at least his awareness of the importance of the poetic element of the philosophical way of life, he chose not to elaborate on it and therefore did not pursue the answer that would have plugged one of the gaps in his thought, as stated above, the issue of how philosophy as a way of life lasts and spreads from place to place. This thesis will argue throughout that the poetic is the answer to the issue, as well as something absolutely *core* to the idea of a philosophical way of life, indeed, it is the poetic that allows such a way of life to not only endure but spread. However, first, we must clearly establish what the poetic is.

The Poetic: A Brief Explanation of the Concept and 'Eastern' and 'Western' Attitudes.

Given the importance of the concept of the poetic to this thesis, as described above, it must be given a definitive definition. For it is a word that can be applied to many diverse contexts and may carry a different connotation in each one. The poetic above all relates to language. It can be defined as an abstract concept relating to language, a quality of language, or a certain and deliberate usage of language that differs from the norm.

In the contemporary era, especially in the age of social media, language is viewed and used more than ever in an everyday context as a mere tool of communication. Once it has fulfilled

its purpose, it is discarded almost without thought or appreciation. One philosopher who put such ideas at the forefront of their work was Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who published many writings on the primordiality and metaphysical centrality of the poetic as a concept.[3] In his later years, he also featured in films, one of which, 1975 documentary called 'On the Way to Thinking' has him discuss his views of language:

> The conception of language as an instrument of information is today pushed to the extreme…Indeed, we must admit that language in its daily usage appears as a means of comprehension and these means are used for the usual conditions of life.

However practical such linguistic usage may be, its casual throw-away nature means that its relation to the truth of things, to the world 'as it is' can only ever be limited or surface-level. If we wish to rectify this issue, language must be utilised and seen in a different, more profound manner. Heidegger goes on to discuss the poetic, quoting Goethe, he says that we only get by with ordinary language 'because we only indicate superficial relations. As soon as speech is made from deeper relations, another language immediately appears: the poetic' (Heidegger/Eidos84, 1975/2011).[4]

In the context of the present work then, the poetic is an alternate usage of language that aims to arrive at the truth of things that is often obscured when language is thought of as a mere communicative tool. As such, the poetic surpasses the often superficial, shallow form of everyday language and seeks to delve into, as Heidegger says, 'deeper relations' into the very being of things.

This alternative use of language is characterised by 1) a vividness of imagery and 2) an ease of recollection. The first logically will lead to the second. Using language in a deeper way, as

[3] For example, see Poetry, Language and Thought (1975) Hofstadter trans. This collection is used in this thesis and is referenced fully in the bibliography.
[4] Eidos84 is the uploader of the video from which Heidegger's quotations are taken. The full reference is in the bibliography.

above, will necessarily render the subject of that language more vivid to the reader or speaker. If something is sufficiently vivid or impactful, it will be remembered, but can also be regarded as a separate aspect.

The poetic is inherently related to poetry with which it shares etymological roots. 'Poetic' derives originally from the Greek poiētikos or 'relating to poets.' But these relations also exist because poetry uses language in such an alternate, more profound way, for example, through symbolism or metaphor. Even if poems aim not to be imagistic, the detailed way in which poetry interrogates language, milks it for all its richness enables a reader to soak it in whilst reading it slowly, necessarily means that at least some vividness will always occur in any form of poetry.

It is when language is written or used in such a 'poetic' way that certain verses or words will metaphorically 'jump' out of the text at the reader or listener. Such verses or words *emerge* in this way because they arrive at the being of things more directly. It is normally verses that are short, consisting of few words that become vivid, and so commit themselves easier to memorisation and thereby, if chosen, repeated recitation.

However, other things can also be 'poetic'; a particular life experience, a beautiful part of the natural world can 'jump out' at someone, and thus become particularly vivid and thus memorable. Whether it is a line of text or another aspect of life, what is poetic will stick in the mind, and be able to be recited, or recalled to memory, at will. It is the *emergence* and thus remembering of such poetic language, the maintaining of it in our minds that philosophically connects us with the 'deeper realities' of such language mentioned by Heidegger.

In this thesis, it will be argued that it is the poetic aspect of a philosophical way of life, including its textual aspects, as well as the notion itself, that allows it to endure and spread

over time. Hadot recognised that poetry had something to offer his ideas, but did not explicitly state what that was, thus leaving a gap in his thought that can be plugged by an application of this concept of the poetic.

Whilst, as we will see later, the West has often rejected the poetic and poetry as a valid means for expressing philosophical truth, principally due to Plato's own banishment of the poets in *Republic*. This Western mistrust of the poetic continued, almost without challenge, until the nineteenth century when German philosophers such as Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Heidegger, as well as German romantic poets such as Goethe (1749-1832), challenged the supremacy of reason and took an avowedly anti-rationalist, anti-Platonist stance. Although further elaboration is required, in his awareness of the links between philosophy and the poetic, Hadot joins these thinkers in their attempt to reevaluate the status and importance of poetry to the good life, Heidegger's work on this matter, will be examined in much more detail in Chapter III. There is, thus, arguably deriving from the Pre-Socratic and even the Neoplatonic tradition, a hitherto hidden tradition of Western poetic philosophy that these thinkers have helped to reveal.

In the East, again as will be seen further on, this mistrust towards poetry has never really taken root and, even though, Asian philosophers composed philosophical treatises and arguments that are akin to Western equivalents, poetry was still always viewed as an equally valuable means of attaining truth. This anti-poetic stance has helped to obscure many of the subtle similarities between Eastern and Western philosophical traditions and it is hoped that a rethink of poetry in this thesis, reestablishing it as not only *essential* to Hadot's work, but to philosophy generally, will act as the bridge between East and West that is sorely needed.

The Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Firstly, a deeper and more extensive overview of Hadot's ideas will be given, examining similarities between the philosophical way of life in Greco-Roman society(ies) with the milieu of Indian Buddhism. Next, we will examine Plato's dismissal of the poets from his ideal state and his reasons for this, and explore that there were thinkers, both before Plato's time, as well as after, who disagreed with his stance. The third chapter will focus on a more extensive dive into the poetic as a concept and expand on how it is essential to Hadot's ideas and their subsequent hoped-for use as a foundation for a modern view of philosophy, making heavy use of the ideas of Martin Heidegger.

Chapter IV, bringing together the insights of the previous three chapters, will be a comparison of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, a key text of Stoicism and *The Dhammapada*, an important text of Indian Buddhism. We will see not only the similarities between these two systems of thought, but also how both make use of the poetic. The fifth chapter shall be a philosophical analysis of Zen Buddhism, and of how it is able successfully to express its philosophical ideas through the medium of poetry, principally *haiku* and *jisei* (death poems) in translation. Such analysis will demonstrate how an old, yet vibrant Asian philosophical tradition and way of life in the Hadotian sense, is able to communicate its doctrines via the poetic. Lastly, in the sixth and final chapter, we will explore how Hadot's ideas can address and potentially solve issues that have arisen in twenty-first century philosophy, as well as defend Hadot from other scholarly critiques of his ideas. Finally, a conclusion will be given that ties together the arguments of the thesis and offers potential paths for the future. Before venturing into the thesis proper, however, it is right that I draw attention to some notices about it and its composition that are important to remember going forward.

Important Notices

Terminology:

There is a tendency within academia to homogenise entire regions of the world. For example, we will often say ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’. Although convenient as shorthand, decolonisation should also aim towards refining our use of language. With that in mind, wherever possible I intend to avoid this and to be as precise as I can in respecting cultural parameters.

However, there will be some cases in which I do use, or have used, shorthand terms. Crucially, their use is not meant to support inaccurate cultural homogenisation nor stereotypes but is done to save word space and time, as well as to avoid unnecessarily confusing readers who are used to such terms.

By ‘Western’ I refer to the cultural sphere predominantly covering North America, parts of Oceania, such as Australia and New Zealand, and Europe. By ‘Eastern’ or ‘Far Eastern’ I principally refer to the countries at the eastern end of the Eurasian continent, not including the Middle East, unless specified. For this thesis, the countries meant are those of the Indian sub-continent, China and Japan. ‘Far Eastern’ refers to three of the main countries of the Sinosphere: China, Korea and Japan. For Indigenous peoples within Western countries such as the Māori, I will refer to them by name. In using any term, I acknowledge that each country and region I refer to encapsulates cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity.

I will also use the term ‘non-West’ sometimes in the thesis. Whilst this also may seem an outdated term. It does have a tradition of usage within recent academia. Pradyumna P. Karan (2004/2017, p. 1) defines the term as follows:

> When we speak of the non-Western world we are referring to the areas in which cultures developed essentially apart from the Greco-Judaic-Christian tradition of the Western culture. Thus, it includes East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea), Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

I use the term ‘non-West’ following Karan’s definition. By using it, again, I do not intend to homogenise all of these diverse regions; but simply to refer to those parts of the world that lie outside of the Western cultural sphere.

All of the manifold instances of diversity can obscured by using such general terms. To reiterate, it is my intention to contribute to this updating of academic language. For any unavoidable use of such terms, however, I apologise. Any such usage is done in full awareness of the issues and problems that plague such terms

A Note on Influences

I aim to write this thesis from as neutral and objective perspective as possible. However, as I don’t believe in the existence of total, pure objectivity, and in the interests of full transparency; it is right to say a little about my personal intellectual influences.

Identifying as Buddhist, I agree with general Buddhist metaphysics, leaning towards the Mahāyāna variety and including Zen. However, this affiliation does not mean I am biased as, being a Westerner, I am also heavily influenced by, and indebted to Western Philosophy in both its ancient and medieval forms, as well as the modern European Continental tradition.

The above being said, I am determined to write this thesis impartially and without biases. However, there may be some unconscious and unintentional influences from the above throughout the present work that have now become part of my own thought processes.

A Note on the Comparative Approach

Although many philosophical schools will be referenced and examined throughout this thesis, the principal comparison will be between Buddhism, in its Indian and East Asian forms, and Greco-Roman Stoicism. The reason for this choice is that there are many points of

comparison between the two philosophies. These points of convergence will be seen in more detail throughout the thesis, but for now, it is sufficient to say that both are philosophical systems with a similar goal – the attainment of a state of mental tranquillity through control of the passions and transformation into a sage.

Although there are major divergences in some of their surrounding metaphysical beliefs and commitments, both are united in viewing the human condition as one of inauthenticity, expressed as a sense of existential suffering caused by a variation of metaphysical craving. The Stoic sense of this concept views the need for everything to be in our control as the cause of our dissatisfaction, whilst Buddhism similarly sees our lusting for permanence in both internal and external matters, as the cause of suffering, as mentioned in Buddhism's 'Four Noble Truths'. Both systems are practical paths that try to address the underlying cause of this negative aspect of the human condition. The similarities between the two sometimes appear in unexpected places and extend even to the terminology used in some cases. For example, take the view on our attitudes towards external events. First Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* Book 8 Verse 47:

> If something external is causing you distress, it's not the thing itself that's troubling you but your judgement about it, and it's within your power to erase that right now.

The medieval Indian Buddhist philosopher Śāntideva (1995, p. 35) in his work, *The Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra,* expresses very similar sentiments to Aurelius when he writes:

> In the same way, since I cannot control external events, I will control my own mind. What concern is it of mine whether other things are controlled?

In addition, scholarship has also started to take note of the similarities between the two traditions on other topics. For example, Peter J. Vernezze (2008) compares Buddhist and Stoic approaches to anger, arguing that both share a similar view of anger as something negative that should be controlled, and that in this regard, both go against the Aristotelian view that expressions of anger are sometimes acceptable. I have also undertaken an

alternative examination of the similarities between Buddhism and Stoicism through a comparison of the philosophical thought of the Indian philosopher Śāntideva (c. 685- c. 763 C.E) and the Greco-Roman Stoics in another publication (see Clarke, 2024).

The differences notwithstanding, both Buddhism and Stoicism have in common a fundamental commitment to correcting what they see as the inherent limitations of human existence and instead, to achieve an optimal standard of living through control of the mind and emotions. As we will see later, both also share the idea of spiritual exercises emphasised by Pierre Hadot. Buddhism and Stoicism, then, are extremely well-suited for a genuine and respectful comparison and it is hoped that comparing them will bear fruitful results in terms of understanding between diverse intellectual traditions

Chapter I: The Hadot Paradigm

In the introduction, we examined some of the basic ideas that constitute the Hadot Paradigm. Among them, we saw that it reintroduced the idea that philosophy was seen as a way of life, rather than just something to be studied intellectually, in antiquity. This point of view presents a challenge to the currently orthodox view of philosophy as a discipline. To see further how the Hadot Paradigm could be an effective way of building a new globalised conception of philosophy, it is necessary that we examine further how exactly it does this.

How The Hadot Paradigm Challenges Philosophical Orthodoxy

The Hadot Paradigm challenges the prevailing, principally analytic, philosophical orthodoxy in several ways. In Western views, philosophy is seen as a discipline based entirely on reason and logic. Anything not possessing a ratio-logical foundation, or that appears more 'mystical', in orientation is relegated to religion or a similar field. Whilst Hadot does not deny that reason and logic are, and always have been, fundamental parts of philosophy; his 'spiritual exercises' add something else to the equation.

Why are spiritual exercises deemed to be necessary to living a philosophical life? The answer lies in the fact that merely knowing intellectually that one should act rationally does not ensure that one *will* act as such. Therefore, to supplement the intellect, one must acknowledge the body, which as we saw above, becomes the outer manifestation of the inner transformation of the embodied soul as reason becomes a habit (Gr: ἕξις/*hexsis*). In order to overcome the passions and achieve *ataraxia,* the teachings and values advocated by a

particular philosophical school must be practiced, so that, in time, they become part of our character. Through spiritual exercises, our everyday sense of self necessarily changes to accommodate this metamorphosis, and we become a physical embodiment of the teachings we profess.

Spiritual exercises thus served to unify the intellectual and practical aspects of a philosophical life. In exercising physically, one would also be aiding their intellectual comprehension of certain teachings and vice versa. We can see this if we examine Hadot's final published book, recently published in English translation: *Don't Forget to Live* in which Hadot (2023, p. 46) talks about the exercise which he calls *a view from above* which he describes as:

> An exercise of the imagination by which one visualised seeing things from an elevated point, which one had reached by rising above the earth, most often by means of a mental flight through the cosmos.

At first glance, this exercise appears to be completely mental in nature with no physical element to speak of. this However, this view is challenged when Hadot (2023, pp. 50-52) goes on to describe the goal of this 'mental flight', from a Stoic perspective:

> The view from above can also become a pitiless gaze brought to bear upon the pettiness and ridiculousness of what inspires man's passions; for from the perspective of the view from above, the earth is no more than a point as compared to the immensity of the universe or universes…This effort to look at things from above thus enables us to contemplate the whole of human reality, in all its geographical and social aspects, as a kind of anonymous swarm, and to resituate it within the cosmic immensity. Seen from the perspective of universal nature, the things that do not depend on us, the things that the Stoics call "indifferents" – for instance, health, glory, wealth – are brought back to their true proportions.

As we can see, the view from above enables a practitioner to replace the 'ordinary' or 'everyday' way of viewing things, affected as it is by the passions and other ailments of the human condition to the 'true view' of things. After having done this exercise, a person will no longer see themselves as individual but as someone intimately connected with 'the all'. The

exercise thus dissipates any notions of separateness to both other people and the world at large. As Hadot writes, when the philosopher imagines viewing the world from the outside, it demonstrates to them the pettiness of the things over which people squabble, such as wealth and glory. As well as this, 'seeing' the world without human-imposed borders will support particularly Cynic-Stoic ideas such as cosmopolitanism: the idea that the world constitutes a single community. We can thus see how a spiritual exercise serves to reinforce what, until then, were merely abstract ideas.

The concept of a spiritual exercise is fundamental to The Hadot Paradigm because it is what enables a philosopher to truly transform themselves both within and without. One must not simply profess beliefs but ensure that one's personal conduct is an expression of those beliefs. Without the addition of a practical element, the idea of a philosophical way of life would become a mere jumble of words lacking any true substance. A way of life must encompass all our being, it cannot be solely psychological, because we also possess a physical aspect to our being, embodied existence that should not be discounted.

Spiritual exercises combine intellectual and practical aspects of the philosophical life, and show that contra to philosophical orthodoxy, pure reason and logic alone do not a philosopher make. As Daniel Del Nido (2018, p.16) says, 'The practice of rational argument alone may make us skilled thinkers, but it does nothing to affect the automatic level of our psychology'. The Hadot Paradigm thus puts forth a new conception of philosophy and what it is to philosophise. This prevailing view of the discipline, however, has also affected how the subject is taught at universities. The notion that one has to live their philosophy has more or less vanished from twenty-first century academia. The sharp contrast between antique and modern views of the subject is demonstrated by two modern followers of Hadot, Matthew Sharpe and Micheael Ure (2021, p.33), who compare modern views of philosophy as taught in universities with that of Socrates. Both opine that unlike modern philosophers, Socrates

‘did not aim to formulate, teach or interpret theoretical doctrines’ and instead sought to convert the souls of interlocuters by engaging with them in a particular mode of philosophical life.

The above leads us onto another way in which philosophical orthodoxy is challenged. We have seen that Hadot’s conception of philosophy as a way of life transforms the individual’s way of seeing the world and as he says, ‘engages the whole of existence’. It is supposed to lead to the attainment of *ataraxia*, inner peace and tranquillity, in the process dispelling our anxieties and fears. All of this sounds like a religious view of life and the prevailing consensus considers philosophy and religion to be distinct disciplines. To modern philosophers, personified especially in the Analytic tradition of Western philosophy, the goal of philosophy is knowledge or truth, not inner peace which is more suitable to religious traditions. The Hadot Paradigm suggests that this view is mistaken and that philosophy and religion, at least in antiquity, were not so neatly bisected. The goal of philosophy according to Hadot was not truth alone, but inner peace and freedom from the passions. In the West up until the Enlightenment, philosophy and religion were viewed as complementary fields, not at odds with one another. Indeed, some of the most influential Western thinkers of the Middle Ages such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (980-1037), Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) (1138-1204), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) adhered to Islam, Judaism and Christianity, respectively. All of them engaged heavily with the philosophy of Aristotle whom they used to provide a rational foundation for their faiths, for them, there was no gulf between philosophy and religion; both were entirely compatible (see Adamson, 2016, pp. 5-8 and 2019, p.5). Hadot’s ideas challenge the idea that philosophy and religion must be separated by an unbridgeable gulf and raises the possibility of a reassessment of the relationship between the two. How exactly Hadot’s ideas can re-bridge philosophy and religion will be addressed in more detail during Chapter VI.

What Are the Intellectual Origins of The Hadot Paradigm?

We have seen that the goal of ancient philosophy according to Hadot, was the attainment of a state of mental tranquillity known as *ataraxia.* Such a state was achieved by an inner transformation of the whole person, and this was done in turn by what Hadot termed *exercices spirituels* or 'spiritual exercises', which were practical exercises designed to change a person's way of viewing the world, and their place within it. For Hadot, philosophy could not be separated from life itself.

Now, we can assess its origins and to what extent it is truly innovative in nature. No idea arises in complete isolation and each one is normally the result of a combination of several other ideas from other places or scholars. Hadot's ideas are no exception to this rule. We have already seen how one of the chief influences was Ludwig Wittgenstein and his concept of 'language games', but there were others. In the introduction, it was also stated how Hadot had arrived at the realisation of the need to situate ancient philosophical texts within the context of the philosophical school for which they were written.

In this light Hadot could be classed more as a historian of ideas or a philosophically inclined historian than strictly a philosopher. Rather than serving as a limitation, this increases his ability to challenge the philosophical orthodoxy because there is a tendency among many philosophers to anachronistically project back our modern views of philosophy onto the ancient period, as we will see in more detail in Chapter VI. An historian, however, is better suited to read and consider philosophical texts within their own cultural, linguistic and historical contexts which are fundamental to understanding what the authors meant to convey when they wrote and how they themselves understood those writings.

Apart from Wittgenstein and Hadot's own academic background, there were other influences on the Hadot Paradigm, notably on the idea of spiritual exercises themselves. The Spanish Jesuit Ignatius of Loyola published a guide of Christian spiritual exercises the *Exercitia Spiritualia.* Hadot (1995, p.82) acknowledges that his version of spiritual exercises and Loyola's are similar but claims that the tradition was not invented by the Jesuit:

> Our reply simply is that Ignatius' *Exercitia Spiritualia* are nothing but a Christian version of Greco-Roman tradition…both the idea and the terminology of *exercitium spirituale* are attested in early Latin Christianity, well before Ignatius of Loyola, and they correspond to the Greek Christian term *askesis.* In turn – askesis – which must be understood not as asceticism, but as the practice of spiritual exercises – already existed within the philosophical tradition of antiquity.

Hadot (1995, p. 128) as well as other scholars like Löhr (2010) have maintained that the tradition of philosophy as a way of life was adopted by Christian philosophers who not only inherited the Greco-Roman tradition but utilised it to portray Christianity as the true and supreme philosophical way of life to compete with Pagan competitors; so the fact that this tradition was still extant within the Christian tradition later on is not surprising. Loyola's exercises are thus a Christianised version of a concept that had existed for a long time, as Hadot says, but Hadot's use of the name of 'Spiritual Exercises' did derive from Loyola's use of the term. This has been noted by other scholars such as John M Cooper (2012b, p. 40) who says that Hadot 'got this term from Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the sixteenth-century Spanish founder of the Jesuit order', a claim that Stephen R. Grimm and Caleb Cohoe (2020, p. 251) in an article about Hadot's ideas, also support. Given the preceding evidence, Ignatius of Loyola can be considered one of the intellectual influences on the Hadot Paradigm, etymologically, if not conceptually.

A final indirect influence on Hadot's thinking is that of Rene Descartes and his famous *Meditations on First Philosophy.* In *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Hadot (2002, p. 264) writes that Descartes 'knew perfectly well' that he was participating in the ancient tradition of

spiritual exercises outlined by Hadot himself. However, Hadot's interpretation of Descartes has been criticised by Kerem Eksen (2019) who says that Descartes' exercises were entirely theoretical in nature and lacked the physical, transformational aspect of antique spiritual exercises. Nonetheless, Hadot evidently saw similarities between Descartes' exercises and those of Greco-Roman antiquity, as he did with the Christian ones of Ignatius. Hadot surmised that there was a lineage of spiritual exercises that, existing since antiquity, had continued through the Christian tradition into the modern era. If Hadot is correct, then the Hadot Paradigm could also challenge the modern Western distinction between ancient, medieval and modern philosophy given that Descartes, considered the 'father of modern philosophy' by some, was participating in something that was anything but modern. More research is needed on the subject to confirm the point, however.

Descartes could thus also be said to be an influence on Hadot, even if not a direct one.[5] Given these aforementioned influences on the Hadot Paradigm we can not say that all his ideas are original, but as is shown often in the history of ideas, nothing really ever is, and this should not be taken as a limitation on the Hadot Paradigm. There are, however, limitations to it and that is what we will cover in the next section.

The Hadot Paradigm: The Need for Elaboration

[5] For an excellent summary of the intellectual origins of Hadot's ideas covering more than I was able to here see "THE TEETH OF TIME: PIERRE HADOT ON MEANING AND MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS" by Pierre Force (2011). The full reference is in the bibliography.

Having seen the some of the intellectual origins of the Hadot Paradigm, we can see that it has the potential, not only to challenge prevailing philosophical orthodoxy, but also to push it to reinvent itself to align with globalisation and decolonisation. Despite this potential, as we examined during the introduction, Hadot's ideas do suffer from some glaring limitations that need to be addressed if they are to bridge geographically distant intellectual traditions and present a sufficiently robust counter argument to the orthodox view of philosophy. One limitation, again, is its lack of clarity on how the idea of a philosophical way of life is sustained and spread both geographically and temporally; that, we will address in Chapter III. In the introduction, another problem was pointed out: Hadot's eurocentrism, then, we said that this issue would be addressed in more detail later in the thesis - it is time to do that now.

It should be noted that nowhere does Hadot express negative views towards philosophical traditions from other parts of the world and viewing the Hadot Paradigm as 'Eurocentric' should not be taken to imply such a stance. The fact remains, however, that Hadot applied his ideas solely to traditions of Western philosophy that derive from the Greco-Roman era; He thus focuses principally on Europe and the wider Hellenistic-Roman empires, which, although extended in some cases far beyond Europe, were still broadly Greco-Roman in intellectual terms.[6] Put more succinctly, although he mentions them at various points in his writings, and even suggests some similarities between them and his own thought, he did not seriously attempt to apply his ideas to Asian, African, Indigenous or other traditions of thought. This is unfortunate because all these regions contained sophisticated forms of

[6] For instance, in the Hellenistic period, Zeno of Citium was from a Phoenician background. He hailed from Citium a Greek city that contained a Phoenician community. The philosopher Crates called him "little Phoenician" maybe indicating his ethnic background (see Diogenes Laertius, 2019, pp. 312-313, Mensh trans). Zeno went on to found Stoicism, one of the most important Greco-Roman philosophical schools. In the Roman period, Porphyry of Tyre was from modern day Lebanon and Iamblichus hailed from Syria. Both areas were under Roman control but are in the Middle East and both philosophers adhered to Neo-Platonism. The point is that to be a philosopher in this period in these areas was to adhere to Greco-Roman (European) philosophy, no matter the geographical or ethnic origins of the thinker.

philosophical speculation that were, in many cases, also ways of life. This Eurocentrism may convince many that his ideas are unsuited to a modern conception of philosophy.

As we have established, due to the socio-political events currently occurring in the background of academia, such as decolonisation and globalisation, excluding entire traditions of thought is growing increasingly untenable. To remain a viable and workable set of ideas that can both increase understanding between traditions, and positively reconceptualise philosophy, the Hadot paradigm needs to be elaborated in a more cosmopolitan direction. A reassessment of Non-Western traditions of philosophy generally is necessary because they have often been marginalised and 'othered' in Western academia, as we saw in the introduction. To see why applying the Hadot paradigm to Asian forms of thought, and Buddhist philosophy specifically, would serve as an effective means of addressing the issues outlined, it would be apt to examine briefly and more deeply the historical attitudes towards these schools of philosophy to ensure that any application of the Hadot paradigm to them does not contribute, however unwillingly, to this marginalisation.

Why is a reassessment of non-Western philosophy necessary?

Due in part, as we have seen, to stereotypical views dating back to the colonial era, it has been sometimes thought that only Western thought and that which derives from it, deserves the name of 'philosophy'. In such a view, anything arising from outside this conception of philosophy is deemed unworthy of serious scholarly attention. Asian schools of thought in particular have been dismissed in the past as too 'mystical' or 'religious to count as philosophy at all. Italian philosopher Massimo Pigliucci (2006) is a prime example of this mindset, when in a blog, he dismisses Zen Buddhist koans as 'nonsense' and goes on to say:

> More generally, it could be argued that there is no such thing as Eastern philosophy…That is because philosophy is an activity of a particular kind, invented 25 centuries ago in Greece…Now, we can find plenty of interesting and stimulating Eastern texts produced over the last couple of

> millennia, from a variety of traditions including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and so forth. But none of these texts is philosophical in nature because they do not attempt to argue for a position by using logic and evidence. On the contrary, they are more alike to ancient Jewish (and then Christian) mystical writings, and are therefore not philosophy under any reasonable understanding of the term.

Recently though, specialists in cross-cultural philosophy and other fields have begun to push back against these Eurocentric views, seeing them as increasingly problematic. We have already seen the views of such scholars of philosophy as Bret W Davis and Thomas McEvilley, but such anti-Eurocentric opinions are also being voiced by scholars who are experts in fields other than philosophy.

For example, anthropologist, Jack Goody whose work focuses on the similarities between Eastern and Western cultures disputes the idea that the one is inferior or superior to the other. Goody (2006, p.119) writes that there were far more similarities and convergences between cultures across Eurasia to challenge the notion of an advanced West and 'stagnant', 'backward' East. He also disputes the idea that institutions and advancements such as towns, universities, fields such as science, economic systems like capitalism, values such as democracy, individualism, equality, freedom and even the impact of emotions, such as love, on popular and literary culture, all have solely European origins (see also Goody, 2010).

Historians are also adding their own arguments to the growing intellectual backlash against eurocentrism. For instance, Naoíse Mac Sweeney in her *The West* disputes the common narrative of Western civilisation that starts with Greece and Rome and continues until our own era. Sweeney (2023, pp. 5-6) writes:

> The modern West does not have a clear and simple origin in classical antiquity and did not develop through an unbroken and singular lineage from there through medieval Christendom, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to

> modernity…Problems with this grand narrative were first identified more than a century ago and the evidence against it is now overwhelming. Today, all serious historians and archaeologists acknowledge that the cross-fertilisation of "Western" and "non-Western" cultures happened throughout human history, and that the modern West owes much of its cultural DNA to a wide range of non-European and non-white forebears.

Likewise, Josephine Quinn in her *How the World Made the West* shows how numerous factors, such as trade, movement of peoples through immigration, conquest and other mediums all formed cross-cultural connections which resulted in what we know as the modern 'West'. Quinn (2024, p. 8) writes that even though the idea of civilisational isolation is factually wrong, it is still the norm. Many distinguish, as she says, 'the West', a Christian culture with Greco-Roman or even earlier…roots, from 'the East', whether centred on Russia, China or Islam'. Even 'multiculturalism', supposed to be a liberal counter to such ways of thinking 'assumes the existence, indeed value of individual 'cultures' as a starting point'. As we can see, then, it is not simply philosophers, but also scholars from numerous other fields who are speaking out against conventional, Eurocentric narratives of the origin of Western ideas and cultures.

Philosophers themselves, apart from those above, however, are not only starting to join other academic colleagues in disputing eurocentrism, but are also becoming more interested in diverse, unconsidered, forms of philosophy. James Maffie specialises in Aztec (*Mexica*) philosophy, (2014, p.6) and questions why some Western philosophers seem to be averse to attributing any traditions of philosophy to any culture outside of the nations of Europe and those within the European cultural orbit. Maffie opines that it is to do with Western self-image:

> …philosophy plays a vital role in the modern West's conception of itself and of the Non-Western *other*. What is at stake here is nothing less than the modern West's self-image as rational, self-conscious, civilized, cultured, human, disciplined, modern and masculine in contrast with the non-West as irrational, appetitive, emotional, instinctive, uncivilized, savage, primitive, non-human, undisciplined, backward, feminine and closer to nature.

Bryan W Van Norden, who we have met earlier, similarly disputes the idea that Eastern forms of philosophy (and Chinese thought in particular) are more 'irrational' than their Western counterparts. In his book *Taking Back Philosophy,* after summarising some ideas of Chinese thinkers to show their worth, Norden (2017, p.14) writes that those Western scholars who dismiss Chinese philosophical arguments as irrational 'do not bother to read Chinese philosophy and simply dismiss it in ignorance'.

What is more, scholars have begun seeing the influence of non-Greek ideas on Greek thought itself and challenging the idea that philosophy is solely a product of a 'Greek Miracle', as Pigliucci seems to think. As Bret W. Davis (2020, p.28) again writes in his introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy:*

> Despite the many deep disagreements among modern and contemporary analytic, continental and pragmatic philosophers regarding the nature and purpose of philosophy, they are often in agreement that philosophy is a unique legacy of the Ancient Greeks. Yet even this would-be Pax Philosophica is disturbed by a number of factors, beginning with the fact that the solely Greek origins of Western philosophy have been contested by scholars who emphasize ancient Greece's intellectual indebtedness to Egypt, Persia and India.

As Davis mentions, a view that is gathering increasing support is that Greece received intellectual and philosophical influences from surrounding cultures with which it was in contact such as Egypt, Persia and India, which would mean that philosophy is *not* an exclusively Western phenomenon. Another area of influence that Davis does not mention is the Levant. The city states of this region, now part of the Middle East, such as Tyre, and Sidon, the people of which are often classed together as 'Phoenicians' also played a key role in influencing the development of Classical Greece. As Quinn (2024, p. 145) writes, it was Phoenician sailors and traders who influenced the Greeks to not only create the *polis* and settler colonies across the Mediterranean, but also the alphabet itself, derived from their own. Arguably, without the development of the Greek alphabet, Greek philosophy could not have

developed. The Phoenicians thus also deserve to be considered another important, foreign influence, on Greek and subsequent Western thought.

Egypt, which had cultural and trade links with the Greek world for centuries before the physical conquest of the country by Alexander, is also one of the most well-supported candidate countries for outside influences on Greek thought. Scholars such as Lithuanian philosopher, Algis Uzdavinys (2008, p. iv) and Egyptologist Bill Manley (2023, p. 10) both write about the possibility of Egyptian intellectual influence on Greek thought as well as the possible existence of native Egyptian forms of philosophy independent of Greece.

India is also a strong contender for outside intellectual influence on Greece. Greeks and Indians had contact with each other within the Persian Achaemenid Empire (550 BCE – 330 BCE) which ruled parts of both Greece and the Indian subcontinent and again when Alexander conquered parts of Central Asia and India, establishing Greco-Macedonian colonies there.[7] Further interactions took place between the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire, founded by Alexander's general, Seleucus I Nicator and the neighbouring Indian Mayuran empire. (See Strootman, 2021, pp. 11-25). Later during the Roman period, there were well-documented and extensive trade ties between the Roman Empire and India, further evidenced by the remains of a Roman trading settlement in Arikamedu, Southern India (see Goody, 1996, p. 87). Given the amount of trade, it is not inconceivable that a philosopher could have travelled with traders and merchants to or from either territory or conversed with local inhabitants. The extent of trade, as well as the site at Arikamedu, tells us that there must have been Roman and Indian merchants conversant in each other's languages and customs, thus

[7] Philosophical exchange in the Hellenistic East is attested in the discovery of a scrap of papyrus that was found within the remains of the Greek city of Ai Khanoum in modern Afghanistan. It contains a discussion about Plato's realm of forms/ideas and how they relate to the material world. It is debated whether it was written by a Greek immigrant or a local, but the city is not far from India, and Indians almost certainly would have been living there, thus providing another potential avenue for the back-and-forth transmission of ideas between Greek and Indian traditions. See (Starr, 2013, p. 80) and (Kubica, 2023, p. 111)

making intellectual exchange more likely. However, given the lack of material evidence, such a hypothesis must remain speculative for now pending further research.

One scholar who has written extensively about Greco-Indian philosophical contact is Thomas McEvilley (2002, pp.642-643), who concludes that there was both Indian influence on Early Greek philosophy as well as Hellenistic Greek influence on Indian philosophy after Alexander's conquests. Christopher I. Beckworth (2015, p. 61) opines that Buddhism heavily influenced the skeptic philosopher, Pyrrho of Elis who accompanied Alexander to India saying that early Pyrrhonism is 'clearly recognisable as a form of Buddhism'. Richard Stoneman (2019, p. 354) also says that much of the extant information about Pyrrho's life and teachings 'recalls key lines of Buddhist practice'. Other scholars such as Adamson and Ganeri (2020, p. 332) are more reserved, saying 'we should almost certainly admit that ideas did filter into the ancient European world from ancient Indian culture', but in comparison to other comparable cross-cultural transmissions, 'the Indian contribution to ancient Greek thought was intermittent and largely incidental'. Summing up, a degree of Indian influence on Greek thought (and vice versa) can certainly be supported, based on the evidence and scholarship, but more research is required.

The point of this discussion is not to deny Greek intellectual achievements, nor the place of Greece as the origin point of *Western* philosophy. It is, however, to assert that Greece was not the *only* place in the world that developed philosophy, and that philosophy should be regarded as having multiple origins, not being the project of a single culture. In effect, this research, and by extension this thesis, is a concrete reassertion of the idea of the *Axial Age* by Karl Jaspers (1948) in which he opines that an intellectual transformation took place around 500 B.C.E independently in Greece, China and India that led to heightened levels of abstract thought and awareness and eventually to religion – and philosophy:

> For the first time there were philosophers. Men dared to rely on themselves as individuals. Hermits and wandering thinkers in China, ascetics in India, philosophers in Greece, prophets in Israel—they all belong together, however much they may differ in faith, content, and inner orientation.

A reassertion of the reality of the *axial age* and along with it, a reassessment of the value and worth of non-Western traditions is necessary considering the onset of globalisation because they have often been purposefully forgotten. For a new conception of philosophy, based on Hadot's ideas to take root, this intentional forgetting should be acknowledged and reversed as far as possible. Despite this, however, are we able to apply Hadot's ideas to such distinct traditions of thought, given that Hadot, as well as his ideas, are unequivocally Western?

Can Hadot's ideas be successfully applied to Eastern Philosophical Schools?

Having examined the historical marginalisation of philosophy from outside of traditional Western parameters, it can be seen why Hadot's Eurocentric approach may act as a limitation towards his ideas being accepted as a workable paradigm. However, despite this situation, it is one that Hadot himself seemed to recognise and acknowledge. Throughout his work, Hadot did admit that there were similarities between ancient Greco-Roman philosophy, his own ideas, and Eastern branches of philosophy and did not at all criticise them as 'non-philosophical'. Indeed, his opinions on the subject seemed to have progressively changed as time went on. In order to clearly view this sense of progression, it is worth comparing quotations from several of Hadot's writings on the subject.

For example, in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, in an interview with Michael Chase, Hadot (1995, p. 282) says that his main idea of spiritual exercises, so central to his conception of a philosophical way of life, has existed in other cultures, including those of Asia:

> Spiritual exercises do not correspond to specific social structures of material conditions. They have been and continue to be, practised in every age, in the most widely diverse

> milieus, and in widely different latitudes; China, Japan, India; among the Christians, Muslims and Jews.

In *The Inner Citadel,* Hadot (1998, p. 310) again refers to what he views as similarities between Chinese thought and Stoicism:

> It could be said, moreover that there is a universal Stoicism in humanity. By this I mean that the attitude we call "Stoic" is one of the fundamental, permanent possibilities of human existance when people search for wisdom.

In *What is Ancient Philosophy*, Hadot (2002, p.278) updates this opinion saying that, although he had been dismissive of comparative philosophical approaches in the past, he had now changed his mind and sees his ideas as possessing potential *universal* applicability:

> As I said, I have long been hostile to comparative philosophy because I thought it could cause confusions and arbitrary connections. Now however, as I read the work of my colleagues…it seems to me that there really are troubling analogies between the philosophical attitudes of antiquity and those of the orient…Perhaps we should say that the choices of life we have described…correspond to constant, universal models which are found in various forms, in every civilisation, throughout the various cultural zones of humanity.

After Hadot's passing, later scholars of his thought have come to share this opinion seeing the potential for a wider, more inclusive deployment of Hadot's ideas. For example, As David V Fiordalis (2018, p.9) says, Hadot's work 'provides an alternative framework for understanding philosophy as a practice, and a discipline' and therefore gifts us a unique model for comparing contrasting traditions of philosophical thought. Christopher W. Gownas (2018, p. 16) writes that the *Great Treatise* of the Tibetan philosopher, Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) 'clearly exemplifies' Hadot's ideas and so 'provides powerful support for the contention that Hadot's concept is useful for understanding Buddhist thought'.

Scholars such as Fiordalis and Gownas agree that the Hadot Paradigm can be expanded to accommodate Asian, African, Indigenous and other traditions of philosophy and that it can act as an 'alternative framework' and 'different model' for comparison. Hadot himself and these other scholars have pushed the door ajar for a genuine expanding of the Hadot

paradigm towards other philosophical traditions, without extending too far away from the Paradigm itself, inadvertently making it unrecognisable. As we saw in the introduction, the means by which the Hadot Paradigm will be expanded is through a poeticizing of Hadot, a recognition of the ability of the poetic to act as a bridge between Eastern and Western philosophy by demonstrating that the poetic is the underdeveloped core of the Hadot Paradigm. Indeed, as will be seen in Chapter III, the poetic is the thing that allows philosophy as a way of life to endure and spread.

Buddhism and the Hadot Paradigm

We will now begin to examine Buddhist philosophy through the lens of the Hadot Paradigm to view potential similarities. There may be some Western scholars, such as Pigliucci, whose view was seen earlier, who, as Buddhism is a religion, dispute the idea that systematic 'Buddhist Philosophy' exists, at least in the way that modern Western philosophers would recognise it. However, this view is itself disputed by such Western specialists in Buddhist thought as Christopher W. Gownas, quoted above, as well as Mark Siderits (2022, pp. 1-2) who, in response to this and similar opinions, writes:

> Buddhist thinkers developed and defended their views about the nature of reality out of the conviction that liberation from *samsara* (the round of rebirths and the suffering that it entails) requires overcoming our ignorance about the fundamental structure of reality, and that philosophical rationality has an important role to play in dispelling that ignorance.

In addition to the fact that Buddhist philosophy *is* expressed in a form that modern Western philosophy would recognise, it was also practiced, in a way that Hadot would have recognised - that is, as a way of philosophical life. Buddhists also used spiritual exercises, akin to those that Hadot outlines, in order to reach the goal of a form of inner tranquillity and spiritual bliss (Pl*:* *nibbāna*/Sk: *nirvāṇa*). Adamson and Ganeri (2020, pp. 5-9) agree with this assessment, explicitly mentioning Hadot by name and his ideas of philosophy as a 'way of life' and saying that Indian philosophical literature 'suggests that this idea had some currency

in ancient India'. Later, they describe it as a 'fact' 'that philosophy was pursued as a way of life in ancient India, just as in Classical Greece'. It is now time to see this borne out based on a comparison within the framework of the Hadot Paradigm.

In this section, a brief overview of the similarities of the philosophical landscapes in India and the Greco-Roman world will be given, discussing the idea of philosophical 'schools' to see to what extent the concept was similar in both places. After this, there will be a brief statement outlining the basics of Buddhist philosophy for the benefit of the reader and to compare relevant aspects with Hadot's ideas and Greco-Roman thought. Lastly, we will examine the concepts of philosophical conversion, spiritual exercises, and the idea of the sage as discussed by Hadot and again look at the extent to which they can be applied to Buddhism. The argument is that Buddhism was also a philosophical-poetic way of life that had to be lived, rather than just studied and can benefit from an extension of the Hadot Paradigm, especially when extended into the realm of the poetic. As will be seen, Buddhist philosophy has historically had a much less hostile attitude towards usage of the poetic than have Western traditions.

In order to live a philosophical life according to Hadot, one had to join a philosophical school, as we have seen above. Hadot (1995, pp. 59-60) remarked on the subject in his inaugural lecture at the College de France in 1983:

> Each school, then, represents a form of life defined by an ideal of wisdom. The result is that each one has its corresponding fundamental inner attitude – for example, tension for the Stoics or relaxation for them Epicureans – and its own manner of speaking, such as the Stoic use of percussive dialectic or the abundant use rhetoric of the Academicians. But above all every school practices exercises designed to ensure spiritual progress towards the ideal state of wisdom…The dogmas and methodological principles of each school are not open to discussion. In this period, to philosophise is to choose a school, convert to its way of life and accept its dogmas.

The concept of a philosophical 'school' is more difficult to apply to India in the same way as Hadot does to the Greco-Roman world because, as Ashok Aklujkar (2017, p.42) explains, the

lines between schools in India were not as neatly defined as those in the Greco-Roman world. For example, whilst Greco-Roman philosophers would defend their own school, and only mention their rivals in terms of criticism in clear and binary terms, Indian thinkers often wrote about a philosophical view they did not agree with more ambiguously.

Keeping what Aklujkar says in mind, the term 'school' can still be used for different groups of Indian philosophers who expounded different doctrines. As Aklujkar (2017, p.42) goes on to say, the primary division between schools of Indian philosophy is between those classified as *Astika* (Orthodox) and *Nastika* (Unorthodox). In broad terms *Astika* refers to Brahmanical schools that accept the authority of the Vedic scriptures whereas *Nastika* refers to schools such as Buddhism that do not. This distinction in Indian thought, based as it is on acceptance, or not, of the scriptural authority of the *Vedas*, is a key difference between Indian and Greco-Roman classifications of schools. Greco-Roman philosophers did not distinguish themselves from each other based on their view towards a certain scripture because their religious beliefs were too decentralised for such a situation to arise. However, it must be noted that these schools are only seen as orthodox or unorthodox from the point of view of the mainstream Brahmanical (later Hindu) tradition. Whilst the nature of the classification of schools is therefore different, the existence of schools themselves in both the Greco-Roman world and India is still a suitable basis for comparison.

Hadot communicates the philosophical landscape of the Greco-Roman world by stating that there existed several schools of philosophy that someone could make a choice to join. Joining a school, as he says above, entailed following a certain form of life. The main schools that Hadot mentions are the Stoics, Epicureans, Platonists, and Aristotelians along with others that he does not classify as 'schools' as such, but more as just ways of life, such as Cynicism and

Skepticism. However, for our purposes, they can be classed as schools.[8] Cultural differences notwithstanding, it seems that a comparable situation also existed in India. Various wandering ascetics (Pl: *samanas*/Sk: *sramanas*) and schools propounded diverse ideas and philosophical views. One could choose to join one of the 'orthodox' (*astika)*, later to become Hindu) or 'unorthodox' (*nastika*) schools. The latter included the Buddhists, Jains, the materialist *Lokayatas* or *Carvakas*, the *Ajivika* determinists, and various others (See Ganeri, 2017, p. 5 and Lahiri, 2015, pp. 35-36) Similarly, to the Greco-Roman world, many of these schools all had a comparable aim, attainment of the state of *moksha*[9] just as the Western schools all sought *ataraxia*. The attainment of such a state in Indian traditions, normally also meant liberation from the cycle of endless reincarnation known as *saṃsāra*, but that distinction between Greco-Roman and Indian thought will be examined later. This was not the case for all Indian philosophical schools, however, others, notably the *Lokyatas* rejected all belief in the supernatural, including reincarnation, and taught a materialist philosophy.[10]

Later when Indian Buddhism itself split into various schools, the situation within the Buddhist tradition was similar. As Sara L McClintock (2018, p.102), who distinguishes between schools as institutions, schools as communities, and doxographical schools, writes on the application of Hadot's version of 'schools' to Buddhist philosophy:

> Rather the benefit of turning to Hadot is to show that ancient Buddhist philosophers were also involved in an existential choice; that they too had commitments to particular schools (inst), schools (comm) and schools (dox); and that their practice of philosophy was tied to a particular manière de vivre, a way of living aimed at a transformation and betterment of the philosopher.

[8] Since both Cynicism and Skepticism professed unique ways to live and theoretically interpret the world, it is possible to class them as 'schools' and also to class more formal schools such as the Stoics and Epicureans, as 'ways of life' – as they involved a lived, practical element.

[9] *Moksha* is the word generally used within the Hindu and Jain traditions, but it is understood to refer to the same goal as that of the Buddhists, with the added element in Hinduism of a union with God, or the divine *Brahman*.

[10] The Lokayata philosophers are a good equivalent of the Greco-Roman skeptics. Other sceptical Indian philosophers such as Jayarasi Bhatta, criticised and rejected the doctrines and beliefs of all other Indian philosophical and religious schools of thought.

Whilst the Greco-Roman and Indian sense of 'school' is not completely analogous and many differences between them exist. They still align, however, because in both cases, there were a selection of philosophical schools that it was possible to join and commit to transform oneself. Thus, the Indian philosophical context is very much comparable with Hadot's work.

Buddhist and (Hadotian) Hellenistic Philosophy: A brief comparison

Like the Hellenistic schools, a follower of Buddhism, also strives towards a supreme goal. Like *ataraxia* in the Greco-Roman context, *nibbana*/*nirvāṇa* or enlightenment (*bodhi*) is described as a state of inner peace and tranquillity. Buddhism also views human beings in their common-sense existence as living inauthentically. Life, according to the Buddha is permeated with *dukkha* often translated into English as 'suffering' but carries a broader meaning of 'dis-satisfactoriness'. The Buddha set out the reasons for this situation, and how to escape from it, in the 'Four Noble Truths' (Pl: *caturāriyasaccāni*/Sk: *catvāryāryasatyāni*)

The First Noble Truth is that life is permeated by *Dukkha* which can involve any negative state from annoyance and boredom all the way to intense physical or emotional pain. The Second Noble Truth (*samudaya*) is the reason why we suffer in this way, which the Buddha taught was 'attachment' or 'craving' (Pl: *tanha/*SK: *tṛ́ṣṇā*), which literally means 'thirst'. We crave for things to be a certain way and to last forever when they do not, which causes us pain when they eventually disappear. The Third Noble Truth (*nirodha*) is that there can be an end to this experience of suffering. Lastly, the Fourth Noble Truth (*marga*) is the solution to the problem which is following the set of Buddhist ethical teachings known as The Noble Eightfold Path. In addition to the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha also taught the 'three marks of existence' (Sk: *trilakṣaṇa*/Pl: *tilakkhaṇa*). These are: suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (Pl: *anicca/*Sk: *anitya*) and No-Self (Pl: *anattā* /Sk: *anātman*). All three permeate our daily lives, the first two we have met already, the third we will now turn to.

Western metaphysics from Plato onwards, is predicated on the idea of essence, that there is a permanent, non-changing aspect to reality beneath surface appearances. This position over time became personalised in the Greek notion of soul (*psyche*) that became a noted doctrine of Christianity when it inherited from the Greco-Roman culture that surrounded it. The soul, or self, is seen as the innermost essence of a person, and is something that is viewed as permanent, the part of yourself that is 'me' that remains the same, despite all outside changes. Buddhism however teaches that the idea of a permanent self or soul is illusionary. This doctrine is known as *anātman* or anattā in *Pāli* and is the most unique philosophical doctrine advocated for by Buddhism.

The differences between general Western and mainly Buddhist views of the self, constitute as Byung-Chul Han (2023, p. 5) writes "the difference between *being* and *path*, between *dwelling* and *wandering*, between *essence* and *absencing."* In Buddhist thought, there is no permanent sense of self or soul that remains static beneath changing appearances. In short, there is no inherent self-existence (Sk: *svabhāva*/Pl: *sabhāva*) for people, nor anything else. This view is in complete contrast to the Greco-Christian view predominant in Western philosophy, given above; and even other Indian traditions, such as Hinduism and Jainism, which view the existence of such an unchanging island of stability or permanent soul (Sk: *Atman/Jīva* as fundamental to their conceptions of personhood.

Buddhism justifies this opinion by viewing the self or soul as consisting of five interdependent entities known as *Skandhas* in Sanskrit (Pl: *khandhas*). These are: materiality (Sk/Pl: rūpa), physical sensations (Sk/Pl: *vedanā*), perception (Sk:*saṃjñā*/Pl:saññā), impulses (Sk: *saṃskāra*/Pl: *saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (Sk: *vijñāna*/ Pl: viññāṇa) (Buswell, Jr and Lopez Jr. trans. 2014, p. 42). All of these are impermanent, and in constant flux, never remaining the same for any significant amount of time.

It is these five *khandhas* working in conjunction together that form the illusion of a self or soul. There is no permanent 'me' that endures, we ourselves are continually changing. Despite this view, however, Buddhism still recognises the need to function and live 'in the world' and thus accepts the use of ordinary language to describe both the self and objects of the world as composite entities, although whilst remembering that such language can only ever be conventional. This bifurcation of reality known as the 'Two Truths' (Sk: *Satyadvaya*/Pl: *Saccadvaya*) will be examined further in Chapter V on Zen. Lastly, deriving in part from the idea of no-self, the Buddha also taught the doctrine of 'Dependent Origination' (Sk: *pratītyasamutpāda*/Pl: *paṭiccasamuppāda*), the idea that everything depends on innumerable causes and conditions to bring it into existance.

As well as this, like Hadot's conception of Greco-Roman philosophy, Buddhism also teaches that humans, in their unenlightened state, are subject to their passions or negative mental states (Pl: *kilesa*/Sk: *kleśa)* and are mistaken about reality (Sk: *dharmadhātu*). The attainment of enlightenment aims to correct these unwholesome (Pl: *aksuala*/Sk: *akuśala* states of mind. Some Buddhist thinkers have come to similar conclusions about the goals and ideals of Buddhist philosophy as Hadot did about Greco-Roman thought. Compare for example Hadot's statement about philosophy being a 'concrete attitude and determinate lifestyle' quoted above with this quote from the American Theravada Buddhist scholar, Bhikku Bodhi regarding Buddhist meditation (2019, p. xi):

> Just as a heart functions as part of a living human body, so meditation functions as an integral part of a more extensive system of spiritual cultivation that ideally should permeate every aspect of human life. This system of spiritual cultivation aims at a deep transformation the personality. It seeks to lift us from our familiar condition of ignorance, bondage and suffering to a domain of unconditioned freedom, a state in which wisdom, purity, and unshakeable peace prevail.

This quote and especially the last sentence almost agrees with Hadot's word for word. The practitioner of the Buddhist way of life also sought to overcome the passions and conditions

of ignorance to experience a state of peace and unperturbedness. Looking at Bhikkhu Bodhi's quotation above, the idea that the Hadot Paradigm can be applied to Buddhism gains much more support.

Although the Hadot Paradigm changes the overall picture of Greek and Indian philosophy from one of divergence to convergence, it should be noted that there are differences between them too. Whilst *nibanna* is indeed viewed and describe as an inner peace and tranquillity similar to the Greek *ataraxia,* its attainment also fulfils an additional goal that is not present in Hellenistic Philosophy – that of the breaking of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth known as *saṃsāra.*

Buddhism teaches that a person experiences constant rebirths in many different forms and that since all of these births will be affected by the same *dukkha,* the cycle is worth leaving, which is done by attaining *nibanna.*[11] *Ataraxia* in the Greco-Roman context was indeed seen as a type of preparation for the act of dying itself. Despite this, it was not sought to influence any kind of afterlife or post-mortem state. Instead, the focus was on achieving it in order to enrich and improve earthly existence. There were a variety of views on death being expressed by different Greco-Roman schools that ranged from some kind of survival of the soul to its complete dissipation with nothing after death, to a type of transmigration of the soul; whilst the latter was akin to Buddhist views, it was not exactly equivalent and no form of afterlife in the Greco-Roman context would be modified by attaining *ataraxia*.

[11] Note that in Buddhism, 'rebirth' is normally used in English, in place of 'reincarnation'. Since Buddhism does not postulate the existence of an eternal self or soul, 'reincarnation' is not viewed as the correct term. Instead, Sanskrit terms such as *punarjanman* (birth-again) or *punarbhava* (re-becoming) are often used. Instead of a soul transferring from one body to another, a widely-accepted view is that one of the five s*khandhas*, consciousness (*vijñāna*) persists as a 'mental continuum' (*saṃtāna*) or 'mindstream' (citta- *saṃtāna*) that goes from one impermanent form, composed of *skandhas* to another. (See Buswell Jr and Lopez Jr, 2014, pp. 708-709) for more information.

Also, unlike *ataraxia*, there are recognised degrees of enlightenment in Buddhism in different branches. In the earlier *Theravada* branch, attainment of enlightenment would render the adherent an *arahant* (Sk: *arhat*) or 'Worthy One'. Becoming such a person would indeed mean freedom from the cycle of *saṃsāra* as well as inner spiritual bliss. Over time, however, whilst the facts behind the emergence of such views is still unclear, it appears that some Buddhists began to see this goal as too individualistic. They still wished to achieve enlightenment, but not just for themselves.

Instead of just nibanna, they wished to achieve the same complete enlightenment as the Buddha himself (Sk: *anuttarasamyaksa*ṃbodhi). To do this, they would awaken within themselves a commitment (Sk: *bodhicitta*) to this end, sometimes over many lifetimes to become a *bodhisattva* and achieve a state of Buddhahood. *Bodhisattvas* worked to achieve liberation as fast as possible, to save not just themselves, but eventually all sentient beings from suffering.

Once they were Buddhas, they would inhabit a state of 'unlocated' or 'unfixed' nirvāṇa (Sk: *apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*) in which they will be able to return to our world to assist others without becoming once again trapped in *saṃsāra* or passing over into another state.[12] These Buddhists called this new conception of Buddhism the *Mahāyāna* or 'greater vehicle' contrasting it to the earlier idea of *arahantship*, which they derogatorily called the 'lesser vehicle' or *Hīnayāna*. These differences reflect the fact that Buddhism is both philosophical and religious – a distinction challenged by Hadot.

A Buddhist Philosophical Conversion?

In order to begin on the journey of philosophy as a lived way of life, Hadot says, a conversion had to occur. As we saw above, an individual living in Ancient India had a choice of what

[12] See Buswell, Jr and Lopez Jr. trans. 2014, p. 60) for more information on *apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*.

philosophical life they wished to commit themselves to. Hadot, however, specifies further that there were two types of philosophical conversion corresponding to two Greek terms. The first, *epistrophe* (ἐπιστροφή) means, as Hadot says (2020, p.93) 'a change in orientation' and implies a return to the origin of something or oneself. The other word is *metanoia* (*μετάνοια*), which means 'a change in thought' or 'repentance'. The word can also mean a mutation or a rebirth. As Hadot (2020, p.102) writes summarising both sorts of conversion:

> In all its forms philosophical conversion is the tearing away from and breaking with the everyday, the familiar, the falsely 'natural' attitude of common sense. It is a return to the original and the originary, to the authentic, to interiority, to the essential. It is absolute a new beginning, a new starting point which transforms past and future…philosophical conversion is the access to inner freedom, to a new perception of the world, to authentic existence.

Metanoia when applied to a Buddhist context, could fit with converting to any of its branches whereas *epistrophe* would apply more specifically to a conversion to Zen Buddhism as we will see. It seems that choosing to enter the Buddhist monastic community (Pl: *saṅgha*/Sk: *saṃgha*) was akin to a conversion, a *metanoia*, both philosophical and religious. We are fortunate to possess an early account of such a process in the form of a poem by an Indian woman Sumangalamata (2005, p.179) from the sixth century B.C.E. From her poem, it appears that she became a Buddhist nun to escape an unhappy marriage:

> A woman well set free! How free I am,
> How wonderfully free, from kitchen drudgery.
> Free from the harsh grip of hunger,
> And from the empty cooking pots,
> Free too of that unscrupulous man,
> The weaver of sunshades.
> Calm now and serene I am,
> All lust and hatred purged.
> To the shade of the spreading trees I go
> And contemplate my happiness.

From this poem we can see that Sumangalamata's conversion to Buddhism represented a complete rupture with her old life. We can infer that she experienced a profound change in how she saw the world, and her experience more than fits with Hadot's own view of such an event.

Sumangalamata chose to write a poem, as we can begin to see the links between Buddhist philosophy and poetry, more on which will come later. From the above, the notion of a philosophical conversion in both Buddhist and Greco-Roman traditions was very similar. Though we know that Sumangalamata was a Buddhist, nothing in the poem indicates specifically Buddhist beliefs. Her emphasis on happiness and freedom from hatred could just as easily have been written by a Stoic or Epicurean. These similarities further support the hypothesis that the Greco-Roman and Buddhist philosophical traditions, despite their differences, can be effectively compared.

Buddhist Spiritual Exercises

We saw above how, for Hadot, spiritual exercises (Fr: *exercises spirituels*) were an imperative feature of a philosophical way of life, being necessary to embody the teachings of a particular philosophical school within one's daily life, If we briefly look at different schools of Buddhism from both India and East Asia, we can see how 'spiritual exercises' of a sort were similarly practiced for almost identical reasons. Of course, Buddhism originates from a very different cultural and intellectual context. As a result, any Buddhist versions of 'spiritual exercises' that will be encountered will not necessarily be the same as those that we have already seen from the Greco-Roman world, but they are similar in theme and desired result.

In Buddhism too, the practical dimension was put above the theoretical; one could not attain any form of enlightenment simply by believing in the Buddha's teachings on faith alone, one had to physically put them into practice, or they would see no tangible results. This is

demonstrated in *The Dhammapada*, a book of the Buddha's teachings, which will be examined further in Chapter IV. In this text, the Buddha talks about the fact that one can only attain enlightenment via one's own efforts and is responsible for one's own conduct. The Buddha thus puts an emphasis on freedom of will (see *The Dhammapada* 2007, pp. 158 – 200, Easwaran trans).

The main way that any grade of liberation is achieved in Buddhism is through meditation. As a result of this, many of the 'spiritual exercises' in Buddhism are meditative in nature. These meditations, like their Greco-Roman counterparts, whilst predominantly mental, still aim towards perceptible practical results. Greco-Roman spiritual exercises employed meditation too but in comparing them with Buddhism, Hadot (1995, p. 59) in his inaugural lecture quoted above said that Greco-Roman meditative practices were 'purely rational, imaginative or intuitive' whereas Buddhist ones were 'linked to a corporal attitude'.

However, Hadot is mistaken here. Firstly, we have seen the importance of the body in ancient Greco-Roman philosophy as the physical demonstration or proof of the inner transformation of the soul, so Greco-Roman exercises were also somewhat 'corporal'. Secondly, the spiritual exercises of Indian Buddhists were indeed corporal, as meditation is a physical action performed with the body. But it also focuses on the mind, thus a fundamental part of Buddhist meditative exercises is also mental, and, as we will see later, also made heavy use of mental imagery in the process. Thus, both Greco-Roman and Buddhist exercises were physio-psychological.

One example of such a Buddhist spiritual exercise was to contemplate the idea of impermanence (Pl*: anicca/*Sk: *anitya*) by focusing mentally on an image of the human body and imagining it decaying. Doing this would teach the Buddhist not to become attached to the

body and not to regard it as equal to a self. As is written in the Buddhist *Vijaya* (victory) *Sutta* (2017, p. 188-189):

> And when it is lying dead, bloated and discoloured. Cast off in a charnel ground, the relatives are unconcerned with it. Dogs then devour it as do jackals, wolves and worms. Crows and vultures devour it, and whatever other beings there are…One who, because of such a body would think to exalt himself or who would disparage others – what is this due to but lack of vision?

An imaginative exercise such as this would allow the practitioner to understand the doctrine of impermanence on a deeper, more internal level. We can conceivably compare it to a spiritual exercise taught by Epictetus who encouraged similar views to the Buddhist ones about the body in order to develop Stoic ideas. Jiangxia Yu (2014, pp. 174-175) writes that both Stoics and Buddhists performed a spiritual exercise that contemplated the body as something impermanent 'to understand the phenomenal world and detach from the externals, and to monitor and tranquilize the internal world'.

Apart from scriptural precent, there also exist concrete examples of individual Buddhists performing recognisible spiritual exercises. For instance, the *Mahāyāna* Indian Buddhist philosopher Śāntideva (c. 685 – c. 763) (1995, pp.16-17), whom we have already met, in his work *The Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (A guide to the Boddhisattva's Way of Life.) in a chapter called 'Confession of Faults' writes of the wrongs that he had hitherto committed during his life. He asks for forgiveness and reminds himself that everything, even his enemies, will eventually fade into nothingness. Śāntideva was confessing his faults, and reminding himself of Buddhist teaching, not necessarily as a daily practice, like adherents of the Hellenistic schools, as he does not mention this, but as a type of spiritual exercise to transform himself and his outlook.

In another text, the *Siksa-samuccaya,* or the *Training Anthology*, Śāntideva (2016, pp. 179-180) proposes an exercise for 'getting rid of unhappiness'. As we saw earlier, one prominent

spiritual exercise, *Praemeditatio Malorum,* practiced by adherents of Western philosophical schools involved imagining the occurrence of potentially negative scenarios, with the idea being that should such a thing happen, the practitioner would already be mentally prepared for the outcome. This pre-preparation also worked in the other direction: visualising oneself acting calmly and kindly towards others in certain situations would produce a similar result. Śāntideva's exercise for increasing happiness follows this closely. When speaking about 'the struggle to set the world free from bondage to *Mara* (A type of Buddhist Satan-like figure), Śāntideva writes:

> In that battle though, first repeatedly practicing enduring your own pain, you succeed through repeated practice against greater and greater difficulties. For example, just as, through habituation, it is possible to believe that the suffering of other sentient beings will bring you happiness, in the same way, by habitually generating thoughts of happiness towards everything that causes suffering, it is possible to abide in happy thoughts.

Charles Goodman (2016, p. xxxv), translator of the above passage, claims that Śāntideva's goal in writing this (as well as the BCA) was to cause a transformation in the reader akin to the one outlined by Hadot in assessing the Greco-Roman end of *ataraxia*:

> Both of Santideva's major works are intended to bring about significant change in the reader. Specifically, these texts seek to encourage an emotional transformation that will move the practitioners away from the constantly changing reactive emotions (Skt: *klesa*) that are characteristic of cyclic existence (*samsara*) and towards the stable, blissful, compassionate awareness that is characteristic of Buddhas.

From the above, it can be demonstrated conclusively that at least some Indian Buddhists, not only performed spiritual exercises as part of a philosophical way of life, that were very similar to their Greco-Roman counterparts, but could also endorse similar philosophical views. Śāntideva's view of turning the mind away from 'reactive thoughts' as mentioned by Goodman, is very much akin to Stoic views. Indeed, Goodman himself (2016, p. xxxvi) says that 'Śāntideva's broad-based critique of reactive emotions, based on the *Mahāyāna sūtras*, is

similar in structure to the Stoic critique but quite different in its content'.[13] A more detailed comparison of Buddhism and Stoicism, in the form of a comparison of *The Dhammapada* with the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, will be undertaken in Chapter IV.

As Buddhism spread throughout Asia and encountered other cultures, innovation took place. In East Asia, a school known as *Ch'an* or later Zen Buddhism developed. Zen Buddhism kept basic Buddhist beliefs from India but changed somewhat how it went about achieving them. Whilst Indian Buddhism had taught humans were unenlightened in their natural state, Zen taught that humans possessed an inherently enlightened nature, but that it was hidden and had to be uncovered. This idea became known as Buddha-Nature and originated in India but acquired much further development as Buddhism spread into East Asia. We will examine this idea in much greater detail in Chapter V on Zen. For now, suffice it to say as Steven Heine (2014, pp. 98-99) explains, Zen 'enlightenment is not so much a discovery or a change of nature as a recovery and reconciliation with the nature one possesses but does not fathom'.

For our present purposes, new types of spiritual exercises were developed in Zen that have remained unique to it, the most famous being the koan. A koan is a paradoxical, non-sensical riddle that one can only solve by going beyond rational thought. The solving of a koan is supposed to result in a 'shock' and an enlightenment experience. Applying Hadot's ideas to it, we can interpret the koan as another example of a Buddhist spiritual exercise. The koan is supposed to affect the individual on a personal level, resulting in a change of view about the world around them. As Heine (2014, p.102) again writes 'learning with cases undertakes a radical approach to spiritual recovery in the sense of digging out from the core of one's being the fundamental causal factors of deep-seated ignorance'. Heine continues that this exercise

[13] Principally due to the Buddhist doctrine of 'no-self' which the Stoics did not adhere to.

eventually allows one to achieve a ‘renovation of character’ and discover, as Zen puts it, one’s ‘original face’.

According to Heine, then, the solving of a koan is supposed to result in a ‘far reaching interior renovation of character’. This way of speaking is like how Hadot described spiritual exercises in the Greco-Roman context as well. Whilst the koan may not result in full enlightenment, it is supposed to give the practitioner a glimpse of what enlightenment is like and result in a reformation of their personal character.

We can now see why the type of conversion Hadot outlined earlier, *epistrophe*, meaning a change in orientation or a return to origins applies more to Zen. Conversion to Zen Buddhism was still a philosophical conversion to a way of life as it was with Indian Buddhism, *metanoia* still describes it also. As Heine said, Zen thought focuses on a recovery of our inherently hidden enlightened nature, a recovery of our ‘original face’. Therefore, the type of conversion referred to by *epistrophe* as a “return to the origins” of something, fits a lot more with it than it does the Indian Buddhist tradition. More will be said about Zen specifically in Chapter V, but at present, it is worth noting its unique contribution to Buddhist thought and ways of life.

The Sage in Greco-Roman Philosophy and Buddhism

The figure of the sage (Gk: *sophós/σοφός*/Pl/Sk: *muni*) is common to both Greco-Roman and Buddhist traditions, Hadot himself also shared this opinion. Writing about the work of another scholar, Michel Hulin, about mystical experience which was influenced by Buddhism, Hadot (2002, p.232) writes that Hulin’s description ‘seemed to me to be close to the characteristics of the ideal of the ancient sage, for the resemblances between the two spiritual quests seem striking’. We will thus elaborate Hadot’s view and examine both Greco-

Roman and Buddhist views of the sage. We will see that for both, the concept was used in specific spiritual exercises.

In the Greco-Roman context, a sage is someone who has fulfilled the goal of the philosophical life, overcoming their passions and attaining *ataraxia*. More importantly, they also provided an ideal towards which to strive for later philosophers. 'In each school' says Hadot (2002, p. 220), 'the figure of the sage was the transcendent norm which determined the philosopher's way of life'. Daniel del Nido (2018, p.31), writing about Hadot's work, says that the sage is also someone who has managed to coherently harmonise the emotional and rational parts of the self and who has made rational conduct a daily habit through spiritual exercises. Having achieved this harmony and 'controlled bodily pleasures, the sage remains unperturbed by events and maintains their composure throughout the course of their life', meaning that the emotional and rational aspects of their existence become unified.

For the Epicureans, the supreme example of the sage was Epicurus himself. The main thing that caused unhappiness and served as an obstacle to inner tranquillity according to Epicurus, was fear. More specifically, it was fear as experienced in two ways above all others: fear of death and fear of the gods. Epicurus taught that death was not anything to fear because upon death, we ceased to exist and thus felt no pain. Whilst the gods did exist in Epicurus' worldview, they did not concern themselves with humanity or the world, thus it was deemed foolish to fear divine punishment.[14] Epicurus had achieved the goal of overcoming these fears and inner mental peace. He was seen by his followers, not just as a respectable teacher, but as a super-human who taught them a type of salvation. Hadot (2020, pp. 191-192) writes that 'Epicurus' disciples considered their master a veritable saviour and as a bringer of a message of salvation'. He goes onto explain that Epicurus was revered so highly by his later followers,

[14] See 'Removing Fear' by James Warren in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus* for more detail on Epicurean ideas on this subject.

that his birthday was celebrated every year with a meal, and they acted as if Epicurus himself were still with them, judging their personal conduct.

For the Stoics, by contrast, the sage was not so much a concrete figure, but an ideal. A Stoic sage was someone who had managed to bring their inner reason in accordance with Universal Reason. It was someone who was no longer affected by what they could not themselves control and as a result had also attained inner tranquillity. However, such a person was rare as Hadot (1998, p. 76) says, for the Stoics, 'a sage is necessarily an exceptional being…an almost inaccessible ideal'.

Buddhist conceptions of the sage are very similar to the ideas of the Hellenistic schools. The ideal for the sage in Buddhism, as with the Epicureans, is also based on the figure who founded the tradition. In the case of Buddhism, this figure is the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. Indeed, he is often referred to as *Shakyamuni* – the sage of the Shakya, his original clan. Also, much like Epicurus, the Buddha is revered as someone who has reached the final goal of the spiritual path, who has overcome the passions, has broken the cycle of life and death and attained the final state of inner peace and tranquillity. The Buddha is seen by his followers as a saviour-like, semi-divine figure whose achievements mean that he has gone beyond the merely human. The idea of a sage is spread throughout various Buddhist texts and is mentioned in contexts ranging from descriptions of the Buddha by others, to the words of the Buddha himself. For example, the Buddha is described in one text (2005, p. 422) as follows:

> Having directly known all the world, all in the world exactly as it is, he is detached from all the world, unengaged with all the world. He indeed is the all vanquishing-sage, the one released from all the knots, who has reached the supreme state of peace, Nibanna, without fear from any side…He is the Blessed One, the Buddha, He is the lion, unsurpassed, In this world together with its devas. He set in motion the wheel of Brahma.

From the above quote, it is clear that the Buddha was treated with especial reverence. In another *Theravada* text, the *Muni Sutta* (2017 pp. 189-190), the Buddha himself describes the desired characteristics of a Buddhist sage, which in some ways sounds like the Stoic conception, especially in the sense of being unaffected by externals:

> One who has overcome all, all-knowing, very wise, untainted among all things, who has cast off all, liberated in the destruction of craving: he is the one the wise know as a muni…Living alone a muni, heedful, not swayed by blame or praise, like a lion not alarmed among sounds…One who remains steadfast like a pillar at a ford when others speak provocative words about some matter, who is devoid of lust with well-concentrated faculties. He, too, is one the wise know as a muni.

The implication of this passage is that the Buddha himself possesses these qualities, as he himself is a *muni*, it could be interpreted thus as another form of religious reverence towards the Buddha. The image of the Buddha as an almost divine sage-figure was further enhanced as the *Mahāyāna* tradition developed in India and further afield. We can see this in the doctrine *Trikāya* or 'three bodies' of the Buddha.

The *Nirmāṇakāya* (emanation/transformation body) is the earthly manifestation of a Buddha, the historical Siddhartha Gautama who taught in India and founded Buddhism as we know it was one such occurrence. The second 'body' the *Saṃbhogakāya* (enjoyment body) is the form of the Buddha visible to Buddhists in advanced stages of the Buddhist path. Lastly the *dharmakāya* (truth body) is the most metaphysically elevated of the three. The *dharmakāya* is equivalent to the absolute, the true form of a Buddha as a cosmic presence which permeates the universe and contains all things within it, as well as the origin and end of all Buddhas. The previous two 'bodies' are themselves manifestations of the *dharmakāya*

In the *Mahāyāna* text, *The Lotus Sutra*, (Reeves trans, 2008, p. 296) the Buddha (implied to be in his *dharmakaya* form) goes as far as saying that his physical human manifestation in India was illusionary and so only 'appeared' to become enlightened and die. He is, in fact, still present but unseen by the unenlightened multitude:

In order to liberate the living,
As a skilful means I appear to enter nirvana.
Yet truly I am not extinct.
I am always here teaching the Dharma.

I am always here
But due to my divine powers
Perverse living beings fail to see me.
Even though I am close.

We can see here that in some parts of the tradition, the status of the Buddha to some Buddhists, could surpass mere reverence and respect to what could be seen as the worship of a kind of divine, being, so much so, that Lopez Jr and Stone (2019, p. 181) note that some scholars have compared it to docetism, a famous Christian Christological heresy. However, we should be wary of thinking of the Buddha as a 'god' such as those in a Greco-Roman context. As Paul Williams (2009, p. 174) writes, the Buddha was not regarded as simply an ordinary human being, even in the pre-*Mahāyāna* schools, and in ancient India, the borders between what was divine and what was human 'were fluid.'. The Buddha was neither human nor God, but a Buddha – a being altogether distinct from both. All in all, the manner in which the Buddha is revered, despite differences, is not so different from how Epicurus was viewed by his followers.

As seen above, Epicurus was also viewed as having surpassed his humanity, and thought of as still being 'present' to watch the personal conduct of his followers. Whilst the ontological distinction was not supported by any official idea or doctrine on the Epicureans' part, to outsiders, these views of the philosopher, expressions of reverence and annual celebrations of his birthday must have seemed very much like the worship of a god.

Indeed, some similarities between Buddhist and Epicurean practice and ideas seem very striking, to the extent that some scholars such as Stephen R.L. Clark (2013 p. 152) writes that

‘there are sufficient similarities of Epicurean doctrine and Buddhist to suggest that there was some contact’. This is not at all impossible given the links between India and the Greco-Roman world that were examined earlier in the thesis, Epicureans and Buddhists could have quite easily made contact, either in physical or intellectual terms. If this were confirmed, it would go a long way towards explaining commonalities between the two, especially in their conceptions of the sage; this hypothesis may be proven with further research.

Either way, the views of the sage in both Epicureanism and Buddhism demonstrate a notable point of convergence for both of these geographically distinct forms of philosophy. In both Greco-Roman and Buddhist traditions, becoming a sage meant in some way overcoming ordinary human existence and venturing into a new, higher state of being, it is just that the Buddhists and Epicureans expressed this in more ‘reverential’ language than did the Stoics. The Stoics, though, could be said to have held a similar view, given the rarity of the attainment of sagehood. They may have believed that such an overcoming of human nature was close to impossible for all but very few.

From the above, it is demonstrable that Buddhist conceptions of the sage align well with the characteristics of the Hellenistic sage from Stoicism and Epicureanism. Like the Epicureans, the Buddha was also revered by his later followers as a semi-divine saviour who had successfully taught how to overcome the negative aspects of the human condition. Like the Stoics, the Buddhist sage was also someone who would only care about what they themselves could control and would not be emotionally affected by externals. Also like the Stoics, the attainment of sagehood (or becoming a Buddha) was seen as something incredibly rare. The similarities of the idea of the sage in the two traditions represents one of the most comparable phenomena common to both Greco-Roman and Indian philosophy.

The Sage and Spiritual Exercises

The idea of the sage in all three traditions also led to specific spiritual exercises to become especially linked with the sage as a concrete figure and/or their example. *The Letter to Meneoeceus* (2012, p.161), reportedly written by Epicurus himself, specifically tells his followers to regularly think on his teachings as a spiritual exercise, as a way of following his example:

> Think about these and related matters day and night, by yourself or in company with someone like yourself. If you do, you will never experience anxiety, waking or sleeping. But you will live like a god among men. For a human being who lives in the midst of immortal blessings is no way like mortal man!

Living one's life by Epicurus' example was a spiritual exercise in itself for the Epicureans and his writings that were available to them were frequently called to mind when a situation arose that would threaten their peace of mind. This form of spiritual exercise had to be constantly done and re-done when needed. As John M Cooper (2012, p.271) explains: 'These collections too are ready for memorization and for subsequent use in the same way as the letters. They are a handy resource for renewing or strengthening one's ethical beliefs in case something arises that might threaten one's equanimity'. Here, again, is another preliminary instance of the importance of the poetic, its memorability and vividness, to the philosophical way of life, as we will explore in more detail later on.

Although the Stoics did not exalt their main representatives to the same extent as their Epicurean counterparts, Epictetus, and others were still considered an example to follow and imitate. Like Epicurus, Epictetus also gave an instruction to his followers to memorise and practice his teachings as a way of following him. As he writes in his Discourses (2007, p. 7): 'That's the kind of attitude you need to cultivate if you would be a philosopher, the sort of sentiments you should write down every day and put in practice'.

Buddhists practiced similar spiritual exercises to the Stoics and Epicureans in order to feel closer to the Buddha as a founder, and to better imitate him. We have noted that Buddhists

revered the Buddha in a similar way to which Epicureans revered Epicurus. As a result, the spiritual exercises that the Buddhists employed to do with the Buddha himself are quite comparable to those of the Epicureans. Epicurus was respected as a person, as much as an ideal by the Epicureans and they were encouraged, for example, to imagine him as watching over their actions. A Buddhist exercise known as *Buddhanasmrti* meaning 'recollection of the Buddha' was alike to this. Engaged in this exercise, Buddhists would imagine that the Buddha was present with them. Karen Armstrong (2019, p.174) explains that practitioners engaged in this exercise would 'call the Buddha to mind dwelling systematically and in detail on his physical features with such concentration that he eventually becomes one with him'.

This becoming 'one' with the Buddha was an act of reverence and respect as much as it was a spiritual exercise. Imagining that the Buddha was there with the meditator could also create a feeling that he was there watching over the actions of the follower. This would result in the meditator making an effort to act ethically, as much like the Buddha as possible, meaning that like the spiritual exercises that Hadot outlines in the Greco-Roman context, the goal of *Buddhanasmrti* was not just to act as a medium for religious worship, but also aimed to transform the worshipper.

Conclusion

We have seen how the Hadot Paradigm issues a challenge to the currently prevailing philosophical orthodoxy and how it can be expanded to encompass forms of philosophy that originate outside of Euro-North America by being applied to the Buddhist tradition. Many aspects of the Hadot Paradigm including the concept of a philosophical 'conversion' to a certain lived way of life, the striving for a peace of mind attained by some form of 'spiritual exercises and the reverence of the sage or founder, can also be clearly located within the Buddhist tradition. All of this provides further evidence that Hadot's ideas can act as the

foundation for a new globalised conceptualisation of philosophy. In the next chapter, we will move onto examining the general Western tradition's rejection of the poetic and poetry as a means of doing philosophy, which it will be argued, derives from the dismissal of poetry by Plato himself. After this, we will examine three thinkers, two before Plato and one after, who successfully used poetry to philosophise and will consider whether this attests to a hitherto hidden poetic tradition within Western philosophy.

Chapter II: Poetic Philosophers: How Three Thinkers Disobeyed Plato

During the introduction, it was stated that the Hadot Paradigm needs to be further elaborated with regards to the poetic in order to plug gaps within it. This second chapter will begin this elaboration. Firstly, we must look at the historical relationship of the poetic, poetry and Western philosophy. To this end, the work of three different philosophers will be examined, two Pre-Socratic thinkers, Parmenides (c. late 6th century B.C.E – c. 5th century B.C.E), Heraclitus (c. 6th century B.C.E – 5th Century B.C.E) and one Late Antique philosopher, Boethius (480 C.E – 524 C.E). All three of them successfully utilised the poetic to express their philosophical ideas. Two did this via basic poems, the other did so in aphorisms, which it will be argued is also poetry. All poems will be examined using literary analysis.

The main responsibility for the somewhat fractious relationship between poetry and Western thought lies at the door of Plato, as it was, he who dismissed poetry from his hypothetical city state in *Republic.* Due to the extent of his influence on Western thought, this rejection of poetry has mostly endured until the nineteenth century, with, as we will see, some notable exceptions in the modern German philosophical tradition. During this chapter and the subsequent two, the aim is to successfully demonstrate that poetry can be used as a medium for philosophy, and that the poetic is fundamental to the Hadot Paradigm.[15]

Plato and the Rejection of the Poets

As stated, the main reason for the aversion of using poetry as a means of doing philosophy in the West is because Plato, one of the most influential thinkers in history, rejected it as

[15] All Parmenides and Heraclitus quotations are from 'The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists.' Translated by Robin Waterfield. Quotations from Plato's Republic are also from Waterfield's translation. Lastly, the poetry from Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* is from P.G Walsh's translation. All three are fully referenced in the bibliography.

unsuitable for this purpose. He does this in two separate chapters of his most famous work, *Republic*, especially in Book Four and Book Ten of the text.

In Book Four, Plato argues against the use of poetry for education in almost all cases. In his time, the main genre of poetry was the epic poetry of Homer, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and the poetry of Hesiod. These poems had a considerable influence on Greek culture and were the only things that united all Greeks regardless of local origin. They were also one of the main sources of information for traditional Greek religious belief, especially from Hesiod. These theological ideas are the basis by which Plato argues against poetry being used as a tool of education in Book Four. In a discussion with Adeimantus, Socrates says that the stories about the gods within poetry, depict them negatively and could therefore have a bad influence on the future guardians of the city state. Socrates (1993, p. 72) says that the poets were deliberately distorting the traditionally good image of the gods. When Adeimantus asks for an example of this in practice, Socrates replies:

> First and most important, since the subject is so important'', I said, 'there is no redeeming feature to the lies which Hesiod repeats about Uranus' deeds and Cronus' revenge on Uranus. Then there are Cronus' deeds and what his son did to him. Now, I think that even if these stories are true, they oughtn't to be told so causally to young people and people who lack discrimination; it's better to keep silent and if one absolutely has to speak, to make them esoteric secrets told to as few people as possible, who are to have sacrificed no mere piglet, but something so large and rare that the smallest conceivable number of people get to hear them.

The critique here is primarily on moral and theological grounds. Plato goes on to add that the stories about the gods fighting in epic poetry could lead people into justifying their own immoral actions by citing divine prerogative. Plato acknowledges that the violent stories could be allegorical in nature, but it is irrelevant as young people would not be able to distinguish what is allegorical from what is true. Plato's stance must be understood in the context of the reverence with which Homer and Hesiod were held. They were regarded as almost divine teachers, a view which cannot be compared with our modern view of poetry

today. As M. Pabst Battin (1977, p.171) writes: ‘We cannot overemphasize the fact that poetry, in Plato's time, was firmly considered a proper source of behavioural models and ethical norms […]’

Due to the background, Plato’s theological criticism of poetry in is slightly more understandable. Given that Homer was held in such high esteem, it is possible that people not trained in the exegesis of poetry, (in classical antiquity, the vast majority), could have used such poetry to justify immoral acts. Despite this, there were no widely reported episodes of such acts occurring and being justified by such poetry. It could therefore be argued that Plato was proven wrong by posterity. However, Plato’s initial critique only proposes a form of censorship; it is in Book Ten where he moves to complete suppression of poetry.

The argument of Book Ten is slightly more complex and arguably contains his main critique of poetry, along with art in general. This argument has been most influential for Western philosophers’ attitudes towards poetry thereafter. Here, Plato criticises poetry and art for three main reasons, and each will be addressed in turn.

The first element of Plato’s criticism of poetry in Book Ten relies on his primary metaphysical distinction, which as Bonazzi (2023, p, 12) writes is, ‘between the sensible (corruptible) dimension and the intelligible (incorruptible) one’. Plato formulates this doctrine in his theory of forms, or ideas. He posits that everything in the sensible, everyday world is an impermanent copy or reflection or a perfect and immutable archetype, all of which reside in an otherworldly realm; unable to be seen via normal human senses.

Poems are written about a certain theme, topic or subject, for example, a tree. The tree a poet happens to write about could be any tree in the world. But, since for Plato, any tree is a just an echo of the ‘true’ form of a tree, the poetic tree is merely a representation of the earthly

tree, which itself as a representation of the true tree in the world of the forms. Poetry, then, is three times removed from true reality. It could be demonstrated as follows:

Form of a tree – Physical tree – Tree written about in a poem (Poetic tree)

Plato (1993, pp. 347-348) makes the argument for this position in a conversation with Glaucon as follows. Using beds as an example, Socrates says that God has made the 'true' bed (the form) and then continues:

Socrates: What about a joiner? Shall we call him a manufacturer of beds?

Glaucon: Yes

Plato: And shall we also call a painter a manufacturer and maker of beds and so on?

Glaucon: No, definitely not

Plato: What do you think he does with beds then?

Glaucon: I think the most suitable thing to call him would be a representer of the others' creations, he said.

Plato: Well, in that case, I said, You're using the term "representer" for someone who deals with things which are, in fact, two generations away from reality, aren't you?

Glaucon: Yes, he said.

Plato: The same goes for tragic playwrights then, since they're representers: they're two generations away from the throne of truth, and so are all other representers.

Given, then, that poetry is three times removed from the true version of reality (which can only be found in the world of the forms), poetry is not a suitable medium for the expression of philosophy which aims at truth; poetry is inherently anti-philosophical in nature. Despite the tradition that holds him as the teacher of Greece, Homer, for Plato, is no philosopher.

As Raymond Barfield (2011, p.14) writes, for Socrates, 'The real danger of the poets is that they lay claim to wisdom, but they give only an imitation of this most important kind of truth'. The poets possess potentially unlimited sources of material with which to do this, since they can write about anything and since the poet communicates necessary through language, Barfield continues, they are seen as further intruding into the domain of the philosopher, who also must make use of this medium.

This brings us to the second main reason for the rejection of the poets. Plato argues that poets, for example, Homer, write about subjects of which they have no knowledge, yet everyone treats them as authorities. Socrates then proceeds to argue that Homer, in his poetry, claims to expound on a number of subjects citing 'warfare, tactics, politics and human education'. He then questions Homer's legacy, and compares him to other famous Greeks, asking, for example, whether any community of followers, form of government, legal code, inventions, philosophical school and the like can be attributed to Homer, to which Glaucon replies in the negative. Socrates (1993, p. 352) continues:

> And I should think we'll say that the same goes for a poet as well: he uses words and phrases to block in some of the colours of each area of expertise, although all he understands is how to represent things in a way which makes other superficial people who base their conclusions on the words they can hear, think that he's written a really good poem about shoe making or military command or whatever else it is that he's set to metre, rhythm and music. It only takes these features to cast this powerful a spell: that is what they're for.

After this, Socrates argues that of a certain object is going to someone who regularly uses certain objects develops expertise on it and can thus teach others. His conclusion is that poets only possess knowledge of what they write about through learning from other non-poets who are the real experts. For instance, a poet would learn about warfare by talking to a soldier. Yet, it is the poet who writes beautifully about warfare, not the soldier who fought, that gains the credit and authority of the populace on the topic of warfare. Thus, in Plato's view, the reputation received by Homer and others is unearned and so unjust.

We know that epic poetry was invested with a heightened sense of moral and intellectual authority, so Plato may have had good reasons behind his criticism. Some scholars such as Eric A. Havelock in his book *A Preface to Plato* (1963, p.125), have defended Plato on this basis. During Plato's time, as Havelock makes clear throughout the book, Ancient Greece was just making the transition from an oral culture into a literate one and people therefore

would have relied on the memorisation of Homeric poetry to transmit Greek cultural norms and values through the generations. It was also the only real form of 'education' that was available at the time. Homer's poems were therefore used to teach people about subjects in which Homer himself had no expertise, which is Plato's criticism:

> In sum then, Plato's conception of poetry, if we apply it to that pre-literate epoch in which the Greek institutions of the Classical age first crystalised in characteristic form, was basically correct. Poetry was not 'literature' but a political and social necessity. It was not an art form, nor a creation of the private imagination, but an encyclopaedia maintained by co-operative efforts on the part of the 'best Greek polities'.

As with the first reason, Plato's argument is again based on the notion that poets deal with appearances that masquerade as truth, although this time it is the second-hand knowledge disguised as expertise that is the issue, rather than metaphysics.

We now arrive at the third and final reason for Plato's dismissal of poetry, which, unlike the previous two is more overtly psychological. As in his metaphysics, Plato adheres to a type of psychological dualism. For him, the mind (or soul) is divided in two, one part suited to reason, which forms the higher part, and another guided by emotion, which makes up the lower part of the mind. In this way, the mind mirrors the division between the higher and lower metaphysical realms. After discussing enduring misfortune, Socrates and Glaucon (1993, p. 358) continue as follows:

> Socrates: Now, our position is that the best part of our minds is perfectly happy to be guided by reason like this.
>
> Glaucon: That goes without saying.
>
> Socrates: Whereas there's another part of our minds which urges us to remember the bad times and to express our grief, and which is insatiably greedy for tears. What can we say about it? That it's incapable of listening to reason, that it can't face hard work, that it goes hand in hand with being frightened of hardship.
>
> Glaucon: Yes, that's right'
>
> Socrates: Evidently, then, a representational poet has nothing to do with this part of the mind: his skill isn't made for its pleasure, because otherwise he'd lose his popular appeal. He's

> concerned with the petulant and varied side of our characters because it's easy to represent.

As one of the most famous rationalists in the history of Western philosophy; for Plato, we reach truth primarily through the use of reason. Above, he claims that poetry enables the opposite of reason. Poetry affects the lower, irrational part of the mind and thus allows emotion to triumph over reflection. Therefore, poetry "deforms" people because they get "carried away" with the emotions shown by the characters in the poem and thus become irrational themselves:

> Socrates: Here's my evidence: You can make up your own mind. When Homer or another tragedian represents the grief of one of the heroes, they have him deliver a lengthy speech of lamentation or even have him sing a dirge and beat his breast; and when we listen to all this, even the best of us as I'm sure you're aware, feels pleasure. We surrender ourselves, let ourselves be carried along and share the hero's pain; and then we enthuse about the skill of any poet who makes us feel particularly strong feelings. (605d, 1993, p. 359)

This third element is arguably the most important for our purposes. If the predominant view of modern Western traditions is that philosophy is almost entirely predicated on rationality, Plato's condemnation of poetry as irrational is a severe sentence indeed. Due to the respect in which Plato is held, it is via such a criticism that poetry is often deemed the antithesis of philosophy. This interpretation of Plato's work has been the norm in scholarship for a long time. As Carleton L. Brownson (1897, pp. 37-38) says of Plato's view of the poets: 'they appeal to the feelings, rather than to the reason […] Their work is the product of a lower element in the soul and tends to nourish and strengthen that element in the souls of others'.

Eric A. Havelock (1963, p.45) writes that due to the educational importance of Homeric poetry, listeners had to in a sense 'merge themselves' with the characters of the poem in order to memorise it. This memorisation did indeed involve a sense of leaving a part of the rational mind behind to 'identify' with the poem, which was necessary so as to achieve the desired effect on the audience, according to Havelock:

> You threw yourself into the situation of Achilles, you identified with his grief or his anger. You yourself became Achilles and so did the reciter to whom you listened. Thirty years later you could automatically quote what Achilles has said or what the poet had said about him. Such enormous power of poetic memorisation could be purchased only at the cost of total loss of objectivity. Plato's target was indeed an educational procedure and a whole way of life.

It is Plato's view of poetry as irrational that could be said to have influenced Western traditions of philosophy to classify the traditions of Asia and elsewhere as such, due to the latter's more open attitude towards utilising poetry for philosophical purposes.

Even in the Western world, as stated above, Plato's general attitude towards, poetry continued to influence subsequent thinkers. Even if some disagreed with outright rejection or censorship, many still saw a wide gulf between philosophy and poetry, a view that has continued in some ways until today.

Epicurus, for example, according to Diogenes Laertius (2019, p. 532, Mensch trans.) said that 'Only the wise man [philosopher] will be competent to discuss music and poetry, though he will not write poems himself.' Jeff Fish (2022, p. 260) summarises the Epicurean attitude towards poetry by saying 'a poet makes or implies many statements about ethical values, but only the trained philosopher knows which are true or false'. Although Epicurus and others did not therefore completely reject poetry; they considered it to be inferior to philosophy, otherwise Epicurus would have also suggested that the philosopher write poems. For them, only philosophers, as Fish says, have the capacity to judge truth, even if the poet can theoretically state it.

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E) did not completely dismiss poetry, but worried about its origins. Many poets in antiquity were seen as having been inspired by the Greco-Roman deities. For Augustine, however, these deities were demonic. Augustine therefore saw philosophy as being the way to 'correct' poetry as Raymond Barfield (2011, p. 5) explains: 'he considers the possibility that the poets do indeed speak for spirits, namely, the demonic. It

is from this perspective that he uses philosophy to correct the errors of the poets.' We can see that Augustine too, also considered philosophy to be superior to poetry and viewed them as separate fields.

Although poetry was somewhat redeemed in philosophical terms by the proponents of German idealism, as well as the attitudes of Eastern traditions of thought, as we will see, some contemporary poets as well as philosophers, *still* acknowledge a separation. Roger Caldwell (2016), a poet who also dabbles in philosophy, is a disciple of Plato when he writes:

> There are things one says in philosophy that could find no place in poetry, and vice versa. One may be both a poet and a philosopher, but not at the same time: the two belong to very different spheres of activity…Artificially yoking them together gives no guarantee of healthy progeny: the result may merely be more bad philosophy on the one hand and more bad poetry on the other. Maybe it is better that they live apart.

As we can see from this brief discussion, then, although some subsequent philosophers did not go as far as Plato in completely banning poetry, many still followed him in their attitudes towards it. Philosophy was not only seen as superior to poetry by some subsequent thinkers, but both continue to be seen as two distinct activities that can and never should be bridged. Thus, there is still a need to demonstrate the view that poetry is a viable medium for philosophical truth against Plato's modern disciples.

Despite Plato's attitude, scholars have maintained for a long time that Plato does not view poetry as totally unredeemable. For one thing, in *Republic*, Plato does in fact allow one very specific form of poetry into his utopian community, hymns to the gods; the implication from this inclusion, is that that Plato (1993, p. 361) is allowing a chance for his views on poetry to possibly change. As he says:

> All the same, we ought to point out that if the kinds of poetry and representation which are designed merely to give pleasure can come up with a rational argument for their inclusion in a

> well-governed community, we'd be delighted…to bring them back from exile.

Scholars have likewise interpreted this remark to mean that there may be room for a reproachment between Platonic philosophy and poetry. William Chase Green (1918, p.75) says that Plato did see it as a possibility that a poet may one day create a poem that would access the realm of the forms: 'He recognized, however, that the poet might express eternal forms, and so far as he did so, he became a philosopher. In some such way Plato imagined that the ancient conflict between philosophy and poetry might cease'.

Green's analysis implies that in order to access the forms, and for Plato, access philosophical truth, poets would in the process cease being poets and become philosophers. Even though this seems like a victory for the philosophers, it is still notable that if the poet accesses the forms through the medium of a poem, it is further testament to the fact that philosophy is capable of being expressed through poetry. Some recent scholars have taken a similar view and suggested that Plato's problem is not with poetry per se, but instead with poets themselves and that Plato would allow a modified form of poetry into his republic. Danielle S. Allen (2013, p.44), for example, says that Plato does not banish poetry as a whole, but only certain types. Lastly, Laura Liliana Gómez Espíndola (2017, p.244) similarly writes that for Plato, a 'revamped' form of poetry could potentially be created that would benefit the populace rather than damage them.

The views of these scholars, almost one hundred years apart, support the position of this thesis, that poetry can be a suitable vehicle to express philosophical truth even on a Platonic basis. From a Platonic perspective, 'good' poetry should guide a person towards the truth of things and the form of the good. To accomplish this, such poetry must engage with the rational part of the mind, and restrict emotional content, also censoring what could be deemed

'harmful' theological views about the gods and the state. While it may be argued that such poetry would be lifeless, the fact that Plato allows an opening for poetry in any form, constitutes the beginning of a potential ending of the conflict between philosophy and poetry. Even some philosophers within the Platonic tradition, who respected Plato as their spiritual master, as we will see, disagreed with his stance, they even used poetry as a medium to transmit truths that they believed went back to Plato himself.

To sum up, in contrast to many of his fellow Greeks, Plato criticised Homer and Hesiod, poets regarded as the very fountainheads of Greek culture and religion. He viewed them not as wise teachers, but as peddlers of illusory untruth that received unjust praises and supported emotion over reason. Due to his great influence on subsequent Western thought he passed down to philosophy a mistrust of the poetic to express philosophical truth. Poetry was relegated to irrational *mythos* and set against prose as a conduit of the rational *logos*.

As mentioned, not all philosophers agreed with Plato's stance. His predecessors, the Pre-Socratics, were philosophers that Martin Heidegger, a notable modern philosopher who defended the poetic, lauded for their use of philosophical poetics (See Heidegger, 2015). In utilising poetry, two notable pre-Socratics, Parmenides and Heraclitus, managed to successfully combine the poetic and the philosophical in a manner that goes against Plato's stance.

Parmenides: The Mystical Poet-Seer

One predecessor of Plato who would have taken the complete opposite stance on poetry, was Parmenides of Elea. He was from the city of Elea, then part of Magna Graecia, on the coast of southern Italy and lived in the 5th century BCE. Scholars only possess one of Parmenides' philosophical works – a poem.

The poem starts with Parmenides recounting a visionary experience during which he met a goddess who revealed to him 'the truth' about the world. The meeting place is described by the goddess herself as "indeed far from mortal men, beyond their beaten paths". It thus seems that Parmenides has entered an otherworldly realm at the behest of the goddess. The mystical, quasi-religious nature of the prologue of Parmenides' poem has been much commented upon by scholars. Robin Waterfield (2000, p. 49) writes that Parmenides:

> saw himself as the prologue clearly shows, as much a shaman or mystic as a philosopher, making a spiritual and philosophical journey just as Homer's Odysseus had travelled the known world. For many people nowadays, the categories of rational and extra-rational thought are distinct, but this was clearly not the case for Parmenides…

John Palmer (2020) agrees with Waterfield but emphasises the cultural and religious background of Parmenides' native region, writing that there existed numerous mystical cults in the Magna Graceia of Parmenides' time, and he seems to be portraying himself as an initiate, or member of one of these organisations. From these views, we can see then that in Parmenides' time, the gap between what was considered 'philosophical' and 'religious was far from being established. Parmenides seems more like a religious mystic than the stereotypical rational philosopher, but his combination of the 'mystical' and the 'rational' within his poetry makes his work a prime example of a successful philosophical use of poetry. A little after the prologue, Parmenides (2000, p. 59) starts to write about his philosophical views proper. He describes something that he only refers to as 'it':

> Now only the one tale remains of the way that it is. On this way there are very many signs.
> Indicating that what-is is unborn and imperishable,
> Entire, alone of its kind, unshaken and complete.
> It was not once nor will it be, since it is now all together,
> Single and continuous. For what birth could you seek for it?
> How and from what did it grow? Neither will I allow you to say or to think that it grew from what-is-not, for that it is not
> Cannot be spoken or thought, Also, what need could have impelled it to arise later or sooner, if it sprang from an origin in nothing? And so it should either entirely be or not be at all.

What is 'it'?

There have been many interpretations of Parmenides' writings throughout the centuries and opinions still differ on what he could have meant by 'it'. Some of these diverse views of Parmenides merit a deeper examination. One mainstream view is what John Palmer (2020) calls 'The Strict Monist View'. Monism, in this context, is the philosophical view that there exists only one thing in the universe of which everything else is a part. Many throughout history have thought that Parmenides was an adherent of monism and that his poem is an expression of it.

Anthony Kenny (2010 p. 21), for example, thought that the 'it' Parmenides speaks of refers to 'being' itself as an abstract quality and that this is the 'one' thing that makes up existence. Thomas McEvilley, who was last mentioned in the context of his work of comparative philosophy (2002, p. 53), agrees with Kenny's view that Parmenides is writing about 'being'. As a result of his views, McEvilley says, Parmenides distrusted sense experience as a reliable source of knowledge because our sense experience tells us that change occurs. For Parmenides though, this is impossible, because as we have seen from his poetry above, 'being' is indivisible and changeless.

Monism is not the only interpretation of Parmenides that exists, however. Another is what Palmer (2020) calls 'The Logical-Dialectical Interpretation'. This view says that Parmenides was actually trying to base his argument upon logical and linguistic lines and speak about these ideas rather than about any grand metaphysical theory of monistic 'being'. A famous adherent of this idea was Bertrand Russel (2004, P. 56), who in his *History of Western Philosophy* writes about Parmenides:

> The essence of this argument is: When you think, you think of something; when you use a name, it must be the name of something. Therefore both thought and language require objects outside themselves. And since you can think of a thing or speak of it at one time as well as at another, whatever can be thought of or spoken of must exist at all times.

> Consequently there can be no change, since change consists in
> things coming into being or ceasing to be.

Other views focus on parts of Parmenides' poem that seem to give the 'it' a material physicality. J.E. Boodin, for example (1943) completely disagrees with the aforementioned monist view in writing that 'the commentators have certainly been wrong in saying that *it* is being[…]' Boodin thought that the 'it' is actually a more materialist view of the sun or "the fire of heaven" as Parmenides would call it.

A definitive answer to the question of what Parmenides meant will never be known and debates will, of course, continue. Although other views are becoming more prevalent, the monist interpretation makes the most sense given the language of the poem. However, all the views expressed could contain an element of the truth since Parmenides' words are in some cases vague and thus can be subject to multiple interpretations.

Despite the difficulty of arriving at a complete answer to Parmenides' meaning, the fact remains that he expressed his philosophical ideas entirely within a poem. Furthermore, he did this successfully, as shown by his subsequent influence on Western forms of philosophy. Before moving onto Heraclitus, a fellow Pre-Socratic thinker, literary analysis will now be applied to Parmenides' poem as poetry itself. Such an analysis will reveal its literary merits and allow us to see that, if Parmenides managed to express philosophy in the medium of poetry, Plato's view of it as an assistant to illusion will suffer a blow.

Parmenides Poem: An Analysis

The quoted section of Parmenides' poem begins with the poet simply describing the 'it' that he is discussing:

> Now only the one tale remains of the way that it is.
> On this way there are very many signs.
> Indicating that what-is is unborn and imperishable,
> Entire, alone of its kind, unshaken and complete.

Parmenides here claims that there are "very many signs" to indicate the truth of 'it' (the monistic material of the universe). This description is not yet a philosophical argument, and Parmenides is asking us at first to simply imagine 'the thing' using words like "entire", "alone", "imperishable" to evoke an image of something that is, paradoxically, almost impossible to imagine, something wholly 'one' that encompasses absolutely everything in existence. In talking about 'it' at all, Parmenides is stretching language to its very limits. He must believe to an extent in the usage of words, though, because he makes at least an *attempt* to explain it so that readers will understand the subject matter at all - this is what the beginning stanza is trying to do.[16]

The remainder of the extract becomes, in effect, a philosophical argument in poetic verse, complete with rhetorical questions addressed to the reader:

> It was not once nor will it be, since it is now all together,
> Single and continuous. For what birth could you seek for it?
> How and from what did it grow? Neither will I allow you to
> say Or to think that it grew from what-is-not, for that it is not
> Cannot be spoken or thought, Also, what need could have
> impelled it to arise later or sooner, if it sprang from an origin
> in nothing? And so it should either entirely be or not be at all.
> […]

Although this argument does not take the form of premises and a conclusion that follows from the premises (the dialectical method was not yet developed), Parmenides is still making a case for his point in this poem and so is 'arguing' for it, including addressing possible

[16] An Eastern parallel to this is the Taoist text, the *Tao Te Ching,* which also describes its ineffable subject matter (the Tao, the source of the universe and all being) in poetic terms as being beyond language, yet necessarily has to make use of language to give people an idea of what it is:

"The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao,
The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.
The unnameable is the eternally real
Naming is the origin
Of all particular things". (Mitchell trans, 1999)

objections. For example, he writes: “Also what need could have impelled it to arise sooner or later if it arose from an origin in nothing?”

As we can see, Parmenides is clearly combining his use of philosophical reason with poetic language in countering this possible objection. His entire poem is an exercise in going beyond what one merely sees via sense experience to what lies beyond it and thus utilises language to describe something that can barely be described, thus reaching, as Heidegger would say, the ‘deeper relations’ of reality. His poem is thus a prime example of poetic language, for not only does it use language in an alternative manner, it also is both vivid and memorable.

For him, there was clearly little to no separation between the domains of poetry and philosophy. Whilst Plato would argue later that poetic language represents a barrier to reality, Parmenides would have retorted that he was using poetry to describe what he regarded as the true reality, the ultimate truth of existence. Arguably, since his poem (or large extracts from it) have survived for millennia, Parmenides was successful in this endeavour.

Heraclitus: An ‘Obscure’ Poet?

Heraclitus was from the city of Ephesus in modern-day Turkey, at the time under control of the Persian Empire. He wrote only one known work *On Nature* which has survived only in fragmented aphorisms. He was known in antiquity for being difficult to read owing to his obscure style of writing, according to Diogenes Laertius (2019, p. 438), ‘so that only the competent might approach it’. Since it is unknown what, if any, ‘order’ the fragments should have, this has led to myriad interpretations of Heraclitus over the centuries, and he has been

seen by different scholars as sometimes having completely contradictory philosophical views. (See Graham, 2021)

Whilst it would go beyond the scope and objectives of this thesis to try to give a definitive interpretation of Heraclitus, I will be attempting to offer a new one of him as a type of poet. I will briefly discuss some of his philosophical views, quoting the fragments and then afterwards, using literary analysis, interpret them as an example of philosophical poetry.

1. Logos and Human Nature

One of Heraclitus' most influential ideas for subsequent philosophy was his idea (for him a discovery) of logos (Gk: *λόγος*). It is quite a complex term to pin down with one definitive 'meaning' in English. It is, as A.C Grayling (2019, p. 28) explains:

> a word used by Greek philosophers in such a variety of ways that it can be taken to mean any and more of 'account', 'theory', 'framework', 'word', 'reason', 'significance', 'principle' and as we might say 'the underlying logic (of something)'.

In the surviving fragments where Heraclitus speaks about the *logos*, he also often speaks about his views of human nature. It is clear that he thought the majority of people were living in ignorance, akin to being 'asleep.'. In the first fragment, he says:

> But of this principle which holds forever people prove ignorant, not only before they hear it but also once they have heard it. For although everything happens in accordance with this principle, they resemble those with no familiarity with it, even after they become familiar with the kinds of accounts and events I discuss as I distinguish each thing according to its nature and explain its constitution. But the general run of people are as unaware of their actions while awake as they are of what they do while asleep. (2000, p. 37)

For Heraclitus, the *logos*, expressed poetically, could be said to 'awaken' people with whom it comes into contact. Subsequent fragments continue to speak about its universality, and of Heraclitus' distrust of the majority, termed "the mob".

> And so one ought to follow what is common. Although the principle is common, the majority of people live as though they have private understanding".

> What intelligence or insight do they have? They trust the people's bards and take for their teacher the mob, not realising that 'most men are bad, few good.
> If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it, since it is trackless and unexplored.
> It is wise for those who listen not to me but to the principle to agree in principle that all is one. (2000, pp. 38 – 39)

Heraclitus was the first philosopher to discuss the idea of the *logos* and, as mentioned above, it would go on to have a massive influence on subsequent Greek philosophy along with Judaism and especially Christianity which taught that the *logos* had become incarnate in Jesus Christ. In the modern era, Heraclitus would also have a notable influence on modern German thought, especially on Hölderlin and Heidegger, as we will see in the next chapter. Heraclitus would not be alone in his dismissal of the majority in some way living in a type of delusion, as we saw from both the later Hellenistic schools and Buddhism, but he did express some more positive views in later fragments which show he did think the *logos* was theoretically, accessible to everyone.

2. Flux/Impermanence

Probably the most famous idea that Heraclitus' expounded, and the one that he was remembered for throughout antiquity, was his idea of impermanence or flux. He expresses this by using the image of a river: 'On those who step into the same rivers, ever different waters are flowing'. And in a fragment quoted by Plutarch: "It is impossible to step twice into the same river" […]as Heraclitus says 'it scatters and regathers, comes together and dissolves, approaches and departs'. (Both, 2000, p. 41)

Throughout antiquity, the most common interpretation of this phrase was that Heraclitus thought that everything in the world was in constant flux with nothing remaining permanent or fixed. The interpretation of Heraclitus given by Plato (1997, p. 120, Reeve trans) in the *Cratylus* was more or less the standard one:

> Heraclitus says somewhere that 'everything gives way and nothing stands fast' and likening the things that are to the flowing (*rhoe*) of a river, he says that 'You cannot step into the same river twice.

Some contemporary scholars disagree with Plato's view. Instead of saying that everything changes with nothing staying permanent, scholars now think that, somewhat paradoxically, Heraclitus was saying that the only permanent element in the universe is in fact its impermanence. McEvilley (2002, pp. 36 - 37) writes:

> …Heraclitus developed the position that the permanent element in nature is change. The unity of things is the unity of an ongoing process, not the unity of a static Other…In terms of metaphysics, Heraclitus's central postulate is his emphasis on change, not on things themselves. Things that are constantly changing are not susceptible of definition, since a definition that applies one moment will not apply the next.

A.C Grayling (2019, p. 29) agrees with McEvilley writing: 'Some commentators disagree that Heraclitus meant what Plato thought he meant. Rather they say, he meant that things stay the same only by changing.' As we will see in more detail later when we examine Heraclitus' statements through a specifically poetic lens, this short aphorism would have made Heraclitus' central doctrine easily memorable. It's also a prime example of a poetic aphorism expressing a philosophical idea through use of a figurative image, in this case of a river.

3. The Unity of Opposites

One last theme that is present throughout the fragments of Heraclitus is that of the unity of opposites. In a number of fragments. Heraclitus writes about things or concepts that are normally considered the opposite of one another, and combines them as a unified whole, saying that they are not the antithesis of each other, but are in fact the same:

> It makes no difference which is present: living and dead, sleeping and waking, young and old. For these changed around are those and those changed around are again these.
>
> Road: up and down, it's still the same road.
>
> Sea: water most pure and most tainted, drinkable and wholesome for fish, but undrinkable and poisonous for people.

> It is not better for men to get everything they want. Disease makes health pleasant and good, as hunger does being full, and weariness rest. (All, 2000, p. 39)

It seems that what Heraclitus is doing here is emphasising the unity of the opposites over their oppositeness and therefore continuing the idea that was noted in the previous discussion about 'flux', that these opposites are encompassed within an underlying unity. Heraclitus, then, is making effective use of the inherent memorability (as we will see in the next chapter, its key characteristic) of the poetic, expressed within the aphorism to argue for his philosophical idea of an inherent unseen metaphysical unity over the common-sense view of division. As Edward Hussey (1999, pp. 96-97) writes, three main conclusions are possible on Heraclitus' unity of opposites:

> 1. The unity is more fundamental than the opposites. 2. The opposites are essential features of the unity. 3. The manifestation of the opposites involves a process, in which the unity performs its essential function.

Daniel W Graham (2008, p.176) comes to a similar conclusion, stressing Heraclitus' views of the interdependence of opposites and its similarities with the doctrine of flux:

> What is crucial in both the doctrine of flux and the unity of opposites is the lawlike relationships that obtain between opposites. Some opposites are equivalent or comparable stages of a cycle; others are hierarchically arranged so that change sustains stability and stability governs change. In either case, opposites are different sides of the same coin: they are interdependent realities.

As we will clearly see later on, this Heraclitan doctrine is very similar to ideas in Zen Buddhism, which teaches that the dualisms we impose upon human experience are unnecessary and illusionary. We will return to this idea, and its cross-cultural links with Heraclitus in Chapter V.

We have now examined a number of fragments by Heraclitus covering three of his main themes. Though there are a lot more to choose from, we now have a sufficient number to, as we did with Parmenides, apply some literary analysis to them. It will be argued that his

fragments can be interpreted as examples of aphoristic poetry which will continue to support the idea that there is a hidden tradition of poetic philosophy within the Western philosophical tradition.

Heraclitus' Fragmented Poesis: Aphoristic Poetry?

We have earlier seen some literary interpretations of Heraclitus' aphorisms by other scholars. Poetically analysing all of them definitively, is almost impossible, given that they are subject to so many interpretations. But, as with Parmenides above, all that needs to be demonstrated is that some Heraclitean fragments can be poetic, and count as poetry, because if so, their philosophical nature will further support the existence of philosophical poetry, going against Plato. Since all that remains of Heraclitus' work are aphorisms, the question to tackle first is: Can aphorisms count as poetry? To begin with, we should define what exactly an aphorism is. Andrew Hui (2019, p.1) calls it:

> A basic unit of intelligible thought"…opposed to the babble of the foolish, the redundancy of bureaucrats, the silence of mystics, in the aphorism nothing is superfluous, every word bears weight. Its minimal size is charged with maximum intensity.

It should be stated clearly: *Aphorisms can be poetry.* Although they are defined by their conciseness, the shortness of form does not entail that aphorisms cannot be counted as poetry, because, as we will see, aphorisms have the same effects as other standardised forms of poetry: Like other forms of poetry, aphorisms also are inherently characterised by the poetic. Their conciseness works to emphasise the poetic element, in fact, because it is the short length that makes emphasizes the fact that an aphorism is, in its very nature, an alternative use of language, as it tries to contain the maximum quantity of meaning in as few words as possible. Aphorisms thus in their very nature, look past all superficial detail to get to the very heart of their topic and to the truth of that topic; adding such detail would mean that it is no longer an aphorism. They are a specialised form of language that can expose the 'deeper relations' in Heideggerian parlance, between us and reality.

Their conciseness also makes explicit the link between the poetic as a concept, and memory. The shortness of an aphorism allows it to strike the reader, even more than other forms of poetry, because all of its meaning is contained in so little content, making it easier to digest, remember and apply to ones' own experience.

Concision itself is referred to in contemporary poetics as a topic of discussion. (See C Rovee (2012. p. 293) The aphorism itself has long been classed as a shortened medium of poetry. As Wolf (1994-1995, p. 433) writes of Shakespeare's aphorisms, 'His greatest gift was his capacity for compressed language coupled with an unlimited suggestiveness.' Indeed, it is this 'unlimited suggestiveness' that makes the aphorism so ideal as a poetic form. Given their lack of surrounding context, aphorisms are subject to a potentially unlimited number of interpretations and, upon an understanding of the aphoristic message being achieved, deliver a flash of insight. Such an insight makes one briefly stop still, for a moment seeing the world anew, more intimately and feeling themselves more a part of it. Thus, aphorisms are not only memorable as above, but they are also inherently vivid in their 'striking' the reader. They are not only an alternative use of language, but also contain the main characteristics of poetic language. As Coyle (1976, p. 207) relates about American poet Wallace Stevens' use of the aphorism: 'The function of the aphorism in poetry is not to capture permanently or didactically some absolute truth, but to give imaginative man a momentary hold on an aspect of experience through the power of his own expression'. As we will see in Chapter V, this flash of insight is what Zen Buddhist thought refers to as *satori*, an enlightenment experience, a unification of subject and object. Aphoristic poetry offers a metaphorical 'pause button', that allows one to grasp a particular moment and let it briefly unify completely with the recipient of the poem.

All other received forms of poetry also have the capacity to deliver a renewed sense of being in the world, but the aphorism, due to its concise nature, delivers a truth, however temporary, that is more 'striking' than others. Of course, other, longer, forms of poetry can also contain aphorisms, Shakespeare's were all part of longer works, for instance. Longer forms of poetry also allow this same, unifying experience. However, such a sense will be revealed in a slower, more measured, format as the reader must put everything within the general thread of the overarching poem. An aphorism, by contrast, even one contained within a larger poem, can be separated from a larger context without losing any of its linguistic power because it contains all of its poetic content, everything with the potential to stay in mind, firmly within itself. As a reader reads through a longer poem, a reorientation of being gradually imparts itself, it differs from the effect of aphorisms, not in its profundity, but in the intensity of its revelation. Aphorisms do not disguise their intensity; their language strikes out at the reader in one swift swoop.

Snider (1994, p.55) writes of Francis Bacon's use of aphorisms that they 'are the preferred vehicle of inquiry because they allow no room for imposing order upon experience prematurely or making potentially erroneous connections.' Aphorisms allow no *apriori* judgement of experience, they give no time to make that judgement. They express our experience just as it is. An aphorism grabs the reader, strikes them and pulls them into the world utilising the vividness of its imagery to carve out a place for itself in the memory. The aphorism, then, has an extremely long history; it is a part of discussions into academic poetics and has been used by established poets as a poetic style. What is more, it can have the same effect on a reader as any longer form of poetry, it just does so in a more immediate manner. Therefore, the aphorism can and should be classed as a form of poetry.

As a form of poetry, then, containing as it does a deep depth of meaning within few words, aphorisms can express complex philosophical positions whilst maintaining their brevity. For instance, if we look at one of Heraclitus' most famous sayings:

On those who step into the same rivers, ever different waters are flowing.

Who could this aphorism be addressed to? It begins with 'on those who step into the same rivers. 'Those' is clearly referring to people, maybe people who used to go and swim in rivers as a pastime. The second part of the line brings home the wider philosophical point: "ever different waters are flowing". Thus, even if a person went to the same river every day, Heraclitus is saying that the person would always be going to a different river because the waters from the day before would no longer be there. In contrast to Parmenides, who as we saw viewed an unchanging 'oneness' as the metaphysical bedrock of reality, Heraclitus, in this aphorism, saw life as impermanent and fleeting. The statement is not just a 'factual' statement about the workings of rivers then, it is also a metaphysical one about the world and our place within it. In this one sentence, a wealth of meaning is therefore revealed. Although the aphorism seems to describe a somewhat ordinary and matter-of-fact statement, it is making a philosophical point and putting forth a metaphysical position.

We can apply the same poetic analysis to another of Heraclitus' aphorisms:

Road: up and down, it's still the same road.

The first word tells us that Heraclitus is describing a road. Which road, he does not say, but it can be assumed that he is referring to a generic 'road', the type that people walk on every day. The next words 'up and down' evoke the image of people walking in both directions on this road, to and from destinations at each end. It is after this that Heraclitus again delivers the philosophical punchline: 'it's still the same road'. What Heraclitus is alluding to here, as

mentioned in a previous section, is the unity of opposites. Despite the fact that people walk on the road in different directions, the difference is nullified by the fact that the road itself is the same. There is thus unity in the opposition, up and down are interdependently related. We saw above how this doctrine is one of Heraclitus' most important.

Boethius: The Christian-Pagan Poet

We have seen that there were indeed examples of philosophers before Plato, in the form of Parmenides and Heraclitus, who successfully combined the poetic and the philosophical. When the Western Roman Empire had all but collapsed, one thinker from within Plato's own tradition disobeyed his master. Before an impending execution, this thinker chose to commit to posterity his philosophical thoughts, in both prose and poetry. That thinker was Boethius who wrote the famous *Consolation of Philosophy* (Lt: *De consolatione philosophiae*).[17]

Boethius wrote the *Consolation* whilst he was in prison. He worked in the court of King Theodoric the Great but fell from favour and was accused of treason being condemned to death as punishment. Boethius was a Christian, but he was also a Neo-Platonist, the same philosophical school founded by Plotinus (204/5 CE – 270 CE) and that Hadot studied in his early academic career.

Neo-Platonists believed in one divine principle which they deemed 'The One' (Gk: *Τὸ Ἕν*) The One was the very principle of being itself and through emanation, its being-ness filtered down the metaphysical hierarchy composed of Intellect or *nous* (Gk: νοῦς), Soul or *psyche* (Gk: *ψυχή*), and down to base physical matter. The goal of life according to some Neo-Platonists, especially the followers of Plotinus, was to enable the soul to leave the physical

[17] All verses from *The Consolation* are from P.G Walsh's 1999 translation, referenced in the bibliography.

body, eventually achieving unification (Gk*: henosis*/*ἕνωσις*) with The One itself. (See Remes, 2014). As Peter Brown (1971, pp. 73-74) writes of the Neo-Platonists from Plotinus onwards:

> What they emphasised was that it was possible, through rational contemplation, to seize the intimate connection between every level of the visible world and its source in the One God. It was possible, therefore, to 'touch' by thought the concentrated centre that had been sensed through the unrolled beauty of all visible things.

Boethius inherited this tradition, and he notably chose to console himself not with his Christian religion, but with philosophy personalised as Lady Philosophy in Pagan guise. As time had gone on, Hellenistic philosophical schools such as Stoicism and Aristotelianism, became absorbed into Neoplatonism. The differences that had hitherto distinguished these schools disappeared and non-Christian philosophers, in effect, constituted a single group (which still could harbour inter-disagreements) that asserted itself against an increasingly popular Christianity (see Byden and Ierodiakonou, 2012, p.30).

Whilst the absence of references to Christianity may strike the reader as strange, being Christian was not radically at odds with being an adherent of Neo-Platonism. During the Roman Empire, many Pagan philosophers taught Christian students, Hypatia of Alexandria, who we have already encountered, is a prime example of this. Due to the similarity of many Neo-Platonist ideas with Christian doctrine, as Edward J Watts (2017, p. 47) writes, Christian students could 'practice Platonic philosophy in a way that was philosophically sound and not radically inconsistent with Christian theology'.

The *Consolation* consists of Lady Philosophy trying to console the prisoner (implied to be Boethius himself) by appealing to philosophy to help him cope with his impending death. The work does contain a large amount of prose, but poetry is present throughout. As James Harpur (2006, pp, 44-45) says about the poetry:

> ln all there are thirty-nine poems: thirty-five of them are addressed by Philosophy to Boethius, while the remaining four are spoken by the prisoner himself The poems. serve to introduce, reflect, enlarge upon and emphasise the themes that the prose sections treat discursively…By the end, the reader, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, has trekked through Boethius's slough of despond and come out the other side, spirits lifted by the sense of transcendence that Philosophy has instilled. Boethius's consolation, is Everyman's.

Much of the poetry draws on stories in Greco-Roman mythology, but Boethius also uses it to discuss themes of a philosophical significance. These themes draw upon all schools of philosophy including Stoicism and others, which, as we saw above, Neo-Platonism had absorbed by this point in time. Some themes are also particular to Neo-Platonism itself. These themes include such ideas as control of the passions/emotions, dismissal of the idea of fame and noble birth, due to their impermanence, cosmopolitanism, and contemplation of The One. Some of Boethius' poetry is very long, but it is worth quoting in full to see its poetic power.

As Harpur says above, the poetry is normally employed to support what the prisoner and Lady Philosophy have been discussing in the preceding prose sections. For example, when Lady Philosophy tells the prisoner that he must control his emotions in the face of his enemies, she afterwards expresses the teaching in poetic verse:

> He who keeps composure in a life well-ordered,
> Who thrusts underfoot fate's arrogant incursions,
> Confronts with integrity both good and evil fortune,
> Succeeds in maintaining an undefeated outlook –
> He will not be moved by the wild threats of ocean
> Spilling out and churning up waves from deep recesses;
> Nor by Vesuvius, exploding from its forges,
> Issuing its smoking fires over wide expanses…(p. 8)

She continues this theme of control of the passions, and at the end of the same book, after describing various natural phenomena, Lady Philosophy says:

> Your case is like these.
> If you wish to behold
> The truth in clear light,
> And to take the straight road,
> Forgo empty joys,
> Dismiss every fear,
> Renounce idle hope,
> Let grief come not near.

The mind is befogged,
Imprisoned in chains,
When emotions like these
Wield monarchical reins. (p. 18)

In Book 2, the need for fame becomes Lady Philosophy's target:

One who seeks fame, and nought but fame, with fierce intent,
And thinks it of the utmost worth,
Should train his eyes upon the boundless firmament
Then contemplate this puny earth.
[…]
Death lumps together lowly and high-born as one;
She ranks the highest with the base,
Where are the bones of trusty Fabricius now gone?
Brutus, stern Cato have no place. (p. 37)

She dismisses the idea of noble or high birth in the same way and in the process, expresses a kind of cosmopolitanism, that as we will see in chapter IV on Marcus Aurelius, was also taught by the Stoics and Cynics.

All men on earth from one source take their rise;
One Father of the world all things supplies.
To Phoebus, rays; horns to the moon on high,
To earth its men, as starlight to the sky.
To lodge in bodies, souls from heaven he leads;
All mortals thus are sprung from noble seeds.
Why boast so loud of forbears and proud race?
Reflect on your beginnings, and God's place
As source of all. No man's bereft of worth,
Save if through vices he betrays his birth. (p. 50)

Finally, Boethius writes a long, yet vivid poem that takes the form of a prayer to God. In doing so, he also includes Neo-Platonic philosophical ideas about 'The One':

Father of earth and sky you steer the world
By reason everlasting. You bid time.
Progress from all eternity. Yourself
Unshifting, you impel all things to move
No cause outside yourself made you give shape
To fluid matter for in you was set
The form of the ungrudging highest good
From heavenly patterns, you derive all things
Yourself most beautiful, you likewise bear
In mind a world of beauty, and you shape
Our world in like appearance. You command
Its perfect parts, to form a perfect world.

[…]

Let me mind rise to your august abode,
And there, dear lord, survey the source of good,
My inward eye I may direct on you.

> Disperse the fog and the encumbering weight
> Of this earth's bulk, and shine fourth, clear and bright;
> For in the eyes of all devoted men
> You are calm brightness and the rest of peace
> Men aim to see you as their starting point
> Their guide, conductor, way, and final end. (pp. 56-57)

The fact that Boethius wrote using poetry at all to express philosophy, shows that he did not agree with Plato's dismissal of the poets and evidently that he thought poetry was still of some philosophical worth, and able to accurately transmit philosophical truth. As with preceding sections, we will now examine some of Boethius' poetry from a literary analysis perspective.

Boethius' Poetry of Consolation*:* An Analysis

As we have seen, with our previously examined poets, Boethius also makes use of poetic language. Not only does his poetry seek to get beyond the impermanent world of the senses to what is permanent and true, following the Platonist tradition, Boethius reflects this desire in his use of language. For not only is it poetic in its characteristics, but the whole text is also unique in its blend of poetry and prose, negating any separation between them as styles.

Boethius' poetry touches on many themes common to all schools of ancient philosophy, such as control of the passions and discouraging obsession with fame and material possessions. The last stanza quoted however, on God, is more specifically Neo-platonist in nature and it is thus this part of *The Consolation* that will be focused on from a literary perspective. The first stanza quoted is a hymn or prayer of praise to God. Boethius describes God by calling him 'Father of Earth and Sky':

> Father of earth and sky you steer the world
> By reason everlasting. You bid time.
> Progress from all eternity. Yourself
> Unshifting, you impel all things to move.

The poetic language that Boethius uses here demonstrates the passion and strength of his faith in God, how he regards God as the originator and cause of all that is, a prominent doctrine in

Neoplatonic philosophy.[18] Interestingly, although Boethius is said to have been a Christian, there is nothing in this description of God that can be taken as evidence of any particularly Christian view, such as a reference to Jesus, for example. However, such descriptions of God were very common in the Neo-Platonist tradition. Take this description by Plotinus (2018, p. 894) himself in *Ennead 6:*

> And within this circling dance, behold the fount of Life, the fount of Intellect, the principle of Being, the cause of goodness, the root of soul…We, however, exist to a greater degree when inclined towards it, and our well-being is there, whereas being distant from it makes us alone and lesser in existence. (Stones et al trans).

Plotinus here was not intentionally writing a poem, but, the vividness of the poetic images he is alluding to here in order to describe God perhaps shows that the line between poetry and prose, at least to describe the profound things of existence, was often blurred.[19] The poetic language of Plotinus could easily be transposed as a poem without having to lose any of its wording. Plotinus' prose and Boethius' poetry provide evidence that much of the Neo-Platonist tradition allowed a space for the poetic in their philosophical outlook.

This use of poetic language of the sort we have described throughout the thesis within Neoplatonism has been noted by other scholars. Alexander M. Key (2022, p. 135), for instance, argues for the existence of what he calls a "Neoplatonist Poetics" that includes one or more of three things: allegory, figure and genre writing. Key says.

[18] Boethius saying that God by using 'reason everlasting…you impel all things to move' demonstrates that Neoplatonism had also absorbed Stoic and Aristotelian views of the divine within its philosophical system, with the Stoic emphasis on a divine 'reason' and the Aristotelian view of the 'first mover'. Neoplatonism had become the dominant school of Pagan philosophy before Boethius' time, but by then, the Stoics and Aristotelians were all but extinct as individual schools of thought.

[19] Much the same could be said of Plato's use of poetic language to describe important aspects of his philosophy, such as the Allegory of the Cave and The Dividing Line.

that ‘there is a strong case to be made that all the vectors and dynamics that one can read as Neoplatonist fall into one or more of these three categories. They therefore constitute our Neoplatonist poetics.’

With this in mind, we move onto part of the second quoted stanza of Boethius’ poetry:

> Let me mind rise to your august abode,
> And there, dear lord, survey the source of good,
> My inward eye I may direct on you.
> Disperse the fog and the encumbering weight
> Of this earth’s bulk, and shine fourth, clear and bright;
> For in the eyes of all devoted men.

This part of the text is once again directed towards God, but it has changed from describing Boethius as poet as an outsider looking at God, arguably to an insider looking *from within* God in the vein of the view from above, the spiritual exercise that Hadot emphasizes. Boethius here describes something akin to a mystical/religious experience, either ‘real’ or imagined: ‘let my mind rise to your august abode, and there dear lord, survey the source of the good’. In Key’s terminology mentioned above, this would be a case of allegory. Key (2022, p. 135) defines allegory in this context as follows:

> […]A set of words that target and sustain a nonverbal realm…In Neoplatonic poetry, the nonverbal realm sustained is almost always divine…Allegory has therefore always been a good way for human language to deal with the ineffable…

From Key’s quotation above, we can see that philosophy often deals with issues that are unable to be expressed in ordinary, everyday language. Boethius is therefore making use of allegory because he is attempting to describe the nonverbal realm of God himself as best he can within the limitations of human language, through philosophy. He calls where God dwells ‘your august abode’ which at least conveys that it is a place of the utmost majesty but also leaves something amiss, in the sense that this phrase seems a little too abstract and cliché to speak of such a place. However, this does not signify a deficiency of linguistic imagination on Boethius’ part rather than the inability of human language to sufficiently describe God or where he dwells, as it is. Like Parmenides, Boethius is thus being pragmatic with his use of

language and sticking to words that will communicate his intended meaning, at least to an extent. He does this whilst keeping in mind that any attempt to do so will always fall short of the actual experience in its entirety.

Moving on finally to the last part of the quoted stanza, we can again see an example of Boethius using his poetry to express Neo-Platonic doctrine:

> Disperse the fog and the encumbering weight
> Of this earth's bulk, and shine fourth, clear and bright;
> For in the eyes of all devoted men.

Boethius petitions God to 'disperse the fog and the encumbering weight of this earth's bulk and shine forth'. In the context of his Platonic intellectual heritage, this expresses Plotinus' belief that the soul and the immaterial is of much more importance than the body and the material.[20] This is the reason for reference to the earth as an 'encumbering weight', it is the earth, the material and intelligible world that is ensnaring the soul, preventing it from reaching its true home within the divine. Boethius is asking God to clear the fog of misunderstanding that the material realm creates, and to shine through it, so that Boethius can return to God with no need of mediation.

Boethius' use of poetry over ordinary prose for his purposes, demonstrates that he too, sought to reveal the existence of the 'deeper relations' between himself and the universe as he saw it. Ordinary language was not sufficient to depict all of this reality, hence why he saw it necessary to support it with poetic language. For such mundane language on its own was not able to express the truth that he wished.

[20] Although Plotinus indeed regarded the spiritual as more important than the material, not all Neo-Platonists accepted this stance. Iamblichus those that came after him adopted the completely opposite view. For them, the two realms were metaphysically intertwined. As Gregory Shaw (2024, pp. 57-62) writes: "Theurgists…aim to *transform* embodied existence, not escape it…This is a critical difference between Iamblichus and Plotinus: sensible matter for Iamblichus is not evil. In fact, the soul *needs* matter in order to unite with the divine. Iamblichus maintained that sensible matter is a manifestation of the One in its dyadic (dividing) power". Thus we must keep in mind the diversity of the tradition.

Conclusion

In this chapter, Plato's negative attitude towards poetry in *Republic* was examined. It was argued that this rejection is responsible for the dismissal of poetry as a valid means of philosophising in the Western tradition. However, it was also argued that there is, in fact, a hidden tradition of poetic philosophy both before Plato via the Pre-Socratics, and after him in the Neo-Platonic tradition – one that, ironically, was said to be based on the ideas of Plato himself.

The *raison d'etre* of this chapter was not only to shift the focus momentarily from Hadot, to examine the reason for the rejection of poesis as a means of philosophising in the Western world, but also to demonstrate the existence of a hidden tradition of Western poetic philosophising which provides further evidence that poetry and philosophy are, and can be once again, entirely complementary.

Before we return comparative work on Western and Asian philosophical traditions in the form of textual analysis in Chapter IV, we will continue with our elaboration of the Hadot Paradigm begun in the current chapter. It has been stated how one of the limitations of the Hadot Paradigm is its lack of clarity on how the concept of philosophy as a way of life managed to endure for so long and spread over such a large geographical zone. Understanding this is vital for our own utilisation of the Hadot Paradigm for reconceptualising philosophy.

During the introduction, it was stated that the poetic could provide the answer to this conundrum, an idea that Hadot had touched upon in his work but failed to expand upon. The next chapter, again, making use of the work of Martin Heidegger and expanding the Heideggerian insights of the introduction, will seek to rectify this problem.

Chapter III: The Poetic as Sustainer

After having examined the historical reasons for the distrust of poetry in the general Western philosophical tradition and having seen some examples of the successful use of poetry to express philosophy, we are ready to apply our insights back to Hadot. As stated, in the introduction, it was said that the Hadot Paradigm needs to be further elaborated to explain how the philosophical way of life endured and spread as far as it did.

The poetic is what will allow us to complete such an elaboration. It will be shown how the poetic is core to the Hadot Paradigm, and acknowledged, but left underdeveloped by Hadot himself. In this chapter, this plugging of the gap in Hadot's ideas will be the focus. We will examine further what the poetic is, as well as how and why it plays such a fundamental role in a successful deployment of the Hadot Paradigm as a framework for a reconceptualised philosophy. As during the introduction, we will be making heavy use of the ideas of Martin Heidegger and expanding upon the aspects of his thought covered prior to this chapter.

Hadot, Poetry and 'Aesthetic Perception'

Although The Hadot Paradigm focuses principally on philosophy as a practical way of life, as we saw briefly in the introduction, it should be noted that the exploration of poetry thus does have a precedent in Hadot's thought. Although he does leave the idea somewhat lacking in

detail, and this lack of precision emphasises the need for further elaboration. However, the fact that he chose to identify poetry as relevant to his work, as we will see, suffices to demonstrate that applying the idea of the poetic to Hadot's ideas is by no means impossible. To begin with, in his work *The Veil of Isis,* Hadot (2006, p. 205), writes the following about the antique idea of the universe itself as a poem 'written' by the divine:

> If the universe is a poem, the poet can unveil its meaning and its secret by composing a poem in his turn, which in some sense will be the universe. For according to a concept that is archaic but has remained alive throughout the ages, the artist has the power of recreating that which he sings. The poet's word is creative.

Whilst referencing the pre-Socratics in the above quotation, Hadot refers to the interpretation of a poet as a type of 'creative' force and as something that has "remained alive throughout the ages". He does not dispute the relevance of the poetic to contemporary life, nor to his own ideas. That the creative aspect of the poetic is still, in a sense, "alive" shows that, perhaps, Hadot thinks it should not be so quickly dismissed.

In his later interviews with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson, Hadot (2011, pp. 140-141) expands on his views of poetry. To repeat the quotation from the introduction, Hadot goes so far as to say that poetry can be a spiritual exercise in itself:

> This is why we can say in general that art, poetry, literature, painting and even music, can be a spiritual exercise. The best example is the work of Proust, because his search for lost time is an itinerary of consciousness, which thanks to the exercise of memory, discovers the sentiment of its spiritual permanence.

Hadot's view here, in terms of the objectives of this thesis, is interesting. Although he gives the example of Proust, saying that it includes "an itinerary of consciousness", the question remains: In what manner can writing poetry be a spiritual exercise as according to Hadot, these exercises are supposed to be both practical, psychological and ontologically transformative in nature? Ryan Harte (2023, p. 63) writes in a recent paper on Hadot, the

ability of poetry to become a spiritual exercise rest its ability to render things "more alive to us" and thus more memorable:

> Poetry infuses the world with self: a poem focuses our imagination and empathy and intellect onto a loaf of bread or a star or a disease, and these things then become more alive to us, and because they are more alive to us, we care about them more—meaning we change (our values, priorities, desires, beliefs). Through imbuing the world with human attention, poetry makes human attention part of the world and the world part of human attention. The self thereby becomes less egoistic and less isolated, the precise goals of spiritual exercise

Lastly, again in *The Veil of Isis*, Hadot (2006, pp. 211-212), writes that there are three different ways of approaching reality in the modern era. We experience the world, according to him through common sense, through the lens of science, or through what he calls 'aesthetic perception':

> The world of habitual perception is opposed, however, not only by the world of scientific knowledge, but also by the world of aesthetic perception…This means no longer perceiving things from a utilitarian point of view, by selecting only what concerns our actions upon things, and thereby becoming incapable of seeing things as they appear in their reality and unity.

Hadot's idea of 'aesthetic perception', which lies at the root of many forms of art, reveals that he views art, including poetry, as being significant to the human condition, and to human living. It is through artistic experience, that one approaches reality in a particular manner, one of only three within Hadot's view. He expands on this in his last published book, *Don't Forget to Live* (2023, p. 140):

> It is in art and through art that one can accede to the consent of existence and that one can say "yes" to life. For Goethe and Nietzsche, art is a privileged means of access to reality, a mode of knowledge that leads its practitioner to feel what Nietzsche calls the Dionysian Experience.

From these preceding discussions, we can see that Hadot was not unaware of the potential philosophical significance of the poetic and poetry more generally. On the contrary, there are clear indications that poetry that he had given it lengthy consideration. Although he does not

fully and consistently apply the poetic to his ideas as overtly as he could have done, the statements throughout his works do seem to be hiding hitherto unactualized potentials.

During the introduction, it was stated that one of the limitations of the Hadot Paradigm is that he failed to demonstrate how it was that the concept of philosophy as a way of life could endure as long as it did and spread across such a large geographical area. Hadot's hitherto mentioned ideas about poetry may hold the solution to this issue, but firstly, they need to be supplemented with those of Martin Heidegger, the philosopher who put the poetic at the centre of his philosophical project.

Heidegger and Poetry

Heidegger's philosophical quest was an ontological inquiry. He sought the meaning of 'being' itself in the abstract sense of the term and what it meant to 'be' (see Frede, 1993, pp. 42-69). He saw poetry and poetic language as being able to reveal *being* more effectively than prose. As David A. White (1989, p. 69) says: 'For Heidegger, the language of poetry has a direct insight into the being of things'. As we saw when quoting the video clip of Heidegger during the introduction, Heidegger believed that poetic language allows us to access the 'deeper relations' of things. For him, these 'deeper relations' represent *being,* not only of individual things, but *being* itself.

Heidegger himself makes his views on poetry explicit in his essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* (Gr: *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*). For Heidegger, it is art that allows the being of something to emerge into truth, or more literally, into 'unconcealedness' which he defines by the Greek word *aletheia* (*ἀλήθεια*). Heidegger (1975, p. 35) clarifies this view when he talks about a painting of a pair of shoes by Van Gogh:

> The entity emerges into the unconcealdness of its being. The Greeks called the unconcealdness of beings *aletheia[...]*there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work. The nature

> of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work.

Heidegger's view is that art, which includes poetry, in disclosing being, or truth, itself, is what reveals the world and its 'deeper relations', in its *suchness* (Pl/Sk: *tathātā*). For him, art acts as a metaphorical light that disperses layers of mistaken interpretations about the world which block our truly seeing reality. We will see later that this is one of the reasons that the truth expressed by the poetic is key to someone choosing to follow a particular philosophical way of life. Further on within the same essay, Heidegger (1975, p. 70) applies his view of art specifically to poetry, and in fact, relegates all art to poetry: 'Truth, as the clearing and concealing of what is, happens in being composed, as a poet composes a poem. All art as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is as such, essentially poetry'. He goes on to say, on the same page, that poetry projects ahead 'the open' (Gr: *Das offene*) which allows being to 'ring out':

> Poetry, however, is not an aimless imagining of whimsicalities and not a flight of mere notions and fancies into the realm of the unreal. What poetry, as illuminating projection, unfolds of unconcealdness and projects ahead into the design of the figure, is the Open which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the Open brings beings to shine and ring out.

What is the nature of 'the open' that poetry 'lets happen'? For Heidegger, poetic language enables a richer and fuller experience of being itself. Unlike prose, due to its vivid nature, in poetic language, everything, even things that often seem of little significance is able to 'shine out'. The open (Gr: *Das offene)* in the words of O' Dahlstrom (2023, p. 193) for Heidegger is 'the place of being'. Western metaphysics often relegates 'being' either to individual beings, or the idea of being itself, which often does not carry any substance. It is the open, that 'opens human beings and being to one another'. In projecting the open ahead, the poetic is what forms the bridge towards the place where human 'beings' and 'being' itself meet and

intertwine harmoniously. The open is where human *beings be*. The poetic leads to the open, it is what illuminates being, brings it forth, unconceals and discloses it and makes it once again a presence in ordinary life. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (1976, p. 539) expands on Heidegger's view of poetic language:

> Since it is through language, and most especially through the language of poetry, that being comes to light, the hermeneutical process must focus on what emerges from the darkness that precedes words and plunges back into concealment.

The above quotation from Rosenfeld is why the Hadot Paradigm requires a much more sustained engagement with the work of Heidegger in order to ensure its elaboration. The process of hermeneutical interpretation, even that of ancient philosophy and philosophical texts must be done with the goal of 'accessing being', which is best done through the poetic. Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (2004, p. 99) agrees writing: 'Since Being must be accessed as withdrawing-emerging presence - as a complex play of presence and absence - poetic language, in contrast to prose, admits a unique capacity to bring Being to language.'

For Heidegger, and later scholars, poetic language is what allows for the unconcealment of being because, again, it is a way of using language that has the ability to more profoundly capture the depth of the existence of things. When one commits to looking through such a lens, through poetic language, one sees not just individual things themselves, but how all things overlap into each other to form a web of being. Again, to quote Heidegger from the introduction, in using this language, one sees more clearly the 'deeper relations' between everything. To an extent, poetic language reveals the *Śūnyatā* of things, a Buddhist concept meaning *emptiness*, which will be examined in Chapter V.

Are we now aware, then, of the type of 'truth' that Heidegger says poetry 'unconceals'? Is it the same truth that is expressed mathematically when we say that 1+1=2, or the logical truth

that reveals itself when we say that if all bachelors are men and Socrates is a bachelor, then he is also a man? It seems that a different form of 'truth' is at play here for Heidegger.

Roger Scruton (2015, p. 161) calls such a truth, 'inner truth', one which is 'bestowed by poetry' and that the 'fusing' of something with its associations and significations for life in the poetic moment are the result of a life lived in full awareness of such a truth. This 'fusion' that Scruton mentions is what happens when such poetic language is utilised. What the thing *is*, its being shines forth and overlaps with your own, to reveal, as Scruton writes 'its associations and significations for life'. Scruton's 'inner truth' and Heidegger's *being* are thus identical and the fusion is simply another way of describing the 'deeper relations' that are revealed via the poetic as a result.

However, whilst poetry does reveal, or unconceal, an inner sense of truth, it also has the effect of revealing an outer sense in the fact that it opens up 'a world'. Heidegger does not only see poetry as allowing for the *aletheia* of being, but he also says that it permits the opening up of a 'world'. By 'world' here, Heidegger refers to the worldview, culture and historical path of a certain nation or people, in his case, the German *volk*. Julian Young (2001, p. 23) writes: 'In sum, then, 'world' is the background and usually unnoticed understanding which determines for the members of an historical culture, what for them, fundamentally, there *is*.'[21] In other words, in opening up a world, the poetic is what commences the process of creating a philosophical way of life, as outlined by Hadot. However, crucially, Heidegger does not just see poetry as a window into a specific *world*, but as actually being the keystone that becomes the foundation of that *world*. Heidegger (2014, p.180) makes clear in *Hölderlin*

[21] Heidegger's idea of 'world' is very similar to his student Hans-Georg Gadamer's (2013, p. 313) idea of an 'horizon' which he defines in his book *Truth and Method* as '[…]the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point'.

and the Essence of Poetry, the poetic acts as a foundation, and itself participates in *founding*/*grounding* (*gründung*):[22]

> Thus, the essence of poetry seems to vacillate in the illusory light created by that poetry, and yet the essence rests firmly behind its own foreground. This firmness poetry owes to its ability to found. This founding remains a free gift…But this freedom is not arbitrary and it does not follow stubbornly where desire might lead it. It is highest necessity. As the founding of Being, poetry is doubly bound, and this twofold bondage, its innermost law, finally allows us to understand its essence completely.

In Heidegerrian terms, g*ründung*, as O. Dahlstrom (2023, p. 137) writes, 'denotes the ground that grounds, namely the appropriation (Gr: *ereignis)* as the truth of being, the happening of its hiddenness as a clearing, constituting the primordial time-space.' For Heidegger (1996, p. 139), it is within the poetic that 'the truth of the dwelling of human beings as historical is grounded' and it is also the poetic that brings 'the dwelling of historical human beings into its essence.'

The poetic thus has a dual purpose and function. Firstly, it *grounds* human beings into their historical *world*, their own way of life, combining past and present and removing any barrier to their intertwining. In doing this, however, the poetic also *founds* that cultural world or way of life, it creates it, and at the same time creates a metaphorical home for human beings within it, for that is its essence. For Heidegger, the poet was the supreme embodiment of a national world, for him, of the German people (Gr: *volk*). Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) was a poet whom for Heidegger, brought forth the *attunement* (Gr: *stimmung)* of a national people to their homeland. As Heidegger (2014, p. 126) writes in his commentary on two of Hölderlin's poems 'The fundamental attunement—which is to say, the truth of the *Dasein* of a people—is originally founded by the poet.' An *attunement* is something pre-determined that affects us as part of our being 'thrown into the world', they 'determine how the world and

[22] Both 'founding' and 'grounding' are used as an English translation and shall be used interchangeably.

entities within the world appear to us' as (O'Dahlstrom, 2023, p. 37) writes. As part of our existential situation, we are thrown into a particular cultural world by default. In the Heideggerian view, it is the poet who, through the medium of the poetic, not only founds that world and then unveils it to us, as above, but also who attunes, or accustoms us to it, thus ensuring that we will henceforth view the world through a certain cultural lens. It is the poet who inducts us into a particular 'national' way of seeing things, a particular form of *being* itself or, as Hadot would term it, a 'way of life' (Fr: *mode de vie)*.

Ironically, despite Heidegger principally applying his view of the poetic to the concept of the *world* of a particular people, it also caused intellectual ripples far from Germany, and even beyond Europe. In Imperial Japan, thinkers influenced by Heidegger such as Keiji Nishitani (1900-1990) and others, took up the idea of poetry being the embodiment of a national spirit; for Japan, haiku fulfilled this role. As D.T Suzuki (2010, p. 231) wrote in his *Zen and Japanese Culture*:

> Perhaps one most egregiously Japanese characteristic is to take notice of the small things of nature and tenderly take care of them. Instead of talking about great ideals or highly abstract thoughts, they cultivate chrysanthemums or morning-glories and when the season comes they delight to see them bloom beautifully as they planned.

Heidegger's philosophy was received very well in Japan where it chimed well with indigenous Japanese thought. Heidegger became so popular among the Japanese intelligentsia, that, as Stella Standford (2003, p. 11) writes, his *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)* was translated into Japanese from German well before an English translation was completed and further says that 'Heidegger's Japanese interlocutors and students often expressed amazement at the tendency of Heidegger's German contemporaries to find his work obscure and difficult.'

Despite his national focus, then, Heidegger invertedly constructed an intellectual bridge between Japanese and Western thought via his view of the poetic. Buddhist, and specifically Zen Buddhist, influence on Heidegger's thought has also been noted by scholars. Graham Parkes (1987, p.1) writes that despite his ambivalent attitude towards Buddhism, Heidegger 'acknowledges parallels between aspects of Buddhist philosophy and his own subversive lines of thought.' Otto Peggeler (1987, p. 49) similarly says that '…there has been a great deal of evidence that Heidegger gladly acknowledged to visitors the closeness of his thinking to the Taoist tradition and to Zen Buddhism.' Byung-Chul Han (2023, p.4), a specialist in Heideggerian thought, however, writes that Heidegger, 'despite always seeking to get closer to Far Eastern thought, remained a philosopher of essence, of the house and of dwelling,' in short, a fundamentally *Western* philosopher. Regardless of whether his implementation of Far Eastern thought was successful, what can be said with confidence is that in his attempt to preserve and present the uniqueness of German culture through poetry, Heidegger's thought also helped defend the uniqueness of a completely different culture, that of Japan, on equal terms.

Martin Heidegger positions poetry at the centre of his ontology and celebrates its inherent power to unveil a sense of being itself that is normally hidden. His view is a challenge to Plato's view of the subject as expressed in *Republic*. Instead of seeing poetry as thrice removed from reality, and therefore truth, as Plato does, Heidegger views the essence of the poetic as bringing truth forth into its being. The Platonic barrier between art and truth has thus been completely torn down, there are no degrees of reality, art expresses reality itself as it is. For Heidegger, poetry does not act as a veil that distorts truth, but instead is the metaphorical receptacle for truth itself. Heidegger is among the most important Western philosophers, if not the most important, to speak in favour of poetry and the poetic being a vehicle for truth. For him, poetry is the means through which being *speaks* to us in a

revelatory manner. It *opens* up the world and unique viewpoint of each individual culture and grounds the people of that viewpoint within it.

Now we have examined both the ideas of Hadot and Heidegger regarding the poetic and poetry, we are ready to combine elements of both in order to discover a solution to the question that Hadot did not elaborate on sufficiently: how is philosophy as a way of life spread, and how does it endure?

The Poetic

An answer to that question can be found in the poetic. Heidegger already made it a primary part of his work; however, it can also assist us in further elaborating the Hadot Paradigm. We saw above that for Heidegger, poetry *founds* a world, *opens* it up and *grounds* human beings within it. However, in previous chapters, we saw how philosophical schools, such as those in the Hellenistic period, are also said to have a 'founder', Epicurus for the Epicureans and Zeno for the Stoics, for example. In Heideggerian parlance, a philosophical school could be interpreted as its own *world*. For, as with national cultures, it was also a unique viewpoint, a way of living, which coloured and influenced the lives of its followers, its doctrines becoming the lens through which they saw the human experience. The founder of a philosophical school is thus someone who, like the poet, in founding that school, opens a *world*, a certain, distinctive way of being among others, and grounds their disciples firmly within it.

Earlier, it was noted that Hadot thought that poetry could serve as a spiritual exercise, and that it is *aesthetic* perception, which includes the poetic and poetry, that Hadot thinks is the most effective way to approach reality because it shows reality in its "unity". If we apply this to Heidegger's insights, we can say that the poetic is thus a necessary supplement to the

Hadot Paradigm. In approaching reality in an aesthetic manner, it is in a poetic manner that someone is going to first encounter the idea of philosophy as a way of life.

It is through the poetic that someone *founds* a particular way of life as expressed through a philosophical school. We have seen that the world Heidegger uses for founding (*gründung*) also means 'grounding', adopting this dual meaning reinforces the point. In *founding* a school and thus a way of life via the poetic, one is also *grounding* it within time and space, and within the earth itself, as one sets up the foundation stone of a building.

To *found*/*ground* something is to make it more than just a theoretical idea by giving it a physical reality. In *founding/grounding* such a way of life, one allows it the possibility of *endurance* over time, as many buildings do. We know that the philosophy as a way of life, unlike individual buildings, however, was portable, and could be found across the Greco-Roman world. Therefore, the poetic must, in allowing such an idea to endure in time, also allows it to spread across space.

However, what exactly is it about the poetic that assists the concept of philosophy as a way of life? Something being *founded/grounded* does not necessarily give it a guarantee of enduring. It also does not logically follow that such a thing will spread to influence something else, just because it is theoretically possible. Thus, in order for the poetic to assist the idea of lived philosophy in any way, there must be something within the poetic that enables it to do this, a quality or characteristic unique to it. We already gave a brief explanation of this during the introduction, our task now is to expand and clarify that explanation.

We know that poetry itself endures because poetry consists of rhyme, metre, easily recited by human beings. This is the reason poetry always formed a key part in the transference of myths and stories from one generation to the next in multiple cultures such as Greek, Indian, Hittite, Norse, Mesopotamian and more. (Harl, 2023, pp. 56-57 and Havelock, 1963) But

whilst these characteristics are indeed useful for the spread of myths and poetry, they are too weak on their own to constitute a primary characteristic and to spread the idea of a philosophical way of life. However, both rhyme and meter undoubtedly provide a contribution to that main characteristic, given their poetic prominence.

Prinz and Mandelbaum (2015, pp. 76-77) claim that 'poetic opacity' is the distinguishing characteristic of the poetic and poetry in general. Poetic language, they say, is inherently opaque and more difficult to understand than ordinary language or prose. As they write:

> With poetry, words and phrases almost function as a barrier to content – pervasive and impossible to ignore. One might even say that poetic words distract – it is harder to immediately grasp the basic word meanings because of the cognitive load brought on from the poetic presentation. But whereas poetic words distract, prose words deliver. Of course, some bad writing also distracts, but unintentionally. Poets distract us intentionally with their words…If poetic opacity distinguishes poems from other forms of writing it may be a mark of the poetic….

However, opacity cannot be the primary characteristic of the poetic, as if Prinz and Mandelbaum are correct, the poetic would not be able to sustain anything as it would be too difficult to understand by the majority. Although most of the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world would not have had access to the means to become a philosopher, the philosophical way of life was, at least theoretically, open to anyone. For example, Epictetus, the famous Stoic, was both a former slave and disabled, and thus would have been at the very bottom of the Greco-Roman social hierarchy: as Vout (2022, p. 167) writes 'Disabled, sick and enslaved people…were assumed, like women, to be inferior: bad of body, bad of character.' Yet, despite these physical and social limitations, Epictetus still became a respected and influential philosopher with his circumstances serving as no impediment, as for the Stoics, these would have been 'indifferents' (see Gevaert, 2017, pp. 213 – 220).

Thus, if the poetic were totally opaque, it would be considered too difficult to comprehend for almost everyone. Since the idea of a philosophical way of life spread so far, the poetic

must primarily consist of something necessarily *accessible* because such a way of life should (and evidently could) be available and easily understood by all with the means to learn. If it were not, philosophy would not have had the social impact that it did.

The characteristic we are searching for must therefore necessarily be something more open and transparent. We have already stated that, as in Heidegger, the poetic consists of an alternative usage of language that captures reality in a deeper way. Such language therefore must contain certain characteristics that enable it to do this. In attempting to spread any kind of message, how vivid it is, the extent to which it jumps out to people and speaks to them, thereby sticking in their memory, becomes a key factor in its subsequent spread. Whatever is being advocated must possess *mass appeal* in order to spread furthest. It has to catch people's attention sufficiently to stay in their minds and pique their interest enough for them to not only find more about the thing in question themselves, but also tell others about it. If a particular way of life or belief system is not sufficiently vivid, it will not be remembered and thus will not endure.

From this, we can say that the poetic is composed of two, overlapping characteristics that allows it to sustain and spread the Hadotian notion of philosophy as a lived way of life: vividness and memorability. Again, if something is sufficiently vivid and notable, it will be remembered and thus then able to endure and spread.

Rhyme and meter contribute to ensuring that something poetic is memorable and can thus be counted as secondary characteristics. If the teachings of a particular philosophical school are condensed down into easy-to-remember and impactful aphorisms, they are much easier to remember and keep to hand for practical application to the situations one faces in daily life. As James C. Klagge (2021, pp. 84-85) writes about the potential for the application for poetic philosophy to change one's view of things:

> Presumably, a poetic approach helps one learn philosophy "by heart", not because it rhymes but because it imprints the lessons on one's heart, so to speak. The lessons constitute a change of heart, as we say. And learning the philosophy by heart means that it has changed one's movement of thought. It has led not just to a change of beliefs, but to a change of dispositions.

Poetry and subsequently, poetic language, itself by its very nature, due to the vividness of the images it can conjure in the mind, is memorable; they possess a sense of vividness and memorability as their core attributes. This is the reason why poems are so easily recited by so many people. Irene Vallejo (2022, p. 81) applies this idea to the decline (and endurance) of oral culture":

> In their effort to endure, denizens of the oral world realized that rhythmic language was easiest to remember and, on the wings of this discovery, poetry was born. During recitation, the melody helps the speaker repeat each line without alteration since it is when the music is broken that the sequence falters. All of us were made to learn poems in school. Years later, after forgetting so many other things, we find we can still remember these poems with extraordinary clarity.

As Vallejo says, poetry was born once it was realized that poetic language was 'easiest to remember'. Being vivid and so easily memorable is what allowed the idea of a lived philosophy of life to not only spread, but to last for centuries.

Poetic texts, normally short in length are more easily translatable into various languages and dialects than long-winded philosophical texts because of these characteristics. This includes being translatable into spoken language, especially if the people concerned are illiterate. For example. It was not only Latin and Greek that were spoken in the Roman Empire and we know that people from outside of its borders joined philosophical schools within it.[23] This approach has been applied to philosophy by some scholars in recent years to the extent that some are attempting to interpret philosophical texts themselves as a form of poetry. Majorie

[23] In his *Life of Plotinus*, Porphyry of Tyre (2018, p. 24) mentions a student of Plotinus called Zethus who he says was 'An Arab by extraction.' Nothing else is known of Zethus' cultural background, but only a little of the Arabian peninsula was controlled by the Roman Empire (although there were cultural and trade links between them), so it is still quite something for Zethus to come to study with Plotinus.

Perloff in her 1996 book *Wittgenstein's Ladder* attempts to interpret the *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, primary works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, as a form of poetry. As Perloff (1996, p. 187) writes, 'Wittgenstein himself may be considered a poet.'

To sum up, we can say that the poetic consists of a particular use of language that is more vivid and therefore memorable. When a philosophical way of life is described and taught using such language, the longer it will last and the further it will spread These characteristics will not just be present in the teachings of a particular philosophical school, although this is fundamental, but also within the very concept of the poetic itself. The idea of the ontological transformation, the *metanoia,* the overcoming of passions and the goal of *ataraxia* that a philosophical way of life involves, is inherently persuasive. It is enticing. It offers things that all humans would want and so invokes imagery that is inherently vivid, it fires the imagination. The concept, even if the offer is not taken up, will therefore be remembered, and spread, by word of mouth or otherwise, That the same will occur with the teachings of a philosophical school ensures that the poetic plays an absolute key role in assisting such a philosophical way of life.

We can also see that the philosophical is possibly better expressed poetically. Wittgenstein's works are written in the form of memorable aphorisms rather than as traditional philosophical treatises. Yet, despite this seemingly unorthodox approach, Wittgenstein is regarded as one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. The same can be said for the Romanian philosopher, E.M Cioran (1911-1995) who neglected to argue for his pessimistic, blunt philosophical viewpoint in logical arguments and did so instead in aphorisms of varying lengths. Far from making them any less rigorous, the poetic nature of his ideas gave them greater philosophical impact. Like Wittgenstein, Cioran is remembered as one of the most important thinkers of his time and continues to be popular today. The poetic and the philosophical, then, are not only able to co-exist, but also to become intertwined.

According to Heidegger (1975, p.192) in his essay *Language* (Gr: *Die Sprache*), it is language itself that 'speaks' and the speaking of language is best looked for in what is 'spoken' and for Heidegger 'what is spoken purely is the poem.' The poetic is therefore ideally placed to serve as the vehicle upon which philosophy conceived as a way of life travels and endures between languages and *worlds*. To better demonstrate this taking place in practice, we can turn again to the example of Indian Buddhism, and in particular how it was spread among non-Buddhist peoples. In effect, as the idea of a philosophical way of life is spread, the philosopher becomes, effectively what could be termed a *poetic missionary*.

The Philosopher as Poetic Missionary

We have established how the inherent vividness and memorability of the poetic ensures that it is the vehicle upon which the idea of philosophy as a way of life spreads and endures throughout time. The philosophical schools of the Greco-Roman world, especially Stoicism and Epicureanism, saw themselves as universal doctrines preaching a type of salvation from the ills of the human condition. However, the spread of these messages was more suited to poetry, not only because of its inherent characteristics, but for the practical reason that prose is more suited to written philosophical texts or treatises, and many people of antiquity, outside of the educated few, would not have been literate. As Woolf (2015, p. 42) writes: 'Many writing systems never had many users, but this reflected on the whole the small number of people who needed to use them', which would not have been many. In order to spread the message of salvation from the passions, then, poetry would be much better suited because of its oral nature.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Homer in Plato's time was still recited orally, and most would have memorised it in this way, rather than possessing a copy in written form. Poetry generally was often memorised and spread in such a way, and given their universality,

schools such as Epicureanism and Stoicism would have done better to have adopted the poetic in order to spread the idea of a philosophical way of life. The philosopher, then, would have acted as a type of 'poetic missionary' spreading messages of salvation through the use of poetry, easily memorable phrases such as the Epicurean *tetrapharmakos* that appealed to, and were easily memorable and spreadable by, the population. The poetic is not only essential to the Hadot Paradigm and the spread of a philosophical way of life but is also necessary in a practical manner due to conditions of the time.

Further East, as Buddhism travelled throughout Asia, missionaries of that way of life faced similar issues. In spreading the Buddhist message to the nomads of the steppes for example, this challenge was emphasised, for their culture(s) were seeped in orality as they possessed no script of their own. The poetic here too was central as poetry itself played a key role in how these nomads remembered their myths and traditions, poetry was often recited in certain ways to aid and enhance the poetic's memorability. As Harl (2023, p. 57) writes, 'drawing on phrases and epithets,' a poet could improvise stories around the main story to add to it, making each performance independent, but with the key parts and moral lessons of a story remaining the same. Buddhist monks, if they wanted their way of life to take root, had to adapt how it was taught and embrace the poetic. Harl (2023, p. 59) writes how the poetic ensured that the Buddhist way of life thrived:

> The monks of Mahayana Buddhism scored spectacular success in converting Iranian and Tocharian-speaking nomads because they stressed the message rather than the sacred language of scriptures. Monks translated Buddhist texts from Sanskrit or Prakrit into the widely spoken vernaculars, Saka, Sogdian, Tocharian and Chinese. Hence monks could preach to nomadic peoples in their own language.

The monks found that in shifting their message from written prose to oral poetry that could be memorised by the nomads and thus spread by word of mouth, their message had far more success because the nomads could adapt it to their already primarily oral culture. Whilst

written prose could only be read by a few, and only those learned in foreign scripts, the poetic could be understood by all and thus has the effect of *democratising* the philosophical way of life in both practical and linguistic terms. The Buddhists, like their Greco-Roman counterparts, had to act as poetic missionaries, utilising the inherent memorability of the poetic as the vehicle for not only spreading their way of life, but investing in its survival. The idea of the philosopher as a poetic missionary thus constitutes more evidence of the necessity of further elaboration of the idea of the poetic within the Hadot Paradigm. Now, however, we must return to the issue of how to make the work of Hadot and Heidegger mesh together coherently, given that they are in some cases, very different.

The Poet and Poet-Philosopher

For a philosophical way of life to spread on a Hadotian basis, Heidegger's idea of *world* as equivalent to one historical nation or people must be modified. The modification must take place so that the idea of *world* is better able to spread to multiple *worlds*, or to allow the original concept of *world* to expand and encompass more than just the national character and history of one particular people. It is the vividness and memorability of the poetic that obliges the Heideggerian view of a cultural way of life, expressed by *world* to cease referring only to a particular people or culture, to cease being nationalist in character and become cosmopolitan.

As we saw above, Heidegger viewed the poet as being someone who uniquely *rooted* someone to their national homeland. But, in this lies the distinction between a poet and a poet-philosopher. Whilst the poet roots someone within their natal borders, both physical and intellectual, the poet-philosopher, by contrast, through the poetic *de-roots* a person from their native land. A poet-philosopher allows a person to enter into a new conception of 'home'; their world is extended from one nation, as in nationalism, to a larger world that itself

encompasses multiple cultural worlds and a cosmopolitan view of things. This is exactly what happened in the Hellenistic and Roman periods; people moved from their place of birth into a larger realm which contained within it multiple cultures and new horizons. Greeks and Macedonians lived as far as India during the Hellenistic period. In the Roman era, people from modern day Italy, France and different parts of Africa, including Egypt were recorded as living in Roman York. (see Stoneman, 2019 and Jensen, 2018, pp. viii/249).

The poet-philosopher in *founding* a school and more importantly, *universalising* it, opening it to all people from all backgrounds and cultures, as we have seen, spreading the message of its teachings through the poetic. In the process, they generate a cosmopolitan *hyperculture,* expanding Heidegger's view of *world*. At this point, though, we can return to Hadot's own idea of the poetic as a *creative* force that reflects in microcosm the creativity of the cosmos. In universalising its message, the poet-philosopher, through use of 'poetry' (in the form of vivid and memorable poetic, philosophic maxims), acts as creator and, by spreading philosophical teachings and forging links between peoples of diverse and disparate national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The poet-philosopher is initiating an *apocalypse* in the traditional Greek sense of the term, an *unveiling* of the wider universe. For people, especially in the ancient world, to whom distant foreign lands were still obscured in myths and legends - learning and communicating with alien parts of the world must have been akin to witnessing a *creation* of the world before their eyes, as it was revealed.

The poet-philosopher *de-alienates* such a hidden world and as a *hyperculture* materialises, cultural connections are formed. What was once viewed as alien becomes a part of *indigenousness*. A *hyperculture* is simply the *indigenisation* of what was once foreign, and this end is that to which the poet-philosopher works towards in spreading their teachings. The work of a poet-philosopher is thus, in this sense, *teleological*, and, as well as helping to reveal the existence of a hitherto hidden truth, as in Heidegger, it also assists in seeing philosophy

itself, not as simply an academic discipline, but itself also a form of poetry. The link between the poetic and its aim towards a cosmopolitan viewpoint, is what allows philosophy as a way of life, as taught by Pierre Hadot, to be able to serve as a bridge between distinct traditions of philosophy. The foundations of it were already laid by Heidegger - Hadot merely built on their bases.

We have now established that the poetic is key to the Hadot Paradigm; it is what allows a philosophical way of life to be founded and grounded and to endure and spread. The poet-philosopher uses the poetic, the aesthetic approach to reality to *universalise* the poetic, transforming it from something nationalist to cosmopolitan, extending the Heideggerian *world* to truly cover the entire *world* rather than just a particular local one. In Heideggerian parlance, the poetic is what allows *the world to world*. Within philosophical poetry, the world worlds in such a way, that individuals are forced to question themselves and their lives; the idea of a philosophical way of life jumps out at them and they are thus directed towards it. However, we must now expand on *how* the poetic is used to spread a way of life. Focusing on texts and speech over concepts for a moment, it has been established that the poetic is a certain type of language that can access, as Heidegger says, 'deeper relations' but what is it about poetic language, other than its primary features that separates it and distinguishes it from every day or ordinary language?

What Separates 'Poetic' Language from 'Ordinary' Language?

It is important to establish concretely what exactly is meant by 'poetic' language and how it differs from what could be termed 'ordinary' or 'everyday' language. Certain scholars such as Peter Lamarque (2015, p. 34) reject the term 'poetic language', saying: 'There is no poetic language as such. Linguistic usage in poetry is as varied as poetry itself and the presence of poetic 'devices' is never sufficient for a stretch of discourse to count as a poem.' Instead,

Lamarque says that it is the practice of "game" in the Wittgensteinean sense, which should be focused on. I wish to counter Lamarque's view by insisting that there is such a thing as 'poetic' language, whilst agreeing with his point that diverse forms of poetry, each have particular ways of using such language. Each form of poetry possesses its own particular conventions and requirements that must be met in order for a poem to count as a particular form, and not another. This is the reason why a definition of poetic language is not able to be based on poetic devices, because there is not a single formal device, or set of devices, that apply to all forms of poetry, in all places and cultures. Thus, another definition must be sought.

It should be said that poetic language is not a form of language that is separate from the language of the everyday.[24] Indeed, poetic language is continuous with everyday language as two metaphorical sides of the same coin; poetic language is an *alternative use* of everyday language. The term 'poetic language' is, then, as Shoshana Benjamin (2012, p. 90) writes: "a metaphorical term". Poetic language differs from so-called 'everyday language' in three different but overlapping ways.

The first is that poetic language, as stated above, is chiefly characterised by vividness and memorability; it is the vividness of the mental images, the care taken in its composition and execution that enables such language to reach deeper into the truth of things. It is also the structure and length of the language used that makes poetry memorable and allows it to stay in the mind longer than prose. These are features of poetic language, and, whilst not the same as formal poetic 'devices', they are indeed 'features' of poetry and support a positive argument for the existence of poetic language. The particular way of using language that we can call 'poetic' to delineate it from the ordinary manner of using it, can be seen in examples

[24] By 'everyday language', I refer to language used without any conscious attempt at embellishment to describe the situations of everyday life in a plain and understandable manner.

of established poetry, and in the existence of so-called 'national poets', the poems of whom are seen as embodiment of the consciousness and *nationalgeist* of a culture. As Heidegger said above, it is poets that attune people to their particular *world,* to that contained within their national borders and culture. Some poets and poems tend to rise above others to become particularly indicative of a national culture or way of seeing things; they become so-called 'national poets'. [25]

The characteristics of vividness and memorability that create a 'poetic language' must be present in order for such a concept as 'national poet' to exist at all. Such poets must *speak* to the people of the country, their words must strike out and stay in the mind, becoming synonymous with nationality. Taking Shakespeare as an example for the UK, if Shakespeare's sonnets were not short enough to recite, striking and easy to remember, despite being beautifully written, they would not be able to be distinguished from all the other reems of English poetry. The fact that they do have these characteristics, that Shakespeare writes in such poetic language and does not just use the same words in a dull and uninspiring way, has meant that Shakespeare became the national poet of England, and his poetry is remembered by millions. Thus, the existence of a poetic language is necessary for the idea of a 'national poet' to take root. Such poets have to use language in a certain and specific way.

The second way in which poetic language can be distinguished from ordinary linguistic usage is that poetic language is based on, and a product of, contemplation. Everyday language is, of course, the result of a process of thought, but normally, everyday topics are spoken about without deep reflection into the meaning of the words used. Poetic language, by contrast, can only be utilised via contemplation and involves an exploration, a look beneath the surface of

[25] . For example, a 2021 UK-wide survey found that Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 beginning with the famous lines: 'May I compare thee to a summer's day?' is considered the greatest poem ever written and revealed that many people are able to recite it (see Simpson, 2021).

ordinary language so as to notice things otherwise missed in everyday conversation. In short, poetic language is *everyday language made strange*, and as a result, is more in touch with the suchness (Pl/Sk: *tathātā*) or *being* of human experience. To demonstrate this, we will consider the example of an everyday action expressed in both everyday and poetic language:

Everyday Language:

I walked to the shop, the sun was out but it was windy too, the leaves were being blown hard.

Poetic Language:

As I walked to the shop, the sun engulfed everything in a sea of light. The wind caressed the leaves which caused them to sway gracefully, and the sunlight burst through the gaps between the trees, in a frenzied dance of green and yellow.

Both statements are talking about the same thing, a person walking to a shop on a sunny, but windy day. In the first 'everyday' statement, the writer obviously takes notice of the force of the wind and the light of the sun but does not seem to pay much attention to it, and it is written merely as a passing thought. By contrast, the writer in the 'poetic' version, has taken the time to stop and consciously immerse themselves in the world, at least for a moment. They do not just describe the wind, sun and trees, but describes their interaction as a 'dance', making heavy use of simile to really capture the spirit of the moment. Of course, we have also said that the poetic is characterised by conciseness and the poetic example above is long. Why, then, use this particular example?

What the above example is supposed to demonstrate is not a perfect, real-life example of the poetic, they abound throughout the thesis, but instead, intends to show, in textual form, the experience which an encounter with a poetic text would invoke. It does this in two ways. Firstly, whilst a poetic text does not necessarily have to be so extravagant in its language, it is, to show the intensity of the imagery which it creates here in the mind, through the use of

metaphor. When one reads, hears or sees, and poetic text or experience, it will 'strike' them with its shock and protrude itself out from the wider text or event. The above example does so via its language.

Secondly, the above example shows well the extent to which one will experience a renewed sense of 'being-in-the-world' when one encounters a truly poetic text or event. They will be immersed within the world, for a fleeting moment experiencing no true separation between themselves and it. The person in the above example in the context of the experience described is *united* with the wind, sunlight and trees and for an instant, forgets their humanity and the supposed gulf between it and nature. That is how poetic language is able to penetrate the mere superficial level of an ordinary description, and get into the 'deeper relations' of being, as Heidegger says. Again, the example's length is exaggerated for the sake of explanation, but this unification (Gk: *henosis*) is also what occurs with short, poetic texts that are easily memorable. In those cases, both the feeling experienced and the words themselves will be remembered, in the above example, perhaps only the experience will be, given the text's length. The point still stands, however; this is the experience evoked by the poetic, both in the 'striking' intensity of its language, and the depth of the emotions and feelings that it can conjure.

As Dorothy Walsh (1938, pp. 77-78) writes: '[…]what is meant in poetry is something which, in its essence, is so completely verbalized that its whole nature consists in its being a thing to be said.' Arguably, the example of 'poetic language' above is much more 'verbalized' as Walsh says, than is the example of everyday language. As stated above, poetic language forges more of a connection with the suchness (*tathātā*) of reality.

To reiterate, everyday usage of language only captures the surface experience of the world, an experience in which people take note of what is around them, but do not fully immerse

themselves within it. Crucially, it needs to be remembered that poetic language is not a different language – as French is separated from English, for instance – from everyday language. They are the exact same language but are utilised to varying degrees of profundity.

But the *poetic* version turns ordinary language on its head and intimately dissects it, obliging the reader to interrogate every word, or event, and probe it in order to extract the maximum extent of its meaning(s). As said above, it allows the person experiencing the text or event to momentarily achieve a form of deep, profound, connection, between themselves and it. As such, a relatively 'ordinary statement', such as the example above about walking to a shop, expressed poetically converts itself into an intimate window into a particular moment of human experience, where every single aspect of it is invested with a form of deep resonance that ultimately arrives at reality itself. As Heidegger said above, through poetry, the being of every moment can 'ring out'. Within the poetic, the ordinary is thus made strange, made more noticeable, protrudes itself out into our field of view so that we cannot help but take note of it. It is this transformation of language that feeds into its characteristics of vividness and therefore memorability.

We can also see this transformation of language if we cross over briefly to religious thought. There are examples of small, intimate and poetic mantras in multiple religions, that, although made up of ordinary words, manage to capture a sense of the sacred that ordinary language is unable to. In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, there is the so-called *Jesus Prayer* normally consisting of a repetition of the phrase: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" or some variation thereof. Looking eastward to the Japanese Shin Buddhist tradition, (which will be covered in more detail in upcoming chapters), there is the *nembutsu* which takes the form of a call for the help of the rescuing grace of Amida the cosmic Buddha, normally said in Japanese as "*Namu Amida Butsu"* (I take refuge in Amida Buddha).

Both phrases are short and do not consist of complex theological or philosophical argumentation, but through constant repetition of each phrase, still manage to explain the main beliefs of their respective religions. At the heart of Christianity is the idea that as God incarnate, Jesus Christ sacrificed himself on the cross in order to save sinful humanity. Thus, in the *Jesus Prayer*, the practitioner calls upon him for this salvation. In Shin Buddhism, we are unable to achieve enlightenment ourselves and thus must rely on the saving compassion of Amida Buddha to guide us to the Pure Land upon death. The *nembutsu* is this theological fact summed up in a single phrase, crying out to Amida for this assistance. Both are examples of the poetic, being very vivid, memorable and easily recitable and thus able to spread, allowing these religious traditions, or religious ways of life in Hadotian parlance, to endure. Similarities have been noted between both, for example by Shin Buddhist scholar Teitetsu Unno (2002, p. 95):

> The appeal and effectiveness of Jesus Prayer, according to the Orthodox tradition, is ascribed to four factors: simplicity and flexibility, completeness, power of Name as such, and spiritual discipline of persistent repetition. Here again we see comparable points made about the saying of Nembutsu with the exception of the fourth, spiritual discipline.

As we can see, Unno also notes the 'simplicity', 'flexibility' and 'persistent repetition' of both, all of which contributes to making both phrases poetic. Both are also examples of the aforementioned linguistic transformation, ordinary language invested with a special sense not experienced in everyday situations. The saying of the phrase both reinforces the practitioners' personal identity as an Orthodox Christian or Shin Buddhist, and also brings the sacred into the human world, piercing the veil between them.

Within this general transformation of language, the barrier between self and world, subject and object, believer and sacred principle, is eroded and broken down as the engagement fostered by poetic language allows the truth of things to shine through the basic understanding of everyday language. Even though Lamarque (2015, p. 36) argues against the

existence of any kind of poetic language ‘as such’, his later answer to the question of why we value the difficulty and complexity of poetry, agrees with the above definition of poetic language as something resulting from contemplation, and able to penetrate to the true sense of the things it discusses. He notes that we find ‘value in the experience” of ‘attending to the finegrainedness of language contained in poetry’ and prefer it over more mundane, common forms of communication.

Since everyday language only scratches the surface of experience, it cannot contain such finegrainedness. Poetic language is able to do this because it provides experience with a deeper level of profundity and as Lamarque says, ‘we find value in the experience that affords’. Poetic language thus gives value because it provides a richer experience of reality.

Related to this linguistic transformation is the third way that we can distinguish poetic from ordinary language. Poetic language within it the most *existential impact*, much more so than ordinary language. When assessing Hadot’s views of poetry above, we noted that Hadot expressed the opinion that there are three primary modes of approaching reality, that of common sense, what we can now term the base reality accessed by ordinary, non-poetic language, the view of science, and finally, that of aesthetic perception. We have seen why the view of the world expressed by ordinary language, the first of Hadot’s trio, is not an effective method for approaching reality as it only reacts to the surface meaning of things. However, why does poetic language (here contained within Hadot’s idea of aesthetic perception) remain the most ‘existentially impactful’ type of language? Can scientific language, another of Hadot’s trio of worldviews, not be a better medium for expressing a philosophical way of life? It is to this that we now turn.

It may be asked, then, why we should not trust science as our primary mode of experiencing reality and why should we not even make use of science to express philosophical ideas and

concepts? It must be said that science is indeed a valid way of viewing reality. However, unless focusing purely and solely on material, empirically viewable reality, it may not be the best way to truly arrive at the existential heart of the things of human existence. Also, whilst some scientific statements are able to be expressed poetically, not all can be.

For example, if we examine the emotion of love, science tells us that love is a mere chemical process taking place via the firing of certain neurons in our brains; this may be true. However, this is the process expressed *scientifically*, and crucially not *poetically*, thus not in any lived sense of the term. If it were expressed poetically, it would no longer be expressed in the language of science. According to scientific methodology, science written poetically is itself a form of poetry and thus no longer science. For example, the emotion of love focusing on the firing of neurons in the brain does not seem very poetic; it is not striking or memorable. Whilst poets can, and do, mention scientific facts; science does not utilise the same discourse or perceptive lens as does poetry. A scientific description of love in a poem would most likely end up just becoming a love poem rather than a scientific explanation of events. Science and the poetic are distinct lenses through which to view reality. Shakespeare would be a more effective conduit for an attempted poetic expression of the scientific facts regarding love, but he was no scientist. Since the poetic is core to the philosophical way of life, one can therefore not live a scientific, rather than a philosophical life, for such a life would lack a truly lived element that embraces the whole person, and only really stimulate the intellect, not resulting in a wholesale existential transformation of the person.

We can better demonstrate this if we briefly leave the Hellenistic world to one side and return to Buddhist India. Modern science and scientific language were, of course, not available to the Buddha to explain his ideas. Nowadays, however, with scientific research advancing every day and Buddhism still a flourishing tradition in the modern world, including the West, the two have indeed begun to meet. One recent work that attempts to explain aspects of

Buddhism scientifically is *Siddhartha's Brain* by James Kingsland. At the end of the book, Kingsland (2016, p. 287) explains the Buddha's '*nirvana-after-death' (Pl: parinibbāna*), what Buddhist tradition regards as his final release upon bodily death, in a purely scientific manner:

> Now he began to let go of everything else: his body, thoughts, feelings, senses. Rising through increasingly diffuse realms of consciousness into infinite space and nothingness, his brain expired in an ecstatic burst of high-frequency electrical oscillations.

This language is not poetic, it is scientific and factual. Let's compare this with the Buddha's own attempts to describe enlightenment in the *Pāli* scriptures, specifically, the *Samyutt Nikaya*:

> Monks, I will teach you the uninclined…the far shore…the peaceful…the deathless…the sublime…the destruction of craving…freedom…the island…the shelter…the asylum…the refuge…the destination… (Bhikkhu Bodhi trans, 2005, p. 365)

The Buddha's descriptions of his state of enlightenment are given in various poetic phrases. He is using similes, *nibanna* is not a physical 'island' or 'shelter' for example, but it is the closest he can get to the truth of things within the limitations that human language affords him. How, then is the Buddha's poetic language more existentially impactful than the scientific version given by Kingsland?

Whilst Kingsland's account may indeed be a true scientific account of the Buddha's final and initial enlightenment (We can never know for sure), it would not have the same impact on someone as the Buddha's own account. We can imagine a hypothetical world where an ancient Indian audience of the Buddha's time would have understood Kingsland's words, perhaps a world where science advanced much more rapidly than in our own. We know historically that, like much of the ancient world, ancient India was a world of constant warfare and early death from now treatable illnesses etc. If a grieving young person, now a monk, Buddha what exactly *nibanna* was, and the Buddha said, "It is an ecstatic burst of

high-frequency electrical oscillations", the grieving person in this world, like in ours, may vaguely understand what was meant by these terms.

However, despite its scientific truth, would this description do much to console them or make them feel a sense of safety in the same way as describing *nibanna* as "a refuge" or "the peaceful" would do? If the Buddha explained the state of enlightenment to them in such terms, or even better, if he called it "freedom from suffering", this language is much more likely to inspire the person to take up the Buddhist path. Knowing that they had a chance at gaining a form of mental peace and freedom from the anguish they felt at their loss. The Buddha's original language would thus have an existential effect on the person, they would be able to almost imagine their own enlightenment and liberation from suffering. This same effect would not be achieved if the Buddha had merely told them what enlightenment was like on a cognitive level because it would not be relevant to their everyday life and experiences.

These reasons, then, are why the 'aesthetic perception' that Hadot cites, in other words living life through a primarily poetic lens, has the most existential impact and therefore must be the primary means by which philosophy as a way of life is founded, spreads and endures. Some scientific language and concepts are capable of being expressed poetically, but not all of science is by any means, or it would no longer be science. What is more, as philosophical doctrines are translated into a poetic form, a new practitioner of a philosophical way of life will also learn to view the world via Hadot's 'aesthetic perception'. They will, as Hadot says, 'see things as they appear in their reality and unity' and in the process achieve the inner tranquillity that was the stated goal of ancient philosophy. Whilst they will still have access to the common sense and scientific ways of viewing things and can count them as valid, the aesthetic dimension must become the primary means through which one experiences reality when living a philosophical way of life. It is seeing the world through this aesthetic

dimension and experiencing the world as it is, that allows for the linguistically transformative and existential impact of poetic language. All these qualities combine in its main characteristics of vividness and memorability, which allows the philosophical way of life to truly change one's 'being in the world'.

Philosophy, Literature and the Poetic

It has been established in the course of this discussion that the principal characteristics of poetic language are vividness, in other words, how language strikes a reader, and memorability. The poetic is what allows philosophy as a way of life to spread and take root in diverse places. Linked with all of these concepts is the idea of philosophy expressed through literature generally such as novels and plays. Although poetry is, of course, itself a form of literature and there have been times throughout the history of philosophy when the former have been the primary medium through which the philosophical has found expression. Although the idea of using literature to express philosophical ideas harks back to antiquity,[26] a particular historical moment in which such an idea remerged, is during the twentieth century in post-war Europe.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the school of philosophical thought known as 'Existentialism' arose with the works of thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Simone De Beauvior (1908-1986) and Albert Camus (1913-1960) and also in novels by such writers as Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924). Existentialism focused on the nature of human existence and sought a way for human beings

[26] An example is Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* (Lt: *De rerum natura*) which expressed the tenants of Epicurean philosophy in the form of a poem.

to navigate the sheer fact of their existence by creating themselves and their own meaning, through an act of individual freedom. It is summarised by Sartre's famous quotation 'existence before essence' meaning that first a person exists, and then is able to decide what they 'are'.

Existentialism is also a philosophical movement that easily became wedded to the novel. Kafka and Dostoevsky were primarily novelists, but trained philosophers such as Sartre, De Beauvoir and Camus also wrote novels to express their philosophy. They saw the act of writing a philosophical novel as being intimately connected to the idea of philosophy as a lived way of life as Hadot had taught. Sartre and De Beauvoir had read Hadot's works during their student days and the connection was a conscious one. As Ursula Tidd (2021, p. 491) writes:

> More than a mere literary vignette, the prospect of turning cocktails into philosophy excited Sartre and Beauvoir because it shunted French academic philosophy out of the sidings of idealist abstraction and into the real world. Philosophy and literature could address what really mattered to them: the texture of life itself as it is lived in the world. 'Philosophy as a way of life', as Pierre Hadot terms it, had long attracted Sartre and Beauvoir since their studies of classical philosophy.

In a way, then, existentialist philosophy was a return to Greco-Roman antiquity in that it was an attempt to create a philosophy that could be lived in day-to-day life and applied to real-life situations. Making oneself through creating one's own meaning was a physical act intended to transform one's view of the world into something new through individual will, very much like a Hadotian spiritual exercise. However, we have already said that it is through the poetic that a philosophical way of life is spread and sustained and novels, inevitably, are almost entirely prose. The contradiction here is not as large as it first appears, though, because novels, even though they are prose contain elements of the poetic.

The presence of vividness and memorability can be seen in the fact that many lines in novels, separated from the rest of the text, have these characteristics. The same can be said for prose

philosophical texts, but, when these particular lines are made independent from the rest of the texts, they convert into aphorisms, and therefore poetry. The poetic in novels, however, can be seen in the first or opening lines of novels. These lines are intended to hook the reader and awaken within them a desire to continue, but taken on their own, they are extremely repeatable and easily kept in the mind, almost like aphorisms in themselves. In order to demonstrate this, we will briefly examine the opening lines of two existentialist novels: *L'Étranger* (The Stranger/Outsider) by Albert Camus and *Die Verwandlung* (The Metamorphosis) by Franz Kafka.[27]

The first line of *The Outsider* reads: 'My Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I don't know' (Smith trans, 2013, p. 3). This declaration is extremely blunt, the protagonist is showing no remorse or sadness at the passing of his mother but is simply saying it as a brute fact. In fact, he is not even able to remember when his mother's death occurred. Camus' opening line is likely to shock the reader, the death of a parent is supposed to be one of the most significant events in a person's life, but the protagonist of *The Outsider* seems not to pay much attention to his own mother's passing. As the novel progresses, we see that the protagonist shows indifference to most things other people would invest in emotionally, or at least care about. Robert Emmet Meagher (2021, pp. 54-55) demonstrates the strangeness of Meursault's attitude here when he writes:

> What's odd here is his fixation on the timing of his mother's passing, rather than the fact. The telegram has provoked puzzlement but no grief. He's in his head at a moment when we would expect him to be in his heart. Whatever his mother might have been to him – loving, devoted, negligent, abandoning, abusive – we would expect some ripple of response to her death.

[27] Both *The Stranger* and *The Outsider* are used in English translations of Camus' novel. In this thesis, *The Outsider* will be used as I feel that this best represents the protagonist of the novel.

However, Meursault does not show any real response and repeats the news of her death as though it were a passing fancy of no real importance to him. Whilst this attitude seems strange, it is paramount to the rest of the novel, as it reveals to us Meursault's attitude to life in general. As Alice Caplin (2016, p. 65) writes about the first paragraph of the novel: 'That first paragraph dictated the whole movement of chapter 1, and with it the temperament of his central character, Meursault.' The opening line is thus of great importance to the novel. From a literary perspective, however it is extremely memorable due to the matter-of-fact manner in which it is said (or written). (Meagher, 2021 p. 52 calls the first lines 'iconic'.) The protagonist of *The Outsider* could repeat this line to himself as an aphorism, as a reminder to not invest emotionally in daily life, if he so chose. In the same way, it could also even be something close to a spiritual exercise.

We see the same thing with regards to Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, the first line of which reads:

> One morning Gregor Samsa woke in his bed from uneasy dreams and found he had turned into a huge verminous insect. (Williams trans, 2014, p. 457)

In Kafka's work, the protagonist Gregor Samsa is literally transformed into a giant insect. The reasons for (or means of) this transformation are never stated but apart from this, the rest of the novel as well as the world in which it is situated, seems relatively free of other supernatural events. The novella has generated several interpretations over the years. Walter H. Sokel (1956, p. 212) interprets Gregor's transformation in terms of rebellion against his hated job and punishment from his family:

> Kafka states in the first sentence that Gregor wakes up to find himself changed into a giant kind of vermin ("Ungeziefer"). The term "vermin" holds the key to the double aspect of the metamorphosis. Vermin connotes something parasitic and aggressive, something that lives off human beings and may suck their blood; on the other hand, it connotes something defenseless, something that can be stepped upon and crushed.

Michael P. Ryan interprets the metamorphosis in the context of Hindu and Buddhist thought, opining that Gregor's surname 'Samsa', may actually be a play on the cycle of birth and

death in Indian religions, *saṃsāra,* and emphasise both his (as well as Kafka's own) suffering:

> Gregor's last name, though, passed on from generation to generation suggests the longevity and prevalence of Samsara…Kafka is perhaps saying that Gregor is not only in terms of Samsara a Reisender traveling from one existence to another, but he is also saying that Gregor is Samsara; he embodies rebirth and its consequent suffering.

Like the first line of *The Outsider*, the beginning line of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is extremely important to the story, setting out as it does the problem that has befell Gregor, as well as his name. It is the transformation detailed in this first line that encapsulates the whole story. Also like *The Outsider*, the sentence is extremely memorable, and we could even go so far as to interpret it in an aphoristic manner, perhaps as an easily repeatable way to reinforce a pessimistic outlook on life.

The main point here is that although these existentialist novels are prose and not poetry, as per the key characteristics of the poetic as vividness and memorability, even prose can contain the poetic, or at least elements of it. Existentialism as we have said, in a sense was a rejuvenation of the older Hadotian idea of philosophy lived as a way of life. Existentialism was also a practical philosophy meant to change the way one saw the world and allow one to embrace their inherent freedom to create oneself and their life's meaning. These existentialist novels have become classics of world literature and as mentioned, their first lines are very famous on their own. Through these novels, and their poetic elements, the ideals of existentialist philosophy were able to spread. It is thus another instance of the poetic acting as the sustainer and endurer of philosophy as a way of life.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, Pierre Hadot failed to explain in his extant writings what it was that allows the idea of a philosophical way of life to endure and be sustained. This

chapter was an attempt to plug this gap in his thought once and for all. Although this solution has been touched upon earlier, this chapter was solely dedicated to exploring it in detail. We have seen that according to Heidegger, poetry and by extension the poetic, is the thing that unconceals being, that allows truth to burst forth from it. Poetry is also the thing that 'opens up a world', which, for Heidegger, refers to the culture and 'historical destiny' of a people. In order to chime with Hadot's more cosmopolitan ideas, we saw how the concept of *world* had to be expanded and for this, we utilised the other Heideggerian notion of *founding*/*grounding* (Gr: *gründung*). The poetic *founds* a philosophical way of life, and in the process *grounds* it, allowing it to endure, entice people to adopt it, and thereby spread to other cultures. We then examined how poetic language distinguishes itself from ordinary, everyday language, concluding that they are two distinctive uses of the same medium. Lastly, we touched upon philosophy and literature and saw how elements of the poetic can also be included within prose, despite the seeming contradiction. The notions of the poetic and the Hadotian idea of philosophy as a way of life are thus fundamentally intertwined and each requires the other. What the poetic is, is thus clearly defined, and it is hoped that this clarification demonstrates the importance of the concept to this thesis overall.

Chapter IV: Marcus Aurelius' Meditations and the Dhammapada: Eastern and Western 'hypomnemata'

In previous chapters, we have examined the Hadot Paradigm, the reasons for the rejection of the poetic, and a detailed look at what the poetic itself, 'is' and how it spreads and sustains the Hadotian notion of philosophy as a way of life. We will continue those themes in this chapter which, is a comparison of the *Meditations* of the Roman Emperor and Stoic, Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) and the book of quotations of the Buddha known as *The Dhammapada.* It will be argued that both works constitute examples, in different ways, of one of the spiritual exercises about which Hadot wrote known as '*hypomnemata'* (memory-aides). This exercise consisted of repeatedly writing down or reading the main teachings of a philosophical school to remember its doctrines. Whilst it is argued by Hadot and others that Marcus' *Meditations* is a prime example of this exercise, such an argument has not been made for *The Dhammapada* which, it will be argued, was an Indian Buddhist parallel of *hypomnemata* that sought a similar goal to its Greco-Roman counterpart.

After an introduction to each text and how *hypomnemata* applies to it, both texts will be compared on the basis of three themes that can be found in both. These are: (1) Doctrine, (2) Impermanence and Death and (3) Ethics and Self-Training. The case will be made that, through the lens of a single Hadotian spiritual exercise, both works represent examples of how the poetic can be applied in practice to the Hadot Paradigm. As well as this, this chapter will serve as further evidence of the fact that the Hadot Paradigm can successfully be applied to successfully compare sometimes very geographically distinct philosophical traditions. Although this was also shown in Chapter I, this chapter will provide further support to this

notion with a more intimate and physical comparison of both Buddhism and Stoicism through examining actual texts rather than just theoretical doctrines.[28]

Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and *hypomnemata*

As quoted above, in his *Discourses* (2007, p. 7), Epictetus tells his students to write down his teachings saying, 'That's the kind of attitude you need to cultivate if you would be a philosopher, the sort of sentiments you should write down every day and put in practice'. This spiritual exercise, as noted above is called *hypomnemata* or (aides to memory) and consists of repeatedly and constantly reading or writing down the teachings of a philosophical school in order to keep them firmly in mind. Michel Foucault (2005, p. 360) in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* writes that *hypomnemata* consists of notes that 'are aids to memory. They are notes of memories, thanks to which, through reading or memory exercises, you will be able to rememorize things said.' Essentially, one repeatedly writes down or reads quotations, reflections and extracts that will aid them in living the philosophical life they have chosen.

The purpose of all this was, as Foucault said, to remind oneself of the example of philosophical sages or school founders, and in the process commit to a type of self-fashioning in line with them. Crucially, in order to be effective, these writings had to be done in a particular linguistic form. In other words, they had to be done poetically because it would be the vividness of such philosophical teachings, in either the form of texts or spoken word, which would both encourage adherents to remember them, as well as assist them in the process.

[28] All verses from Meditations are taken from 'Meditations: The Annotated Edition' (2021) translated, edited and introduced by Robin Waterfield, referenced by the chapter and verse numbers from the book. All Dhammapada verses are from 'The Dhammapada' translated by Eknath Easwaran (2007) Both are fully referenced in the bibliography.

Meditations has been interpreted in multiple ways by scholars and is called 'a kind of spiritual diary' by P.A Brunt (1974, p.1), a 'unique and hybrid philosophical and autobiographic text' by Männlein-Robert (2012, p. 375) and 'a private notebook rather than a work intended for publication' by John Sellars (2021, p.20) that Marcus wrote throughout his life whilst serving as Emperor, including whilst on military campaigns. Hadot (2020, p. 211) argued that *Meditations* is an example of *hypomnemata,* written to keep the ideas of Stoicism firmly in Marcus' mind and to remind him to stick to Stoic teachings:

> Thanks to this meditation, one has constantly 'at hand', that is to say, present, the fundamental dogmas of the School so that they can exercise their powerful psychological effect upon the soul. This meditation can take the form of a written exercise which will be a true dialogue with oneself: *eis heauton.* A large part of Marcus Aurelius' *meditations* corresponds to this exercise. It is a matter of having the fundamental dogmas of Stoicism present to the mind in a living manner. What Marcus Aurelius repeats (to himself) are fragments of the Stoic system.

In *The Inner Citadel* (1998, pp. 31-32) Hadot reiterates this opinion writing 'Thus the Meditations belong to that type of writing called *hypomnemata* in antiquity which we could define as "personal notes taken on a day-to-day basis." This was a very widespread practice…'

Other scholars have agreed with Hadot on the literary genre of *Meditations*. Matthew Sharpe and Michael Ure (2021, p.95) writes that *Meditations* 'represent a Stoic set of *hypomnemata* (literally aides to memory) answering to Epictetus's exhortation: a kind of writing as spiritual exercise'. John Sellars (2021, p. 31) after describing Hadot's idea of spiritual exercises, including *hypomnemata*, writes that 'Meditations stands out as a text that is itself an extended spiritual exercise' and Männlein-Robert (2012, p. 368) calls the text 'a very special, singular kind of a personal *hypomnemata*.' Angelo Giavatto (2012, p. 334) says that 'By writing the *Meditations* Marcus aims at keeping the principles of Stoicism alive in his spirit, through repetition.' Lastly, in his introduction to his translation of *Meditations*, Robin Waterfield

(2021, pp. xxxi-xxxii) agrees with Hadot's view about the text. Mentioning the righteousness of Marcus Aurelius' writing, Waterfield says that in repeatedly writing down his thoughts, Marcus tells himself to keep the core ideas and tenets of Stoicism firmly in his mind 'so that they can strike his mind with their original force'.

Summarising these scholarly views, the idea that Marcus Aurelius' writing of *Meditations* was an example of the spiritual exercise of *hypomnemata* is well supported. The emperor himself confirms early on that he had been doing *hypomnemata* in other forms in Book 3 verse 14: 'Don't be sidetracked anymore! You're not going to read your notebooks, or your accounts of ancient Roman and Greek history, or the commonplace books you were saving for your old age'.

This quote, especially the mention of 'notebooks' which is what the text itself originally was, shows that Marcus had performed a very similar exercise before. Its mention of 'Greek and Roman history' goes well with Foucault's quote above about the fact that the exercise could also include writing down specific quotations. It seems that Marcus had written down quotes from historical sources for himself too, which would make sense in his role as Emperor.

It is not difficult to see Marcus' writing of *Meditations* as a continuation of his earlier copying of Greco-Roman history – both were instances of Marcus attempting to be a better ruler and person, indeed, an early example of what modern commentators would call 'self-help' literature. In attempting to improve himself, Marcus also necessarily had to make use of the poetic, for he could not carry with him his entire library on campaign. The poetic plays a clear role in this type of self-improvement because the more memorable a particular 'helpful' quotation is, the more it is able to 'jump out' of the text, become vivid, and therefore able to be recited at will. The poetic can be seen being used even in modern self-help literature where useful phrases are normally written in a similar manner.

In writing *Meditations*, then, Marcus Aurelius was trying to absorb Stoic teachings and apply them to daily life. There is a clear ethical vein that runs throughout the *Meditations*, and this makes sense, as ethics is seen as the branch of philosophy that teaches us how we should live, and act towards others. Marcus Aurelius admits himself in Book 7, verse 67 of the text, that he is best at ethics and not so much the other areas of philosophy, logic and physics: 'You may have resigned yourself to never being good at logic or physics but don't on that account despair of being self-reliant, modest, focused on the common good and obedient to God.' Marcus Aurelus, through *hypomnemata*, was thus using Stoic doctrines to train himself.

That this was the purpose of Marcus performing the exercise, as well as arguably, its success, is further supported if we turn to the Greek historian, Herodian (2007/2020). He says that the populace of the Roman Empire did not just view Marcus as someone who liked philosophy, but *as a philosopher* due to how he lived, as well as his theoretical knowledge. His reputation was so high, that he inspired others to take up philosophy too:

> To his subjects he revealed himself as a mild and moderate emperor; he gave audience to those who asked for it and forbade his bodyguard to drive off those who happened to meet him. Alone of the emperors, he gave proof of his learning not by mere words or knowledge of philosophical doctrines but by his blameless character and temperate way of life. His reign thus produced a very large number of intelligent men, for subjects like to imitate the example set by their ruler.[29]

Herodian's quotation shows us that Marcus truly lived his philosophy and that his use of *hypomnemata* seems to have been effective. Conceivably, the writing of *Meditations* could be seen as an attempt to maintain this way of living whilst he was away. Alternatively, it could just have been a continuation of Marcus' training towards the attainment of *ataraxia*.

The Dhammapada and *hypomnemata*

[29] Herodian 1.2.4 (2007/2020)

We have seen that Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* is an example of the Hadotian spiritual exercise of *hypomnemata,* the act of repeatedly writing down or reading the teachings of a school so as to keep its teachings firmly in mind. There is another example of *hypomnemata*, though not called by that name, in the Indian *Theravada* Buddhist tradition as well in the form of a text called *The Dhammapada.* This text is a very different text from *Meditations*. Firstly, whereas we know, factually, that Marcus wrote *Meditations, The Dhammapada* is not a single coherent text as such, it is an anthology or compilation of quotes from other Buddhist texts in the *Pāli* Cannon and elsewhere, specifically of direct quotes from the Buddha without any context or commentary.

Whilst it is unknown who compiled the particular quotations, the reason for the text's creation seems to be practical in nature. The canon of Buddhist texts, even just in the *Theravada Pāli* Canon is extremely large. Since many monks, and indeed members of the laity, would have had to travel long distances, as merchants, traders or missionaries, for example, it would have been extremely impractical for them to carry around large numbers of heavy texts. *The Dhammapada* was created as a solution to this problem; a small handbook of key quotations from the Buddha in an easily accessible, easy to comprehend, portable format. It was, in effect, a Buddhist version of the famous *Enchiridion* or 'handbook' of Epictetus. Scholars and translators of the text have agreed with this position. As Wallis (2004, p. xi) writes in his translation, emphasising the poetic nature of the text:

> By distilling the complex models, theories, rhetorical style, and sheer volume of the Buddha's teachings into concise, crystalline verses, the Dhammapada makes the Buddhist way of life available to anyone.

Easwaran (2007, p.13) agrees with Wallis who explicitly says that *The Dhammapada* was a 'handbook' and emphasises the practicality of it saying that 'it is a collection of vivid, practical verses… it must have been the equivalent of a handbook: a ready reference of the Buddha's teachings condensed in haunting poetry and arranged by theme'. As Easwaran says,

The Dhammapada is ‘poetry’ and the compilers of the text clearly recognised the need to use the poetic, as we have defined it, in their composition. This would ensure that the reader would be able to use the text as an assistant to their particular way of life, as well as easily explain teachings to others. These phrases would also be easily spread by word of mouth, which, as we saw in Chapter III, was the principal way in which Buddhism was spread to non-literate peoples, such as steppe nomads via the poetic.

The Dhammapada, can quite conceivably be called a Buddhist variation of the Greco-Roman spiritual exercise of *hypomnemata.* The aforementioned small size of the text would not only have assisted travel, but also made it ideal for quickly reading, or reciting, a relevant quotation to address a situation in daily life. As mentioned above, *hypomnemata* did not just involve writing, it also could involve the repeated reading of relevant passages to remember them too. In the early Buddhist context in India, we must remember this aspect of the exercise too, for it was this form of recitation and memorialisation that acted as the principal means through which early Buddhist teachings were transmitted for centuries before they were committed to writing.

As Bhikkhu Analayo (2022, pp. 91-92) writes in his *Early Buddhist Oral Tradition*, early Buddhists recognised the need for the need to accurately transmit the Buddha’s teachings and thus the importance of memory and by extension, of the poetic. Bhikkhu Analayo writes that ‘repeated verbal recitation is required to guard against loss of memory.’ Thus, the phrases of *The Dhammapada*, and other such literature are necessarily poetic and easy to verbally recite and remember. Indeed, it was the poetic that allowed the Buddhist way of life to survive down the generations. This repeated poetic recitation is all the more necessary because poetic language, delves deeper than everyday language, as we saw in Chapter III. Thus, forms of everyday language are easily forgotten because there is no effort to intensify their imagistic

vividness and to make them memorable. Therefore, in order to rectify the deficiencies of such language, it was necessary for Buddhist medicants to make use of the poetic.

Again, it does seem that *The Dhammapada* would have been, and probably was, used for similar purposes to Greco-Roman *hypomnemata*. The Buddhist adherent would have had quotations from the Buddha, the supreme sage on their person in the form of memorised quotations or a physical text, for repeated reading or reciting until his words became part of that adherent's daily life and actions.[30] The Buddha in the form of quotations, would thus serve as a spiritual example and guide. In essence then, in both Greco-Roman and ancient Indian contexts, the idea of memorising philosophical doctrines, through writing and reading physical texts, or reciting verses from memory alone, was of paramount importance. The term *hypomnemata* can be applied to the Indian Buddhist exercise without much if any variation or change apart from those of a linguistic and cultural nature.

There is no evidence for direct influence of either of the texts on the other. However, we can say, that both of them, independently, sought to achieve the same goal which was a way of constantly reminding oneself of the main teachings of their philosophical school through a form of *hypomnemata*. Their commonality is thus one of general practice. The Buddhist compilers of *The Dhammapada*, of course, would not have known of this Greco-Roman exercise. But, like Aurelius' *Meditations*, the text was a way for the Buddhist practitioner to remember teachings and eventually, through living a philosophical. Buddhist way of life, to embody them, in the Hadotian sense of the term.

[30] Although oral transmission was more common, the idea of Buddhist monks carrying and reading texts is not out of the question. Bhikkhu Analayo (2022, p. 201) notes that in order for certain Buddhist doctrines and ideas, such as the monastic rules (Pl/Sk: *Vinaya*) to be memorised, a physical text must have existed. Despite widespread illiteracy, it is highly possible that some monks, would have carried, and been able to read, a physical text containing the Buddha's teachings.

Therefore, both should be seen as works of philosophy, guides to living a certain philosophical way of life and examples of the same, or a very similar, spiritual exercise. As a result, both texts are readily comparable and have numerous points of similarity. This comparison will now be given and split into a number of themes that are evident in both texts, sometimes even in similar phrases. Although, as they are from different cultures and time periods, the differences will also become readily apparent.

Common Themes: A Comparison of both Texts

1.1 Doctrine in Meditations

One of the main themes running through both *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada* are constant reminders of the main doctrines and ideas of the school that each text represents, whether Buddhist or Stoic. Marcus Aurelius and the compilers of *The Dhammapada* took the time to choose and write particular things about the main ideas of the school they were adherents of.

There are numerous examples of this throughout the Meditations such as in Book 2, verse 17. After a reflection on death and impermanence (two other main themes that we will explore later), Marcus writes the following:

> What, then, can escort us safely on our way? Only one thing: Philosophy. This consists in keeping the guardian spirit within us safe from assault and harm, never swayed by pleasure or pain , purposeful when it acts, free from dishonesty and dissemblance, and never dependent on action or inaction from anyone else. It also consists in accepting what happens, the lot one has been assigned, as coming from the same source as oneself, and in always awaiting death with a serene mind, understanding that it's no more than the disintegration of the elements of which every living creature is a compound.

In Chapter 4, verse 23, Marcus writes to the 'universe' or rather to the divine presence that the Stoics believed permeated it.

> Universe, whatever is consonant with you is consonant with me; if something is timely for you, it's neither too early nor too late for me. Nature, everything is fruit to me that your

> seasons bring; everything comes from you, everything is contained in you, everything returns to you…

Lastly in Book 6, verse 41, Marcus writes about our tendency to judge things that happen to us as 'good or bad' and explains the Stoic idea that only things that depend on us can be judged this way. We suffer because we assign moral value to things that are not within our control, and so which are, for the Stoics, morally indifferent:

> If you treat things that aren't subject to your volition as good or bad, it's inevitable that when you meet one of these "bad" things or fail to gain one of these "good" things, you'll blame the gods or hate the men who are responsible for what happened or who you suspect may be responsible for such a thing in the future. In fact, many of the wrongs we commit are a consequence of our assigning value to these things. But if we judge only things that are up to us to be good and bad, you'll be left with no reason to criticise the gods or adopt a hostile attitude towards other men.

Lastly, in Book 8, verse 47, Marcus expands on the above idea and writes his famous words about the Stoic idea of judgement: 'If something external is causing you distress, it's not the thing itself that's troubling you but your judgement about it, and it's within your power to erase that right now'.

If these quotations were all that remained of Marcus' notebooks, a situation that is indeed a reality for many of his contemporaries, they would still be a very good indication of the main ideas that characterised Stoicism as a unique school. Marcus Aurelius had more than just a superficial knowledge of Stoic philosophy. In fact, he had a deep knowledge of Stoic ideas and tried his best to put them into practice, as we saw from Herodian's quote earlier on. We should remember also that all of *Meditations* was written from memory, it is not likely that Marcus would have been able to take many Stoic books with him on campaign, and there would have been no one to check his knowledge. That Marcus' writings correspond with other known Stoic texts, should demonstrate to us the extent of his learning.

Lastly, the fact that entries about similar ideas are written in different books of *Meditations* demonstrates that Marcus wrote them down continuously, at different points – thus

performing *hypomnemata*. These doctrines are amongst the most important that a Stoic would have to know and practice which also could explain their consistent repetition throughout the work.

1.2 Doctrine in the Dhammapada

Some of the quotations chosen for *The Dhammapada* also cover general Buddhist doctrine. Despite the differing beliefs and cultural context around the composition of both texts, there are verses on general doctrine that are readily comparable with the *Meditations*. The chapter known as *The Awakened One* (*Buddha*), for example, contains a poetic statement of the purpose and goal of the Buddhist path:

> Take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha and you will grasp the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering and the Noble Eightfold path that takes you beyond suffering. That is your best refuge, your only refuge. When you reach it, all sorrow falls away. (p. 171)

These brief reflections on general Buddhist ideas are continued in the chapter called *Thirst* (Pl: *taṇhā*) that contains a general quotation summarising the Buddhist view of the human condition pre-enlightenment:

> All human beings are subject to attachment and thirst for pleasure. Hankering after these, they are caught in the cycle of birth and death. Driven by this thirst, they run about frightened like a hunted hare, suffering more and more. Overcome this thirst and be free. (p. 235)

Both verses are written in a short, repetitive style that would have greatly assisted repeated reading and memorisation. Like the verses examined above in the *Meditations*, these verses give a useful and detailed overview of general Buddhist doctrine, the goal of Buddhist practice and how Buddhism views the world at large. Even on their own, they would have been useful for *hypomnemata* and would have assisted the reader in keeping on the Buddhist path. The first verses would have reminded one of the Four Nobel Truths, fundamental Buddhist doctrines and the general Buddhist path. The second quoted verse would have helped remind them about *why* they were on the path. It details the nature of the

suffering/dissatisfaction (*dukkha)* that permeates the world and tells them to advance towards liberation quickly.

Impermanence in Meditations

A second set of interrelated themes present in both texts are the ideas of impermanence and death. For Buddhism, impermanence (Sk: *anitya*/Pl: *anicca*) is one of the 'three marks of existence' (Sk: *trilakṣaṇa*/Pl: *tilakkhaṇa*) and an important Buddhist idea, and death is the natural extension of this. For Marcus Aurelius in *Meditations*, both impermanence and death are some of his most mentioned topics and were clearly constantly on his mind. Firstly, we will look at Marcus' ideas about impermanence and then those of *The Dhammapada* before doing the same for the idea of death. After which, brief commentary will be given.

In Book 4, verse 36, Marcus writes the following:

> Observe at every moment how change is responsible for everything that comes to pass and familiarise yourself with the idea that there's nothing the universe loves so much as changing things and creating similar things. The point being that everything that exists is in a sense a seed for what takes its place.

A few pages later in the same book, in verse 43, Marcus goes onto say: 'Time is a river of events and its current is strong; no sooner does something heave into view than it's swept away and something else is being carried past instead only to be swept away.' In later books, Marcus' reflections on impermanence take a more explicit tone. In Book 5, verse 33: 'Before long, either ashes or a skeleton, and either just a name or not even that – and what's a name but noise and a fading echo? The things that are valued in life are vain, rotten and trivial.' Lastly, in Book 7, verse 21, Marcus' reflections about impermanence have formed into a single, sentence: 'Soon you'll have forgotten everything; soon everyone will have forgotten you'. These are just some of Marcus' many reflections on impermanence. Possible reasons for its frequency, as for that of death, will be suggested below.

2.2 Impermanence in The Dhammapada

Being a main doctrine of Buddhism, impermanence (Sk: *anitya*/Pl: *anicca*) is also mentioned throughout *The Dhammapada*. Buddhists tended to mention death as an indication of impermanence and we will see that in the next sub-section. However, throughout the Dhammapada, there are also some verses that speak of general impermanence as a concept. In the chapter called *The Path* (Pl: *magga*), the Buddha is quoted as saying: 'All created things are transitory; those who realise this are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to pure wisdom' (p. 205).

Another common image in *The Dhammapada* to remind a reader of impermanence is a 'mirage'. Material things such as the human body and the world at large are compared to a mirage or illusion (Sk: *māyā*) given their impermanent nature. This image is used in the chapter called *Flowers* expressed in highly poetic, memorable terms:

> Remembering that this body froth, of the nature of a mirage, break the flower-tipped arrows of Mara. Never again will death touch you. (p. 117)

This image is repeated in the chapter *The World* (Pl: *loka)*:

> Look on the world as a bubble; look on it as a mirage. Then the King of Death cannot even see you. Come look at this world! Is it not like a painted royal chariot? The wise see through it, but not the immature. (p. 161)

Both texts therefore used forms of alternative, poetic language so that the idea of impermanence, through memorable, vivid verses, would become imprinted on the mind of the person reading or writing it. Such verses themselves would easily be available for use as *hypomnemata*.

2.3 Death in Meditations

There are also numerous verses in both texts about the idea of death, which of course, is related to the idea of impermanence and a product of it. Nothing lasts forever because everything in some sense, 'dies'. Marcus contemplates the nature of death – and whether or not there is anything after it – numerous times throughout the *Meditations.* Death as a theme

is normally invoked in Buddhism as an indicator of impermanence. A contemplation of death itself acts as a spiritual exercise because the practitioner would learn not to value transient things such as wealth, glory or fame, as none of them endure. One can also physically face the unknown element of death calmly and with acceptance. Again, we will examine Marcus' approach first beginning with Book 4, verse 37:

> Your death is immanent, and you haven't yet achieved simplicity, imperturbability, the conviction that nothing external can make you a worse person, or the ability to deal serenely with everyone, nor do you dedicate your intelligence solely to right action.

Book 8, verse 58:

> To be afraid of death is to be afraid of either unconsciousness or a different kind of consciousness. But if death is the end of consciousness, you won't be conscious of anything bad either. And if you gain a different kind of consciousness, you'll be a different kind of creature, which is to say that, you'll still be alive.

As with the theme of impermanence, death is clearly something that weighed heavily on Marcus' mind. This interest can be traced to two different reasons. Firstly, since the time of Socrates, in the Western tradition, philosophy had often been thought of, as Plato (1997, p. 59) says in the *Phaedo*, 'training for dying'. The Stoics, seeing themselves as successors to Socrates would have inherited this view. Secondly, as mentioned, Marcus wrote *Meditations* whilst on campaign, leading his troops. On the battlefield, the prospect of death would have occurred daily to him. Seeing comrades killed and wounded would have also most likely reinforced the idea of the impermanence of life, as well as the Stoic about not being affected by things out of our control, death being one of them.

2.4 Death in the Dhammapada

As mentioned above, death is also persistently mentioned in *The Dhammapada*. One difference with the *Meditations* is that Marcus Aurelius, as we have seen, thinks about the afterlife and whether there is one. There are no such questions in *The Dhammapada,* possibly because Buddhism always had a firm doctrinal position on life after death whereas, as we saw

in Chapter I, the Hellenistic schools were more flexible on this issue. *The Dhammapada's* talk of death focuses on the speed with which it can come and exhorts readers to attain enlightenment with a sense of urgency before the chance is lost. It does so, sometimes with graphic language and imagery. In the chapter titled *Age* (Pl: *jarā*) for example: 'This body is a painted image, subject to disease decay and death, held together by thoughts that come and go. What joy can there be for those who see that their white bones will be cast away like gourds in the autumn.' (p. 150)

The passages in this verse, especially the last sentence, are graphic and aim to hit the reader with a sense of alarm and encourage them to reach their goal as soon as they can. Other verses on death also focus on the sheer speed with which death can come, for the same reasons. In the chapter *The Path* (Pl: *magga*) images of natural disaster and family members are invoked:

> Death comes and carries off a man absorbed in his family and possessions as the monsoon flood sweeps away a sleeping village
>
> Neither children nor parents can rescue one whom death has seized. Remember this and follow without delay the path that leads to nirvana.(Both p. 207)

In *Impurity* (Pl: *āsava*) the reader is addressed directly and told that they are already dying and so need to 'strive hard':

> Your life has come to an end and you are in the presence of death. There is no place to rest on this journey, and you are so unprepared. Light the lamp within; strive hard to attain wisdom. Become pure and innocent and you will be free from birth and death. (p. 194)

This verse can be directly compared with one from *Meditations* quoted above where Marcus Aurelius writes 'your death is immanent […]'. For both Stoics and Buddhists, meditation on the subject of death is important because, as stated above, it not only puts their lives into perspective, but allows them to see philosophically that the passions and pleasures humans

are controlled by, are meaningless. It also reminds them that they have little time left to achieve their goals before their own deaths.

Although the quoted part of *Meditations* is not the last book in the text, and so Marcus may not really have been close to dying, the point of including such a verse is the same as *The Dhammapada*. Both seek to fill the reader with a sense of urgency and motivation to achieve the goals of their respective spiritual paths as quickly as possible. These comparisons provide more evidence as to the similarity of the spiritual exercises of both ways of life.

Ethics and Self-Training in Meditations

As in all ancient philosophy, ethics and moral conduct are prioritised in the Meditations. Ethics is the part of philosophy that really informs the text as a whole, due to Marcus Aurelius' preference for ethics, as detailed above. As such, there are numerous instances where Marcus reminds himself to act justly and kindly to others. In doing this, he is trying to reorient his self towards the goal of sagacity. *The Dhammapada* too, tells its readers to act with kindness, non-violence and compassion, reinforcing the strong ethical tradition expounded by Buddhism. In both traditions, ethics is a form of self-creation; ethical practice is a way of transforming oneself into a new, more serene and thoughtful, type of person. Such a transformation though requires effort and can not occur immediately. The spiritual exercises mentioned below, encompassed by the poetic, thus assist the practitioner to implement such new ethical conduct *existentially*, that is, covering every aspect of the person mental and physical.

In Stoicism, there is a belief that all human beings derive from the same divine reason which permeates the universe. All people have within them a spark of this divinity which entails a form of human equality, at least in spiritual terms. Marcus Aurelius bases his belief on showing kindness and justice to others on this doctrine. Throughout the text, he expounds a

cosmopolitan point of view of all humans as part of a single world community. This view is best expressed in an argument he makes in Book 4, Verse 4:

> If intelligence is something we have in common , then reason, too, which makes us rational beings, is something we have in common. If so, then, the reason that dictates what we should and shouldn't do is also something we have in common. If so, then, law too is something we have in common. If so, then we're fellow citizens. If so, then we have some form of society in common. If so, then, the universe is a kind of community, since the universe is the only shared society that anyone could describe as common to the entire human race.

Marcus' cosmopolitanism carries on a long tradition of the concept in Stoic tradition. G.R Stanton (1968, p. 187) speaking about Marcus' quotation writes: 'The argument is distinctly circular, in that either the common possession of mind or the common state has to be assumed. But to Stoics these assumptions were both acceptable.' Similarly, A.A Long (2008, p. 51) writing about the history of Stoic cosmopolitanism shows that Marcus' embracing of the idea made him the latest in a long tradition and supports the idea that he was thoroughly educated in the school, saying that the Stoics advocate that we treat all people as quasi-siblings, with the only necessary foundation for this position being our common humanity.

Within the context of the Stoic way of life, numerous spiritual exercises would have helped in reinforcing the idea of cosmopolitanism, mostly, as Long said, by emphasising our shared humanity. *Hypomnemata*, constantly writing down such an idea as Marcus was doing, would be effective, but other exercises would possibly have more of an effect. The 'view from above', imaging oneself floating above the earth, would show that the so-called borders between nations are merely human constructs, and that humans actually possess a lot more in common. A meditation on the divine 'universal reason', a part of which we all share, would also provide a common foundation on which to base a notion of human social and perhaps political equality. This demonstrates that for Marcus, and the Stoics generally, the philosophical way of life is again not solely an inner endeavour, although it will reorient the

individual soul, it also possesses an external dimension, and will also transform how the philosopher thinks of, and acts towards, others.

Throughout the text, Marcus engages in what could be called 'self-training'. As stated above, he consciously tries to make himself a better person and to reform himself by use and remembrance of Stoic principles. This can be seen in multiple verses where he reminds himself to 'stick at it', for example in Book 5, Verse 34:

> You can always be content if you continue to make good progress, which is to say if your beliefs and actions keep you on the path of reason…

And in Book 6, Verse 30:

> Keep yourself simple, good, guileless, dignified, unpretentious, devoted to justice, pious, kind, affectionate to others and resolute in carrying out your proper tasks. Strive to be and remain the kind of person philosophy would have you be.

We can see from these verses that Marcus is constantly reminding himself to consistently follow the path he has embarked upon. He knows that he is not a perfect person, and he is attempting to work on himself. One problem Marcus had according to the *Meditations* was his tendency to become angry with others. Thus, he constantly reminds himself not to do this and sometimes uses the example of the cosmopolitanism outlined earlier to give himself reasons not to give into his frustrations, such as in Book 2, Verse 1:

> At the start of each day tell yourself: I shall meet people who are officious, ungrateful, abusive, treacherous, malicious and selfish. In every case, they've got like this because of their ignorance of good and bad. But I have seen goodness and badness for what they are, and I know that what is good is what is morally right and what is bad is what is morally wrong; and I've seen the true nature of the wrongdoer himself and know that he's related to me – not in the sense that we share blood and seed, but by virtue of the fact that we both partake of the same intelligence, and so of a portion of the divine.

In Book 4, Verse 6, Marcus is clearly trying to calm himself down after having had an argument with someone he disliked:

> Given the character of the person in question, this outcome was inevitable. To want it not to be the case is to want a fig tree not to have sap. In any case, remember this: in no time at all both you and he will be dead, and shortly after that not even our names will remain.

Marcus is aware of the ability of these constant reminders to himself to influence his character. As he says in Book 5, Verse 16: 'Your mind will come to resemble your frequently repeated thoughts, because it takes on the hue of its thoughts'. However, Marcus' attempting to control his anger functioned as a spiritual exercise in and of itself. In putting an attitude of loving kindness and understanding in place of his outbursts, he is increasing the hold of Stoic cosmopolitanism over his character. As Martha Nussbaum (2019, p.81) writes:

> Marcus speaks to himself as to a person very prone to anger and resentment. Here the cosmopolitan thought of respect for humanity and sociability steps in to give him a new view of his political enemies…Cosmopolitanism supports the removal of anger, because it tells him that connectedness is important and insults are unimportant. And the removal of anger further supports cosmopolitanism. Because he sees his enemies as fellow humans, sharing purposes and ends with him, he can treat them as ends, rather than merely as obstacles in the way of his policies.

We can see then that there is a strong commitment to an ethic of self-transformation in the Stoic tradition and that Marcus expresses in the *Meditations*. He also uses the *Meditations* to engage in self-training to try and make himself a better person, using Stoic teachings. We will now examine the same ideas in *The Dhammapada*.

3.2 Ethics and Self-Transformation in the Dhammapada

Buddhism also teaches that one should act with kindness and compassion towards other sentient beings and such teachings are fundamental teachings of the Buddhist tradition. As such, ethical teachings are prevalent within *The Dhammapada*. Buddhist ethics are not based on the same explicitly declared cosmopolitan ideal of universal political citizenship as in Stoicism. However, Buddhist ethics are also based on a notion of cosmopolitanism, if we say that the term refers to the idea that humans are part of a single community.

Buddhism teaches that humans are united by the fact that we all experience suffering *(dukkha)*. A Buddhist should remember this and therefore show compassion to others, remembering that we are all experiencing the same troubles. Buddhist ethics is also based on

the idea of *karma* (Pl: *kamma*). if one commits immoral actions, such as killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, they will receive negative *karma* and be reborn into a lower state of existence in their next life. Both ethical foundations are found in *The Dhammapada*. In the chapter titled *Punishment*, the following is written:

> Everyone fears punishment; everyone fears death, just as you do. Therefore, do not kill or cause to kill. Everyone fears punishment; everyone loves life, as you do. Therefore, do not kill or cause to kill.
>
> If, hoping to be happy, you strike at others who also seek happiness, you will be happy neither here nor hereafter. If, hoping to be happy, you do not strike at others who are seeking happiness, you will be happy here and hereafter. (Both p. 143)

Both verses offer interesting divergences from Stoicism. Firstly, although Stoicism agrees that we should treat everyone with kindness due to a similarity in the human condition, namely that we all possess the part of, and derive from, the same divine reason, Stoicism did not extend this to non-violence. Marcus himself, as mentioned above, wrote *Meditations* whilst he was out on campaign fighting; he was not a pacifist. Buddhism meanwhile teaches non-violence and does not traditionally agree with warfare in any circumstances.[31]

Although Marcus would undoubtedly see the Persians and Germanic tribes he fought against as 'human' the same as himself, he still saw the need to fight and kill them. It could be argued that, since Marcus was Emperor, he had to place a practical limit to his compassion to defend the Empire, whereas the Buddha never sought political power.[32] There is also no comparable tradition of non-violence in the Greco-Roman tradition for Marcus to draw upon.

[31] Though the ideal Buddhist attitude to violence is non-violent pacifism, recent scholarship has found that there have been numerous historical cases where Buddhists have engaged in violence and warfare (See Jenkins (2013, p.472) and Neigenfind Jr (2020, p. 399). In the Dhammapada, however, pacifism is indeed promoted many times throughout the text, violence never is.

[32] Indeed, in Book 8, Verse 1 of the Meditations, Marcus expresses tension between his desire to be a philosopher and his role as Emperor and worries that his role may mean that he never becomes a philosopher. Preaching compassion for all whilst still needing to fight against others to defend the Empire is clearly another example of the tension between the two roles for Marcus.

In the religions of the Indian-subcontinent, non-violence or *ahimsa* is a commonly expressed concept and is central to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, so it would not have been considered unusual for the Buddha to have expressed such an idea in his native context (see Howard 2018).

These differences though should not disguise the similarities between the two traditions and, indeed, the two texts. Such similarities are mainly to be found in the advocacy of philosophical self-training. We have seen already that Marcus attempts to train himself into a better person throughout the *Meditations*. A similar idea runs through *The Dhammapada* too. To begin, the Buddha and Marcus Aurelius both recognised the ability of the mind to affect someone's character, and therefore, for the necessity of self-training. Marcus wrote that the mind 'takes on the hue of its thoughts'. Compare this with the very first verse in *The Dhammapada*, again in the chapter *Twin Verses*: 'Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think. Suffering follows an evil thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it'. (p. 105) This awareness of the ability of one's thoughts to impact the state of the mind again further supports the need in both traditions constantly to keep morally correct thoughts in mind to draw upon, hence the reliance on the poetic in a philosophical life.

For Buddhist ethics, this self-training is fundamentally important. As Christopher E. Gowans (2013, p. 433) writes, a difference between Hellenistic and Buddhist moral philosophy is that Hellenistic thinkers (including Stoics) attempted to develop a 'systematic moral philosophy'. By contrast:

> The situation was rather different in Indian Buddhism. Though there were some philosophical considerations of ethical topics, these occurred primarily in practical contexts, especially in discussions of the path to enlightenment, usually alongside a good deal of moralizing and exhortation for moral improvement. There was virtually no aspiration to a general, systematic account of these topics. The main perspective was typically concern for moral training with a view to our overall spiritual progress.

The idea that that Buddhists' concern with morality was practical rather than theoretical is supported by other scholarship. Paul Williams (2000, P. 99) for example writing about the origins of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, stresses that its emergence was not the result of a 'Buddhist Reformation' as in the Christian world. Williams writes 'Buddhism is thus an orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. What is important is harmony of behaviour, not harmony of doctrines'.

Though Williams was not speaking of ethics here, what he says can also be applied to Buddhist ethics. What matters in Buddhism is orthopraxy, in other words, practice; thus, Buddhist thinkers, including the Buddha, thought up ethical ideas that could be applied to real, practical situations. This is contrasted by Gownas with the Hellenistic thinkers who tried to think up systematic theories of morality and ethics that could be applied generally to all situations. They were thus more theoretical than practical here. In this, Gownas is right, however, his view is not completely correct, because we have seen already that Marcus, a famous Greco-Roman thinker in his own right, defiantly did attempt 'moral training with a view to our (or his) overall spiritual progress' so the difference between Buddhist and Hellenistic-Roman views of ethics and morality that Gownas cites, whilst present, may not be as prominent as he thinks.[33] What Gownas does do is talk about the importance of spiritual training to Buddhism and this emphasis can be seen from *The Dhammapada* itself: In the chapter *Anger* (Pl: *dosa*), the Buddha says:

> Use your body for doing good, not for harm. Train it to follow the dharma. Use your tongue for doing good, not for harm. Train it to speak kindly. Use your mind for doing good, not for harm. Train your mind in love. The wise are disciplined in body, speech and mind They are well controlled indeed. (p. 189)

And the chapter *Vigilance*:

[33] We have also seen, via Hadot, that Hellenistic Philosophy had a lived, practical element as well as a theoretical one. However, in ethics, to say that they were slightly 'more' theoretical than the Buddhists in terms of ethical theories does not entail that they had no practicality to speak of, Hadot has already shown that conclusively.

> If you meditate earnestly, pure in mind and kind in deeds, leading a disciplined life in harmony with the dharma, you will grow in glory. If you meditate earnestly, through spiritual disciplines, you can make an island for yourself that no flood can overwhelm. (p. 109)

We can thus see that *The Dhammapada*, in very similar language to Marcus, also advocates a form of spiritual/philosophical self-training. Like Marcus in Book 5, Verse 34, *The Dhammapada* in the second verse quoted above also tells a Buddhist to keep on the path and they will 'grow' in doing so. Marcus tells himself to continue on the path and in Book 6, Verse 30, also quoted above, Marcus also tells himself to practice and retain good moral qualities. The verse from *Anger* in *The Dhammapada* tells a Buddhist to do the same thing.

Another metaphor that *The Dhammapada* uses for self-training is that of 'conquering.' Instead of meaning violent conquest however, the Buddha advocates 'self-conquest' as in the chapter *Thousands*:

> One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield. Be victorious over yourself and not over others. When you attain victory over yourself, not even the gods can turn it into defeat. (p. 135)

A similar verse is in the chapter *self* (Sk: *Ātman*): 'Your own self is your master; who else could be? With yourself well controlled, you gain a master very hard to find' (p. 157). This self-conquering or self-mastery in *The Dhammapada* is a metaphor for self-training; conquering oneself involves bringing the passions, the mind and body under control as a conqueror would an external foe, which is something that Buddhists are best placed to do. Though Marcus does not use the same language of conquest, the same element is clearly there in his talk of self-training and such a description could equally be applied to any of the Hellenistic schools, including Stoicism, due to the emphasis on conquering the passions via the use of reason and moderation.

One final point of comparison between the self-training in both the *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada* is their teachings on anger. As we saw in the previous section, in *Meditations*,

Marcus seemed to have some issues with anger and tried to train himself to keep his emotions in check via Stoic teaching. Buddhism teaches a similar view on anger to Stoicism. As Peter J Vernezze (2008, p. 2) writes when comparing both with the more lenient Aristotelian view of anger: 'By contrast, according to what I will call the alternative view represented by Buddhism and Stoicism, anger is always a bad thing and is to be avoided even in the most extreme circumstances'.

For Stoicism, becoming angry is a sign that a person has allowed emotions to overcome reason; they are allowing themselves to consent to negative impressions and have accepted them as harmful. In Buddhist thought, anger is also a passion and should therefore be avoided because it results in us remaining trapped within *saṃsāra* and our unenlightened view of the world. Equally, demonstrating anger towards other people is the opposite of compassion, a key Buddhist virtue, and if left unchecked, could eventually result in violence, which as seen above, is something else condemned within the Buddhist tradition. Controlling the passion of anger is simply another aspect of the reorientation of the person towards a higher state of being. Again, shows the need for the poetic, as such phrases that caution against anger in both texts could readily be deployed to assist someone in real-life situations where anger would arise.

This stance is reflected in the text itself; the reader is reminded of the need to avoid anger in several places. In the first book, for example, the Buddha tells the reader to let go of grudges, and in the process, anger: 'He was angry with me, he attacked me, he defeated me, he robbed me' – those who dwell on such thoughts will never be free from hatred. As stated, there is a chapter specifically titled *Anger* (Pl: *dosa*) and in this chapter, the Buddha is more explicit about the need to control the emotion when it arises and in a subsequent verse, says that anger is one of the emotions one needs to 'conquer':

> Those who hold back rising anger like a rolling chariot are real charioteers. Others merely hold the reins."
>
> Conquer anger through gentleness, unkindness through kindness, greed through generosity and falsehood by truth. Be truthful; do not yield to anger. Give freely, even if you have but little. The gods will bless you (Both p. 188)

Thus, we can see that ethics and self-transformation through self-training was as important in Buddhism as it is in Stoicism. This can be seen in the number of ethical imperatives and calls to train oneself to adhere to them throughout both texts. *The Dhammapada* assumes that a Buddhist is not a perfect person, and that there is a need to train oneself in Buddhist doctrines until they become part of the person's character. The exact same assumption was made by Marcus Aurelius about himself. The fact that both texts contain content that is so similar in nature supports the assertion that *The Dhammapada* was a Buddhist version of *hypomnemata.* Constant reading and re-reading of these ethical verses would serve as a means of training, of embedding them in a person's consciousness just as the constant writing of Stoic ideas aimed towards the same goal.

From the verses that have been examined then, it can be concluded that both the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and *The Dhammapada* are both examples of the spiritual exercise of *hypomnemata.* Both, independently, sought the exact same goal, that through constant writing and reading, the ideas of Stoicism and Buddhism would become part of person's daily conduct and would be 'ready to hand' to address various situations. This comparison creates further opportunity for more intellectual understanding between diverse philosophical traditions in the sense that it provides further proof that there are more similarities between these traditions than may appear at first glance.

Meditations and The Dhammapada as Examples of the Poetic

As we saw in Chapter III, the poetic is a unique way of using language that is constituted by the primary characteristics of vividness, memorability. Throughout the current chapter, it has

been argued that both *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada* were texts that acted as transmitters and guides, of and for, the Stoic or Buddhist philosophical life, respectively. Through the spiritual exercise of *hypomnemata*, as outlined by Pierre Hadot, the teachings of a school would stick in the adherent's mind.

Combining the insights of both the previous and current chapters, it can now be said that they are also fundamentally *poetic texts*. Indeed, for *hypomnemata* to be effective, it *must* be paired with the poetic. The verses written for *Meditations* and chosen for *The Dhammapada* have been very consciously and deliberately chosen, not only as the best to fulfil the task of assisting a philosopher, but also as verses that go beyond mere superficial lists of doctrine to truly get to the heart of the path of which they are representative.

Instead of simple, quick bullet points, the verses are purposefully written in language that summarises the doctrine or idea, but also encourages the person to adhere to it, relating it to their overall existential situation and reminding them the repetition and eventual embodiment of these doctrines will eventually lead them to liberation.

That being said, they are also written in such a way that is not overly verbose or descriptive and which allows them to still express their philosophical ideas in striking, easily digestible and quotable phrases that are also relatable. Thus, both texts are indeed alternate uses of language, and it is this language as well as their memorability and vividness that are the products of such language, which has allowed them to continue to be read in the present day.

We will now examine a few of the verses we have covered within this chapter, with a poetic eye to further support the argument made above. In the case of *The Dhammapada*, it merely reinforces the idea of the Eastern traditions as more receptive to the intermingling of philosophy and poetry. For *Meditations*, however, it shows that there has always been a

hidden tradition of, as Hadot (2011, p. 141) says 'Western philosophical poetry' present within Western philosophy, despite Plato's censorship of the poets in *Republic.*

We will begin with one of the most famous lines of *Meditations:* 'If something external is causing you distress, it's not the thing itself that's troubling you but your judgement about it, and it's within your power to erase that right now'.

Whilst maybe a little longer than some other examples of the poetic, we have seen, the verse consists of two sentences. As with all the text, it is something that Marcus is instructing himself to do. However, the memorability of the verse does not consist in its imagery, for it does not attempt to describe or 'paint a picture' of anything specific. The memorability and vividness are found in its content, namely that it describes one of the central Stoic philosophical doctrines, that of having the freedom not to consent to negative mental impressions, in an easily memorable manner.

There is also nothing 'culturally specific' within the verse, meaning that there is not really anything that a non-Roman would struggle with when the verse was translated into a different cultural or linguistic medium. This verse thus constitutes an example of the poetic, because it is a verse that is easily memorised and expresses a fundamental idea of Stoicism that is easily able to spread. Indeed, the fact that it is a poetic is why it is amongst the most famous verses of the entire text.

If we examine *The Dhammapada* in the same manner, we can see a similar poetic substrate beneath the surface of the plain text:

> Take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha and
> you will grasp the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the cause of
> suffering, the end of suffering and the Noble Eightfold path

> that takes you beyond suffering. That is your best refuge, your only refuge. When you reach it, all sorrow falls away.

This passage is quite long, but the final line could be done away with, which would only leave:

> Take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha and you will grasp the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering and the Noble Eightfold path that takes you beyond suffering.

This modified version is shorter and therefore more suited to repetition and memorialisation. Just like the verse in *Meditations*, it summarises the main points of the tradition to which it belongs, in this case, Buddhist, very well. The verse details the Buddhist path, and the *raison d'etre* of Buddhism in an easy to comprehend way that also gets to, and increases, the connection between the Buddhist path and oneself. The person is told to 'take refuge', or in other words 'trust in' the Buddha, his teaching and the wider monastic community and that doing so will take them beyond human dissatisfaction.

Content-wise, then, this verse is the same as that of *Meditations*, in that the strength of the poetic within this passage lies within the fact that the principal ideas of the school are succinctly summarised and easily repeated. However, unlike the *Meditations* verse, this text from *The Dhammapada* also possesses memorability in the vividness of its imagery. The language, even in translation, evokes strong images in the mind when read (or heard). The Buddha himself is mentioned, and as stated previously, mentally conjuring the Buddha in meditation is a Buddhist spiritual exercise (*Buddhasmrti*). Verses about The Four Nobel Truths, mentioning the dissatisfaction of human existence (Pl: *dukkha*) would also call to mind, instances of when it was experienced in life.

Marcus' open-minded view on life after death is also easily transferred to a more poetic medium, In *Meditations*, Marcus writes:

> To be afraid of death is to be afraid of either unconsciousness or a different kind of consciousness. But if death is the end of

> consciousness, you won't be conscious of anything bad either. And if you gain a different kind of consciousness, you'll be a different kind of creature, which is to say that, you'll still be alive.

Marcus is saying here that there is no need to fear death, because either of the two possibilities for life after it are not harmful. Either one no longer exists at all, in which case, they will no longer experience pain, or there is another form of conscious existence, meaning that technically, one will still be 'alive' even after death. The quote, and the views contained within it could be turned into a more easily digestible shortened version such as:

> If death ends consciousness,
>
> There will be no evil.
>
> If there is consciousness after death,
>
> One will not taste it (Own example).

Such a shortened version is similar to a practice of the Stoics' rivals, the Epicureans, who employed a similar short poem-like mantra, to summarise their doctrines. As Sellars (2020, p. 42) writes, the Epicurean method was called the *tetrapharmakos* or *The Fourfold Remedy* and took the form of a four-line poem-like statement summarising Epicurean doctrine:

> Don't fear God
>
> Don't worry about death.
>
> What's good is easy to get
>
> What's terrible is easy to endure.

Although the proposed version for Marcus only focuses on death, rather than the whole set of Stoic doctrines, it is still very much a poetic statement, and, like the one from *The Dhammapada*, it is memorable in both content and imagery. Fear of death is one of the 'passions' that ancient philosophy sought to liberate a person from - it thus features heavily within philosophical teaching. There would be strong images for a hearer of this statement, including those of what they imagine when they think of evil and dying.

However, its form makes it easy to remember, communicates the Stoic view of death, which was open-ended, well, and is easily communicable to other contexts. Although Marcus did not write the verse as a Stoic version of the Fourfold Remedy, he would have had no reason to do this. Marcus Aurelius did not imagine that anyone would ever read his *Meditations*, let alone use it to spread Stoic teachings. The main point is that, with hardly any substantial modification, Marcus' passage is easily able to be turned into a poem in itself, or at least a statement that is much more poetic.

For a final example, we can look at the topic of philosophical self-training as covered above, and one passage of *The Dhammapada*:

> One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield. Be victorious over yourself and not over others. When you attain victory over yourself, not even the gods can turn it into defeat.

Although it would not take too much effort to remember this, again it could be shortened to just the first sentence: 'One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand men on the battlefield'. Again, both content and imagery work together to imbue the poetic within this statement. In ancient India where, as in much of the ancient world, wars and conflict were commonplace, the image of a conqueror would have been easily imaginable, but what would be especially striking, would be the reversal of that image. The conqueror is turned from one who values material, external conquests, to one who exercises that same energy on themselves internally in a peaceful manner. What is more, the Buddha claims that a peaceful conqueror is *greater* than a violent one. Thus, there is not only a strong image, but striking content. The one line is brief but powerful and again, would be easily transferrable to a variety of cultures and contexts. One could also make use of the phrase to ward off other passions such as anger, or even war itself, if in a position of power. It is thus another example of the poetic being present within *The Dhammapada*.

From analysing these verses and searching within them for the existence of what has already been characterised as the poetic, we can see that both *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada* are inherently poetic texts; they both contain within them the chief element of the poetic, memorability, and both make their respective ideas memorable for practitioners. However, as stated earlier, the poetic should not just be a prominent feature of the texts themselves but is also what allows the idea of a philosophical life to endure and spread further geographically. Many of the chosen verses in both texts are easily translatable into different contexts outside of Rome or India, and this has been proven by the fact that the texts continue to be read today in languages, cultures and societies totally different from those in which they were written. Buddhism could not have spread to the nations of Central Asian and the Far East, were documents like *The Dhammapada* not relevant to, and did not speak to, the general human condition. Marcus Aurelius' personal writings would not still be being read in the twenty-first century, if they were viewed as an anachronism that did not fit into the modern world. Both texts can thus be read as examples of the poetic, and both demonstrate that Plato, again, was incorrect; not only has there existed an obscure tradition of the poetic within Western philosophy, philosophy and poetry can also, as demonstrated clearly in this comparative chapter, co-exist fruitfully,

Chapter V: Zen and the Art of Poetic Philosophy

In the previous chapter we examined the similarities between Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada.* We saw also how aspects of these texts can be interpreted poetically. We are now ready to take these discussions further and examine poetry that was written intentionally as poetry and how it expresses philosophy. To do this, we will focus on Japanese Zen Buddhism. The necessity for a separate chapter on Zen lies in the fact that it possesses a unique philosophical viewpoint concerning the nature of our experience of reality and makes use of the poetic as a primary vehicle for expressing these views. It demonstrates how rigorous philosophical acumen can be communicated through a poetic lens, and how this can be imbued within a philosophical way of life.

After a look at what Zen Buddhism is, as well as its main philosophical doctrines, we will examine examples of Japanese poetry, principally Haiku and *Jisei* (death poems) in translation to see how they communicate Zen Buddhist philosophy. The aim is to show that the Zen Buddhist tradition provides proof that poetry and philosophy are compatible, a view that challenges the Platonic rejection of poetry that was seen in Chapter II.

Zen as Anti-Philosophical Philosophy?

Before we go into poetry, we must briefly summarise what Zen Buddhism is and what distinguishes it from the Indian Buddhism we have focused on in previous chapters, before delving into a deeper examination of the unique philosophical views that it expounds. Zen is a school of Buddhism prominent in East Asia. The word 'Zen' is a translation of a translation in a sense. It means essentially 'meditation,' and is a Japanese word which is a translation of the Chinese word *Ch'an*, itself a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *dhyana.* To explain the geographical jump from India to East Asia, some historical context is required.

Buddhism spread out from India via the famous trade routes across Eurasia known as the Silk Roads. Missionary monks, traders, sailors, migrants, and other migrants took the faith to Central Asia and eventually East Asia. In China, Buddhism interacted with native Chinese traditions of thought such as Daoism and Confucianism. This fusion led to the development of distinctive Chinese schools of Buddhism including *Ch'an*. (See Liu Xinru 2019, pp 152-160). The 'first patriarch' of Zen is said to be Bodhidharma, who, according to legend, arrived in China in the fifth century C.E. Although Bodhidharma is regarded as the one who brought the *Ch'an* tradition to China, he is not regarded as the original 'founder.' Many Zen Buddhists see the tradition as originating with the Buddha himself in India, In the collection of koans and stories known as *The Gateless Gate*, there is a story that proports to be the 'origin' of Zen as a school:

> When Shakyamuni Buddha was at Mount Grdhrakuta, he held out a flower to his listeners. Everyone was silent. Only Mahakashyapa broke into a broad smile. The Buddha said "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvellous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa. (Sekida translation, 2005, p. 41)

Whilst *The Gateless Gate* cannot be counted as historical evidence, as such, this story and that of Bodhidharma, is used to give Zen a pedigree that goes back to India and the Buddha, which gives it legitimacy in the eyes of other schools and traditions.[34]

[34] Some scholars such as Ray Grigg (1994) and more recently, David Hinton (2020) have opined that Zen Buddhism is really a Buddhist-influenced Daoism and thus not 'really' Buddhism. It is true that translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese often used already-extant Daoist philosophical terms to make Buddhist concepts easier to understand for Chinese readers (see Smart, 1989, p. 120, Lai, 1993 p. 277 and Bose, 1996, p. 90). But that does not mean that Zen is not Buddhism. Given that China already had a sophisticated philosophical tradition before Buddhism arrived, it was inevitable that back and forth influences would occur. But, saying that the resulting hybridised tradition can only be either Daoism or Buddhism is unnecessarily essentialist, and such a strict demarcation would likely not have been recognised, either at the time or now. Both traditions have influenced each other to such an extent, that it is hard to determine where one ends and the other begins. Other scholars such as Barbara O'Brien (2019, p. 55) have also argued in favour of Zen's Buddhist pedigree.

Just like the Hadot Paradigm, Zen also seeks to fundamentally disrupt our ordinary experience, to reorient ourselves, living and acting in such a way as to bring to light our inherent Buddha-Nature. As Japanese philosopher and scholar Toshishiko Isutzu (1977, p. 4) writes, in order for Zen to achieve its required transformation, the Western-Aristotlean view of man as a 'rational animal' has to be superseded:

> The image of man peculiar to Zen Buddhism emerges exactly when such a common-sense image of man, be it pre-philosophical or philosophical, is smashed to pieces. The ordinary image of man on which our daily life is based and on which our social life is carried out, does not, according to the typically Zen conception, represent the true reality of man.

However, unlike the schools of philosophy examined so far within The Hadot Paradigm, one paradoxically unique philosophical view of Zen is, ironically, a marked distrust of philosophy. Rational discourse, logic, and conceptualisations of any kind are viewed, not as a path to truth, but as a barrier to its realisation. Toshishiko Izutsu (1977, p. x) is correct when he says that these views render Zen as 'not merely non-philosophical, it is more positively anti-philosophical.' To many, the expression 'Zen philosophy' will be a positive oxymoron. That said, the position that philosophy based on reason and logic is not a reliable, is itself a philosophical position, even though it goes against philosophy as normally conceived in Western traditions. Zen Buddhism also expounds many positive doctrines and provides answers to what Western philosophical traditions would deem the ordinary questions addressed by philosophy, including the nature of reality, the world and man's relation to it and the reliability of language.

Contrary to traditions hailing from Euro-North America, Zen Buddhism accepts the poetic, and poetry, as a valid medium of philosophical speculation and articulation. Zen gives poetry essentially the same status as prose in this regard, though poetry may be more suited to expressing Zen thought, as we will see. Lastly, the divergence of Zen philosophy from Western philosophy, rejecting (at least theoretically) the use of reason and logic, should not

deter us from engaging in the, perhaps paradoxical, pursuit of attempting to comprehend it philosophically. For, as has been stated throughout, a revitalised conception of philosophy that is suitable for a globalising world based on the insights of the Hadot Paradigm will need to move beyond solely using reason and logic as the base line for defining any coherent philosophical system as philosophical. A successful demonstration of a perfectly well-fashioned philosophical enterprise, such as Zen, existing *without* a prime focus on such a logocentric framework will assist us greatly in this endeavour.

Zen Philosophical Doctrines: Buddha-Nature, Emptiness, Pure Experience and Philosophy of Language

Buddha-Nature

The doctrine of Buddha-Nature (Sk: *buddhadhā*tu/Ch: *fóxìng*/Jp: *busshō*), last touched upon in Chapter One when Zen spiritual exercises were briefly mentioned, is essentially the inherent ability of all sentient beings to become enlightened Buddhas. Interpretations of it can vary from a metaphor for the capacity to reach enlightenment to suggestions as in the *Tathāgatagarbha sutras* that all sentient beings actually contain a sort of Buddha or Buddhistic substratum. As Paul Williams (2009, p. 105) writes, this teaching: 'appears to suggest that sentient beings are in reality in some sense deep down already, even now, fully-enlightened Buddhas, or intimately associated with such a state of enlightenment.'

When Buddhism eventually spread into China, the idea of Buddha-Nature assisted greatly in the acculturation of Buddhism into Chinese society which was in many ways very different, from India. Due to these differences, many Buddhist values immediately clashed with the hitherto dominant Confucianism, which bulked, at, for instance, the reclusive nature of Buddhist monasticism which split the family unit. The Buddha-Nature doctrine especially influenced the *Ch'an*/Zen school of Buddhism which, following earlier Confucian precedent,

used it to interpret human nature *positively*, as well as introduce a notion of social equality. As Christoph Baumer (2011, p.1) writes, for Zen:

> the nature of all living things is fundamentally good, despite the evident suffering in this world. Since every living thing carries within itself the kernel of the Buddha-Nature, it can potentially experience enlightenment (Chinese: Wu)…Chinese Buddhism emphasises the possibility and necessity of recognising and awakening one's own slumbering Buddha-Nature. By giving the Buddhist message this optimistic perspective, Chan succeeded in adapting the essentially pessimistic worldview of Indian Buddhism to Chinese thought.

The main conclusions that Zen Buddhism took from these controversies and the various interpretations of the Buddha-Nature were twofold. Firstly, humans, indeed, already possessed an enlightened nature. This 'original enlightenment' (Ch: *běnjué*/Jp: *hongaku*), however was obscured by defilements and mistaken views about reality, such as our tendency to create mental dualisms, as we will see. As Bodhidharma (2022, p. 117) the founder of *Ch'an*/Zen, wrote, '…all living things share the same true nature, which isn't apparent because it is obscured by sensation and delusion'. (Red Pine trans).

The point is then, that as we are aware that our Buddha-Nature is hidden, we need to reveal it and thus there is still room for spiritual progress by Zen's adherents. Upon attaining enlightenment also called *satori*, *kenshō* or 'pure experience', it is not only reality, but also our hitherto hidden Buddha-Nature, is revealed, as we will soon examine in more detail. The emergence of Buddha-Nature and enlightenment are synonymous, one does not occur without the other. To repeat a view again briefly outlined in Chapter I, in Hadotian terms, a philosophical conversion to Zen is best regarded as *epistrophe*, it is not so much a complete rebirth, but a reorientation or a return what was once there but is now lost, which for Zen, is our inherent Buddha-Nature. Secondly, Zen adopted the view that one could achieve enlightenment, or a form of it, instantaneously, potentially in every-day situations. This form

of awakening is called *satori* or *kenshō*, in a Westernised lexicon, it has been called 'pure experience'. All of these terms, however, refer to essentially the same thing.

Emptiness (*Śūnyatā*)

Another important doctrine that was to be highly influential to Zen Buddhism waa that of *Śūnyatā* (emptiness), referred to firstly in Chapter III. Although the same term exists in *Pāli* as *Suññatā* where it is used principally to refer to the idea of 'no-self', it was further clarified and nuanced as *Mahāyāna* developed, principally by the Indian Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 150 – c. 250 C.E), founder of the *Madhyamaka* school of thought.

In Chapter I, we looked at the principal Buddhist ideas of *anatta/anatman* (no-self): that humans lack any sense of continuing essential identity and are instead composed of five interdependent and impermanent *skandhas* and also *dependent origination (Sk: pratītyasamutpāda/Pl: paṭiccasamuppāda*): the idea that all things only exist ontologically dependent upon other things. Everything is connected by innumerable causes and conditions. Nāgārjuna's idea of *emptiness* is essentially a combination and logical extension of both ideas. If sentient beings have no inherent self-essence (*svabhāva*), and everything, including sentient beings, only exist dependently, Nāgārjuna reasoned that *everything,* not just sentient beings, must necessarily also lack such self-nature. Everything is thus characterised by an essential *emptiness*, by a lack of hard demarcation and therefore can only exist if everything else, to which it is linked by innumerable connections, also exists. As Nagarjuna himself famously declares in the verse 24: 19 of his magnum opus, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, or 'Root Verses on the Middle Way': 'There being no dharma whatsoever that is not dependently originated, it follows that there is no dharma whatsoever that is non-empty.' (Siderits and Katsura Trans,

2013, p. 278).[35] It is important to note that *Śūnyatā* does not equate to an other-worldly realm nor is it anything material that can be pointed to. Philosophically speaking, *Śūnyatā* is not actually any 'thing' at all, but the void or space between entities thar also welds them together. *Śūnyatā* thus does not betray its own logic, as it willingly concedes that even the idea of *emptiness* is itself *empty*, it lacks any substantial physical existence in and of itself.

As stated in Chapter I, when discussing the doctrines that influenced Nāgārjuna, he, like the Buddha before him, also accepted the fact that to successfully live in the world, he and other Buddhists still had to speak in ordinary terms. They had to act as if the things to which they referred did have self-nature. For instance, it was easier to refer to a chariot as a composite thing in place of referring to the separate parts of which it was made which together we designate 'chariot'. This is where the doctrine of the 'two truths' (*satyadvaya*), of which the *Madhyamaka*s became among the most notable adherents, again, comes into play. Nāgārjuna distinguished between two levels of truth, the 'conventional truth' (*saṁvṛtisatya*), how things appear on the at first glance, as composite objects with their own independent existence, which he accepted possessed a certain level of reality in order to navigate the world around them. The second level of truth is the 'ultimate truth' (*paramārthasatya*), the doctrine that everything is actually *empty* (*Śūnya*) of any such intrinsic existence, in short, they way things actually *were* behind our delusions. The doctrine of *Śūnyatā* defined by Nāgārjuna would go on to have a profound effect on the subsequent development of all future schools of Buddhism, including on Zen.

[35] The Sanskrit word 'Dharma' used up until now has meant something akin to 'teachings', normally those of the Buddha or Buddhism in general. However, Nāgārjuna uses the word differently, as Buswell Jr and Lopez Jr (2014, p. 242) write, in this context 'dharma' means something like: "a physical or mental 'factor' or fundamental 'constituent element,' or simply 'phenomenon'…the individual building blocks of our compounded existence…" Thus, Nāgārjuna's meaning is that there is nothing that exists that is not 'empty' of its own inherent self-nature (*svabhāva*)

Pure Experience

As well as inheriting doctrines, such as Buddha-Nature and *Śūnyatā* from older schools of the *Mahāyāna*, Zen Buddhism developed its own ideas too that distinguished it as a unique school among others. Arguably, the main uniquely Zen doctrine, which Izutsu (1977, p. 8) calls 'the most fundamental philosophical assertion made by Zen' has already been mentioned: the existence of, and ability to, acquire a state of enlightenment known as *satori, kenshō* or 'pure experience.'[36] Kitaro Nishida (1870 – 1945), a Japanese philosopher who was heavily influenced by Zen, in his book *An Inquiry into the Good* (1990, p. 3) mainly uses the latter term, and defines it as follows:

> To experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications. What we usually refer to as experience is adulterated with some sort of thought, so by *pure*, I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination.

As mentioned above, Zen views aspects of everyday and philosophical thinking such as verbose rational and logical analysis, even language itself to some extent, as constituting a dualistic barrier between us and reality. What the attainment of this form of enlightenment means in practice is to experience the world as it is before the onset of dualistic thinking, before a separation is established in the mind between oneself as subject and the world as object. As a result, reality will be seen, as Kitaro (1990. p. 3) says 'without the least addition of deliberative discrimination'. Again, achieving this enlightenment experience not only reveals reality as it is, but also, in the process, brings our Buddha-Nature to light, because it is our mistaken views about the world and reality that obscure it from us. The existence of Buddha-Nature is necessary to achieve *satori*, and thus become a Buddha, in the first place.

[36] All three of these terms refer to the same state of enlightenment. 'Pure experience' is not a translation of the Japanese term, but more a 'Westernised' version of it to make it more comprehensible to Western philosophers.

This is where the uniqueness of Zen's 'pure experience' lies, not only in the general distrust of dualisms, thought and language that form the background to it, but also in the view of reality gained upon its successful attainment.

Zen is often considered a branch of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, but in its own interpretation of mainstream *Mahāyāna* thinking, ratio-logical thinking not only obscures our Buddha-Nature, but also is what prevents a realisation of the true emptiness of all *dharmas* and their ontological interconnectedness, including between ourselves and the external world. Zen is also distinct from other Buddhist schools because many forms of Indian Buddhism focus on escaping *saṃsāra*, via enlightenment as quickly as possible. In the process, the escape necessarily entails a type of transcendence of the human condition as ordinarily understood, thus rejecting the world *as it is*. Other schools such as *Yogācāra*, an idealist school, denied that the physical world existed outside of the mind at all (see Bartley 2015, pp. 101-115). In contrast to these, the philosophical orientation of Zen is *materialist*, in that it regards only the way we see the world from the point of view as a subject as unreal, or at least heavily distorted due to our tendency to become lost in endless subject-object dualisms. The material world itself, though, exists and the goal of Zen, unlike previous interpretations of the Buddhist path, is not to transcend it, but to access it in its *truest* form. The mystical and the material are somewhat intertwined in Zen thought, with little distinction between them (which would constitute yet another dualism). For instance, P'ang, a Zen Buddhist layman is quoted as saying to a Chinese monk: 'My supernatural powers and marvellous activity – Drawing water and carrying firewood.' (Foster and Shoemaker, 1996, p. 65) Another story in *The Gateless Gate* (2000, p. 109) illustrates this attitude further:

> Joshu asked Nansen: 'What is the path?'
> Nansen said: 'Everyday life is the path'.
> Joshu asked: 'Can it be studied?'
> Nansen said: 'If you try to study, you will be far away from it.'

The moral of the story is that 'studying' everyday life will result in another dualistic distinction or conceptualisation, which will draw one further away from it, hence Nansen's answer. Through the attainment of its version of enlightenment, then, Zen Buddhism seeks a fundamental turn *towards*, rather than *away from*, the world, and by extension, human life itself.

Pure experience, *satori* is also where we can see the influence of the doctrine of *Śūnyatā* examined earlier. Zen asserts that upon attaining *satori* or *kenshō*, one simultaneously achieves an understanding of *Śūnyatā*, as well as of Buddha-Nature. Whilst not denying or disputing the central premise of emptiness, what is realised is not just the lack of inherent self-nature (*svabhāva*) of all things, as in Nāgārjuna, but also the emptiness that lies between all our conceptual and linguistic dualisms that we assume are inherently connected as pairs. For Zen, when we see how things 'really are', there are no real distinctions between such concepts as life and death, or even between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. We will see this interpretation of emptiness in practice when we examine *jisei* poetry below.

Both doctrines can also be linked with the idea of the 'unity of opposites' posited by Heraclitus in Chapter II, there too; the dualistic distinctions between ideas and concepts normally considered to be opposed, are dissolved, and their interdependency is realised. As Bret W Davis (2013, p. 190) writes when discussing Zen 'awakening':

> One thus awakens to the "formless self" underlying the formation of the ego, and one awakens to the emptiness of all the phenomenal forms that one encounters in the world. And these are not separate matters since, according to Zen, one also awakens to the non-duality of self and world.

In Zen's interpretation of *emptiness*, then, what is revealed is the interconnectedness that should, and upon enlightenment does, characterise our experience of this world, rather than

something beyond it. This is in complete contrast to the heavily dualistic Platonic view in which true reality is to be sought beyond concrete material existence. From a Zen standpoint, truth is found in immanence. As Byung-Chul Han (2022, p. 26) writes 'There is no gradient of being that separates emptiness from the immanence of things as they appear…the Far Eastern model of being does not involve 'transcendence' or the "wholly other".' Thus, to attain *satori* is just to achieve awareness of things as they are in their wholeness. *Śūnyatā* is thus an important part of Zen's philosophical outlook, even if not always as explicitly stated as in other schools, like the *Madhyamaka*. This demonstrates that although Zen does expound its own unique philosophical ideas and doctrines, it is not at all cut-off or segregated intellectually from the wider Buddhist tradition.

Is *Satori* Equivalent to *Nibbāna/Nirvāṇa*?

We have seen, and will see, that Zen advocates distinct philosophical positions from those of Indian Buddhism due to the intellectual influences on it from other parts of East Asia. These views also extend to the doctrine of enlightenment. We examined Zen's view of instantaneous enlightenment, known as *satori*, *kenshō* or 'pure experience' in the previous section. A question to consider is: What is the distinction, if any, between this type of enlightenment and 'full enlightenment' spoken about in other schools of Buddhism? This difference may seem entirely semantic, but as already established, *satori* is a primary doctrine of Zen and impacts its philosophy. So, its precise meaning and what it exactly refers to needs to be clarified and examined briefly. It is worth turning to other scholars to assist us in this endeavour.

As Green (2013, p.123) writes 'instead of speaking of enlightenment, *Ch'an* practitioners seek 'understanding' or *satori'*. D.T Suzuki (2022, p. 230), an important transmitter of Zen Buddhism to the West, describes Satori as follows:

> Satori may be defined as an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradiction to the analytical or logical understanding of it. Practically, it means the unfolding of a new world hitherto unperceived in the confusion of a dualistically trained mind. Or we may say that with satori our entire surroundings are viewed from quite an unexpected angle of perception.

Suzuki (2022, p. 229) continues by saying that *satori* 'is really another name for enlightenment…which is the word used by the Buddha and his Indian followers ever since his realisation under the Bodhi tree[…]' For Suzuki, it seems that *satori* and the enlightenment achieved by the Buddha are semingly identical. Other scholars, such as Chen-Chi Chang (1957, p. 339) disagree and distinguish between different 'degrees' of enlightenment. In contrast to Suzuki, Chang says that *satori* (Ch: *Wu*) is slightly different from the full enlightenment described by the word *chueh*, the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit *bodhi*: '*Wu* describes better the awakening aspect in its immediate sense, while *chueh* denotes permanent and complete enlightenment'. If we look at Zen literature, there are many Zen Masters said to have achieved *satori.* One of the most famous was Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769), regarded as having invigorated the *Rinzai* school of Zen.

According to his biography by Waddell and Waddell (1994, pp. 118-125), Hakuin had his first *satori* experience inside a temple at the toiling of a bell, but it was not seen as a complete enlightenment by senior monks. It was only after a woman struck him on the head with a stick in annoyance, that he had what could be regarded as a 'full' enlightenment. The fact that Hakuin had an 'enlightenment experience' before having a 'full and complete one' tells us that perhaps *satori* is a type of initial stage, or a glimpse, of enlightenment rather than the complete and final deliverance from suffering. The crucial point to take from this discussion is that *satori* and c*hueh* both constitute at least a form of enlightenment. As Suzuki (2022, p. 229) writes: 'There are several other phrases in Chinese designating this spiritual experience, each of which has a special connotation, showing tentatively how this phenomenon is

interpreted'. Chang (1957, p. 340) also says about the different forms of enlightenment quoted from him above: 'However, these experiences are different only in degree of profundity, not in essence or in basic principle'.

We can therefore call *satori* an enlightenment experience, which differs slightly "in profundity" from the full enlightenment, such as that experienced by the Buddha, but remains a true form of awakening all the same. In any case, all forms of enlightenment in Buddhism aim to render the individual fully awakened to reality as it is, taking us from delusion and ignorance into light and truth.

Zen and Language

Another unique aspect of the philosophy of Zen is its philosophy of language, or, better said, its 'anti-philosophy of language'. As we saw above, Zen Buddhist thinking regards even language itself as an obstacle to a true view of life. However, Zen's view of language often seems confusing or even contradictory, from a Western perspective, because on the one hand, we know that Zen regards speech and linguistic expression generally as a dualism, separating us from the 'pure experience' of reality. The American philosopher and Zen scholar, T.P Kasulis (1981, p. 55) summarises the Zen viewpoint by saying that in Zen Buddhist philosophy, 'intellectualizations, concepts, even language itself are inadequate for expressing our experience *as it is experienced.*' Although humans tend to take a realist view when discussing whether ordinary sense experience truly reflects lived reality, these distinctions for a Zen Buddhist are merely inaccurate constructs that blind us to the true nature of the world. In the *Vimalakirti Sutra,* a *Mahāyāna* text that heavily influenced Zen and East Asian Buddhism generally, the distrust of language is clearly shown:

> 'Manjusri Bodhisattva then asked Vimalakirti,
> "Now that we have all expressed our views, Would

> the Layman please tell us his? What is a bodhisattva's door of nonduality?
>
> Vimalakirti was silent and said nothing.
>
> "Manjusri Bodhisattva sighed and exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful, indeed! The absence of words and speech is the true door of nonduality!"' (Red Pine trans, 2020, p. 69)

The quotation above itself constitutes a counter argument of language truly to convey our to the supposed impossibility of language to convey our thoughts. Zen has produced a voluminous number of texts in the form of koans, poetry, treatises and more that in total reaches many thousands. If Zen teaches that language takes us away from a true view of base reality, why does it boast such a prodigious output of literary written texts, or allow itself to be influenced by texts at all? The answer, or at least a possible one, is that Zen does not completely reject language; what it does do is see and use language in a poetic manner, as a distinct employment of the poetic, designed to reorient and restructure a person's sense of self and relation to being. Other Western scholars echo this view such as Steven Heine (2013, p 350) who writes that Zen is known 'for inventing a creative new style of expression that uses language in unusual and ingenious fashion to surpass a reliance on everyday words and letters.'

A promising view of this so-called 'Zen language' has been expressed by Dale S Wright (1992) who says, following such thinkers as Heidegger and Gadamer, that despite Zen teaching the rejection of language, one cannot literally divorce themselves from the inheritance of language and culture because one experiences the world itself through an inherently linguistic medium. Instead of a wholesale rejection, also following Wittgenstein, Wright (1992, p, 126) says that Zen monks engage in a 'very unusual, precise and exclusive language game'. When the novice monk enters the Zen monastery, they are socialised into the community and learn the particular language of Zen and how it works. Through this

training, they are, as Wright (1992, p. 125) continues, ‘gradually formed into the kind of self for whom Zen experience is a possibility’. Wright says that upon entering a Zen Buddhist monastery, the initiate is socially re-shaped and moulded by linguistic and social practices that are unique to the Zen tradition. In short, through Zen training, a new person is created who views the world in a different way from a non-initiate. To enter a monastery then is to willingly submit to a *refashioning of the self*.

As Wright says, then, although it preaches the negative philosophical aspects and consequences of language, Zen is unable to reduce its dependence on the linguistic medium completely; it merely socialises its practitioners to utilise language in a different manner. We can infer that the language that Zen is against is ordinary, non-Zen language. This form of linguistic and social training turns the Zen Buddhist monastery, like the Hellenistic schools, into what American sociologist Erving Goffman (2022, p. xi) calls a ‘total institution’ a concept that we examined in the introduction. The ‘total institution’ of the monastery then formally ‘recreates’ the Buddhist novice into a new type of person, in a comparable way to the Hellenistic schools, initiating the person into the philosophical ‘language game’ as Wright says, of Zen Buddhist life and practice. One way that Zen goes about transforming the ordinary view of language is by using the poetic, which Zen has always viewed, unlike Western traditions, as a valid vehicle for the truths of its philosophy.

Outside the Scriptures? Buddhism, Zen and the Poetic

As we saw in our examination of *The Dhammapada* in the previous chapter, many Buddhist texts are more than able to be read through the lens of the poetic. Whilst Japanese Zen Buddhist poetry will be the focus going forward, we saw with Sumangalamata’s poem in Chapter I, that Buddhists making use of poetry in general to express their philosophical views is not an East Asian nor a Zen innovation. Japanese Buddhist poets were themselves adding

their own contributions to what was already a long-established practice that began in India. It is worth looking at a couple more examples of Indian Buddhist philosophical poetry to situate the Zen poems within their proper religious and philosophical context.

In the ancient collections of Buddhist poems known as the *Theragatha* and *Therigatha* or 'Songs of the Old-Time Men/Women', A monk named Anupama (2020, p. 38), reflects on the Buddhist doctrines of craving as the cause of suffering, and impermanence:

> This mind
> Fierce with desire, chases shadows
> Chases phantoms.
> It sets up its own chopping block
> I call you witch mind!
> Thief mind!
> How often does a Buddha appear?
> Don't distract me
> From the goal.
> (Schelling and Waldman trans).

A Buddhist scholar named Vidyākara (c. 1050-1130) compiled a collection of poetry known as the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*. One poet, Saṃghaśrī (1968, p. 53) writes about the need to, like the Buddha, reign in the passions, sounding similar to Greco-Roman philosophers as outlined above by Hadot:

> Love and anger both are states
> hostile to self-control.
> What then did Śiva hope to gain
> by slaying Love in anger?
> Rather may he who by forbearance
> quelled Love together with a hundred foes,
> that chief of saints, the Buddha,
> point you to your welfare (Ingalls trans).

Lastly, Buddhist philosopher, Dharmakīrti (fl. c. 6th or 7th century), wrote a love poem that takes the form of a philosophical argument against theism. Dharmakīrti (1968, p. 135) argues that a woman he was enamoured with was so beautiful, that even God could not have created her, and so does not exist:

> Had the creator once seen her, he would never have let her go,
> this gazelle-eyed beauty
> with face as golden as saffron paste.
> Again, had he closed his eyes he could never have made
> such features.
> From which we see
> that the Buddhist doctrine is best:
> that all is uncreated. (Ingalls trans).

As we can see, then, Indian Buddhists had already managed to not only combine the spheres of the literary and the sacred without any bouts of significant tension, but had also developed sophisticated strategies for arguing for their tradition through the medium of poetry itself, further showing the acceptance of philosophical poetry within an Eastern culture.

East Asia, of course, possessed many poetic styles of its own. Whilst the styles of poetry were undoubtedly different, the idea of a poem being a suitable medium for expressing Buddhist philosophical truth was inherited by Zen. The deep links between, poetry, the poetic, East Asian cultures, and Zen Buddhism, have long been recognised within Western traditions of academia. Harold E McCarthy (1951, p. 21) writes that poetry as a literary craft is appreciated differently in East Asia than in Western cultures: ‘But this much is certainly true: in the West, poetry, regardless of the heights it has reached, has never been understood and accepted as it has been understood and accepted in China and Japan.’ Zen, specifically, as a school of Buddhism native to China and matured within it as well as in neighbouring East Asian nations, is uniquely accultured to the cultures of the different East Asian nations. This includes the shared cultural reverence for poetry, Zen did not argue against the exalted status of poetry, and instead, embraced it. As Barbara O’Brien (2019, p. 86) writes ‘As Zen developed, teachers often used the language of poetry rather than of prose to express the dharma.’ Lastly, Bret W Davis (2022, p. 262) says ‘Poetry has always been highly valued as a linguistic vehicle for spiritual insight and experience in Zen’. Although the poetic nature of Zen is well known, the contradiction that occurs due to writing something with words that is supposed to be “beyond words and letters” has been acknowledged within Zen poetry itself.

Ryokan (1758 – 1831) for example writes: ‘Who says my poems are poems? They aren’t poems at all, only when you understand my poems aren’t poems, can we talk poetry’ (Hamil trans. 2007, p. 159).

Why exactly is poetry useful for expressing ‘Zen language?’ As we have seen, Zen seeks pure, direct and unmediated experience of reality, a state that is said to occur before a mental separation is established between the subject and the object of experience itself. The experience is thus pre-conceptual. The state in between the bifurcation between the experiencing subject and experienced object is what Heidegger again referred to as *the open* (*Das offene),* ‘the place of being’. As O’ Dahlstrom (2023, p. 193) says, it allows being itself to reveal itself and make itself known and felt; the state of ‘pure experience’ is a glimpse into *the open*, even if only briefly. Zen pure experience is only achieved when one journeys into the expanse opened by the poetic. The poetic can achieve this, because when one reads a poem, they are taken into *the open* in a moment of pure experience. The vividness of the poetic ensures that it is grasped intuitively, and commits itself to memory, before a mental bifurcation between subject and object, poet and poem, can occur. The poetic by its very nature poeticises, and in poeticising, it opens a path into *the open* itself and allows us to reorientate ourselves towards being itself.

Poetry therefore is suited to Zen thought because it allows one at least a glimpse of ‘pure experience’. As Yong Zhi (2013, p. 27) writes: ‘The leap from the conventional system of words to a poetic insight corresponds to the leap from ordinary experiences to enlightenment, from the disclosed to the new disclosure.’ Eventually, when the images have settled down within the mind and their meaning has become clear, the bifurcation occurs, but for a second as the poem is read, the individual experiences its images in all their complete concreteness

just as they are described: this is a type of Zen experience. As O' Brien (2019, p. 86) says above, poetry 'presents reality more directly'.

Finding Zen in Words and Letters: Haiku, Jisei and the Path Ahead

Now that we have analysed Zen Buddhist philosophy, and the positive links between it, thw poetic and poetry, we are ready to move onto an analysis of poetry itself. Japanese poetry, like other poetic traditions, is comprised of many different poetic styles and forms. Since to cover them all is beyond the scope of this thesis, two styles in particular will be focused on: haiku and *jisei*, also known as death poetry.[37] Throughout our analysis, we will seek to discover how Zen philosophy is expressed through these forms of poetry and so increase support for the argument against Plato's assertion that poetry and philosophy are, with brief exceptions, incompatible.

After a brief exploration of both poetic forms and how they link to Zen, we will examine a selection of haiku written by three Japanese Buddhist poets. This examination will involve my own interpretations as well as input from scholars where appropriate. The same process will be repeated for the analysis of the *jisei*. Whilst different haiku express different things, the overarching interpretation advocated here, will be that they allow a reader to access what is referred to above in Zen philosophy as *satori* or 'pure experience'. Other Zen concepts are sometimes included within them too, they will also be mentioned, but as secondary to *pure* experience. The *jisei* (Death poems) will come next and will be split into several Zen philosophical themes that are present throughout the selection.

Section One: Haiku and Zen

[37] Although 'haiku' is a Japanese word, it has more or less entered the English language and so I have chosen not to italicise it as a non-English term. The same cannot be said for *jisei,* however, hence the italicisation.

Haiku are short poems normally composed of three lines in a five-seven-five syllable format totalling seventeen syllables for each poem. Some famous Western poems can be quite verbose and lengthy (such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divina Commedia*). In contrast, haiku are meant to capture a single temporal moment, but, such brevity can disguise much depth and meaning.[38] As William J. Higginson and Penny Harter (2013, p. 6) write, haiku give us the clarity to view things in a new way 'letting an object or event touch us, and then sharing it with another.'

The writing of haiku has become an increasingly popular activity in the West, especially from the mid-20th century onwards. Nevertheless, there is controversy amongst some poets over whether it is possible to write 'true' haiku in English, or in languages other than Japanese. Martin Lucas (2007, p.5), for example, opines that we are unable to write an authentic haiku poem in English:

> Haiku is not *haiku*. Our 'haiku' are not *haiku*. *Haiku* – here identified by italics – is a very short form of Japanese verse. It would not be quite true to say that it can only be written by a Japanese, but it can only be written in Japanese, and it would require the same level of fluency in Japanese culture, history and literary tradition as in language.

This view needs to be taken into consideration; it could be conceded that English-language haiku are merely an *interpretation* of the form. Often, this is in fact the case, because the composition of English words is sometimes unsuited for the 5-7-5 format seen in traditional Japanese haiku. The legitimacy of such haiku does not affect our aims here, as Zen philosophical influence can still clearly be seen, even in translated *haiku*.

[38] Lucas (2007, p. 6) disputes that we can even apply the English term "lines" to haiku saying: We might naively imagine the poetry of all languages to be structured in lines, but it isn't so; the concept of lines has limited validity in describing the structure of a *haiku*." He applies a similar analysis to such words as 'syllables' and 'cutting word' (Jp: *Kireji*). However, for the sake of convenience, these English terms will continue to be used throughout this chapter.

As demonstrated above, Buddhist ideas and the medium of poetry have long been viewed as compatible since its origins in India. When the tradition spread to East Asia, this perception was not seriously contested, and poets began to merge Buddhist insights with their own poetic and literary traditions. For instance, Hiroaki Sato (2018, p. 26) writes about the Buddhist monk and poet, Fujiwara no Shunzei and one of his works written in medieval Japan: 'In it, he argued that poetry could be an opportunity to lead oneself to the Way of Buddha because it revealed profound truths.' That poetry was used as a means of expressing and spreading the ideas of general forms of (mainly Mahāyāna) Buddhism is clear. But can we say the same if the focus is moved to Zen specifically?

In one sense, they can be seen as separate. Anyone can write or read haiku without ever having studied or had any affiliation with Zen. But it is also true that haiku as a poetic is very much suited to expressing specifically Zen Buddhist philosophy, uniquely so.

The Zen Buddhist idea that haiku expresses as a form, is that of *satori*, *kenshō* or pure experience. To reiterate, Zen Buddhism argues that our linguistic and conceptual dualisms separate us from experiencing the world as it is. Upon a first reading, due to the brevity and the vividness of haiku poetry, the poem is often imprinted in a reader's mind before they have really had a chance to intellectualise about its meaning. In this split second, a form of *unification* (*henosis*) is achieved between the words of a poem and the reader. All poetry is to an extent capable of this, but in haiku, again due to its size, the ability is more pronounced. This unified thought process is however briefly, overcoming dualistic thinking, and is thus a glimpse of what Zen refers to as *satori*. Haiku are therefore inherently poetic, not only in their being poetry, but also in the experience that they invoke. Speaking in Stoic terms, haiku could be said to give an 'impression' to the mind, and in the moment before one is able to judge that impression, *satori* is briefly achieved. As D.T Suzuki (2010, p. 240) writes:

> First of all, we must know that a haiku does not express ideas, but that it puts forward images reflecting intuitions. These images are not figurative representations made use of by the

> poetic mind, but they directly point to original intuitions, indeed, they are intuitions themselves. When the latter are attained, the images become transparent and are immediate expressions of the experience.

From Suzuki's quotation, it seems that he believes that haiku are linked with Zen as he says that they express the 'intuitions' of Zen. Other scholars have been more explicit in this regard and have opined that haiku can and does express philosophical ideas and insights. John Stevens (1980, pp. 24-25) speaking of Santōka Taneda, a poet we will study later, says that for him haiku '… [was written Zen, spontaneous, sharp, clear, simple, direct'. R.H Blyth (1898-1964), a notable scholar of Japanese culture, in the first volume of his four-volume set of Haiku translations (2021, p. v) goes as far as to say that haiku is a 'form of Zen'. He writes in the preface 'If we say then that haiku is a form of Zen, we must assert not that haiku belongs to Zen, but that Zen belongs to Haiku'. Later, Blyth (2021, p. 271) explicitly links haiku poetry with the Zen doctrine of pure experience, writing:

> Haiku is the revealing of this preaching by presenting us with the thing devoid of all our mental twisting and emotional discoloration; or rather, it shows the thing as it exists at one and the same time outside and inside the mind, perfectly subjective, ourselves undivided from the object, the object in its original unity with ourselves.

There are many different views about the compatibility of Zen Buddhism with haiku and to examine them all would be beyond our scope. From the scholarly opinions cited above, we can at least argue for a link between them. Such an argument will be made in the subsequent section.

Haiku: An analysis

As stated above, the overarching Zen Buddhist idea expressed by haiku is that of pure experience, *satori* or *kenshō*. To be clear, this is not to say that every haiku poem is intentionally expressing this doctrine. Many haiku can be read as having nothing to do with Buddhism, and many haiku poets were sometimes adherents to other Buddhist schools or

were not Buddhists at all. The point is, that due to the nature of haiku expressing a single moment 'as it is', devoid of any separation between the reader and the experience, the Zen idea of pure experience underlies haiku as a form.

To use the technical Japanese term, pure experience is the *sugata* of haiku, a term that as Steven D Carter (2019, p. 210) says, is, 'variously translated as "total effect," "configuration," "overall effect". Generally referring to the effect upon the reader of a poem taken in both thematic and aesthetic terms.' There were, though, some haiku that were written by Zen poets to specifically refer to their Zen and other Buddhist ideas, some are better examples than others, as we will now see.

In the following section, some examples of haiku with a clear Zen Buddhist influence will be analysed and interpreted. It is fitting to begin with, arguably the most famous haiku poet in Japanese history: Matsuo Bashō.[39]

Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694)

Matsuo Bashō is regarded 'probably as the greatest master of all haikai literature' (Higginson and Harter 2013, p. 11). Bashō was known for travelling around Japan with his poet-disciples. For our purposes, he was also linked intimately with Zen Buddhism. As Jane Reichhold (2013, p. 9) writes in the introduction to her translation of Bashō's haiku, although Bashō never actually took formal monastic vows, 'his poetry is infused with Buddhist ideas and ideals to a degree not found in the works of most other writers.' As a result of this 'infusion', of Buddhist philosophy, many of Bashō's haiku could be interpreted as being

[39] All of Bashō's Haiku are taken from the translation by Jane Reichhold (2013). The page numbers will be given in footnotes and the full reference is in the bibliography below.

representative of Zen. To begin with, we will analyse what is not only Bashō's most well-known poem, but perhaps the most famous of all Japanese poems:

The old pond,
A frog jumps into
The sound of water.[40]

This poem has had numerous interpretations and variations over the centuries, and it is all but impossible that we will arrive at a definitive one. Given the poem's fame, it is worth studying it to a greater extent than the other poems in our selection. The poem is often regarded as being an expression of *satori* with the 'old pond' representing the unenlightened mind and the frog jumping into the water representing the shock of enlightenment. As Robert Aitken (1978, p. 4) writes in his book *A Zen Wave: Basho's Haiku and Zen:* 'For a poet such as Basho, an evening beside a mossy pond evoked the ancient. Basho presents his own mind as this timeless, endless pond, serene and potent – a condition familiar to mature Zen students.'

D.T Suzuki (2019, p. 241) gives his own Zen interpretation of Bashō's haiku saying that the poet has gone beyond conscious thought in its composition, which is worth quoting at length:

> But Basho the poet is not living there as we are, he has passed through the outer crust of consciousness away down into its deepest recesses, into a realm of the unthinkable, into the Unconscious, which is even beyond the unconscious generally conceived by the psychologists. Basho's old pond lies on the other side of eternity, where timeless time is. It is so "old "indeed, that there is nothing more ancient. No scale of consciousness can measure it. It is whence all things come, it is the source of this world of particulars, yet in itself it shows no particularization.

Geoffrey Wilkinson (2018/2019, p. 32) agrees with Suzuki's reading and indirectly links it with *Śūnyatā*: 'The frog, the pond, the poet, the whole universe itself, are all dissolved in that one sound and united in the undifferentiated nothingness…' Although other interpretations

[40] Reichhold (2013, p. 59), poem 152

differ, a case can be made that Bashō's Pond haiku is a representation of Zen philosophy, and more specifically of *satori*. When first reading the poem, without context, it does not seem to have much to do with Zen, even though upon further inspection, these connections become clearer. Despite the Zen effect on the reader, the literary connections with it may not always be viewable at first glance.

The next haiku of Bashō's that we will study is also able to be interpreted as referring to *satori*.

Fading temple bell,
The fragrance of flowers strikes
At evening.[41]

Taken at face value, Bashō has clearly heard the bell of a temple ringing at the same time as he has smelt some flowers in the evening. Like the previous poem however, there is a more philosophical interpretation available. The literal interpretation is, of course, true, in a sense. However, Bashō describes not the bell as 'striking', but the fragrance of the flowers instead which he writes are "striking at evening". For Bashō, these two events of the bell sound fading away and the flowery smell have become intertwined and interconnected.

The flowers have replaced the bell, and their scent is so strong, that it is almost hitting the tranquillity of evening. Sound and smell have converted into a single sense, at least for a moment. The moment in question is one of pure experience. All separation between Bashō, the bell and flowers have broken down and thus Bashō is experiencing these things as simultaneous whole, free of any conceptual demarcation.

One last haiku of Bashō's seems to refer to another Zen idea, the distrust of language:

When saying something,
My lips are cold

[41] Reichhold (2013, p. 111) Poem 398

Autumn wind.[42]

As said, this haiku appears to be expressing the Zen view to not trust the ability of words to convey truth. As T.P Kasulis (1985, p. 28) writes about this poem:

> In this haiku, he expresses the Zen qualms about putting things into words. There is no argument or justification: only the expression of a feeling, a sense of loss. If we listen carefully to the silence between the second and third lines, we hear the beckoning whisper of nothingness.

One might retort that this interpretation presents a contradiction. Bashō is distrusting words whilst writing a poem to communicate this insight. However, this objection does not necessarily completely derail the interpretation. The poem could be read, not as signifying a *total* distrust in words, but a *partial* one, and advocating a form of linguistic minimalism, rather than a complete divorce from words. As Bashō says, "when saying something" which implies that he does not completely disregard words because within the context of the poem, he is allowing himself to "say something". If Bashō completely rejected the ability of words to express anything, he would not be writing this in a poem, but he would also not be writing about linguistic expression within that poem.

The next line "my lips are cold", suggests that the speech, whatever it is, is chilling Bashō's lips. The point here, is not those words are to be completely thrown away, but that there is always something left out when words are uttered. As we have seen in Zen, linguistic expression forms a barrier to truth and words can never express the whole. In this poem, Bashō is allowing himself to say something, showing that speech to an extent, is acceptable, but the fact that it chills his lips, a negative effect, is Bashō's way of saying that words can never show us the whole of our experience 'as it is'.

[42] Reichhold (2013, p. 123) Poem 469

We can see then that Bashō is an example of a haiku poet who expressed Zen philosophy through his poetry. These haiku of Bashō's do not mention the word 'Zen' at all, and yet they can be interpreted as completely in line with Zen Buddhist thought. This fact shows that haiku does not have to be overtly and obviously philosophical, to be considered and counted as philosophical. It can remain poetry and tune into philosophy via imagery and wordplay, both do not have to be twisted and distorted into something that they are not.

Santōka Taneda (1882-1940)

We move onwards a few centuries from the time of Bashō with our next haiku poet. Santōka led a wandering, nomadic life that was similar to Bashō's. Unlike Bashō, however, in 1925, he became an ordained Zen Buddhist priest. (Oyama/Wilson, 2021, pp. 15-16). However, poetically, Santōka departed from Basho in an important respect. Whilst Bashō used and popularised the 5-7-5 seventeen syllable form, Santōka did not follow this schema and instead wrote 'free verse' haiku, disregarding the traditional poetic form. This difference does not make Santōka's poetry any less haiku than Bashō's, though. As we will see, Santōka also used his haiku to express Zen philosophy. In fact, as we saw above in the quote by John Stevens, Santōka believed that *satori* was integral to haiku. We can see this view further if we look at his own writings. Towards the end of his life in his diary (Oyama/Wilson. 2021, p. 308) he writes:

> I thought about the character of haiku:…the union of self and other – fusion of subject and object…totality and the individual – to grasp eternity by means of the moment. Then to express oneself using the totality and the individual. To express totality through the individual.

The first of Santōka's haiku we will examine was written when he was spending time in self-reflection in a Buddhist temple for a few days:

The unending sound of water,
To me

The Buddha.[43]

Here, Santōka is listening to water falling and compares it metaphorically to the Buddha. As he was in a Buddhist temple when he wrote this haiku, it seems that he is expressing an experience of *satori* in that, he, the sound of water, and the idea of the Buddha have all melded into one, no longer bound by linguistic separation. The water is 'the Buddha' in the sense that it is the Buddha's teaching that has allowed Sanōtka to have such an experience. This could also be expressing the view that even water itself has Buddha-Nature, a similar view to that held by Kobayashi Issa, as we will see in the next section.

Another of Santōka's poems seems to be an experience, as well as an expression, of the Zen rejection of dualisms, as well as of *satori*.

Within life and death
Snow falls ceaselessly.[44]

It appears that the poem is describing again, a relatively ordinary experience, that of being in heavy snowfall. The philosophical significance, though, lies in the fact that Santōka mentions that snow is falling within life *and death*. Zen, as we have seen, distrusts dualistic separation, conceptual and linguistic. It views such dualisms as an obstruction to our viewing reality as it is, as well as our Buddha-Nature. In saying that snow is falling within the realms of both life and death, Santōka is demonstrating his rejection of such dualisms, choosing to view life and death as intertwined. His experience of them both as one seamless reality, could also be taken as an experience of *satori* in itself. In this poem, the *emptiness* of all concepts has been exposed, even that of, and between, life and its opposite.

We will now examine a third and final poem of Santōka's.

[43] Taken from The Life and Zen Haiku Poetry of Santoka Taneda (2021) by Sumita Oyama and William Scott Wilson p. 213 – Full reference is in the bibliography below.
[44] Taken from Mountain Tasting: Zen Haiku by Santōka Taneda (Stevens trans, p. 42). Full reference in bibliography.

The thistles –
Bright and fresh,
Just after the morning rain.[45]

Santōka appears to have had his eye caught by some thistles in this haiku. Again, literally interpreted, there seems nothing particularly 'Zen-like' about this poem, Santōka is just mentioning what some thistles look like after a morning's rain. However, given what we already know. it can be interpreted in a 'Zen way' too. Like Bashō's poem about the flowers and temple bell, the brightness and freshness of the thistles, and most likely the smell have all united into one for Santōka. He is thus experiencing a moment of 'pure experience' or *satori* without linguistic conceptualisation. Whilst the language of the poem may seem plain in English, the translator John Stevens (1980, p. 55) writes: 'The assonance and beauty of this poem in Japanese is impossible to reproduce in English', implying that Santōka's experience of the thistles went much deeper than simply describing what he could see.

Santōka, like Bashō, used his haiku to express not only his personal experiences, but also Zen philosophical doctrine. He also stated explicitly that he viewed the writing of haiku as a path towards *satori*, demonstrating the link between his haiku and Zen. Santōka did not imply that this link was in any way novel or 'tacked on' and by his time, haiku was centuries old; Santōka must have viewed haiku and Zen as always having shared this connection.

Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828)

For the analysis of our final haiku poet, we return to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to examine the poetry of Kobayashi Issa. He is also considered one of the 'masters' of haiku and as Higgonson and Harter (1985/2013, p. 16) write: 'The majority of Japanese who like

[45] Ibid p. 55

traditional haiku poetry probably know and like Issa better than any other poet'. Like Bashō and Santōka, Issa spent much of his life travelling around Japan.

Like Bashō and Santōka, Issa was also a Buddhist; however, unlike them, he was not a Zen Buddhist. Issa was an adherent of *Jōdo Shinshū* or Shin Buddhism, founded by Shinran (1173-1263). Shin Buddhism is a school of Pure Land Buddhism, which in its basic doctrine teaches that followers can achieve rebirth in the 'Pure Land' by having faith in the saving power of a celestial Buddha, Amitābha (Jp: Amida Butsu); which is necessary due to the onset of the 'degenerate age' or *mappo*. As Charles B. Jones (2021, p. 139) writes about Shinran's founding of the school:

> He came to realize more deeply than ever that the other power of Amitabha was all that he needed to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land, and other practices added nothing. Having hit "rock bottom", he resolved to entrust himself completely to the Buddha's power. As a layman in the eyes of the law, he was free to preach to anyone and everyone, that all they needed was this complete trust (Jpn: *shinjin)* upon which rebirth in the Pure Land would be assured.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a deep analysis of Shin Buddhist thought, but the fact remains that if Issa was not a Zen poet, his inclusion needs to be justified. The first part of the justification is that Issa's haiku poetry expresses Buddhist philosophy just as well as the other two poets we have studied. Since part of the purpose of this chapter is to show how poetry can express philosophy using the example of Japanese Buddhism, it would be remiss to not include Issa when his poetry supports our argument, simply because of doctrinal differences. What is more, as Zen seeks to go 'beyond' conceptualisations, it most likely wouldn't recognise a true 'separation', at least in philosophical terms, between the different schools in any case.

The second point to note is that, despite Issa not following Zen, his poetry was influenced by it, at least indirectly, as he was influenced by Bashō, who did follow Zen Buddhism. As David G Lanoue (2004, pp. 130-131) argues, Issa's school of haiku was to a large extent 'influenced by Basho'. Lastly, as mentioned above, Zen pure experience is the *sugata* (effect of the poem on the reader) underlying haiku as a form; therefore, even if Issa did not adhere to Zen Buddhism doctrinally, he is still in a way expressing 'Zen' philosophy in writing haiku.

The first of our chosen haiku can be interpreted in a Zen light, given what we already know:

Were it not for the Buddha-Law,
The dew on the leaf
Would not shine at all.[46]

Read through a Zen lens, Issa seems to be saying here that if it were not for Buddhist teachings (The Buddha-Law), he would still be thinking in terms of concepts and linguistic separation, but due to being able to reach a state beyond this, he is able to notice the dew shining on the leaf; he is able to see the world 'just as it is', even down to the tiniest details and feel at one with it. In other words, Buddhist teaching is making the dew 'shine'; if it were not for this teaching, the dew would simply not be noticed by Issa. This poem is thus an example of how Zen-like thinking can be found within his poetry, even unintentionally.

In another Haiku, Issa is having a type of religious experience:

Plum-blossoms:
My spring
Is an ecstasy.[47]

[46] Taken from R.H Blyth *A History of Haiku: Volume One* (2022) p. 359 – Full reference is in the bibliography.
[47] Taken from *Haiku* edited by Peter Washington (2003) p. 106 – Full reference is in the bibliography.

Firstly, this poem could be read in the light of Issa's already extant Shin Buddhist beliefs. As Lanoue (2008, p. 162) writes about Issa's religious view of such things as plants:

> However, the leaf, duckweed, and blossoms are not merely symbols. In the poet's view, all living things, including plants, find themselves on the same cosmic pilgrimage toward enlightenment…suggesting on a symbolic level that all living things are progressing towards an eventual enlightenment.

In a Zen philosophical reading, the 'ecstasy' Issa is experiencing due to the plum blossom could be seen as an attainment of *satori.* The feeling of the dissolving of all distinctions between himself and the plum blossoms, coupled with his Shin belief that all living things are also heading towards enlightenment, could have his induced his enlightenment experience or his 'ecstasy'. He and the plum blossoms have united on the Buddhist path and the fact that Issa refers to it as "my spring" supports this interpretation. This poem therefore could be read with a joint Shin-Zen interpretation.

For the last of Issa's poems that we will examine, it is fitting to demonstrate a poem that can be read more in line with Issa's Shin Buddhism than Zen. Doing this will prove further that haiku is also capable of expressing Shin Buddhist philosophy and therefore support the general compatibility of poetry and philosophy.

One reason that adherents of Shin Buddhism seek rebirth in the Pure Land is because they believe that enlightenment is no longer possible on the earthly plane as we are living in a "degenerate age" (Jp: *mappo).* Due to this, we are only able to achieve enlightenment in the Pure Land itself and we can only get there through faith/trust (Jp: *shinjin)* in Amitābha Buddha. As Thomas P. Kasulis (2018, p. 193) summarises Shinran's views on this topic:

> From Shrinran's vantage point, the Degenerate Age (*mappo)* is not so much a matter of gradual historical decay, but more primarily a universal characterization of the human condition. That is, it has always been the Degenerate Age and Enlightenment has always involved entrusting ourselves to Amida's vow, even when it was not formally described as such.

Issa refers to this idea frequently, such as in the following haiku:

A world of short-lived dew
And in that dew-drop –
What violent quarrels![48]

In the first and second lines of this haiku, Issa refers to the general Buddhist doctrine of impermanence (Pl: *anicca/*Sk: *anitya*/Jp: *mujō*). He refers to the world 'short-lived dew' and calls it a 'dew drop'. In the last line, he refers to the age/condition of *mappo* by drawing attention to the 'violent quarrels' that take place in the world, referencing the fact that he is living in an age of war and conflict – a degenerate age. As well as this, he could be comparing the life on earth to the 'superior' and 'truer' world of Amitābha's Pure Land. Compared to that world, this one is short-lived, a mere drop of dew, and yet despite the fleetingness of existence, humans still engage in warfare, something that will be absent upon rebirth in the Pure Land.

Therefore, it is not just Zen Buddhist philosophy that can be expressed by haiku, even though Zen philosophy arguably underlies haiku; other Buddhist ideas can be expressed within these poems too. The fact that Issa's Shin Buddhist ideas can be read into haiku just as much as Zen, show that the inclusion of philosophy within, and its applicability to, haiku is not just a one-off; other forms of Japanese Buddhism can be expressed too, further evidence of the embrace of the poetic and poetry in Asian traditions.

[48] Also taken from R.H Blyth *A History of Haiku: Volume One* (2022) p. 363

In the next section, we will seek to advance the argument further through an analysis of *jisei* (death poems), some of which are haiku. We will show how common themes, many of which include Zen ideas and philosophical/religious doctrines, are just as suited to this death poetry as they are to ordinary non-*jisei* haiku. The fact that these poems were written on the verge of death provides an opportunity for rich and detailed philosophical reflection. Before that though, we should return to the Hadot Paradigm as so far, we have spoken about Hadot little during this chapter. Given all that we have analysed about Zen, haiku and the lives of the particular haiku poets, we must ask whether there is any way that Zen Buddhist philosophy, including the writing of *haiku* can be classed as a philosophical way of life?

Zen, Haiku and Hadot: Zen as a Poetic Way of Life

Intriguingly, Hadot was evidently familiar with haiku and explicitly mentioned the form during his interviews with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson. Hadot (2011, p. 141) says:

> One can also speak of poetry, I am speaking above all of that form of Far Eastern poetry, the haiku, which seems insignificant because describes an apparently banal moment of existence – a butterfly landing on a flower, for example – but it has philosophical depth because it suggests everything he does not say – that is, all the splendour of the world.

By now, we can see that the three haiku poets we have examined did not just compose poetry as a pastime - their haiku were part of their daily lives. These poets in effect 'lived' their poetry and much like Hadot's work would remind us that philosophy in the Greco-Roman era was viewed as something one had to live and practice, Bashō, Santōka and Issa did their best to practice a poeticized philosophical way of life.

As Reichhold (2013, p. 12) says on Bashō: 'Basho clearly lived the life of a poet where his poems were the result of his way of living.' In his diary as Oyama and Wilson (2021, pp. 280/307) inform us, Santōka Taneda compared haiku to a way of living on two separate

occasions: ‘To me, living is writing haiku, writing haiku is none other than living…above and beyond *being* a haiku poet, I am someone whose walking, stopping, sitting and lying down are all thoroughly haiku.’ Lucien Stryx (1987, p. 29) writes that Issa also sought to live this poetic way of life as Bashō had done: ‘He decided - very much in imitation of Basho - to live as a poet and spent the next ten years journeying.’ All three poets took to travelling around Japan, writing haiku as they did so. In Hadotian terms, writing haiku was their ‘spiritual exercise’.

It should be remembered from the introduction, that Hadot (2011, p. 140) did admit ‘that art, poetry, literature, painting and even music, can be a spiritual exercise.’ That the writing of haiku is a spiritual exercise is supported when we remember that, for these poets, haiku was not just a secular pursuit but also formed part of their Buddhist religious and philosophical practice. If we briefly look at Zen Buddhism itself taken on its own terms, similar to its Indian cousin and Greco-Roman philosophy, Zen also sought to completely transform the individual and their way of being in the world. As Brett W Davis (2020, p. 691) writes, Zen transformation is a self-overcoming that requires not only a mastery of the self, but ultimately a so-called ‘great death’ of the ordinary ego-self.

The main source of suffering in Greco-Roman thought was, as we saw, the fact that we are controlled by our passions, anxiety and worry; we don’t see the world as it is, due to this. Through lived practice of philosophy, our reason will be able to overcome the passions, and we will be able to live free of worry. For Zen, the source of our suffering, as in general Buddhism, is attachment or craving (Pl*: taṇhā*/ Sk: *tṛ́ṣṇā*) but also stems from separation between ourselves as subject and the world, or reality, as object, the dualistic separations created by our minds. Zen seeks enlightenment in the form of *satori*, *kenshō* or pure experience, the state of experiencing reality free of conceptualisations with our ‘original

face'. For Zen, craving is caused by our consistent lack of access to the world as it is; we crave for worldliness, and *satori* provides us with a means of rectifying this issue. The overarching view of the human condition in Greco-Roman philosophy and Indian and Zen Buddhist philosophy is closely comparable.

Likewise, the Zen way of life is also poeticized, it is not only the poetry, such as haiku, but also the stories and koans such as 'The Sound of One Hand Clapping', 'Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two' and Joshu's Dog (2000, pp. 34, 95 and 105). These all also contain the primary poetic characteristics of vividness and memorability, and the unique Zen-language, which allow the idea of Zen as a philosophical way of life to endure, continue remaking its adherents, and spread. The stories particular to Zen are what partly constitutes its uniqueness as a philosophical school, a variation of Buddhism in its own right.

The poetic aspect of Zen Buddhism is seen in its adoption by the Beat poets of the 1950's United States, which included Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder. Buddhism, says Prothero (1991, p. 217) 'inspired more of them more deeply than any other'. It was adopted, as Garton-Gundling (2017, p. 200) in 'a paradox of rebellion and reconciliation', a countercultural movement against mainstream American values, but also seeking a remodelling and reconciliation of and with them. East Asian poetry, such as haiku, acted as one of the principal vehicles through which Zen Buddhism was transmitted to the Beats and both Kerouac and Synder, who studied in Japan, became fervent Buddhists. Both sought to live the Buddhist way of life in the Hadotian sense, and their new Zen values and beliefs were expressed by haiku that they wrote in English. For example, Synder (2022, p. 120):

Drinking hot sake
Toasting fish on coals
The motorcycle
Out parked in the rain

And Kerouac (2013, p. 12):

Evening coming –
The office girl
Unloosing her scarf

The (Zen) Buddhist philosophical way of life was spread through the poetic, which in this context, was contained within haiku and other Buddhist texts (Kerouac memorised various *sūtras*, see Fields 2022, p. 245). Both Synder and Kerouac, via their haiku, in describing a single moment, sought, as earlier haiku poets did, to achieve a *satori* experience and wrote as a spiritual exercise. The fact that the poetic assisted so much in Buddhism's dissemination in North America further demonstrates the poetic's key role in the endurance and spread of a philosophical way of life, even across continents. The poetic served to *de-root* Buddhism from its native India and in a process of unconcealment (*aletheia)* revealed itself the Americas, projecting itself forward into Heidegger's 'open' (*das offene)* where it could intertwine harmoniously in the United States and, through the Beats, become part of American culture.

Zen, Indian Buddhism and Greco-Roman philosophy, then, all share the status of being poeticized-philosophical ways of life. Furthermore, Zen also contains within it a cosmopolitan element that enables its adherents to act as poet-philosophers, as outlined in Chapter III, for it not only de-sites the adherent from ordinary ways of seeing, but is also inherently cosmopolitan, being made up of cultural elements from India, China, Japan and other parts of Asia.

Hadot's idea of spiritual exercises also finds a home within Zen thinking. Like with Indian Buddhism, solely intellectually understanding philosophical ideas without a lived, poetic element is not enough. In Zen, again similar thinking prevails; a purely intellectual understanding of Zen (as far as this is possible) would merely constitute another form of

conceptualisation and barrier to truth. One must train oneself to attain enlightenment via physical exercises too, such as sitting in *Zazen* or meditating on a koan, venturing beyond rational thought. Above we saw that for Bashō, Santōka and Issa, haiku was a way of life. The repeated writing of poetry became a Buddhist spiritual exercise, a Japanese *hypomnemata* and part of the Buddhist path. The fact that all three poets were wandering across Japan made the act of traveling, a Buddhist spiritual exercise too. As David G Lanoue (2004, pp. 33-34) writes in the case of Issa:

> Issa's adoption of the moniker "priest" and his use of plainly Buddhist terminology to describe his lifestyle of constant motion – west to east, "rocky crag" to "tree-shaded gorge" – suggest that, despite his playfulness and self-irony, he perceived his walk through the world as spiritual discipline , a Buddhist "way.[49]

In traveling, the three poets acted, not only as poet-philosophers, but also poetic missionaries. As they moved from place to place, through their actions, their very existences became vivid, memorable, and thus part of the poetic element that enables the philosophical way of life to spread. Through travel, they spread their ways of life and their philosophical beliefs and teachings, further afield.

Section Two: Words of Death: Zen and Death Poems (Jisei)

Now that we have examined haiku and applied our insights briefly to the Hadot Paradigm, it is time to look at *jisei* (death poems) in detail. We must first define exactly what this form of poetry is to avoid any confusion. According to Steven D. Carter (2019, p. 207) *Jisei* or *Jisei no Uta* is defined as: "Death poem. Poem written just before death in some cases, but often simply the last poem a person wrote."

[49] It should be noted that on page 16, Lanoue specifically uses the phrase "spiritual exercise" when discussing Issa's travelling: "As we will see in chapter 1, the kind of travel he describes in prose and in haiku is, in conception and practice, a spiritual exercise."

As Carter says, *jisei* or death poems are essentially a poem written on the verge of death, or as a poet's final poem. Although, as Carter says, a *jisei* can just be simply a final poem, and not necessarily reflect their death, a tradition did arise of consciously writing *jisei* specifically when one knew death was near. It is this later type that we will examine below; poems that were knowingly written shortly before death. The tradition of writing such *jisei* can also be found in China and Korea as well as Japan. It is the East Asian equivalent of the Western grave epitaph. The practice of writing death poetry is more directly linked with Zen than is haiku. As mentioned previously, although many *jisei* are haiku, a haiku can be written without having anything to do with Zen Buddhism. By contrast, a *jisei* will more or less always at least allude to Zen. As Lucien Stryk (1991, p. 33) writes:

> Jisei were thus considered of great importance, not only as personal testimonial, but as virtual koans themselves. They were pondered, lectured upon, and held to be revelatory of the deepest truths of discipline. Six hundred years after the first were composed in China, they were to take their honoured place in Japanese Zen practice.

From this, then, we can see that the writing of *jisei* is directly linked with Zen Buddhist practice, which is not surprising given the Buddhist emphasis on impermanence and transience. As earlier, common themes that are found in multiple death poems will be examined and it will be argued that they successfully express Zen Buddhist philosophy.

Jisei (Death Poetry): Common Themes

Pure Experience/*Satori*/*Kenshō*

The first Zen philosophical idea that we will examine within death poetry is, once again, the primary one of pure experience, *satori* or *kenshō*. As seen throughout the chapter, this idea is key to Zen as a philosophical school and way of life. As expected, this idea features prominently within *jisei*, both directly and metaphorically. It is intertwined with many other themes, as we will see, but there are examples in which poets speak about or refer to the idea

explicitly on its own terms. Three Zen monks in particular provide good evidence of this in their respective death poems.

The first is Enni Ben'en who died in 1280

All my life I taught Zen to the people –
Nine and seventy years.
He who sees not things as they are
Will never know Zen.[50]

The first two lines of the poem involve Enni reflecting on his long life of teaching Zen and seem to imply a weariness of tiredness, as he explicitly refers to his old age. The last two lines, however, show that Enni is meditating upon *satori*. He says that if one does not attain that view of reality 'as it is', in its 'suchness' (*tathata*), they will never understand Zen properly as it relies on giving its adherents access to a view of the world unencumbered by concepts and other dualisms.

Musho Josho who died in 1306 touches upon the same theme:

When it comes – Just so!
When it goes – Just so!
Both coming and going occur each day.
The words I am speaking now – just so![51]

It is unclear what 'it' refers to in the poem, but given the context, that this is a death poem, conceivably 'it' means 'life'. 'Just so!' in Japanese as Hoffmann (1987, p. 109) writes is *nyoze* and 'is a cry used by the Zen master to direct his pupil's attention to "things as they are, or to indicate that the student sees things clearly'. Hoffmann supports an interpretation of the poem that indicates that Josho, at the point of death, is speaking from a viewpoint of *satori*. He seems to be undoing the conceptual separation of 'life and death' and pointing to

[50] All death poems are taken from: *Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death* edited by Yoel Hoffmann (1987). After each poem, I will put a footnote with the page number. The full reference is in the bibliography. Enni's poem is page 96
[51] p. 109

both ‘as they are’ in themselves. Hoffman (1987, p. 109) also writes that, according to sources, Josho summoned other monks and spoke this poem to them before dying (hence why he refers to speaking in the last line). Thus, it seems that he was giving them one last lesson by telling them that life and death, from this conception-less perspective, really have no separation.

A similar message occurs in the poem of Kozan Ikkyo who died in 1360:

Empty-handed I entered the world
Barefoot I leave it.
My coming, my going –
Two simple happenings
That got entangled.[52]

It seems that Kozan is also attempting to experience, or is experiencing, reality from within a state of *kenshō*, viewing the inherent *emptiness* (*Śūnyatā*) of life and death and their inherent interdependency. Like Josho’s poem, Kozan’s *jisei* also involves a theme of movement, of coming and going; this seems in both cases to be referring to impermanence, a theme that we will arrive at in more detail later on, as life is just the time between a coming and going, a gust of wind.

From these three poems, we can see that the Zen philosophical doctrine of *satori* is unsurprisingly popular in death poems, and we will see it featured within other themes as said above. The doctrine is clearly expressed in these poems and in a way that still allows the poetry to flow uninterrupted.

Blasphemy

Another theme that pervades Japanese death poetry, linked with that of humour, is that of blasphemy. That word is used, not in the manner of a judgement, but because in Zen

[52] p.107

Buddhism the Buddha and other important religious figures can sometimes be referred to and spoken about in a way that in other religious contexts would most likely be viewed as blasphemous. Death poetry is no exception to this, and three Zen monk-poets are good demonstrations of how Zen creatively uses blasphemy to, as we will see, paradoxically advance its doctrines.

The first is Guin who died in 1333:

All doctrines split asunder,
Zen teaching cast away –
Fourscore years and one.
The sky now cracks and falls,
The earth cleaves open –
In the heart of the fire
Lies a hidden spring.[53]

The death poem of Kogaku Soko who died in 1548 has similar themes and images to Guin's poem:

My final words are these:
As I fall throw all on a high mountain peak –
Lo! All creation shatters: thus, it is
That I destroy Zen doctrine.[54]

Both of these poems express images of destruction in two different ways. The first is the destruction of the Zen Buddhist sect itself. Both poets speak of 'destroying' or 'splitting asunder' Zen and its doctrines. The second manner of destruction seen in these poems is what could be termed 'natural destruction' in the manner of a natural disaster. Guin describes the sky 'cracking and falling' and the earth itself 'cleaving open'. Kogaku says that 'creation shatters'. In context, these vivid apocalyptic images could be seen as consequences for the poets having rejected Zen. Before we get to the reasons for this rejection, we should look at the third and final 'blasphemous' death poem which is arguably the most explicit of the three.

[53] pp. 97-98
[54] p. 105

The poem is by Shumpo Soki who died in 1496 at eighty-eight years of age:

My sword leans against the sky.
With its polished blade I'll behead
The Buddha and all of his saints.
Let the lightning strike where it will.[55]

In Shumpo's poem, the theme has shifted slightly when compared to the others. Whilst Guin and Kogaku speak of destroying Zen and its ideas as a sect, Shumpo here openly speaks of killing the Buddha himself, along with other religious figures. In the last line, he seems to accept that his punishment for this act of sacrilege is to be struck by lightning saying to 'let it strike'.

Even if it is accepted that these poems are metaphorical in nature, the fact still remains that such violent language and imagery directed against the founder of a religion and its teachings would be seen as incredibly offensive if applied to other traditions. It is even stranger that these poems are written by monks who claim to follow the tradition and figure that they are simultaneously claiming to destroy on their deathbeds. Why, then, do Zen Buddhists so denigrate their own beliefs?

There are two main reasons and both have roots in the Zen philosophy that we have examined earlier. The first is to reinforce Zen's inherent scepticism about the ability of language to convey truth, in that, the distrust also extends to the words and meanings expressed by 'Zen' and 'Buddhism' themselves.

In taking this route, we can also see the background influences of other *Mahāyāna* philosophical ideas on Zen such as the 'Two Truths' and *Śūnyatā*. Of course, Zen Buddhists believe in the existence of Zen Buddhism, and its superiority as a belief system. Their blasphemy is, crucially, not supposed to imply religious scepticism or unbelief. The point is

[55] p. 113

that the words ‘Zen’ and ‘Buddhism’, can, according to Zen thought itself, only ever be taken as a conventional truth. The ultimate truth, of course, is that not only are these words inadequate to express reality, but they also lack any inherent self-nature, they are merely *emptiness*. Lastly, and perhaps for Zen most importantly, declaring a separation between a Zen Buddhist and Zen, itself would only mean yet another dualism. Zen is using paradoxical critique here to reinforce its own doctrines and ideas.

The second, related, reason behind Zen’s approach, is simpler: to shock. Talk of ‘destroying’ Zen and the Buddha is, at first glance, shocking, but that is the point. For it is supposed to be so controversial, that the Zen adherent will be’ thrown’ beyond their ordinary dualistic way of thinking, and it is hoped into *satori*.

This way of doing things can be seen even more if we realise that such strategies go back to its *Ch’an* Chinese roots and can be demonstrated especially in the popular story quoted by Towler (2017, p. 69) about the ninth century Zen Master known as Linji:

> Get rid of anything that stands in the way of your cultivation. Even if you come upon the Buddha on your path do not let him distract you for a moment. If you should meet the Buddha in this way you must kill him! And if you should meet the patriarchs on your road, kill them as well. Even if you should meet with arhats (saints) on your path, kill them as well!

Whilst such a proclamation is surprising, others are even more so. For example, case 21 of *The Gateless Gate*: (Sekida trans, 2005, p. 77)

> A monk asked Ummon, “What is Buddha?”
> Ummon replied, “a stick of dried shit!”
> (*kanshiketsu*).[56]

[56] Sekida transliterates the Japanese word in his translation but makes it clear in a footnote that this is what the phrase means in English. I’ve switched around the order in writing it down to show just how shocking the statement is.

These short stories are clearly aiming for both objectives. Not only is the language here used to describe the Buddha, from insult all the way to murder, supposed to encourage one to 'kill' and rid themselves of any lingering dualism, even between themselves and the Buddha, they are both so stunning and unexpected answers, that any devout Buddhist would indeed be startled, potentially into an enlightenment experience. In these attempts, nothing is off limits as Hyers (1989b, p.55) writes:

> There has probably never been a religious movement so sweepingly iconoclastic as Zen…before true liberation can occur, all idols must be overturned or stood upside down. Anything, however holy is potentially an idol: therefore, anything is a legitimate object of laughter.

Blasphemy then, is the word that best describes the Zen approach detailed above, but perhaps it is better written as 'creative blasphemy', for it uses blasphemy to creatively, and paradoxically, defend and reinforce its own ideas and tradition, as well as a pedagogical tool to achieve its philosophical and religious goals.

Humour/Irony

Another theme prevalent within death poems is the use of humour or irony, strategies that Socrates was also fond of using in the West (see Tanner, 2017). Despite Buddhism often being seen as serious in the popular Western imagination, Zen Buddhist practice and teaching has often made use of humour and irony in its discourse. As Conrad Hyers (1989a) relates, humour was used in Zen for reasons that included forcing the mind beyond conceptual distinctions and uniting opposites that often seemed irreconcilable (see also Hyers, 1989b). We can see the same thing occurring when certain poets make use of humour or irony in writing their *jisei*. There are three main examples of this that demonstrate it well. Two concern poetry itself and one more generally views their death in a humorous manner.

Firstly, Chowa, who died in 1715, wrote the following poem:

This is one poem –

People won't dispute
The winds of winter.[57]

Chowa seems to be mocking the fact that poems are often subject to numerous interpretations after they have been written. The last line invokes a natural winter image that at first glance seems to have little to do with the rest of the poem. However, within the context of Zen thought, we could interpret this as Chowa trying to say that disputes over poems cloud the mind and prevent us from achieving enlightenment or *satori*. The last line then, is Chowa bringing himself back to the concreteness of experience before his death, in this case, becoming aware of the chilling winds. It could be said that at his death, Chowa has abandoned what he sees as pointless debates and has cleared his mind before he departs.

Toko, who died in 1795, chose to write a similar haiku to Chowa's which makes heavy use of irony. Toko chooses to mock the very concept of a death poem, but ironically chooses to do so via the writing of a death poem:

Death poems –
Are mere delusion
Death is death.[58]

Toko questions the need, and even the reality to an extent, of death poetry but does so using the very thing he criticises. It is possible that he was joking here, but he may equally have been making a serious philosophical point. Like Chowa, Toko could have viewed the distinction between death poetry and death itself as merely another human construct that prevented one from seeing death as it is. This could provide a reason as to why Toko calls death poems "mere delusion", for him, they merely add to the delusions experienced by

[57] p. 154
[58] p. 321

human beings. This view is further supported by the fact that the last line simply says, 'death is death' and no more than that; we do not need further words or concepts to disguise the fact.

Our final ironic death poem is not about poetry but about death. It is from Moriya Sen'man who died in 1838, and who, in the words of Hoffmann (1987, p. 80), 'expected an entertaining afterlife':

Bury me when I die
Beneath a wine barrel
In a tavern.
With luck
The cask will leak.[59]

The last line in Japanese 'moriyasen mosi' is, as Hoffmann (1987, p. 81), points out, a play on the poet's name as they are similar in pronunciation. Moriya Sen'an's death poem seems to be making fun of death generally. Whilst as Hoffmann says, the poem could easily be seen to express hope for a fun afterlife, if we take into consideration what Hyers (1989) said about the Zen use of humour to collapse categories and distinctions, Moriya Sen'an's words could be seen as an attempt to collapse the separation between life and death. The view is strengthened when we consider that he wants the casket of wine to leak over his dead body, implying that he will be able to enjoy the wine in the afterlife. Since he is dead, this seems implausible, but if he is indeed attempting to collapse ordinary distinctions, the poem makes more sense.

Buddha Nature

As we saw earlier in the chapter, the doctrine of Buddha-Nature is key in Zen Buddhism, its realisation is an element of *satori*. As a result, it often features heavily within Zen poetry, including *jisei*. As also mentioned above, the attainment of enlightenment and realisation of

[59] p. 80

Buddha-Nature is often described metaphorically as, for example, 'the moon shining in the darkness of night' (Carter 2019, p. 161) These metaphors are to represent how, in Zen, we already possess a type of enlightened state that is hidden by defilements and ignorance; Zen helps us to bringing such a state to light. The metaphor, being a poetic image, is suitable for poetry and poets make use of such metaphors frequently.

Reaching a true *satori* experience is shocking in nature, as it is supposed to jolt practitioners out of their ordinary ways of seeing the world. Not only will they see the world free of conceptual and linguistic dualisms but will also see their Buddha-Nature clearly. We can also see this expressed in death poems. Firstly, there is the death poem of Kinko, who died in 1860:

Within the vast and empty
Autumn night
Dawn breaks.[60]

One interpretation of this poem could be an entirely literal one: Kinko is simply describing the breaking of dawn. However, given that this is a death poem, and what we know about Zen metaphors, another, more philosophical reading could be that Kinko is describing his attainment of enlightenment, and realisation of his Buddha-Nature, before his death. 'The vast and empty autumn night' could be referring to the state of the mind before enlightenment; it is lost in ignorance and delusion symbolised by darkness. The breaking of dawn, then, is a metaphor for *satori* and a view of his Buddha-Nature. This images within the poem support this interpretation because the light of dawn is implied to 'break' through the darkness, just as *satori* breaks through ordinary dualistic perception and how Buddha-Nature 'breaks' through the delusion that disguise its existence. According to this reading, Kinko may have reached enlightenment at the very end of his life.

[60] pp. 220-221

Momen, who died in 1788 wrote a similar death poem to Kinko's, but instead uses the imagery of clouds:

Clouds breaking up
And lo – true skies:
The voice of a cicada.[61]

Unlike Kinko, Mumon's death poem does not refer either literally or metaphorically to the state of the mind pre-enlightenment. His poem does still imply an enlightenment experience, however, by referring to "clouds breaking up" which might refer to state of ignorance being overcome by the truth of enlightenment ("true skies"). The last line gives the impression that Momen's experience of *satori* was brought on by the noise the cicada insect makes, as Hakuin's was caused by a bell tolling.

Both poems use similar natural imagery, a prerequisite of a haiku, which imply truth overcoming ignorance in the form of enlightenment bursting out from beneath the defilements under which one's inherent Buddha-Nature is veiled. The Zen take on enlightenment reveals a philosophical view of human nature. For Zen, the 'true nature' of human beings is concealed underneath our ordinary, conceptual way of viewing the world. Attaining enlightenment allows our Buddha-Nature to shine forth. These poems, then, express Zen philosophy through metaphor and in doing so constitute a successful use of the poetic in philosophical terms.

Impermanence

Lastly, one more prominent theme in Japanese *jisei* is that of impermanence or transience (Pl: *anicca*/Sk: *anitya*/Jp: *mujō*). As examined in the first chapter, impermanence has been a primary doctrine of Buddhism from its beginnings in India. Given the prominence of this

[61] pp. 240-241.

idea, and the nature of human reflections on life and death, impermanence is a very fitting theme for the purposes of expressing one's final words in a death poem.

Among poets to refer to this theme was Hamei who died in 1837 and wrote:

Man's death,
A mound of gleaming bones:
a flowering and a fading.[62]

In a graphic image, Hamei describes how human beings will be a simple pile of bones after death. In the final line, he describes life and death itself metaphorically. He writes of life as "a flowering" symbolising life, here imagined as a blooming flower, signifying birth. Death, he calls "a fading" referring to how life gradually dissipates until death. The poem itself is a haiku, and so is going to be brief, as all haikus are. However, the short length of the phrase "a flowering and a fading" shows us that Hamei views life as fleeting, lasting no more than a moment - it flowers and then fades just as quickly.

Our next poet, Nandai, died in 1817, and also used a natural image to express impermanence:

Since time began,
The dead alone know peace.
Life is but melting snow.[63]

In this poem, Nandai starts with a thought on the nature of suffering (Pl: *dukkha/Sk:duḥkha*/ Jp: *ku)* Only the dead, he says, experience true peace, because being dead, they are no longer plagued by the problems of the human condition. The last line ventures into the theme of impermanence when he compares the short time living to snow melting in the sunlight. This poem really has two themes, both of which can easily be read as Buddhist in nature: Suffering and Impermanence. Nandai's poem could also be read as quite pessimistic, given that he sees life as short, and the only real peace being attained in death.

[62] p. 182
[63] p. 243.

Our final death poem that focuses on impermanence is by the poet Seishun, who died between 1660 and 1672. Like Hamei, Seishun also uses the image of a flower:

Flowers bloomed yesterday,
Today winds blow –
What but a dream…[64]

Seishun does not seem to be using a flower to directly represent life, as was Hamei but, paired with the next line, compares life and death with changes in the weather. Yesterday, he says, the weather was nice enough for flowers to bloom, today, the wind is blowing. 'Yesterday' and 'today' appear to be the words signifying 'life and death' and the speed of life is as quick as the pace at which weather changes day to day. Seishun supports this with the final line in which he compares life to a dream. Speed, and/or movement, is also indirectly referenced in this last line, as Seishun is saying that life has gone by so quickly, he is not sure if he had been dreaming.

Our analysis of all of these *jisei* shows that they can express profound Zen Buddhist philosophical themes that range from direct referencing of Zen doctrine and ideas to indirect allusions to them through metaphor. Other themes seen in *jisei* include irony and even what could be called blasphemy. The small selection shown here supports the argument that, contrary to Platonic assertions, poetry is particularly apt for rich philosophical speculation and reflection – not least at the point of death.

Conclusion

[64] p. 274

The *raison d'etre* of this chapter has been to demonstrate two things. The first was to introduce Zen Buddhist philosophy generally and show that, like Indian Buddhist thought in previous chapters, it was also lived as a poetic way of life to which the Hadot Paradigm can be successfully applied. The second objective was to show the centrality of poetry to Zen, as, as a means of putting the individual in touch with the transcendent. Poetry is a form of meditation in Zen, and as Santōka's view demonstrated, is itself a form of spiritual exercise. In doing this, the Platonic decision that philosophy and poetry are not compatible, and the reluctance to use poetry to philosophise in some Western traditions is shown to be hasty at best, and misguided or even faulty, at worse because Zen has shown that the two disciplines can cooperate more than effectively.

Since this can be done, there is no reason why Western forms of philosophy cannot be expressed through poetry too. The fact that other schools of Buddhism are also spoken about within poetry, such as in the case of Issa's Shin Buddhist thought, only adds to the point. Paired with our previous chapters on the Pre- (and Post-) Socratic poetic and aphoristic philosophy, as well as the poetic philosophy of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and *The Dhammapada*, the Platonic, and subsequent Western philosophical rejection of the poetic can no longer stand – poetry and philosophy not only exhibit striking similarities, they are extremely effective when paired together.

For the final chapter, we will now return to focus on the ideas of Pierre Hadot that we have called The Hadot Paradigm. In this chapter, an argument will be made in favour of Hadot's ideas as a method of comparative philosophy, including addressing scholarly critiques. It will be shown how we can bring the Hadot Paradigm to bear on contemporary debates

surrounding such issues as decolonising the curriculum, East-West dialogue and religion and science. It will also offer some final remarks and thoughts for future research.

Chapter VI: Defending Hadot: A Response to Critiques and Limitations

In previous chapters, we have examined Hadot's idea of ancient philosophy; that it was practiced as a way of life that aimed to attain a state of inner tranquillity via spiritual exercises to transform one's 'being in the world.' The thesis has sought to apply it to Buddhist thought in both its Indian and Zen manifestations. It has been argued that an expanded version of Hadot's thought, via a recognition of the ontologising force of poetic language, can act as a bridge between Eastern and Western traditions of philosophy, as well as aiding in the creation of a revitalised conception of philosophy that is able to fit within the overarching societal context of globalisation and decolonisation. In the final chapter, we will seek to round up all previous discussion and to argue in favour of Hadot's applicability to modern issues and debates in philosophy, religion and decolonisation. We will also address criticisms of Hadot from other well-known scholars of ancient philosophy and attempt respectfully to refute them. Lastly, we will examine possible limitations to a potential

universal application of the Hadot Paradigm. It is hoped that by the end of this chapter, Hadot's ideas will be seen as a thoroughly dynamic and modern paradigm that can be used in the twenty-first century.

Criticism of Hadot – and a Response

Whilst Hadot's work has made him a very well-known scholar, not all other specialists in ancient philosophy agree completely with his views. Hadot's critics include such eminent scholars as John Sellars, Martha Nussbaum and John M. Cooper. It is worth addressing these criticisms first, and seeing how well-supported they are, before moving on to how the Hadot Paradigm can assist us in solving other issues, including the plight of philosophy.

Sellars and Nussbaum

First, we will turn to the criticisms of Sellars and Nussbaum, as they are similar in content. Both Sellars and Nussbaum agree with Hadot that ancient philosophy was practiced as a way of life and that it included spiritual exercises. Where both are at odds with Hadot is that they believe that Hadot overemphasises the lived, practical nature of ancient philosophy and neglects its rational, dialectical side. Firstly, Sellars (2009, p. 116) thinks that Hadot classifies the entirety of philosophy as a spiritual exercise:

> Philosophy for the Stoics is not merely a series of spiritual exercises; rather these exercises serve to train the apprentice philosopher in the art of living, to translate his doctrines (*logoi)* into actions (*erga*) to transform his life (*bios)* into that of a sage. But as Epictetus emphasizes, before such exercises can begin the apprentice must first learn his doctrines and master philosophical theory. Exercises alone are not enough. In his attempt to emphasize the importance of *askesis*, Hadot has, it seems, forgotten the role of *logos*.[65]

[65] The Greek words in italics are written using the original Greek alphabet in Sellars' book, but I do not have the means to produce these letters myself. I have however, replaced the words with Sellars' own transliterations into the Latin alphabet in the glossary at the back of his book.

Nussbaum (2009, p. 353) has a similar criticism of Hadot:

> Stoicism is indeed, as Michel Foucault and other affiliated writers[66] have recently insisted, a set of techniques for the formation and shaping of the self. But what their emphasis on habits and *techniques du soi* too often obscures is the dignity of reason. Many forms of life in the ancient world purveyed *techniques du soi.* What sets philosophy apart from popular religion, dream-interpretation and astrology is its commitment to rational argument.

We must examine their criticisms honestly and not just reject them because they are criticising our intellectual framework. Sellars and Nussbaum are both authorities on ancient philosophy and their opinions should be taken seriously. It is true, for example, that Hadot (1995, pp. 82-83) writes that for the Stoics, philosophy 'did not consist in teaching an abstract theory…but rather in the art of living.' Some may say that this statement, and others like it, prove that Sellars and Nussbaum have a point. However, such a view is undermined significantly if we examine some more of Hadot's own writings on the subject. In *What is Ancient Philosophy,* Hadot (2002, pp. 2-4) explicitly states that a philosophical life and philosophical discourse are not separate:

> 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…I mean, then, that philosophical discourse must be understood from the perspective of the way of life of which it is both the expression and the means. Consequently, philosophy is above all a way of life, but one which is intimately linked to philosophical discourse.

In *The Inner Citadel,* Hadot (1998, pp. 81-82) when specifically discussing the Stoic conception of the parts of philosophy, says that the Stoics viewed the three parts – Logic, Physics and Ethics - as an organic whole when practicing Stoic teachings in daily life but treated them as separate when teaching them in a pedagogical setting – thereby confirming that teaching philosophy in a discursive way was important as was living it:

[66] In Nussbaum's own footnote at this point in the text, she makes it clear that 'affiliated writers' includes Hadot.

> In view of the preceding considerations, we are now better able to understand how the Stoics distinguished between *philosophy* and discourse *concerning* philosophy. They affirmed that logic, physics and ethics…were not in fact parts of philosophy so called, but parts of discourse concerning philosophy. The only time physics, logic and ethics appear as distinct, separate, and perhaps even successive, is within the context of the philosophical teaching discourse…Thus logic, physics and ethics are distinguishable when we talk *about* philosophy, but now when we *live* it.

From these extracts, then, we can see that Hadot did not completely reject the need for philosophy to be taught in a classroom-type setting. Indeed, he saw the teaching of philosophy, as he says, 'philosophical discourse' and the philosophical life to be linked. Although he said that theoretical study needed to be seen in the context of a lived way of life, he still admits its importance both to philosophical schools generally, and, to the Stoics in particular. Hadot did not think, as Sellars (2009, p.116) says, that the *only* thing ancient philosophy consisted of was spiritual exercises, but he may have thought that the emphasis of ancient philosophy and its goal was predicated on the consistent practice of these exercises.

Turning to Nussbaum, the above points also go against her view that Hadot's emphasis on spiritual exercises 'obscures the dignity of reason'. However, another part of her view can also be shown to be mistaken. Nussbaum writes 'What sets philosophy apart from popular religion, dream-interpretation and astrology is its commitment to rational argument.'

From what we saw of how philosophy and religion were viewed in antiquity; it does seem that she is being anachronistic here and revealing her desire to preserve unhelpful and outdated forms of Western rationalism in what she sees as a pristine form. Philosophy is set apart from 'popular religion…etc' in the *modern period* by a 'commitment to rational argument' but in antiquity, as we saw, there was no such separation. Many philosophers believed in and practiced 'popular religion' too. As Hadot (2020, pp. 253-254) noted when speaking of certain Neoplatonic philosophers in late antiquity:

> '…the Neoplatonic philosophers of Syria and Athens had a wholly different conception of the relationships between philosophy and religion. They will place beyond philosophy what they call 'hieratic': that is to say, sacred operations, the strict observance of rites and sacraments desired by the gods…These devoted pagans practice fasting with fervour, make pilgrimages to famous sanctuaries and practice sacrifices, divination and ritual baths. They are attentive to all the divine warnings, to the dreams, mysterious signs, miraculous cures, and multiple testimonies to divine benevolence. They believe in exorcisms and visions of the future in mirrors.'

Despite what Nussbaum says, then, in antiquity, philosophy was not 'set apart' from popular religion and other practices. Indeed, she is right that it contained a commitment to argumentation via the use of reason, but we have already established that Hadot accepted that too. Nussbaum's critique of Hadot is thus pushing a modern view of philosophy, which does separate itself from religion as we have seen in above discussions, back onto philosophy as it was viewed and practiced in antiquity.[67]

Cooper's Critique: Anti-Spiritual Exercises

Now we move on to Cooper's criticism which differs from that of Sellars and Nussbaum in some ways and is similar in others. It is similar in the respect that he agrees with Sellars and Nussbaum (and thus by extension, with Hadot himself) that philosophy in antiquity was practiced as a way of life. Cooper (2012, p. 19) also agrees with the other critiques of Hadot because he also sees Hadot as having disregarded the rational aspect of philosophy. He takes issue with Hadot's classification of the choice to commit oneself to a philosophical school as an 'existential option':

> One's 'option' for any one of these philosophies in particular, far reaching as the consequences might be for one's way of life, does not deserve to be called an 'existential' one. The only existential option involved is the basic commitment to being a

[67] From Meditations Book 1:17, Marcus Aurelius also seemed to have accepted the existance of the popular gods of the Roman pantheon, even as a Stoic philosopher. G.R Evans (2003, pp. xli-xlii) in his introduction to a translation of St Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (City of God) writes that despite viewing them as demons, Augustine shared the belief in spirits and 'gods' that could affect human beings with his Pagan counterparts – another example of a sophisticated philosopher, which Augustine undoubtedly was, believing in 'popular religion' in antiquity.

> philosopher, to living on the basis of philosophical reason. The choice to be an Epicurean or Stoic, for example, depends – certainty, by the standards of those philosophical movements themselves, it ought to depend – on rational arguments in favour of the fundamental principles of the philosophical school in question.

Cooper seems to be mistaken in that, like Nussbaum's, his criticism is to an extent anachronistic; for instance, he overlooks the fact that fact and value, reason and feeling, were not viewed as separate in an ancient philosophical context. However, in modern philosophy, one indeed adopts the ideas of a certain philosophical school or movement by means of rational argument. Cooper is correct, no doubt, that this was important in the ancient world as well. One would have first had to be persuaded of the truth and logical sense of the doctrines of a particular philosophical school before choosing to join it. Despite this, the choice could still be classed as an 'existential' one. In order to support this, we must first see what an 'existential choice' is. For that, we will turn to French existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre (2007, p. 23), who said that 'the first of existentialism is to make every man conscious of what he is, and to make him solely responsible for his own existence.'

Existentialism, then, which famously preached 'existence before essence' teaches that first a human exists but has the freedom of choice to create themselves and their own meaning, however they wish. Keeping this in mind, it would be wise for us to look at an extract from Hadot (2002, p.3) to understand better what exactly Cooper was criticising:

> In the first place, at least since the time of Socrates, the choice of a way of life has not been located at the end of a process of philosophical activity, like a kind of accessory of appendix. On the contrary, it stands at the beginning of a complex interrelation in critical reaction to other existential attitudes, with global vision of a certain way of living, and of seeing the world, and with voluntary decision itself. Thus, to some extent, this option determines the specific doctrine and the way this doctrine is taught. Philosophical discourse then, originates in a choice of life and an existential option – not vice versa.

In this way then, we can see that the voluntary choice to commit to a philosophical school, and therefore a way of life, could be considered an existential option. In choosing a

philosophical school in antiquity, the student was, as Sartre would say, 'choosing their meaning', choosing their 'essence'. The student was making a voluntary decision to create themselves in a certain way, depending on which school they picked. Of course, the acceptance of philosophical claims on rational grounds, as Cooper says, was important. But this alone does not cover what practicing philosophy as a 'way of life', which Cooper accepts, meant. Accepting something as a way of life can not mean simply assenting to ideas that one finds sensible. As noted earlier, most modern philosophers do this; but not many modern thinkers would claim to practice philosophy as the ancients did.

As Hadot says, accepting something, not just as an interesting teaching, but as a way of life requires a transformation of the way one views the world, of the person and how they conduct themselves. As we have seen, the Hellenistic philosophical schools engaged the whole existence of an adherent. Yes, of course, rational discussion was needed, but we can not live entirely according to reason; we are also emotional and social creatures as well as rational ones and the philosophical way of life also cultivated these aspects of the human being. Saying something is a 'way of life' as Copper does, but then saying that all it consists of is 'living on the basis of philosophical reason' is much too restrictive a definition. As we saw in our previous discussion of science interpreted as a way of life in Chapter III, all Cooper's definition covers is intellectual life, not 'life' as an organic whole on an ontological basis.

It is for this reason that Cooper's criticism is slightly anachronistic. Like Nussbaum, he is pushing a modern philosophical view onto antiquity. One could argue that Hadot is as well when he refers to existentialism, which he is, but as we have seen, there are similarities to be seen between the 'choice' taken by both the existentialists and the thinkers of antiquity. Both are choosing or creating their own meaning by adopting a certain way of life. In Hadot's use

of the term, though, it is accepted that these commonalities are only *similarities*, not a concrete example of the exact same thing in both cases, unlike Cooper's example.

This brings us to the second part of Cooper's critique of Hadot which differs completely from those of Sellars and Nussbaum. They accepted the existence of spiritual exercises but thought that Hadot was pinning too much of his arguments on them. Cooper rejects the existence of spiritual exercises as part of the philosophical life, until the later period of Imperial Rome: 'Only in late antiquity – long after the heyday of Greek philosophy, in classical and Hellenistic times (fifth to mid first centuries B.C.E) – did the way of life of philosophy begin to share the features of a religious way of life that I have just drawn attention to[…]'[68]

Cooper then claims that, due to the general culture of the late antique world at the time, as well as the battle between Neo-Platonism and Christianity for adherents; the separation that had formerly divided the philosophical and the religious life broke down. The two became intermingled and philosophers began to engage in 'nonrational practices' as Cooper refers to Hadot's 'spiritual exercises':

> The sharp separation ceased between, on the one hand, the life of philosophy as grounded in an individual's personal grasp, through fully articulated reasoning and argument, of the true reasons why a certain way of life was best, and, on the other hand, a religious life grounded in sacred texts and validated through intense feelings of conviction generated in prayer or in the sense of having a personal relationship to a higher power. Those nonrational practices that Hadot describes as "spiritual exercises" – meditation, self-exhortation, memorization, and recitation to oneself of bits of sacred texts, causing in oneself, devoted prayerful, or prayer-like 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.

[68] Cooper's definition of a 'religious way of life' on p.18 is the following: 'A mere feeling of conviction that some way of living is the right one, induced for example, through prayer or through a sense of having a personal relationship with a higher than human power, will not do. These characteristics of a religious way of life – living on the basis of a scared text or tradition, validation through an intense personal feeling – distinguish that way of life from the philosophical one.'

There are issues with both parts of Cooper's critique here. Firstly, although the Classical and Hellenistic periods were historical highpoints for philosophy, it is controversial to suggest that by late antiquity (which by implication includes the Roman period, since Cooper does not mention it alongside what he describes as the 'heyday' of philosophy), philosophy was a spent force and past its 'heyday'. If it were, Christianity would not have been able to absorb as much influence from philosophy as it did and would not have sought to portray itself as a philosophy in order to appeal to the educated populace. What is more, many of the most influential philosophers in the Western tradition, both Pagan and Christian, came from the late antique period including Origen of Alexandria (c. 185 – c. 253 C.E), Plotinus (204/5 – 270 C.E), Porphyry (c. 234 – c. 305 C.E), St Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 C.E) and Proclus (412 – 485 C.E). These thinkers would also have a major influence on subsequent traditions of Western philosophy. As Peter Brown (1971, p. 73) writes:

> The 'Hellenes' created the classical language of philosophy in the in the early Middle Ages, of which Christian, Jewish and Islamic thought, up to the twelfth century, are, but derivative vernaculars. When the humanists of the Renaissance rediscovered Plato, what caught their enthusiasm, was not the Plato of the modern classical scholar, but the living Plato of the religious thinkers of Late Antiquity.

Secondly, like Sellars and Nussbaum, Cooper is also applying an anachronistic reading of philosophy to the environment of antiquity. There was no 'separation' between a philosophical and a religious way of life – the two were intertwined. In his critique, as well as in his definition of a 'religious' life in the footnote (no. 68) above, Cooper describes a religious way of life as involving 'sacred texts and traditions' and 'a personal relationship to a higher than human power'. He claims that the emphasis on such texts and emotions serve to differentiate the religious from the philosophical life.

However, during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, there were some philosophers who fulfilled Cooper's definition of a 'religious life' and vice versa. Religious people, such as Jews and Christians, indeed lived on the basis of their sacred texts. However, Pagan philosophical schools had the same idea in many cases. The Platonists revered Plato's dialogues and subjected them to numerous interpretations just as Jews and Christians did to the *Torah* and Bible. Peter Adamson (2015, p. 159), for example, writes that for Platonists, Plato's dialogues 'were something akin to sacred texts.'[69] As Platonism evolved over time, this tendency would only increase. Gregory Shaw (2014, p. 9) writes that for fourth-century Platonists, 'Plato's dialogues had already become a kind of scripture'.

As for a sense of having 'a personal relationship with a higher than human power', the Stoics believed that they had one in the form of the divinity inherent in the universe known as 'Universal Reason', but which the Stoics routinely called 'God' or 'Zeus' in a more personal fashion. The Epicureans, another Hellenistic school, as we have seen, elevated Epicurus to almost divine status, celebrated birthdays in his honour and acted as if he were present watching their conduct; he was thought of as being beyond the merely human. Socrates was known for claiming to communicate with a personal *daimonion*, a divine spirit-like being. Diogenes Lairtius (2018, p. 78. Mensch trans.) in his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* says of Socrates 'He used to say that his daimonion warned him of future events'. Socrates (1997, p. 29. Grube trans.), admits as much in Plato's *Apology:* 'I have a divine or spiritual sign which Meletus has ridiculed in his disposition. This began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do'. This certainly sounds like a 'personal relationship with a higher than human power' that Cooper describes

[69] Although Adamson mentions 'late antiquity' here, this chapter is about the Middle Platonists, which emerged before the advent of late antiquity and before Neoplatonism proper.

as a characteristic of the religious life. Does that therefore mean that Socrates should not be classed as a philosopher?

On the other side, Cooper describes the philosophical life as 'grounded in an individual's personal grasp, through fully articulated reasoning and argument, of the true reasons why a certain way of life was best' and claims that the religious life does not do this. However, Christian philosophers in the Greco-Roman world, who were of course religious, put forward numerous rational, philosophical arguments as to why their way of living was superior to the Pagan schools. Again, to appeal to the educated populace of the Roman Empire, Christians necessarily had to defend their views using such arguments. They could not just rely on scripture, because the Bible did not address many of the philosophical issues that Christians and Pagans both sought answers to. Many Christian thinkers were also at the same philosophical level as their Pagan counterparts, as George Karamanolis (2021, pp. 11-15) writes of Christian arguments about such doctrines as the incarnation or bodily resurrection: '…Christians were also seriously concerned with showing that such doctrines are entirely reasonable…The Christians…were also capable of producing views of considerable philosophical sophistication.'

It seems, then, that even more 'religious' thinkers were also capable of using 'fully articulated reasoning and argument' in favour of their views. From the above, we can see that Cooper's bifurcation between two ways of life, one religious and one philosophical, is not only anachronistic, but also much too simplistic when applied to the philosophers of antiquity. There were philosophers, even in the periods that Cooper classifies as the 'heyday' of philosophy, including Socrates himself, who exhibited characteristics of the 'religious way

of life' such as relying on higher powers and revering sacred texts of authorities.[70] There were also undoubtedly 'religious' thinkers such as the Christians who utilised reason and argument as only those following the 'philosophical life' should. The so-called 'divide' between the philosophical life and the religious one that Cooper cites, collapses when subjected to analysis. It was also one that the people of antiquity would not have recognised as a valid distinction.

The final part of Cooper's criticism of Hadot focuses on Hadot's conception of spiritual exercises as integral to Greco-Roman philosophy. As we have seen, Cooper disagrees with this. Cooper raises a valid point in saying that spiritual exercises as described by Hadot are 'nonrational', in the sense that they are not primarily based on the use of reason. However, we return to the point made against the previous point of Cooper's criticism: namely, that people cannot be expected to accept and practice something as a 'way of life' through rational means alone. Rational acceptance, of course, must be part of it, but it cannot be the only criteria for taking on a way of life. If it were, ancient philosophers could only be claimed to have followed an intellectual way of life, not a form of living that encompassed all aspects of the human confronting their own condition. As Sharpe and Ure (2021, p. 323) write against both Cooper and Nussbaum's criticisms:

> The basic problem with this argument is that philosophers, like psychologists today, can give accounts of non-rational behaviours without these accounts themselves becoming thereby 'irrational', anymore than someone who describes badness well does not thereby speak badly…The moment one realizes that convincing people through argument to accept a course of life is not sufficient for them to do this successfully, it becomes *pre-eminently* rational to prescribe extra-rational means for them to try to transform themselves, so that over time, they do become more philosophical, not simply in their theoretical talk, but in their everyday lives…It is closer to the truth to say that by advocating regimens of spiritual exercises, these philosophers wanted to extend, not diminish, the hold of reasoned philosophical positions on our lives.

[70] Pythagoras, a philosopher of the Classical Period, also was seen as 'religious' as Charles H. Khan (2001, p. 13) writes: "In these fifth- and early fourth-century echoes, the fame of Pythagoras is that of a fabulous sage and religious teacher, who, was perhaps also a charlatan". Kahn says that Pythagoras' reputation improved as time went on, but it is still another example of a clearly 'religious' philosopher in the 'heyday of philosophy' as Cooper says.

Other parts of Cooper's critique of spiritual exercises also run into difficulties. He says, for example, that such exercises 'had, and could have at most, a secondary and very derivative function…'. However, for many philosophers, spiritual exercises were primary, not secondary to their philosophical practice. For example, we saw in Chapter IV when analysing Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* that his use of spiritual exercises namely *hypomnemata*, had much more than a 'secondary or derivative' impact on him and was something he used to instil Stoic philosophical doctrines within himself. Indeed, it was his main way of doing so as being emperor; he was not able completely to dedicate himself to philosophy. Epicurus also made *hypomnemata* central to his school's practice. As Peter Adamson (2015, pp. 24-25 writes: 'In letters to his friends and in pithy aphorisms, he encapsulated his doctrines in a way that was easy to study and memorise, and he explicitly encouraged his adherents to take advantage'.

Cooper also misconceives the general purpose of spiritual exercises. He says that the goal of spiritual exercises is to cause '[…]in oneself, devoted prayerful, or prayer-like states of consciousness, and mystical moments[…]' Indeed, some philosophers such as the Syrian Neoplatonist, Iamblichus and even Socrates himself, who, according to A.C Grayling (2019, p. 60) 'had strange habits, such as standing in a trance for entire days, lost in thought', lived in ways that were far removed from the modern rational ideal. But engaging oneself in mystical states of consciousness is not the main purpose of spiritual exercises. Cooper here seems to confuse the idea of 'spiritual exercises' in the ancient Greco-Roman world with 'spiritual exercises' in the context of medieval Christian mystics or Muslim Sufis, which did, and do, indeed attempt to achieve the states of mind and connection with the divine that Cooper describes.

Spiritual exercises as described by Hadot focused on the here and now, not on an afterlife. None of the Hellenistic schools, not even the Stoics, who were theists, attempted to provoke in themselves such prayer-like states. Spiritual exercises did aim at a state of mental tranquillity or unperturbedness, but there is no need to invoke anything supernatural here. The main purpose of spiritual exercises was to allow the philosophical doctrines that had been learned and understood rationally to become a natural part of one's practical and daily conduct. Sellars (2009, p. 121) defines a spiritual exercise as follows:

> A spiritual exercise is, then, a form of practical training directed towards the incorporation of philosophical doctrines into one's everyday habits. This habituation (*ethismos)* involves a transformation of one's character (*ethos)* which in turn transforms one's behaviour. As such, this process will enable the translation of doctrines (*logoi)* into actions (*erga).* It is the second stage of philosophical education once the study of theory has been completed. It is the means by which the philosophical apprentice completes his education in philosophy conceived as a *techne.*

To conclude our analysis of Cooper's criticism, in his direct critique of Hadot's spiritual exercises, as well as the general criticism of Hadot, Cooper makes the mistake of assuming that rational acceptance is all that is needed to embark on a philosophical way of life. More than this is needed, and spiritual exercises serve to support rational acceptance, not go against it. He also confuses spiritual exercises of Greco-Roman antiquity, and the spiritual exercises of later spiritual-mystical exercises present in the later Abrahamic religious traditions. Cooper seems to think that the spiritual exercises of Greco-Roman times have a primarily religious goal to awaken mystical states of mind, whereas in actuality, their goal was to better enable philosophical doctrines to become part of everyday living, as well as the non-supernatural goal of *ataraxia*.

All three of these critics of Hadot are learned scholars and make some interesting and valid points. However, their critiques are mistaken in the sense that they attempt to apply modern

philosophical distinctions, such as the separation between philosophy and religion to modern philosophy. Hadot does not, as they say, replace the (very real and important) rational side of philosophy entirely with the practical, 'spiritual' side, he acknowledges both aspects. As we have seen in Cooper's case, the three scholars also have mistaken conceptions of what spiritual exercises are and their criticisms of Hadot's other ideas are similarly misguided. That being said, Hadot's critics are completely within their rights to criticise his ideas, and no doubt, criticism will, and should, continue unabated, but for such critiques to be truly effective, they must take note of the rebuttals of this thesis, as other critics of Hadot will undoubtedly focus on similar aspects of his thought, as they are his most influential ideas. Now that the critics have been addressed, we are able to see how Hadot's ideas can address other issues raised by the thesis, first and foremost, the plight of philosophy itself.

Hadot and Philosophy's Practical Element

As outlined in the introduction, in our contemporary globalising world, philosophy is currently facing a crisis of legitimacy, principally due to its lack of engagement with the decolonisation agenda and the wider world, due to which it is also seen as impractical and outdated. It is time to visit again how The Hadot Paradigm can address these issues, and where it could lead philosophy in future, beginning with the so-called lack of practicality. Although it held esteem in the past, in our current era, especially in certain Western countries such as the United Kingdom and United States, philosophy is distant from most people's lives. Some people are not aware of what philosophy is, and it is often dismissed as 'useless', 'outdated' and 'impractical' amongst other stereotyping views, as we saw in the introduction with the views of Stephen Hawking and Neil Degrasse Tyson.

Such opinions are having an impact, not only on the social status of philosophy, but also on the teaching of the subject. Many university philosophy departments in the Western world are under threat of closure and some have closed already; the website dedicated to professional philosophy; *Daily Nous* (2023) has a detailed, ever-expanding page that tracks these closures. The causes of what could be termed the 'degeneration' of philosophy's status in the twenty-first century are diverse and complex.

As stated before, there are many wider societal currents and events that are impacting philosophy, including general issues to do with higher education and not all of these problems are the fault of philosophy. Many are indicative of the wider cultural *zeitgeist*, which values speed, efficiency and profit over contemplation and less easily observable results. Philosophers themselves have begun to opine about this state of affairs; Julian Baggini (2018) writes of the closures 'The crude pursuit of what is "practical", "efficient" or "useful" is threatening everything of value that isn't evidently profitable' and Byung-Chul Han (2015, p. 13) calls contemporary society *Burnout Society*, one that has lost the ability for serious contemplation in favour of what he terms a 'hyperattention', characterised by 'a rash change of focus between different tasks, sources of information and processes'. This societal context, then, is one reason for the decline in the status of philosophy. However, there are others, as we have seen, which are more directly the fault of the discipline, and of philosophers themselves. In their book *Socrates Tenured*, Robert Frodeman and Adam Briggle (2016, p. 7) set out what they think is the main problem with modern academic philosophy: its institutionalization in universities:

> "The institutionalizing of philosophy made it into a discipline that could be seriously pursued only in an academic setting. This fact represents the great unthought of contemporary philosophy. Take a simple detail: philosophy had never before had one central home. Philosophers could be found anywhere – serving as diplomats, living off sinecures, grinding lenses, even housed within a college or university. Afterward, if they were 'serious' thinkers, the expectation was that philosophers were inhabitants of the research university.

Frodeman and Briggle thus support the argument given above in their own analysis; that it is the academic confinement and lack of engagement with the wider world that has led to the decline in the reputation of philosophy. How can The Hadot Paradigm address this issue of the seeming unrelatability of philosophy in ordinary people's lives? It can help in a number of ways. As stated in the justification for the use of The Hadot Paradigm in the introduction, an increased awareness of Hadot's ideas, not just in academic contexts, but also within the public sphere too, will show that philosophy is not just idle thinking for thinking's sake. The Hadot Paradigm will show that philosophy can still have a lived, practical element with an attainable goal. The second way Hadot's ideas can address the issue is by demonstrating that the problems it sought to solve, have still not been solved. Many of the issues that Hadot claims philosophy tried to solve constitute anthropological constants that still afflict the human condition today. Arguably, we are still subject to the passions, such as anxiety and irrationality, which have only increased in intensity as time has gone on. Despite the temporal and technological gap, we are no less affected by these problems as human beings than were the people of the Greco-Roman era. As John Sellars (2022, p. 4) writes when discussing a modern application of Epicureanism:

> Epicureanism has much to teach us today. In an age rife with anxiety, it offers a path to peace of mind. In a culture of excessive material consumption, it prompts us to rethink how much we really need in order to live well. In an era of increasing social isolation, it reminds us of the value of friendship. Perhaps most importantly of all, when we are often surrounded by misinformation, it insists on the importance of unvarnished truth.

Much the same could be said about Stoicism or the other Hellenistic schools. Sellars makes a very effective point when contemplating how we can apply the teachings of ancient philosophical schools to modern problems, mostly because the problems the schools sought to address have hardly changed.

In some of their criticism, Frodeman and Briggle (2016, p. 9) sound like they wish philosophy to return to something like Hadot's conception of it, especially in their advocacy for philosophy's practical element:

> Our claim, then, can be put simply: philosophy should never have been purified. Rather than being seen as a problem, 'dirty hands' should have been understood as the native condition of philosophic thought – a subject matter that is present everywhere, often interstitial and essentially interdisciplinary in nature. Philosophy is a mangle. The philosopher's hands were never clean and were never meant to be.

Frodeson and Briggle sound very similar to Hadot in that they opine that philosophy always possessed a practical element ("dirty hands") which is the "native condition of philosophic thought". What this means is that philosophers were always supposed to involve themselves in the world, not stand aloof from it. Byung Chul-Han (2021, pp. 102-103), in an interview, says much the same about the state of academic philosophy in Germany, saying that it needs to address modern and practical issues such as the increasing digitalisation of society:

> Unfortunately, academic philosophy in Germany is increasingly moribund and lifeless. It does not seek to address the present or the social problems of the present…We need to take greater theoretical risks. Academic philosophy is too cautious for that. I wish it were more courageous and daring, 'Spirit' [*Geist*] originally meant agitation or emotion [*Ergriffenheit*]. In that sense, academic philosophy is spiritless.

In revealing the idea of a philosophical way of life aimed at the goal of *ataraxia*, Hadot demonstrates that philosophy had a practical element, almost from its conception. Its aim was assisting human beings in addressing the ills of their existential situation, not to transcend this world to another otherworldly realm. In choosing to live philosophically, a philosopher sought to ensure that life was lived in the calmest, most tranquil state of mind possible within this plane of existence.

Frodeson, Briggle and Han are correct in much of their critiques. In the past, philosophers could indeed be found in many walks of life and as practitioners of many professions. They were not always found in one specific place. Philosophy needs to be applied more effectively and transparently to contemporary issues and, at least to an extent, venture outside of the university in order to do this effectively. Whilst Han says philosophy needs to address digitalisation, Frodeman and Briggle make the case for how it can be applied to such issues as the environmental crisis and bioethical issues. However, the latter two are mistaken in their view philosophy should be de-institutionalised or that the entire existing academic apparatus of philosophy should be completely overturned. This is mainly because, although philosophers need to venture outside of the academy, it does help if philosophers, at least in a professional capacity, remain in a specific location for pedagogical purposes. The university may have negatively affected the discipline; but it has done it some good as well. Namely, it has given the discipline dedicated space in which to develop as well as a standard of academic quality. In a university, philosophers are also more conveniently able to cooperate with experts and scholars in other fields, as it has been argued, they need to do. Hadot's idea of philosophy as a way of life should indeed be taught more, but *alongside* current teaching methods, not in such a way that those methods are superseded by Hadot's ideas. A complete supersession would not just negate the positive aspects of modern philosophy but may also alienate those who do not completely agree with The Hadot Paradigm, potentially leading to the loss of many decent and committed academics.

The above ways, then, are how Hadot's conception of philosophy as a way of life can try to assist in improving the reputation of philosophy among non-philosophers, showing that it has a practical goal and demonstrating that it can address contemporary issues. Hadot's work, as we have seen, shows us that the goal of philosophy was not truth, as it is often assumed today - it was happiness, or inner tranquillity.

The pursuit of truth is undoubtedly a noble goal, and we should continue to pursue it but, the goal of happiness should be brought back into the mainstream as the second goal of the philosophical quest. Truth is invaluable but so is happiness, tranquillity and an overall peaceful mental state. The idea of attaining those states, somewhat itself an existential truth, would make philosophy much more appealing to people outside of academia as peace and happiness is something desirable to all human beings, no matter our background, especially with the rise in awareness of mental health over the last couple of decades.

Hadot and Reconceptualising a Truly Global Philosophy

Issues of practicality and relevance are not the only problems facing philosophy in the twenty-first century. As outlined in the introduction, the other is the onset of globalisation and the need for philosophy to be reconceptualised, not just to maintain relevance, but also to thrive in a world of acknowledged interconnectedness. In order to achieve this, philosophy must embrace thought from outside of the West. The framework for this expansion, again as mentioned, is the Hadot Paradigm and the idea of philosophy as a *way of life*. In the justification for the Hadot Paradigm in the introduction, we saw how the elements of the Hadot Paradigm are present in other, non-Westerm forms of Philosophy, such as Neo-Confucianism. Now, we have seen that Buddhism also fits neatly within the parameters established by the Hadot Paradigm without any necessary modification or change. We will now address in further detail how exactly Hadot's work, taking into account the insights of the previous chapters, is suited to this endeavour.

Traditionally, as we have seen throughout the thesis philosophy in the Western world, has been viewed primarily as *logocentric* in nature. The main way of practicing the philosopher's craft is through the analysis of texts either by or about philosophers. Textual analysis has indeed been an extremely important part of philosophy from antiquity to the present day and Hadot does not dispute this. However, his work reveals that this was not the *only* manner of philosophising in the world of Greco-Roman antiquity; there was another way, one that was valued just as much as, or even more than, textual analysis inside a classroom. One had to live their philosophical doctrines in a practical manner and put them into practice in day-to-day life with the purpose of transforming one's being in the world. Hadot's ideas offer such a radical reformulation and reconceptualization of philosophy, in a manner that renders it universal and more inclusive to other traditions, due to the common features that it shares with other traditions, that they have the potential to modernise philosophy and make it relevant to a globalising world.

According to Hadot, there was more of an emphasis on the actions and way of life of a philosopher as these actions expressed their philosophical doctrines and without a physical demonstration of philosophy, someone could not call themselves a philosopher. The practical, lived demonstration of one's philosophy was so important in antiquity that, as we saw earlier, it could even be shown in the style of beard of a philosopher as John Sellars (2009, pp.18-19) showed. Sellars, along with Cooper (2012) are scholars who agree with Hadot that philosophy was practiced as a way of life in antiquity.

As we have seen, the goal of ancient philosophy, according to Hadot, was the attainment of *ataraxia* (inner tranquillity) and with it, freedom from such ills as anxiety, fear, worry and other passions. The way this state was achieved, as again we saw in earlier chapters, was

through what Hadot termed *exercices spirituels* (spiritual exercises). Hadot (2002, pp. 179-180) defines them as 'voluntary personal practices intended to cause a transformation of the self'. The fact is that this aspect of philosophy, the idea of it as a practical way of life, has been overlooked within Western traditions so that the academic conception of the subject is often all that philosophy is thought to be. Hadot's ideas, of course, present a very different conception of the discipline.

There exists a lot more metaphorical ground that the Hadot Paradigm can cover. But this will not be possible if philosophy continues to be viewed as it is currently, putting the academic and scholarly aspect over the lived and practical one. In the currently dominant conception, philosophical thinkers such as the Neo-Confucians, Taoists and Sufis would be deemed non-philosophers, as would the Buddha, Socrates, Diogenes, or Confucius, as none of them wrote any texts themselves. If such a rejection is allowed to occur, it would be fundamentally unjust, as there is no genuinely decent or logically sound argument in its favour. It would also be a loss of any useful insights we could have gained form those traditions. Likewise, if we cross from the Far East to the Far West, to the Pre-Columbian Americas to look at the civilizations of the Aztecs (*Mexica*) and Maya, we do not find many institutions dedicated to philosophical speculation such as may have been found in cities such as Rome, Alexandria or Nalanda in India, for instance. However, we know from the work of such scholars as James Maffie (2015) and Alexus McLeod (2018) that both of these peoples had developed sophisticated philosophical traditions that also were not divorced from daily life. Yet, under the current philosophical orthodoxy, these traditions, as stated above, will most likely not be seen as valid forms of philosophy at all.

The Hadot Paradigm, applied equally to *all* variations of philosophy from whatever culture or location, shows that on a fundamental level, different traditions are in some sense the same.

There are differences, of course, but in the face of the wider philosophical quest to achieve happiness and address the existential questions of human existence, these differences become superficial in nature, based as they are on mere accidents of culture and geography. For example, undoubtedly there are differences between Indian and Greek forms of philosophy. Greek thought is, not unjustly, often seen as the pinnacle of Western philosophy whereas Indian philosophy, as we saw in the first chapter, is viewed sometimes as too 'religious' or 'mystical' to be philosophy. Yet, we can see from the work of such scholars as Thomas McEvilley, already encountered, that the two share many similarities and influences. Even stereotypically 'irrational' Indian philosophy shares the Greek intellectual emphasis on the notion of the abstract concept, such as 'justice', 'courage' or 'soul' on which to contemplate; all of which became subjects of Plato's dialogues. Indeed, there is such similarity between the two traditions, that we can read about what Hajime Nakamura (1964, p. 48) says is 'the Indian propensity for the abstract notion' or refer to what Jacques Gernet (1995, p. 65) calls India's 'particular propensity for abstract speculation'. This thesis has demonstrated that it is outdated to think of 'civilisational aptitude' towards philosophy being present in some cultures and not others, all nations having their own intellectual traditions. Despite the language, we can still see within this scholarship, and from the rest of the thesis, that these labels such as 'rational' and 'irrational' heedlessly applied to the intellectual thought of certain countries, civilisations or regions, often do not survive the scrutiny of comparative scholarship.

In order truly to achieve a genuinely inclusive, reconceptualised version of philosophy, one that is not only relevant to peoples' everyday lives, but also speaks to the contemporary globalising current and is able to have an authoritative impact on the direction of affairs, the Hadot Paradigm must be given wider recognition. Within that framework, the idea of philosophy as a practical way of life should be given more credence, not to completely

replace the current prevailing academic apparatus of philosophy, but to offer an alternative, one that was considered mainstream in the ancient world and one that viewed the poetic as a suitable lens through which to live a poeticised life. As the Hadot Paradigm can, and should, act as a bridge between diverse conceptions of philosophy. Asian, African, Indigenous, and other forms of philosophy must be embraced alongside Western philosophy, seen as its intellectual equal and similarities, as well as differences, should be acknowledged. Perhaps in future courses of philosophy, distinctions between 'Eastern' and 'Western' philosophy will be done away with, leaving only 'philosophy' as the discipline that is truly global in scope and which rightfully, is seen to belong to all humanity.

However, even here a note of caution should be deployed. Any embracing of philosophy from outside of 'the West' must be done carefully, considerately and properly, employing philosophers who have genuinely studied those traditions, perhaps are familiar with the relevant languages and cultures, maybe from those cultures themselves. Western academics should take care so as to ensure that they do not construct a metaphorical 'buddha statue'. What this means is, sprinkling nuggets of information about so-called 'exotic' traditions to keep philosophy in vogue and remain interesting, but underneath enjoying no genuine substance or true conviction. Although these traditions will result in a rejuvenation of philosophy, they must be embraced in and of themselves. As Sophia Rose Arjana (2020, p. 12) writes, this is one of the many negative ways in which the 'West' receives Eastern traditions, not on their own merits, but as a set of traditions and cultures that we can mix and match to cure our own cultural ills: 'In modern mysticism, the East becomes fetishized, offering a space through gratification – through practices, products and experiences – that is missing in one's normative existence.'

Venturing down this path is comparable to the statues of the Buddha that adorn many Western homes, and the shelves of garden centres. They are seen as more of an interesting ornament or 'talking point', something to transfer to us its inherent 'peacefulness', and mere products of capitalist markets, than the image of a founder of a world religion with a serious message. We must not view philosophical traditions from outside of the West, merely as a way to metaphorically 'tape over' the issues by haphazardly and carelessly throwing in a mishmash of Eastern traditions (what Arjana 2020, p. 5 calls *muddled orientalism*) as a means of making philosophy more 'appealing' - in order to quiet our critics and increase our funding – without actually striving to substantially change it.

Instead, we must embrace these traditions because we truly believe that philosophy must be reconceptualised to suit the modern world and because we know that these traditions, sophisticated and philosophically rigorous, offer new and exciting ways to tackle philosophical questions and learn to philosophise anew. Decolonising in the carefully, considered manner that is required is a serious project that will require skill, effort and ingenuity on the part of Western philosophers, but it is a project that, upon conclusion will yield a reinvigoration of the discipline.

It is not only philosophy that will be positively reinvigorated by the Hadot Paradigm, for it also has the potential to impact other issues that have been raised by this thesis, including the decline of religious beliefs in the West, revaluation of philosophy and religion, and the debate between philosophy and science. It is to these issues that we now turn.

Hadot and the Decolonisation of Religion

In the twenty-first century, philosophy and religion are thought to exist and operate in completely separate spheres. Whilst philosophy, again, is said to be based on reason, religion and theology is seen as having faith as its foundation. This separation, however, with the help

of some colonial-era stereotyping, has come to play a part in shaping Western views about philosophy from different parts of the world. One such colonial-era notion that Hadot's work can assist in refuting, is the idea that whilst the West has philosophy, the rest of the world only has religion. Any forms of sophisticated intellectual thought are thus relegated to philosophy and are denied any connection with religious thinking. The separation of philosophy and religion though is thoroughly modern in origin and comes principally from the era of the Enlightenment. The views of Peter K. J. Park's (2013, pp. 1-2) on this issue were encountered in the introduction and can now be expanded. After saying how the exclusion of African and Asian philosophy is recent, Park goes on:

> …Also beginning at that time, they segregated religion from philosophy and argued that Africans and Asians had religion, but not philosophy. Stated more simply, historians of philosophy began to exclude people they deemed too primitive and incapable of philosophy.

As we have seen throughout the thesis, the Hadot Paradigm blurs the distinction between philosophy and religion and reveals their interconnectedness, that in the antique context, people would have seen little real difference between the two. In eliminating this distinction, the Hadot Paradigm can assist is dismantling an idea rooted in colonial thinking. As well as this, a more open attitude to religion by philosophers (and vice-versa) will facilitate an exchange of ideas and concepts that may result in the enrichment of both disciplines. Throughout the thesis, we have seen that many of the philosophical schools that Hadot mentions display characteristics that would often seem stereotypically 'religious' in nature. Examples include the Stoic and (Neo-)Platonist profession of the existence of a divine creative principle and the Epicureans reverence for Epicurus himself as a type of saviour. Even Cynic asceticism could easily be compared to later Christian and Buddhist monastic practices. The language that Hadot himself uses to describe a philosophical life would also fit very well in a religious context. For example, when discussing an individual choosing which

philosophical school to join, Hadot (2002, p.3) explicitly uses the term *conversion* which carries certain religious connotations. Choosing a philosophical school, was for Hadot "an existential option" and entailed 'a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one's entire being'.

This passage makes the choice to join to a philosophical school sound very much like the choice to commit to a religious faith, the term 'conversion' is used in both cases. Indeed, if the words 'philosophical school' were replaced with the words 'religious faith' or 'church', the rest of the passage would still make sense entirely as one about a religious conversion. Such similarities are not superficial or coincidental but point to the fact that the separation between philosophy and religion that for us seems concrete and entrenched was non-existent in antiquity, and the line between what was deemed 'philosophical' or 'religious' was extremely porous. A conception of secularism where religion is seen as a private matter was not yet established in the Greco-Roman era; religion formed a part of daily life and could not neatly be cordoned off from its other aspects. Religion and philosophy were thus co-dependent as religion was intermingled with just about everything else.

Later scholarship has supported Hadot in viewing religion and philosophy as sharing an intimate link in the late antique context. George Karamanolis (2021, p. 14) writes:

> Theology was a central part of ancient philosophy…The distinction between philosophy and religion, today conceived as distinct academic disciplines, was foreign to the ancient world…This evidence shows that for philosophers in antiquity, let alone in late antiquity, there was hardly such a distinction between theology and philosophy; the former was part of the latter.

A good demonstration of this in practice is again to refer to the Neo-Platonists, the most prominent and widespread philosophical school in Late Antiquity which competed with

Christianity. Fredrik Janby et al (2019, p. 5) writes that during this time, 'any modern bifurcation between philosophy and religion was non-existent'. Like Christianity, Neo-Platonic philosophy also offered answers to profound questions about the meaning of life, death and the relationship between humans and the divine. The Christians did not see, as we maybe would today, the potential solution of allowing the Pagans to operate within a strictly demarcated "philosophical sphere" whilst leaving "the religious" to them. Instead, they viewed the Neoplatonists as *competition.*

The link between philosophy and religion is seen even more within Neoplatonism if we look at the theurgists. Iamblichus (c. 245 – c. 325 C.E) a Syrian philosopher, encountered previously, wished to reestablish what he viewed as the ancient rituals that invoked the gods, a practice known as theurgy. These rituals could involve activities that go far beyond the stereotypical Western image of a rational philosopher. As Greogry Shaw (2024, p. 7) writes:

> They practiced rituals, performed blood sacrifices, and involved gods and daimons in divinatory spells that allowed them to perform miracles. They had supernatural power. They were perceived to be divine and their theurgic rituals were designed to transform them, while mortal, into gods. Instead of adhering to out expected norms of Hellenic philosophy – the development of rational arguments and mastery of discursive exercises – these theurgist philosophers claimed that their rites transcended all thought and rational reflection.

Many moderns might dispute that Iamblichus, and his followers were 'philosophers' but their contemporaries did not. The reason that the description above clashes so much with our image of the philosopher is because we are in a world where philosophy and religion are demarcated to separate spheres of life as well as different university departments. For philosophers such as Iamblichus and the other intellectuals of Late Antiquity, however, there was no such separation. One could perform a blood sacrifice to the gods and defend their reason for doing so with a rational philosophical argument. The theurgic philosophers, more

than anything, demonstrate the lack of any separation between philosophy and theology in the Greco-Roman tradition.

Hadot, and scholars after him, thus demonstrate a fundamental flaw in the notion of a separation between philosophy and religion. Although its adherents seem to believe that it has always existed since the beginning of philosophy, Hadot and others show quite conclusively that during the Greco-Roman era, one of the most important time periods for the development of philosophy, this separation did not exist. Nor does it seem that it existed during the Medieval period; philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) Maimonides (1136-1204) and Ibn Sina (980-1037) when quoting such authors as Aristotle did not separate these quotes from their theological expositions. In fact, they used Aristotle and others as authorities to support their religious arguments. The flaw in this assumption becomes even more apparent if the split is seen as being between a *logocentric* 'philosophical' West and a *mythocentric* 'religious' East when it would render many of the most influential Western thinkers non-philosophers due to their religious convictions. It seems that, as Park writes above, the idea of a separation between philosophy and religion proper originated with the Enlightenment and was then 'read back' onto earlier eras of history in order to justify the exclusion of philosophical traditions from other cultures.[71]

Hadot and the Revaluation of Religion and Philosophy

Continuing with the theme of religion, the Hadotian conception of philosophy could also help to fill the gap left by the increasing disappearance of organised religious faith. In the twenty-

[71] The concept of 'religion' itself may be Western in origin too. As Jason Ananda Josephson shows in his book *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (2012), the Japanese had no native concept of 'religion' equivalent to the Western idea. They only had to start thinking about it when Japan was modernised/westernised during the Meji Restoration. If this is true, then the split between philosophy and religion is probably based on Western culture which makes even more unsuitable when applied on a global scale.

first century religion is becoming less influential and less persuasive for many people in certain parts of the West. In the UK, for example, in a recent study of British attitudes towards religion, David Voas and Steve Bruce (2018, pp. 2-21) write:

> Most of the shift in the religious profile of the nation has been towards non-affiliation, with 52% of the public now saying they do not regard themselves as belonging to any religion…In conclusion, our analysis shows that those claiming religious identity, practising a religion or believing are clearly diminishing, as a proportion of the British population and so, arguably, in influence.

In Spain, according to a 2020 study by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas* (2020, p. 21), 40.6 percent of people surveyed defined themselves as "Non-Practicing Catholic" and Alfonso L Congostrina (2022) in an article for the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, citing another study sums up by saying: 'In the two first years after the arrival of Covid-19 non-believers have risen from 27,7% to 37,1% of the population. In the year 2000, only 13,2% of citizens declared themselves atheists or agnostics' (my translation).[72]

Lastly, in the United States, Greogy A Smith (2021) in an article for the *Pew Research Centre* writes that self-confessing Christians in the U.S have fallen from 75% in 2011 to 63% in 2021. He also says that almost 30% of Americans now do not identify with any particular faith, or are atheists: 'Currently, about three-in-ten U.S. adults (29%) are religious "nones" – people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious identity.'

From this brief selection, we can see that traditional religions are losing adherents in some parts of the West. We have already seen how the Hadot Paradigm could allow for the creation of a truly reconceptualised, global philosophy, but that is on a grand scale. In more intimate terms, Hadot's conception of philosophy viewed as a way of life can provide an alternative to

[72] Translation of: "En los dos primeros años tras la llegada de la covid-19 los no creyentes han pasado del 27,7% al 37,1% de la población. En el año 2000 solo el 13,2% de los ciudadanos se declaraban ateos o agnósticos"

religion. To be clear in the use of the world ‘alternative’, the idea is not to suggest that philosophy is in any way ‘superior’ to religion or to make a value judgement on the decline of belief in some countries. Rather, it is to argue that philosophy as a lived practice can become another choice for people who have freely chosen not to adhere to any of the main religious traditions.

Recently, more and more people in the West have begun to try to follow the doctrines of the Hellenistic schools. Most notable in this case is the resurgence of Stoicism. During the last few years, books have been published that attempt to apply Stoicism to our own day and for non-academic audiences. These books have been written by both philosophers and non-philosophers, for example *The Daily Stoic* (2016) by Ryan Holiday has proven very popular. Massimo Pigliucci, who, as we have seen, is an academic philosopher has written *How to be a Stoic* (2017) It is possible that the philosophical doctrines of the Hellenistic Schools (except maybe Cynicism!) viewed as a way of life as Hadot says, could serve as a practical belief system that could provide people with a sense of meaning to their lives and fill the gulf left by the decline of traditional religious faiths. Like traditional religious faiths, they also attempt to answer the so-called ‘big questions’ of life and do so in a coherent manner. They could thus serve as an alternative, secular-spiritual guide to life. As Pigliucci (2017, p. 5) writes:

> …in Stoicism, I have found a rational, science-friendly philosophy that includes a metaphysics with a spiritual dimension, is explicitly open to revision, and most importantly, is eminently practical.

Some aspects of the traditional ideas of the schools may have to be changed in order to be acceptable to as many people as possible. One can hardly imagine atheists being convinced of the idea that everything is controlled by the ‘Universal Reason’ or ‘God’ of traditional Stoicism, one can follow a more secular version (as Pigliucci does himself). However, the

traditional view of the divine in Stoicism would still leave it open to people who do believe in a God outside of traditional faiths.

A modern version of one of the Hellenistic Schools as a Hadotian 'way of life' may also be able to avoid becoming another version of the more violent and intolerant minority strains of religion that have come to light in recent decades. That is not to say at all that religion automatically leads to violence; there have also been and continue to be extreme versions of secular ideologies. Nor is it to blame any particular faith – all religions have had extremist elements at some point – or to disguise the many examples of religious tolerance and cooperation prevalent throughout the centuries in all areas of the world. But the fact is, that many people, however unjustly, view religion negatively because of these violent elements (63% of the British public think that religion brings more conflict than peace, according to Voas and Bruce's study (2018, p. 16) above).

One might retort that allowing different schools of philosophy that have different, and sometimes contradictory, ideas on how to achieve the good life, to proliferate in the modern era would create similar conflicts to those between different religions. That is not necessarily the case. Whilst there was indeed rivalry between the different Hellenistic schools, the most well-known being that between the Stoics and Epicureans, it was not as fierce as that between some rival religions and inter-religious sects. Eleni Kechagia (2010, pp. 154-155) writes that there were hardly any references to the Stoics in the writings of the early Epicureans but that rivalry did increase later on when Stoic ideas became more standardised. John Sellars (2022, p.3) writes that, despite their debates against each other, they also 'shared a lot of common ground' including the goal of inner tranquillity, empiricism, and an emphasis on a lack of material possessions.

The philosophies of the Hellenistic Schools also lack the inherently universalist element present in some major faiths such as Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. Stoics, for example, would deem Epicureans 'mistaken' and vice-versa, but this would not cross into notions of heresy. As emperor, Marcus Aurelius was a Stoic, but established chairs in Athens for the other schools, as well as for Stoicism, showing an appreciation for their views (see de Blois, 2012, p. 177). There is no reason why such a pattern could not be repeated today. There is also no record of adherents of different philosophical schools ever engaging in physical violence against one another, justifying it with the words of Epictetus or Epicurus. Lastly, even if there were some intolerance between the modern variations of these schools, that does not therefore mean that it is the fault of the schools themselves, no more than religions are themselves responsible for the violence committed in their name, as every major faith cautions against violence and warfare, with some allowing it under strict conditions. It would say more about human nature than any philosophical or religious teaching if Stoic or Epicurean teachings were used for violence, given that the topic of warfare is barely alluded to in extant texts, nor in the teachings themselves. The Hadot Paradigm thus has the potential to provide an alternative to religion that can maybe avoid some problems and give people a credible notion of meaning within their lives and daily existence.

How Hadot Can Address the Debate Between Philosophy and Science

Recently, a number of scientists such as Stephen Hawking and Neil Degrasse Tyson, as we saw during the introduction, have criticised philosophy and have expressed the opinion that it is no longer needed. They say that this is the case because the natural sciences have taken the place of philosophy as the principal discipline through which we learn about the world.

Philosophers have, of course, offered responses to this including Bryan Van Norden (2017, p.1), who writes in response to Tyson that his response is 'ironic because he is a PhD, a

doctor of *philosophy*, reflecting the historical fact that natural science developed out of the field he denigrates.' Thomas P Kasulis (2018, p. 186) calls such attitudes expressed by some scientists against philosophy 'naïve scientism'.

Indeed, the scientific method is the most effective method for answering cosmological questions about the universe we inhabit, and it has indisputably achieved important advances in medicine and other fields. However, those who think philosophy can be entirely replaced by science miss the fact that the methods of science necessarily must rely on philosophical assumptions about the world in order to function at all. As Edward Feser (2008, p. 84) writes, the scientific method assumes such things as the existence of an external physical world, that our senses give us reliable sources of information about that world, that our language can adequately describe it truthfully (a claim that Zen philosophy would dispute) and other such assumptions. None of these claims can be proven using the scientific method but, again, must be assumed as true in order to *do* science. As such, there is still a need for philosophy and in questions pertaining to the existential issues of the human condition, the questions science can ask and answer, and the extent to which it can assist us in solving them – are very limited.

The Hadot Paradigm can address this debate on the side of philosophy. It is true that science can offer us a guide on how to live in the most basic sense of survival. It can tell us what food is the best to eat, how much exercise to do in order to maintain a healthy body etc. In being healthy, we will, of course, 'live' longer. However, science can not guide us in a way of life in the same way as the Hadot Paradigm can. Hadot's ideas reveal to us that philosophy is a way of life that encompasses the whole of life, not just one part of it as science does in showing us how to stay 'alive'.

For Hadot, the practice of philosophy is a way of actively fashioning oneself into a better human being. The Hellenistic schools provided people with a set of doctrines to apply to life, so much so, that they would become part of daily conduct. Science is unable to achieve this goal. A scientist can experience a sense of wonder in conducting science; they may even have their perceptions and lives completely changed by science, but science is unable to give us a tool with which to fashion ourselves in the same way that philosophy can. If science could be classed as a way of life apart from in the sense of 'living', it would only be one that affected the mind intellectually, an intellectual way of life, not one that encloses the whole being of a person in their totality, that includes the intellect, but is not limited to it.

In this way, philosophy, as interpreted by Hadot, supports the idea that philosophy is still needed, as well as science. The natural sciences can excellently answer cosmological questions, but they are limited by their very nature to addressing questions which are empirically verifiable. The questions such as 'how should I live?' that Hadot's conception of philosophy attempts to answer and the very issues that it tries to solve are not entirely solvable by science. As stated earlier, the very problems that The Hadot Paradigm aims to solve, such as anxiety, irrationality and other passions are anthropological constants that remain part of the human condition. For problems such as anxiety, science can indeed help, by medication or psychological therapy, but The Hadot Paradigm views such issues as inherently part of the human condition and thus seeks to solve them in this manner, aiming to change not just someone's psychological mindset, but their entire way of being in the world, their relationship to it, and their awareness of the sheer fact of existence.

Although there are many reasons why philosophy is still needed and valid in our scientific world, The Hadot Paradigm can provide further support to philosophy because it shows that

there are still issues beyond the grasp of science; that it can give guidance in all areas of life, not just in an intellectual sense. Lastly, it allows one to fashion oneself bodily, mentally and existentially, in a way that science cannot.

Further Anomalies for the Hadot Paradigm: Aristotle and Shinran

We can see that the Hadot Paradigm can be applied to many areas outside of philosophy and potentially have a significantly positive affect. To finish, however, we must once again address the issue of universally applying the Hadot Paradigm to philosophy and whether there will be any difficulties. There are two traditions which could be difficult to interpret using The Hadot Paradigm. One of them is the Aristotelian tradition which Hadot himself did interpret as a way of life in the same practical way as the other Hellenistic Schools. However, for many reasons, Aristotle's tradition falls short of the Hadotian conception in a way that the other schools do not. The second tradition is the Japanese school of Shin Buddhism encountered briefly in Chapter V when examining the poetry of Issa. Although The Hadot Paradigm can definitely be applied to Zen, it has more difficulty with its Shin cousin due to the differences between Shin thought and Hadot's idea of philosophy. Firstly, we will start from the West and look at how Aristotle may pose an unexpected difficulty.

Aristotle

Despite his status as one of the most important philosophers, Aristotle presents a difficulty when attempting to apply Hadot's ideas universally, though one that Hadot himself did not seem to recognise. In *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Hadot (2002, p. 82) claims that the

Aristotelian school was a lived way of life too. He acknowledges that it was slightly different from the other Hellenistic schools in the sense that it was primarily a life of the mind:

> It is thus indisputable that for Aristotle, the life of the mind consists, to a large degree, in observing, doing research and reflecting on one's observations. Yet this activity is carried out in a certain spirit, which we might go so far as to describe as an almost religious passion for reality in all its aspects, be they humble or sublime, for we find traces of the divine in all things.

Cooper (2012, p. 140), although he disagrees with a lot of Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy, as we have seen, does agree with him about the content of the Aristotelian 'way of life'. He says that contemplative philosophy is the centre of the contemplative life, the type of philosophical life that Hadot claims Aristotle's school taught, which is theorizing aimed at the truth about reality. Although Hadot and Cooper concur here in both the existence of an Aristotelian way of life as well as its aims, Aristotle's school actually represents a limitation of The Hadot Paradigm. The first reason for this view is that, as stated at other points throughout, including in the above discussions of science, a way of life that is confined only to the mind, as Aristotle's was, is not a way of life as taught by other Hellenistic schools. The philosophical way of life as Hadot envisions it is supposed to cover every aspect of life, even extending to day-to-day living. Aristotle's way of life consists mainly in intellectual endeavours and, again as above, does not cover and encompass the whole existence and being of a person, which is what a 'way of life', according to The Hadot Paradigm, should be. Of course, intellectual endeavours were part of the ways of life of the other schools too but did not limit themselves to that alone.

Another reason that Aristotle presents a difficulty in universally applying The Hadot Paradigm is the fact that neither Aristotle himself, nor it seems any later Aristotelian thinker left a concrete example of a way of living to imitate, in the way the other schools did. John Sellars (2009, p. 32) writes 'in antiquity, philosophy was often conceived as something

primarily expressed in an individual's actions (*erga)* and way of life (*bios)* rather than something restricted to written doctrines and arguments (*logoi).'* As we have seen, Sellars agrees with Hadot that philosophy was a way of life and that it entailed spiritual exercises. However, Aristotle's view of the philosophical life, even as Hadot describes it, is not expressed through actions and is restricted to written texts.

The other schools by contrast contained thinkers that expressed their philosophy through texts *and* through their actions, normally also in public. Socrates lived his philosophy even until his death; we have seen that Marcus Aurelius was admired by the populace of the Empire for actually living as a Stoic philosopher. Epicurus, even suffering in pain on his deathbed, still maintained mental tranquillity. Plotinus, the founder of Neo-Platonism, was said by his student Porphyry to have rejected having his likeness preserved in painting or sculpture, to maintain his belief that the soul was more important than the body. Porphyry (2018, p. 25, Stones et al trans.) also wrote that Plotinus '[…] never relaxed his attention to himself, or his constant reversion to intellect'. Even the founder of the Skeptic tradition, Pyrrho was said to demonstrate his attainment of *ataraxia* arising from his suspension of judgement by the way he lived. The Cynic Diogenes of Sinope is famous to this day for putting his ideas of rejecting social custom into practice.

The point is that all of the other Hellenistic schools were founded by people, or contained them in later tradition, who demonstrated their philosophical beliefs, as Sellars says, by their actions. With Aristotle's school being devoted primarily to contemplation and academic study, it would have been difficult for Aristotelian philosophers *physically* to show their philosophy (except maybe through how they dressed, such as in Sellars' earlier beard example) in the same manner as other schools. In this regard, the modern scientist is the contemporary heir to this way of life; a scientific way of life is not a philosophical way of

life, because there is no practical example of imitation that extends beyond the intellect. It is telling that Sharpe and Ure (2021), followers of Hadot, in their book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, do not mention the Aristotelian school among the Hellenistic schools they subject to examination within the same tradition as Hadot

It is for these reasons that Aristotle's school presents a problem for applying the Hadot Paradigm universally. Aristotle's view of life is confined to the intellect, not the whole person and it is difficult to show through action, as well as through intellectual study, two features that are very important to the Hadot Paradigm. None of this is to criticise the philosophy of Aristotle or his school; the sophistication of Aristotelian thought and his exalted place in philosophy is more than well-deserved. However, unfortunately, it does create an issue for a full and complete application of the Hadot Paradigm.

Shin Buddhism

As stated in the last chapter, Shin Buddhism was started as a school by the Japanese monk Shinran (1173-1263). It focuses on the idea that we can no longer attain enlightenment of our own accord, via our 'self-power' (Jp: *jiriki*) because of the onset of the 'degenerate age' (Jp: *mappo*). Due to the vow taken by Amitābha Buddha (Jp: Amida) in the distant past to help all beings to enlightenment, there is another way to become enlightened. Through *shinjin* (entrusting or faith) in Amida's vow and chanting the *nembutsu* (Jp: 'Namu Amida Butsu'), one can achieve rebirth in Amida's Pure Land through his grace, his 'other power' (Jp: *tariki*), after death, in which the practitioner will be able to attain enlightenment without any distractions or obstacles.

The Hadot Paradigm could indeed be applied to Shin Buddhism in many ways. More than other Japanese Buddhist schools, Shin Buddhism focuses on lay people and does not prioritise monastic life. This is because Shinran himself was 'defrocked' and sent to the countryside after having been involved in controversy. The emphasis on laity is why Shin

Buddhism was able to become as popular as it has. Due to this, it could indeed be described as a way of life, something practiced as a part of daily existence that also involves 'spiritual exercises' of sorts. The *Nembutsu* could be interpreted through an 'Hadotian' lens as a Shin spiritual exercise as it is also transformative. As David G Lanoue (2004, pp. 192-193) writes about how Issa integrated his Shin faith into his life as a lay follower:

> As such, "prayer" is perhaps an inadequate English equivalent for *nembutsu.* More than a collection of words, it is a way of life, a way of thinking…and a way of spiritual liberation. It is as natural as breathing…In the context of Shinran's doctrine, these and hundreds of similar haiku in Issa's cannon can be viewed as celebrations of Amida Buddha and his Other Power amid scenes of everyday life. Prayer is part of life, whether one is labouring in the field, calling fireflies, cracking a flea or swatting a fly.

So, Hadot's conception of philosophy can be successfully applied to Shin Buddhism almost completely, but not fully. The issue that prevents this taking place is how exactly the goal of each path is achieved. For Hadot, as we have seen, the goal of Greco-Roman philosophy was a state of tranquillity (Gr: *ataraxia*) that all of the Hellenistic philosophical schools sought. *Ataraxia* was achieved, granted, under the guidance of a teacher, and within the context of a philosophical school, but the final crossing of the threshold into mental tranquillity had to be done individually. The same idea can be seen in Indian and other forms of Buddhism; including Zen, the teachings of the Buddha and other sages can act as a guide, but enlightenment cannot be attained by anyone else on your behalf.

In Shin Buddhist thought, by contrast, this is not the case. As already explained, Shinran believed that humankind was living in the age of *mappo,* translated by Thomas P Kasulis (2018, p. 148-149) as *The Degenerate Age* which he describes as follows:

> According to a venerable Buddhist teaching, after the death of Shakyamuni, the ensuring centuries would bring a gradual decline in people's ability to achieve enlightenment. The Buddhist truths – its doctrines and praxis – remain always true, of course, and human nature does not change, but external circumstances certainly do. Insights get watered down, values co-opted, institutions corrupted and good intentions side tracked.

We can see by now that this way of viewing things is very different from the Hellenistic schools, Indian Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. The Hellenistic schools placed importance on reason as a means of achieving *ataraxia* but for Shinran, ratio-logical thinking (Jp: *hakarai*) cannot assist us, as Kasulis (2018, p. 186) writes:

> Shinran came to identify the problem as one of *hakarai*, the calculative thinking and weighing of logical alternatives that characterized the philosophical reasoning behind the Path to Self-perfection. Being egoless and free of distortions and delusions, a buddha can engage in *hakarai* effectively. But we ordinary people, bound up as we are with karmic afflictions and crippled with defilements cannot. *Hakarai* is not simply reasoning, but also an attitude toward reasoning, a self-confidence that you are on top of things, and if there is something you don't yet understand, you can figure it out eventually.

This is the stance of Shin Buddhism: we live in a degenerate age that means that we cannot achieve the goal of the path ourselves. We must rely on an other-worldly power in its achievement, and we cannot make use of reason to assist us. This why we cannot apply the Hadot Paradigm to Shin Buddhism completely. The Hellenistic schools of the Greco-Roman era did not believe in a degenerate age; they did not believe that humans were perfect creatures, controlled as they are by the passions, but they had a belief that we are capable of overcoming this condition with effort and practice. There was no reliance on an 'otherworldly' power in order to achieve *ataraxia*.[73] Not even the Stoics or many of the Platonists who were theists, believed that one had to rely completely on divinities, (apart from the theurgists in the Iamblichan tradition), to achieve a state of inner tranquillity. We had to achieve *ataraxia* on our own and rational understanding and argument played a big part in its attainment, as did lived practice. Although this thesis has tried to move away from using reason as the means of classifying a philosophical system, the difference is that other systems of world philosophy, may not prioritise reason, but do indeed make use of it in their

[73] There are different interpretations as to what Amida Buddha actually 'is'. Mark Unno (2020, p. 183) says that Amida is not a transcendent being, but the 'true nature of the self'. In contrast, John Paraskevopoulos, a Shin Buddhist priest (2020, p. 91) writes that 'Amida is a real, transcendental Buddha whose existence is grounded on the highest reality itself.'

philosophical speculations. In contrast, Shin Buddhism not only does not prioritise reason, it actively campaigns *against* its use.

These derivations make Shin Buddhism too divergent from Greco-Roman philosophy, even from other forms of Buddhism, to be able to apply Hadot's idea of philosophy to it completely. A way of life, with spiritual exercises, Shin Buddhism indeed is, but its reliance on otherworldly power, dismissal of reason and professed lack of belief in the ability to achieve its goal ourselves, means that there is a limit to how far we can push the Hadot Paradigm in this case.

These two examples show that a universal application of The Hadot Paradigm to every philosophical tradition is difficult for many different reasons. For Hadot's ideas to be a truly workable bridge for East and West in philosophical terms, these issues need to be ironed out. Is there any way that Hadot's universality can be salvaged?

Salvaging Hadot

Even though there are difficulties with how we apply Hadot to certain traditions, there is a way of salvaging his universality in a sense and that again, is via the poetic. The poetic is essential to the philosophical way of life because, as we saw in chapter III, the poetic is what not only sustains the phenomena of philosophy as a lived way of life, it is also what allows it to spread. We have seen that vividness and the memorability that results from it, are the key characteristics of the poetic.

An adherent of a philosophical school needs to be able to remember the teachings of that school in order to apply them to everyday situations. Complex and long-winded arguments are not so well suited to this endeavour because they are more difficult to remember than short phrases or sentences. Such arguments will also be logical and lack any emotional impact or any vivid lines that will engage a reader or listener and lodge in their memory.

They also require a high level of education to understand. For those just beginning their education, or without it, they will therefore be unsuitable. This is why the poetic cannot be based on such dry, logical arguments.

The use of the alternative language of the poetic allows the Hadot Paradigm to be applied universally, since any philosophical system can be condensed into, vivid, emotionally engaging, easy-to-remember aphorisms. All of the philosophical traditions analysed so far are anything but simple. The Hellenistic schools as well as the Buddhist ones all have highly technical, sophisticated worldviews and teachings, yet we have seen that they are able to be rendered to poetic form, which makes them easier to practice and have "to hand". Even though the Aristotelian tradition and Shin Buddhism present possible limitations of the Hadot Paradigm, arguably the poetic could salvage even these two schools of thought for Hadot's ideas. The Shin Buddhist *nembutsu* '*Namu Amida Butsu'* could be interpreted as a poetic phrase in itself that summarises Shin belief. Though Aristotle's system does not engage the whole of life, the ideas of his school could be turned into poetic 'bites' that will allow them to touch more aspects of life than just the intellectual arena and become more compatible with daily, lived practice. Hadot's system indeed suffers from limitations, but these limitations, with the assistance of the poetic, do not by any means need to be fatal. Not only does the poetic expand the areas of his thought that he had left underdeveloped, and allow his ideas to endure and spread, its use also ensures its universal applicability. The Hadot Paradigm can therefore still be used as to reconceptualise philosophy in a manner that can apply to as many philosophical systems as possible, as well as philosophy as a whole.

Conclusion: Addressing Critics of Decolonisation and Final Thoughts

We have seen how embracing the Hadot Paradigm, a set of ideas that are common to both Eastern and Western traditions of philosophy, as a framework from within which to reform philosophy, could and will lead to a rejuvenation and reinvigoration of the discipline. Many,

such as Massimo Pigliucci and others, might still scoff at the idea that philosophy needs to be changed at all, that our modern, Eurocentric conception is the "true" definition of philosophy. If such opinions are allowed to prevail over those of reform, then it is likely that philosophy as we know it today will eventually be extinguished from academia. It will be dismissed as irrelevant stargazing that no longer speaks to people or can assist in solving contemporary issues. As we can see from the closure of philosophy departments, such a process has already begun. Whilst those with anti-reform views may see themselves as doing a service to philosophy, their desire to remain entrenched in their conservatism will be more damaging than reform would be.

In concluding, it is fitting that we address the concerns of other academics who criticise and/or misunderstand the idea of decolonisation and, unlike this thesis, would reject it as the way to best deal with the current background context of globalisation. Such academics believe that decolonisation is predicated and focused on undermining the Western world or that it is not a helpful term for what it wants to achieve. It is worth spending a little time briefly examining and refuting such views. one from a 'Western' point of view such as that of Doug Stokes, who thinks that the project is anti-Western and one from a non-Western, specifically African viewpoint that of Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, who does not view current decolonising efforts as the best way forward. Such an examination seeks to reassure readers who are not convinced and/or hold similar views.

To begin with, Stokes (2023, pp. 82-84) says in his recent book *Against Decolonisation*, referring to advocates in favour of decolonisation:

> These theorists' political goal is to establish the radical contingency of knowledge and deconstruct dominant or 'hegemonic' ways of constructing knowledge. By doing this, Western civilisation's 'Eurocentric' self-belief and confidence would be undermined, and by extension, Western political hegemony….the castigation of white, Eurocentric curricula explicitly involves judgemental relativism where all ideas are said to exist on an equal plane, regardless of their integrity.

This thesis hopes to have shown that claims such as Stokes' are mistaken. At least as far as philosophy is concerned, no one wishes to argue for the 'contingency of knowledge' or invoke 'judgemental relativism'. Asian, African, Indigenous, and any other ideas that are incorporated into a decolonised philosophy curriculum will be subject to the same criteria that apply to any other philosophical idea: being open to support or criticism based on sound argumentation and scrutiny. Their inclusion does not 'explicitly' imply that all these ideas will be assumed to be philosophically sound, *apriori*, purely due to their originating outside of Euro-North America. What decolonisation will do is ensure that *all* traditions, Western and non, are given an *equal place* at the metaphorical table. They will then be able to argue for their view of the world and have it examined with equal respect. Currently, all 'seats' in many Western philosophy departments are occupied by Western traditions, with little to no space for any other part of the world even set at the same table. Likewise, in equivalently comparing Western, Indian and East Asian traditions, the thesis hopes to have demonstrated that decolonisation does not seek to 'undermine' the West's self-confidence or self-belief. As stated, Western philosophy should be justly proud of its achievements and should continue to be studied. However, the rest of the world also possesses interesting, sophisticated philosophical traditions that are worthy of serious consideration and study. Decolonisation does not aim to raise up one whilst simultaneously pushing down another, but simply to put both on equal footing, on the same metaphorical level. Similarly, exposing the Eurocentric focus of current philosophy courses is done not out of a desire to disparage Western achievements, but to draw attention to all the knowledge, ideas and conversations we are missing out on if we continue *only* to focus on *the west* whilst ignoring *the rest*.

For Táíwò (2022, p. 29), he does not disagree with decolonisation in principle and as advocated in this thesis, the desire to diversify the philosophical curriculum by bringing

thinkers from outside of Euro-North American traditions. However, he does disagree with the idea that in order to do this, we should disregard anything linked with the 'colonial' as not worthy of consideration, even intellectual interactions derived from colonialism, that Africans freely chose to engage in:

> If decolonising means no more than broadening our horizons of what counts as significant ideas or ways of thinking, many of us are already doing that without the additional fuss of subscribing to a particular ideology. And if it means that we must get rid of anything that smacks of 'colonial' inspiration in our intellectual works, even when some of us have so domesticated these syntaxes as to make them our own, we'd have to acknowledge that African agency does not count for much at all.

Táíwò (2022, p. 192) goes onto say that this way of thinking of decolonisation means that 'many now think there is nothing to be found in terms of Africa's engagement with modernity and interactions with other civilisations, and what they must so instead is look for 'African things.'

Táíwò's worries about decolonisation are unfounded, but nevertheless brings up some extremely valid points that should be considered if the concept is to work for everyone. The version of decolonisation that is advanced in this thesis is not one that seeks to get rid or purge anything and everything Western within philosophy, but merely the negative attitudes and stereotypes that continue to affect the subject, how it is seen, and taught. That said, it is true that the project does also seek to further the inclusion of non-Western traditions and their overlooked ideas. Does this goal not necessarily entail a 'scaling back' of Western traditions?

No. As stated during the rebuttal of Stokes above, there is no desire to rid the curriculum of Western ideas, but simply to include more ideas from outside of the Euro-North American traditions. As stated in the introduction, we have to redefine what philosophy 'is' as a subject in order to decolonise it. Ideally, the result of this will not only be an expanded conception of

philosophy but one that negates the need to split it into different, essentialist regional, temporal and cultural variations at all. We will still acknowledge that the ideas were and are different depending upon such factors as time, place, religion and culture, but also that each set of these ideas constitute just one branch growing from the overarching tree of 'philosophy'; branches that overlap and intertwine.

Therefore, diverse ideas from all around the world as well as fusions, such as the use of and adaptation of Western ideas by non-Western scholars to their own intellectual and cultural milieu, even those imposed upon them by colonialism, will be completely valid and treated equally. This is especially true if these non-Western scholars, such as Táíwò *want* to make use of these ideas. To tell non-Western scholars what ideas they are and are not allowed to use would be incredibly condescending and smack of the parental mentality that colonial governments had when they sought to help indigenous peoples 'grow up' into modernity. Everyone should have the freedom to make use of what ideas they wish, providing it is done in a respectful manner.[74]

Ironically for scholars such as Stokes and others who view decolonisation as something novel, utilising the insights of the Hadot Paradigm to reinvigorate philosophy would not be progressive. It would actually be conservative, in the sense that Hadot proposes nothing new; his work aimed to reveal and bring back the ancient form of philosophising, the lived poetic form that has been lost. The "new" form of philosophy that completely changed the nature of the subject is our modern formulation. Therefore, the Hadot Paradigm would bring forth a renaissance, a rebirth, just as the Italian renaissance reembraced the culture of Greco-Roman

[74] Táíwò (2022, p. 191) also raises an interesting point about the decolonisation of language, something that was touched upon during the introduction also. He is right that bifurcating the histories of formerly colonised countries into 'pre-colonial' and even 'post-colonial' is not necessarily the best path. We need to be as specific as possible when referring to different time periods, geographical locations and cultures.

antiquity but applied that to its own time. What is needed in philosophy is not just a reconceptualization, a reformulation, but a renaissance that dares to venture *ad fontes.*

If this is done, we will end up is an inclusive, modern form of philosophy that is able to learn from the insights of the world outside of it whilst still revering the great achievements of Western traditions, integrating them harmoniously. Philosophy will once again be considered to be truly *global* in scope, to belong to humanity as a whole 'way of life' alongside simply an academic discipline that will be able to once again assist ordinary people with their existential situations. This new philosophy will offer people new belief systems, whilst achieving a harmonious compromise with the fields of religion, the sciences and the other disciplines. Additionally, philosophers will take their places once again as *mainstream* public intellectuals and give authoritative views on such pressing issues as climate change, artificial intelligence and inequality. Philosophy itself will once again regain her rightful position as 'queen of the sciences'.

If reform is not done, then the philosophical legacy of the past 4000 years could, quite conceivably, simply fade away to dust, and the deaths of Socrates, Hypatia and other thinkers who died for their ideas will have been in vain. Perhaps it is only fitting to end with the words of another ancient philosopher, one who uttered a phrase that should be the mantra of any would-be reformist who sees the truly global interconnections inherent within a love of wisdom. Diogenes of Sinope, when asked where he was from replied 'I am a citizen of the world'. Philosophy will only be prosperous once again when she can repeat the same answer to anyone who asks where she belongs, not just *to* the world, but also as a lived reality *within* it.

Bibliography:

Adamson, P (2015) Philosophy in the Hellenistic & Roman Worlds: A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps Volume 2. London: Oxford University Press.

Adamson, P (2016) Philosophy in the Islamic World: A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps Volume 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Adamson, P (2019) Medieval Philosophy: A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps Volume 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Adamson, P and Ganeri, J (2020) Classical Indian Philosophy: A History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps Volume 5. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Aitken, R (1978) a Zen Wave: Basho's *Haiku* and Zen. John Weatherhill, Inc/Shoemaker & Hoard: Washington D.C

Aklujkar, A (2017) History and Doxography of the Philosophical Schools In. J Ganeri, ed. The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy 1st ed. United States: Oxford University Press p. 43

Al-Hassan, A.Y and Hill, D.R, (1986) *Islamic Technology: An Illustrated History.* Paris and Cambridge: UNESCO and the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

Allen, D.S (2013) Why Plato Wrote. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell (Blackwell Publishing Ltd)

Angle, S.C and Tiwald, J (2017) *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Arjana, S.R (2020) Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi: Orientalism and the Mystical Marketplace. London: OneWorld Publications Ltd.

Armstrong, K (2019) The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts. London: The Bodley Head

Aurelius, M/Waterfield, R (trans) (2021) Meditations: The Annotated Edition. New York: Basic Books.

Baggini, J (2018) *If universities sacrifice philosophy on the altar of profit, what's next? The Guardian*. [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/21/universities-philosophy-profit-business-partners [Accessed 1st September 2023]

Barfield, R (2011) The Ancient Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry. New York: Cambridge University Press

Bartley, C (2015) An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Hindu and Buddhist Ideas from Original Sources. Bloomsbury Academic: London and New York.

Basho, M/Reichhold, J (trans) (2008/2013) Basho: The Complete Haiku. New York: Kodansha, USA Inc.

Battin Pabst, M (1977) Plato on True and False Poetry. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. [Online] Vol 36 (2) pp. 163-174. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/429756.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_search_gsv2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Abfb06a51257b6d73abbf8753b0000d4d [Accessed 15th April 2021]

Baumer, C (2011) China's Holy Mountain: An Illustrated Journey into the Heart of Buddhism. London and New York: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd.

Beckwith, C.I (2015) Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia. Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford: Oxford University Press

Benjamin, S (2012) On the Distinctiveness of Poetic Language, *New Literary History.* Vol 43 (1) pp. 89-111. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23259362.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A23f23c138077d336c7f5a7e11a72e0d3&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 9th March 2023]

Bergsma, A, Poot, G and Liefbroer, A.C (2007) Happiness in the Garden of Epicurus. Journal of Happiness Studies [Online] Vol 9 pp. 397-423. Available at: https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10902-006-9036-z.pdf [Accessed 27th March 2022]

Bhambra, G.K et al (2018) Introduction: Decolonising the University? In: Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıolu, eds. *Decolonising the University*, 1st ed. London: Pluto Press

Bhikkhu Bodhi/Gunaratana, B.H (2019) Buddhist Sutras for Recitation: A Companion for Walking the Buddha's Path. Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications.

Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans) (2017) The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses together with its commentaries. Masachussets, United States: Wisdom Publications

Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans) (2005) In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Cannon. Masachussets, United States: Wisdom Publications

Bhikkhu Analayo (2022) Early Buddhist Oral Recitation: Textual Formation and Transmission. Sommerville, MA: Wisdom Publications

Bodhidharma/ Red Pine (trans) (2022) 'Bodhidharma's Principles and Practice', in Red Pine (ed.) Zen Roots: The First Thousand Years: Nine Sutras and Texts. Berkeley, California: Counterpoint, pp. 117-119

Bose, K.S (1996) The Theoretical Foundations of Zen Buddhism. The Eastern Buddhist. [Online] Vol 29 (1) pp. 85 - 98 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44362151.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A0283aa04c716f688e7e3353510c83bde&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6490%2Ftest_segment_6&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 7th July 2022]

Black, B (2022) *Decolonising Philosophy. Ethica: LU Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.ethicajournal.com/post/decolonising-philosophy [Accessed 3rd August 2023]

Blyth, R.H (2021) Haiku I: Eastern Culture. New York: Angelico Press

Blyth, R.H (2022) A History of Haiku Volume One: From the Beginnings up to Issa. Philadelphia: Greenpoint Books.

Boethius/P. G Walsh (trans) (2000) The Consolation of Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boodin, J.E (1943) The Vision of Parmenides. The Philosophical Review [Online] Vol 52 (6) pp. 578-589. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2181260.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A5e5c925b40e103956f0de2118544c121&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 15th March 2022]

Bradatan, C (2015) *Dying for Ideas: The Dangerous Lives of the Philosophers.* London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Brown, P (1971) The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150 – 750. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.

Brownson, C.L (1897) *Reasons for Plato's Hostility to the Poets. Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association.* [Online] Vol 28. Pp. 5-41. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2935649.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3Adaae5c4c4440273a1443881ecf799cb3 [Accessed 15th April 2021]

Brunt, P.A (1974) Marcus Aurelius in his Meditations The Journal of Roman Studies [Online] Vol 64 pp. 1-20. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/299256.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8a95f01abe4079722d2b3c6248dfca24&ab_segments=&origin= [Accessed 16th January 2022]

Buswell. Jr, Robert, E. and Lopez Jr, Donald, S. (2014) *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton, New Jersey and Oxfordshire, UK: Princeton University Press

Byden, B and Ierodiakonou, K (2012) Greek Philosophy. In: John Marenbon, ed. The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy, 1st ed. Global: Oxford University Press

Caldwell, R (2016) The Philosophy of Poetry. *Philosophy Now.* [Online] Available at: https://philosophynow.org/issues/114/The_Philosophy_of_Poetry [Accessed 24th July 2024].

Callard, A. (2020) Should we cancel Aristotle? *The New York Times.* [Online] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/opinion/should-we-cancel-aristotle.html (Accessed: December 14, 2022).

Camus, A/Smith, S (trans) (2013) The Outsider. Global: The Penguin Group

Carter, S.D (2019) How to Read a Japanese Poem. New York/Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press

Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas (2020) BARÓMETRO ESPECIAL DE JULIO 2020 AVANCE DE RESULTADOS. CIS. [Online] Available at: http://datos.cis.es/pdf/Es3288marMT_A.pdf [Accessed 10th September 2022]

Chang Chi, C (1957) The Nature of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. Philosophy East and West [Online] Vol 6 (4) pp. 333-355 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1397478.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Ac8722ebb980b5c4e8c3d93c823c85676&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6451%2Ftest&origin=search-results [Accessed 29th July 2022]

Clark, S.R.L. (2013) Ancient Mediterranean Philosophy: An Introduction. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Clarke, L (2024) The Stoicism of Śāntideva: Comparisons between Stoic and Buddhist Philosophy. *Theoria* [Online] Vol 90 (4) pp. 1-23. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/theo.12547 [Accessed 6th August 2024]

Congostrina, A.L (2022) El número de ateos en España se multiplica durante la pandemia. El Pais. [Online] Available at: https://elpais.com/sociedad/2022-04-07/el-numero-de-ateos-en-espana-se-multiplica-durante-la-pandemia.html [Accessed 10th September 2022]

Cooper, J.M (2012 a) Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus. New Jersey/Oxford: Princeton University Press

Cooper, J.M (2012 b) Ancient philosophies as ways of life. The tanner lectures on human values. Available at: https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_resources/documents/a-to-z/c/Cooper%20Lecture.pdf [Accessed 13th December 2021]

Coyle, B (1976) An Anchorage of Thought: Defining the Role of Aphorism in Wallace Stevens' Poetry. *PLMA*. [Online] Vol 91 (2) pp. 206-222. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/461508.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A2d82b8ba460b23b6141ba3df85754683&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 13th September 2023]

Daily Nous (2023) *Cuts and Threats to Philosophy Programs*. *Daily Nous*. [Online] Available at: https://dailynous.com/category/cuts-and-threats-to-philosophy-programs/ [Accessed 4th September 2023]

Davis, B.W (2022) Zen Pathways: An Introduction to the Philosophy and Practice of Zen Buddhism. New York: Oxford University Press

Davis, B.W (2020) Human/Nature Nondualism in Zen and Japanese Thought. In: Bret W. Davis, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy, 1st ed.* Oxford: Oxford University Press p. 691

Davis, B.W (2020) *Introduction: What is Japanese Philosophy?* In B.W Davis, *ed. The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy. 1st ed.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press

Davis, B.W (2013) Forms of Emptiness in Zen In: Steven M. Emmanuel, ed. *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy. 1st ed.* Oxford/Malden, Massachusetts/Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Inc. p. 190

De Blois, L (2012) The Relation of Politics and Philosophy Under Marcus Aurelius. In: Marcel Van Ackeren, ed. A Companion to Marcus Aurelius, 1st ed. Malden, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Del Nido, D (2018) PIERRE HADOT ON HABIT, REASON, AND SPIRITUAL EXERCISES The Journal of Religious Ethics [Online] Vol 46 (1) pp. 7-36 Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jore.12205 [Accessed 30th November 2021]

Desmond, W (2014) *Cynics* London and New York: Routledge

Downing, G.F (1998) Deeper Reflections on the Jewish Cynic Jesus. *Journal of Biblical Literature.* [Online] Vol 117 (1) pp. 97-104. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3266395.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A49a8e2542b291a47e75519347010c2ae&ab_segments=&origin= [Accessed 1st December 2022]

Easwaran, E (trans) (2007) The Dhammapada. California: Nilgiri Press

Eddy, Paul R. (1996) Jesus as Diogenes? Reflections on the Cynic Jesus Thesis. *Journal of Biblical Literature.* [Online] Vol 115 (3) pp. 449-469 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3266896.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A19d232aad37c67c37f8f35c9dddaca04&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 1st December 2022]

Eksen, K (2019) Descartes and Spiritual Exercises: A Critique of Pierre Hadot's Historical Narrative. Philosophy Today [Online] Vol 63 (1) pp. 73-92. Available at: file:///C:/Users/Lee/Downloads/Descartes_and_Spiritual_Exerci.pdf [Accessed 10th December 2021]

Epictetus and Robert Dobbin (trans) (2008) *Discourses and Selected Writings.* London: The Penguin Group.

Epicurus/ Strodach, George K. (trans) (2012) The Art of Happiness forward by Daniel Klein New York: The Penguin Group

Espíndola Gómez Liliana, L (2017). Plato on the Political Role of Poetry. In H.L Reid, D Tanasi and S Kimbell, ed. *Politics and Performance in Western Greece: Essays on the Hellenic Heritage of Sicily and Southern Italy,* 1st ed. Sioux City, Iowa, United States: Parnassos Press – Fonte Aretusa Organization, p. 244

Faverau, M (2021) The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Feser, E (2008) The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism. South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press.

Fields, R (2022) How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America: Fortieth Anniversary Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Fiordalis, D.V (2018) Introduction. In D.V Fiordalis, ed. Buddhist Spiritual Practices: Thinking with Pierre Hadot on Buddhism, Philosophy, and the Path.. 1st ed. Berkeley, California: Mangalam Press,

Fish, J (2022) An Epicurean Evaluates the Practical Wisdom of Homer: Philodemus, *On the Good King*. In: Christina-Panagiota Manolea, ed. *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Homer from the Hellenistic Age to Late Antiquity*, 1st ed. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 259-274

Force, P (2011) THE TEETH OF TIME: PIERRE HADOT ON MEANING AND MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS. *History And Theory* [Online] Vol 50 (1) pp. 20-40. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41300058.pdf?ab_segments=0%252FSYC-6168%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Ad88213d9feeeca1ec7ca9d8844b53b88 [Accessed 11th December 2021]

Foster, J and Shoemaker, J (edits) (1996) The Roaring Stream: A New Zen Reader. Hopewell, New Jersey: THE ECCO PRESS.

Foucault, M/Gros, F (edit)/Burchell, G (trans) (2005) The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981-1982. New York and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frede, D (1993) The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project. In: Charles Guignon, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger, 1st ed.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 42-69.

Frodeman, R and Briggle, A (2016) Socrates Tenured: The Institutions of 21st- Century Philosophy. London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd.

Gadamer, H.G./Weinsheimer, J and Marshall, D.G. (trans) (2013). Truth and Method, London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Ganeri, J (2017) Introduction: Why Indian Philosophy? Why Now? In. J Ganeri, ed. The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy 1st ed. United States: Oxford University Press

Garton-Gundling, K (2017) Beat Buddhism and American Freedom. College Literature [Online] Vol 44 (2) pp.200-230. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44507179.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A381bd3248c1a30736f4d2d565a037674&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 19th March 2020]

Gernet, J and Verellen, F (trans) (1995) Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries. New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press

Gevaert, B (2017) Perfect Roman Bodies: The Stoic View. In: Christian Laes, ed. Disability in Antiquity, 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge

Giavatto, A (2012) The Style of the Meditations. In: Marcel Van Ackeren, ed. A Companion to Marcus Aurelius, 1st ed. Malden, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Goffman, Erving (2022) Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates. Global: Penguin Random House UK.

Graham, D.W (2021) "Heraclitus" *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Online] Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/ [Accessed 26th March 2022]

Graham, D.W (2008) Heraclitus: Flux, Order, and Knowledge. In: Patricia Curd and Daniel W Graham, ed. The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy, 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grayling, A.C (2019) The History of Philosophy: Three Millenia of Thought From the West and Beyond, Global: Penguin Random House, Penguin Books.

Green, R.S (2013) East Asian Buddhism. In: Steven M. Emmanuel, ed. *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy. 1st ed.* Oxford/Malden, Massachusetts/Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Green Chase, W (1918) Plato's View of Poetry. Harvard Studies in Classical Philology. [Online] Vol 29. Pp. 1-75. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/310558.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3Adaae5c4c4440273a1443881ecf799cb3 [Accessed 15th April 2021]

Goody, J (1996) The East in the West. Cambridge/New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press

Goody, J (2006) The Theft of History. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, J (2010) The Eurasian Miracle. Cambridge/Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press

Gordon, Lewis. R (2019) *Decolonizing Philosophy*. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy.* [Online] Vol 57 pp. 16-36. Available at: https://philosophy.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/365/2020/11/Gordon-2019-Decolonizing-Philosophy.pdf [Accessed 3rd August 2023]

Gordon, Lewis R. (2023) *What Does it Mean to Colonise and Decolonise Philosophy? Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements.* [Online] Vol 93. Pp. 117-135. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/82DB49AE42F8BA1A445CAEDF1A0C98FA/S1358246123000103a.pdf/what-does-it-mean-to-colonise-and-decolonise-philosophy.pdf [Accessed 3rd August 2023]

Gosetti-Ferencei, J.A (2004) *Heidegger, Holderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language Towards a New Poetic of Dasein.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Gownas, C.W (2013) Ethical Thought in Indian Buddhism. In: Steven M. Emmanuel, ed. *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy* 2nd ed. UK: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Gownas, C.W (2018) Buddhist Philosophy as a Way of Life: The Spiritual Exercises of Tsongkhapa. In: Steven M. Emmanuel, ed. *Buddhist Philosophy: A Comparative Approach* 2nd ed. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.

Griffith, S.H (2008) *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam.* Princeton, New Jersey and Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press.

Grigg, R (1994) The Tao of Zen. Rutland, Vermont, Tokyo and Boston: Charles E Turtle Co, Inc.

Grimm, S.R and Cohoe, C (2020) What is philosophy as a way of life? Why philosophy as a way of life? European Journal of Philosophy [Online] Vol 29 pp. 236-251. Available at: https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ntu.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1111/ejop.12562 [Accessed 10th November 2021]

Gulley, N (1977) Plato on Poetry. Greece and Rome. [Online] Vol 24 (2) pp. 154-169. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/642701.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3Adaae5c4c4440273a1443881ecf799cb3 [Accessed 16th April 2020]

Gutas, D (1998) *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries).* Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Hadot, P/ Chase, M (trans) (2023) *Don't Forget to Live: Goethe and the Tradition of Spiritual Exercises.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press

Hadot, P/ Chase, M (trans) (2002) *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Massachusetts, United States: Harvard University Press.

Hadot, P/Davidson, A.I (ed) / Chase, M (trans) (1995) Philosophy as a Way of Life. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hadot, P/ Chase, M (trans) (1998) The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius. Massachusetts, United States: Harvard University Press.

Hadot, P Carlier, J and Davidson, A.I. Djaballah, M and Chase, M (trans) (2011) *The Present Alone is Our Happiness.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Hadot, P/Sharpe, M and Testa, F (trans) (2020) The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot.. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Hamil, S and Seaton, J.P (trans and eds) (2007) The Poetry of Zen. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Han, B/Steuer, D (trans) (2023) *Absence: On the Culture and Philosophy of the Far East.* New Jersey and Cambridge: Polity Press

Han, B/Steuer, D (trans) (2022) *The Philosophy of Zen Buddhism*. Hoboken, New Jersey and Cambridge: Polity Press

Han, B/Steuer, D (trans) (2022) *Hyperculture: Culture and Globalization.* Cambridge and Medford, Massachusetts: Polity Press.

Han. B/Steuer, D (trans) (2021) Capitalism and the Death Drive. Cambridge and Medford, Massachusetts: Polity Press.

Han, B/Butler, E (trans) (2015) *The Burnout Society* Stanford University Press: Stanford

Hansen, V (2012) *Silk Roads: A New History*. New York: Oxford University Press

Harman, G (2012) Concerning Stephen Hawking's Claim that Philosophy is Dead. Filozofski vestnik. [Online] Vol XXXIII (2) pp. 11-22. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/287250263.pdf [Accessed 7th December 2021]

Harpur, J (2006) Fortune's Prisoner: An Introduction to the Poems of Boethius's "Consolation of Philosophy". The Poetry Ireland Review. [Online] No. 85. Pp. 44-51. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25580681.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A5368725b9a4d065160a2ee0444181fad&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 26th March 2022]

Harl, K.W (2023) *Empires of the Steppes: The Nomadic Tribes who Shaped Civilisation*. London and Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic

Havelock, E.A (1963) A Preface to Plato.: Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press.

Heidegger/Eidos84 (1975/2011) Heidegger on Language and Poetry (English Subtitles). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-P00IDJpvg [Accessed 21st August 2024]

Heidegger, M and Rojcewicz. R (trans) (2015) The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Heidegger, M and De Man, Paul (trans) (2014) Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry In: Martin McQuillan, ed. *The Paul de Man Notebooks*, 1st ed. Edinbourgh: Edinbrough University Press.

Heidegger, M/McNeill, W and Ireland, J (trans) (2014) *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine"* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press p. 126

Heidegger, M/McNeill, W and Davis, J (trans) (1996) *Holderlin's Hymn"Der Ister"*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press p. 139

Heidegger, M/Hofstadter, A (trans) (1975) Poetry, Language and Thought. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Harper Perennial

Heine, S (2014) Zen Koans. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press

Herodian (2007/2020) *Herodian 1.2* [Online] Available at: https://www.livius.org/sources/content/herodian-s-roman-history/herodian-1.2/ [Accessed 15th August 2024]

Higginson, W.J and Harter, P (1985/2013) The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Teach and Appreciate Haiku. New York: Kodansha USA Publishing LLC.

Hinton, D (2020) China Root: Taoism, *Ch'an* and the Original Zen. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Hoffmann, Y (ed and trans) (1986) Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death. Tokyo/Rutland, Vermont/Singapore: Tuttle Publishing

Holiday, R and Hanselman, S (2016) The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations on Wisdom, Perseverance, and the Art of Living: Featuring new translations of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. London: Profile Books Ltd.

Howard, V.R (2018) Nonviolence in the Dharma Traditions: Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. In: Andrew Fiala, ed. The Routledge Handbook of Pacifism and Nonviolence, 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge

Hui, A (2019) A Theory of the Aphorism: From Confucius to Twitter. Princeton and Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press.

Hussey, E (1999) Heraclitus In: A.A Long, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy, 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hyers, C (1989a) Humor in Zen: Comic Midwifery. Philosophy: East and West. [Online] Vol 39 (3) pp. 267-277. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1399448.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A6ca3e1d89e1588c41279d1069da9149e&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 14th July 2023]

Hyers, C (1989b) The Laughing Buddha: Zen and the Comic Spirit. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Ivanhoe, P.J (ed) (2019) *Zhu Xi: Selected Writings* New York: Cambridge University Press

Izutsu, T (1983) *Sufism & Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts.* Los Angeles, Berkley and London: University of California Press

Izutsu, T (1977) *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism*. Boston, Prajna Press

Janby, L.F et al (2019) Introduction. In: Panagiotis G. Pavlos, Lars Fredrik Janby, Eyjolfur Kjalar Emilsson and Torstein Theodor Tollefsen, eds. *Platonism and Christian Thought in Late Antiquity, 1st ed.* Abingdon. Oxon/New York: Routledge

Jaspers, Karl/ Manheim, Ralph (trans) (1948) *The Axial Age of Human History: A Base for the Unity of Mankind.* [Online] Available at: https://www.commentary.org/articles/karl-jaspers/the-axial-age-of-human-historya-base-for-the-unity-of-mankind/ [Accessed 18TH August 2023.

Jensen, E (2018) Barbarians in the Greek and Roman World. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Jones, C.B (2021) Pure Land: History, Tradition and Practice. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Josephson, J.A (2012) The Invention of Religion in Japan. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Kafka, F/Williams, J (2014) The Essential Kafka. Ware, Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions Limited

Kaplin, A (2016) *Looking for The Stranger: Albert Camus and the Life of a Literary Classic.* Chicago and London

Karan, Pradyumna, P. (2004/2017) The Non-Western World: Environment, Development, and Human Rights. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Kasulis, T.P (1981) Zen Action, Zen Person. Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii

Kasulis, Thomas, P. (2018) Engaging Japanese Philosophy: A Short History. Honolulu, Hawa'i: University of Hawai'I Press,

Kechagia, E (2010) RETHINKING A PROFESSIONAL RIVALRY: EARLY EPICUREANS AGAINST THE STOA. *The Classical Quarterly.* [Online] Vol 60 (1) pp. 132-155. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40984744.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A7714c84c5f0f300037c207806c618417&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 13th September 2022]

Kerouac, J (2013) Evening Coming. In: Jim Kacian, Philip Rowland and Allan Burns, eds. Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years, 1st ed. W.W Nortan & Company: New York and London.

Key, A.M (2022) What are Neoplatonic Poetics? Allegory; Figure; Genre. In: Stefan Sperl and Yorgos Dedes, eds. *Faces of the Infinite: Neoplatonism and Poetry at the Confluence of Africa, Asia and Europe*, 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kenny, A (2010) A New History of Western Philosophy in Four Parts Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press

Khan, C.H (2001) Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: A Brief History. Indianapolis, United States: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Kitaro, N (1990) An Inquiry into The Good New Haven and London: Yale University Press

Klagge, J.C (2021) *Wittgenstein's Artillery: Philosophy as Poetry.* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press.

Kubica, O (2023) Greco-Buddhist Relations in the Hellenistic Far East: Sources and Contexts. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Laertius, D/Mensch, P (trans) and Miller, J (ed) (2018) Lives of the Eminent Philosophers. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lahiri, N (2015) Ashoka in Ancient India. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press

Lai, W (1993) *The Three Jewels in China* In: Takeuchi Yoshinori et al, eds. *Buddhist Spirituality: Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, Early Chinese*, 1st ed. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Lanoue, D.G (2004) Pure Land Haiku: The Art of Priest Issa. Reno, Nevada: Buddhist Books International

Lanoue, D.G (2008) The Haiku Mind: Issa and Pure Land Buddhism. The Eastern Buddhist. [Online] Vol 39 (2) pp. 159-176. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44362411.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A5317f91d0664816100f2f871b9696b0f&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 12th August 2022]

Lao Tzu/Mitchell, S (trans) (1999) Tao Te Ching: An Illustrated Journey. London: Frances Lincoln.

Levine, K (2014) NERDIST PODCAST: NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON RETURNS AGAIN. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20150411083123/http://nerdist.com/nerdist-podcast-neil-degrasse-tyson-returns-again/ [Accessed 7th December 2021]

Löhr, W (2010) Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project. Vigiliae Christianae. [Online] Vol 64 (2) pp. 160-188. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20700362.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Abb2f5d9ead4452769907117be1fea93b&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 20th September 2023]

Long, A.A (2008) The Concept of the Cosmopolitan in Greek & Roman Thought. Daedalus [Online] Vol 137 (3) pp. 50-58. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40543797.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A490734aec468433d6385eacbb04ea9d2&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 14th February 2022]

Lopez, Jr, Donald. S and Stone, Jacqueline I. (2019) Two Buddhas Seated Side by Side: A Guide The Lotus Sutra. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Lucas, M (2007) *Stepping Stones: A Way Into Haiku*. Hornchurch, Essex: The British Haiku Society.

Maffie, J (2014) Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion. Colorado: University Press of Colorado.

Makeham, J (ed) (2018) *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Maldonado-Torres, N et al (2018) Decolonising Philosophy In: Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancıolu, eds. *Decolonising the University*, 1st ed. London: Pluto Press

Malik, K (2017) *Are SOAS Students Right to 'Decolonise' Their Minds From Western Philosophers? The Guardian.* [Online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/feb/19/soas-philosopy-decolonise-our-minds-enlightenment-white-european-kenan-malik [Accessed 3rd August 2023]

Manley, B (2023) *The Oldest Book in the World: Philosophy in the Age of the Pyramids*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd p. 10

Männlein-Robert, I (2012) The *Meditations* as a (Philosophical) Autobiography.In: Marcel Van Ackeren, ed. A Companion to Marcus Aurelius, 1st ed. Malden, Oxford, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

McCarthy, H.E (1951) Poetry, Metaphysics, and the Spirit of Zen. Philosophy East and West. [Online] Vol 1 (1) pp. 16 – 34. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1396933.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afe911925bb160eb24805bc983234f29a&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 14th July 2022]

McClintock, S.L (2018) *Schools, Schools – Or Must a Philosopher be Like a Fish?* In D.V Fiordalis, ed. Buddhist Spiritual Practices: Thinking with Pierre Hadot on Buddhism, Philosophy, and the Path.. 1st ed. Berkeley, California: Mangalam Press,

McEvilley, T (2002) The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies. New York: Allworth Press

McLeod, A (2018) *Philosophy of the Ancient Maya: Lords of Time.* London: Lexington Books

Meagher, R.E (2021) *Albert Camus and the Human Crisis.* New York: Pegasus Books, Ltd.

Meyer, M (trans) (2007) *The Gospel of Thomas with the Greek Gospel of Thomas* In: Marvin Meyer, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised and Updated Translation of Sacred Gnostic Texts*, 1st ed. New York: Harper One.

Mikalson, J.D (2006) 10: Greek Religion: Continuity and Change in the Hellenistic Period In: Glenn R. Bugh, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World, 1st ed.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, A, Jiangshan, W, Yi, T et al (eds) (2020) *Imperial China: The Definitive Visual History.* London: Dorling Kindersley Limited and Encyclopaedia of China Publishing House.

Mohammadi, Ali (1997) *International Communication and Globalization: A Critical Introduction.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Nagarjuna/Siderits, M and Katsura, S (trans) (2013) Nagarjuna's Middle Way: *Mulamadhyamakarika.* Sommerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications

Nakamura, H/ Wiener, Phillip P. (1964) Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan. Hawai'i: University of Hawai'I Press.

Neigenfind Keith, L. Jr (2020) Is Nonviolence and Pacifism in Christian and Buddhist Ethics Obligatory or Supererogatory? Buddhist-Christian Studies [Online] Vol 40 pp.387-40. Available at: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/775613 [Accessed 16th February 2022]

Norden, B.W Van (2017) Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto New York, Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press

Nussbaum, M.C (2019) The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

O'Brien, B (2019) The Circle of the Way: A Concise History of Zen From the Buddha to the Modern World. Colorado: Shambhala Publications

O. Dahlstrom, D *The Heidegger Dictionary: Second Edition*. London, New York and Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic

Oyama, S and Wilson, S.W (trans) (2021) The Life and Zen Haiku Poetry of Santoka Taneda. Tokyo, Rutland, Vermont, Singapore: Tuttle Publishing

Palmer, J (2020) Parmenides. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Online] Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/parmenides/#LogDiaInt [Accessed 21st March 2022]

Parkes, G (1987) Introduction. In: Graham Parkes, ed. *Heidegger and Asian Thought, 1st ed.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

Paraskevopoulos, J (2020) Immeasurable Life: The Essence of Shin Buddhism. New York: Sophia Perennis/Angelico Press.

Park, P. K.J (2013) Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon' 1780-1830. New York State: State University of New York Press, Albany.

Pigliucci, M (2006) On the pseudo-profoundity of some Eastern philosophy. *Rationally Speaking.* [Online] Available at: http://rationallyspeaking.blogspot.com/2006/05/on-pseudo-profoundity-of-some-eastern.html [Accessed 23rd August 2023]

Pigliucci, M (2017) How to Be a Stoic: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Living. London: Rider/Ebury Publishing.

Peggeler, O (1987) West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao Tzu In: Graham Parkes, ed. *Heidegger and Asian Thought, 1st ed.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

Perloff, M (2021) *Infrathin: An Experiment in Micropoetics.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Pieterse, J.N (2004) *Globalization & Culture: Global Melange.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd.

Pirson, F (1996) Style and Message on the Column of Marcus Aurelius. Papers of the British School at Rome. [Online] Vol 64 pp. 139-179. Available at:https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40310934.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A2632962fcf0bd0a8dbc1ef5b29b90535&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 7th February 2022]

Plato/Grube, G.M.A (trans) (1997) Apology In: John M. Cooper and D.S Hutchinson, eds. *Plato: Complete Works, 1st ed.* Indianpolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Plato/G.M.A Grube (trans) (1997) Meno. In: John M Cooper and D.S Hutchinson, ed. *Plato: Complete Works* 1st ed. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Plato/C.D.C Reeve (trans) (1997) Cratylus In: John M. Cooper and D.S Hutchinson, eds. *Plato: Complete Works, 1st ed.* Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Plato & Grube, G.M.A. (trans.). (1997) Phaedo. In: John M Cooper & D.S Hutchinson, eds. *Plato: Complete Works, 1st ed*. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Plotinus, Stones et al (trans) (2018) *The Enneads* Global: Cambridge University Press

Porphyry/ Stones et al (trans) (2018) *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of His Books by Porphyry of Tyre.* In: Lloyd P. Gerson, ed. *Plotinus: The Enneads, 1st ed.* Global: Cambridge University Press

Prinz, J and Mandelbaum, E (2015) Poetic Opacity: How to Paint with Things and Words. In: John Gibson, ed. *The Philosophy of Poetry*, 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prothero, S (1991) On the Holy Road: The Beat Movement as Spiritual Protest, The Harvard Theological Review [Online] Vol 84 (2) pp. 205-222. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1509800.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8c0a1fcf25a751158ac40ea9e92f0a9c&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 28th July 2020]

Quinn, J (2024) How the World Made the West: A 4000 Year History. London and Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic.

Red Pine (trans) (2022) Selections from the Vimalakirti Sutra. Red Pine (ed.) Zen Roots: The First Thousand Years: Nine Sutras and Texts. Berkeley, California: Counterpoint

Reps, P and Senzaki, N (compliers) (2000) Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings. Global: The Penguin Group

Reeve, G (trans) (2008) *The Lotus Sutra: A Contemporary Translation of a Buddhist Classic*. Sommerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications

Remes, P (2014) Neoplatonism. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge

Rosenfeld, A.H (1976) The Being of Language and the Language of Being": Heidegger and Modern Poetics. Boundary 2/Martin Heidegger and Literature. [Online] Vol 4 (2) pp. 535-553. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/302152.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A80199d39990c7c96c97dd6a1e1663205&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 14th March 2023]

Rovee, C (2012) Concision In: Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman (eds) et al. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed. Princeton, New Jersey and Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press.

Russel, B (2004) History of Western Philosophy. London: Routledge

Ryan, M.P (1999) Samsa and Samsara: Suffering, Death, and Rebirth in "The Metamorphosis". *The German Quarterly.* [Online] Vol 72 (2) pp. 133-152. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/408369.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A322e09c86426b6e730c86e18035fd850&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 15th December 2022]

Saint Augustine/Bettenson, H (trans), Evans, G.R (intro) City of God. Global: Penguin Books

Sandford, S (2003) Going Back: Heidegger, East Asia, and 'the West'. Radical Philosophy. [Online] Vol 120 pp. 11-22. Available at: https://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp120_article_goingback_sandford.pdf [Accessed 20th July 2022]

Santideva/ Crosby, K and Skilton, A (trans) (1995) The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Santideva/Goodman, Charles (trans) (2016) *The Training Anthology of Santideva: A Translation of the Siksa-Samuccaya.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Sartre, J.P and Macomber, C (trans) (2007) Existentialism is a Humanism. New Haven and London: Yale University Press

Sato, Hiroaki (2018) On Haiku New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation

Scholte, Jan Aart (2005) *Globalization: A Critical Introduction.* London: Red Globe Press.

Schelling, A and Waldman, A (trans) (2020) Songs of the Sons and Daughters of Buddha: Enlightenment Poems from the *Theragatha* and *Therigatha*. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Scruton, R (2015) Poetry and Truth In: John Gibson, ed. *The Philosophy of Poetry*, 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sekida, K (trans) Two Zen Classics: The Gateless Gate and The Blue Cliff Records. Colorado: Shambhala Publications.

Siderits, M (2022) How Things Are: An Introduction to Buddhist Metaphysics. New York: Oxford University Press

Simpson, C (2021) The Greatest Poem Ever Written: None Can Compare to the Bard's 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day'. *The Telegraph.* [Online] Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/10/05/survey-reveals-poem-uk-voters-believe-greatest-ever-written/ [Accessed 27th August 2024]

Sellars. J (2009) The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy. London: Bristol Classical Press/Bloomsbury Academic

Sellars, J (2021) Marcus Aurelius Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Sellars, J (2022) The Fourfold Remedy: Epicurus and the Art of Happiness. Global: Penguin Books/Penguin Random House.

Sharpe, M and Ure, M (2021) Philosophy as a Way of Life: History, Dimensions, Directions. London/New York/Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic.

Shaw, G (2024) Hellenic Tantra: The Theurgic Platonism of Iamblichus. New York: Angelico Press.

Shaw, G (2014) Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus (Second Edition). Kettering, Ohio: Angelico Press/Sophia Perennis.

Smart, N (1989) The World's Religions. Victoria, Australia: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.

Smith. Gregory, A. (2021) About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated. Pew Research Center. [Online] Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/#:~:text=Currently%2C%20about%20three%2Din%2D,asked%20about%20their%20religious%20identity. [Accessed 10th September 2022]

Snider, A (1994) Origin and Authority in Seventeenth-Century England: Bacon, Milton, Butler. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.

Sokel, W.H (1956) Kafka's "Metamorphosis": Rebellion and Punishment. *Monatshefte.* [Online] Vol 48 (4). Pp. 203-214 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/30166165.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A4705f2d09b5834f3a182ae5a5ced0276&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 15th December 2022]

Stanton, G.R (1968) The Cosmopolitan Ideas of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Phronesis. [Online] Vol 13 (2) pp. 183-195. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4181819.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A490734aec468433d6385eacbb04ea9d2&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 14th February 2022]

Starr, F.S (2013) *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Steinbach-Kirloskar, M and Kalmanson, L (2021) *A Practical Guide to World Philosophies: Selves, Worlds and Ways of Knowing.* London, New York, Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic.

Stewart, G.T (2021) *Maori Philosophy: Indigenous Thinking From Aotearoa.* London, New York, Dublin: Bloomsbury Academic

Stokes, Doug (2023) Against Decolonisation: Campus Culture Wars and the Decline of the West. Cambridge, UK and Hoboken, New Jersey: Polity Press

Stoneman, R (2019) The Greek Experience of India: From Alexander to the Indo-Greeks. New Jersey, United States: Princeton University Press.

Strootman, R (2021) The Seleukid Empire In: Rachel Mairs, ed. The Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek World, 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge

Stryk, L (1987) Issa. The American Poetry Review [Online] Vol 16 (3) pp. 29-32. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27778236.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A5317f91d0664816100f2f871b9696b0f&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 11th August 2022]

Stryk, L (1991) I Fear Nothing: A Note on the Zen Poetry of Death. The American Poetry Review [Online] Vol 20 (3) pp. 33-36. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27780412.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A4c774c467019cb320a893e518c9310b4&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 3rd August 2022]

Sumangalamata/Chakravarti, U and Roy, K (trans) (2005) A Woman Well Set Free. In Meena Alexander, ed. Indian Love Poems. 1st ed. New York, London, Toronto: Alfred A Knopf,

Suzuki, D.T (1970) Shin Buddhism: Japan's Major Religious Contribution to the West. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Suzuki, D.T (1938) Zen Buddhism. Monumenta Nipponica. [Online] Vol 1 (1) pp. 48 – 57 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2382444.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A80efe50b586ce1941d310bff36a37f7c&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6490%2Ftest_segment_6&origin=search-results [Accessed 13th July 2022]

Suzuki, D (2010) Zen and Japanese Culture. New Jersey: Princeton University Press

Suzuki, D.T (2022) Essays in Zen Buddhism (First Series) London: Souvenir Books/Profile Books Ltd

Sweeney, N.M (2023) The West: A New History of an Old Idea. London: WH Allen/Ebury Publishing.

Synder, G (2022) Gary Synder: Collected Poems. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc.

Táíwò, O (2022) Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously. London: Hurst & Company

Taneda, S/Stevens, J (trans) (1980) Mountain Tasting: Zen Haiku by Santōka Taneda. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill.

Tanner, S.M (2017) *Plato's Laughter: Socrates as Satyr and Comical Hero.* Albany: State University of New York Press

Tidd, U (2021) *Existentialism and the Novel* In: Adam Watt, ed. *The Cambridge History of the Novel in French*, 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Towler, S (2017) The Spirit of Zen: Teaching Stories on the Way to Enlightenment. London: Watkins Publishers

Unno, M (2020) Modern Pure Land Thinkers: Kiyozawa Manshi and Soga Ryojin. In: Bret W. Davis, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy, 1st ed.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Uzdavinys, Algis (2008) Philosophy as a Rite of Rebirth: From Ancient Egypt to Neoplatonism. Chepstow, UK: The Prometheus Trust.

Vallejo, I/ Whittle, C (trans) (2022) *Papyrus: The Invention of Books in the Ancient World.* London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

Vidyākara (ed)/Ingalls, D.H.H (trans) (1968) Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's "Treasury". Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

Vernezze, P.J (2008) Moderation or the Middle Way: Two Approaches to Anger. Philosophy East and West [Online] Vol 58 (1) pp. 2-16. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20109444.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A2ce52d28ba0f937ad5c89f3e8a2bed9f&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results [Accessed 15th February 2022]

Voas, D and Bruce, S (2018) Religion: Identity, Behaviour and Belief Over Two Decades. British Social Attitudes. [Online] (36) pp. 1-29. Available at: https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39293/1_bsa36_religion.pdf [Accessed 10th September 2022]

Vout, C (2022) Exposed: The Greek and Roman Body. London: Profile Books Ltd

Waddell, N and Waddell, N.A (1994) A Chronological Biography of Zen Priest Hakuin (Hakuin Oshō Nempu). The Eastern Buddhist [Online] Vol 27 (1) pp. 96-155. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/44362011.pdf?refreqid=fastly-

default%3A60ba6d4e0f7f102577ef391c0b041d7c&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6451%2Ftest&origin=search-results [Accessed 29th July 2022]

Wallis, G (Trans, 2004) The Dhammapada: Verses on the Way. New York: Modern Library/Random House, Inc.

Walsh, D (1938) The Poetic Use of Language, *The Journal of Philosophy* [Online] Vol 35 (3) pp. 73-81. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2018444.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Ab8fc13b7aab4e9e4eb1e877ee7db5bfa&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 13th March 2023]

Walsh, P.G (trans)/Boethius (1999) The Consolation of Philosophy. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Warren, J (2009) Removing Fear. In J Warren, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Washington, P (ed) (2003) Haiku. New York, London, Toronto: Everyman's Library Pocket Poets/Alfred A Knopf

Waterfield, R (trans)/Plato (1993), Republic. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Waterfield, R (trans) (2000) The First Philosophers: The Presocratics and the Sophists. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Watts, E.J (2017) Hypatia: The Life and Legend of an Ancient Philosopher. Oxford: Oxford University Press

White, D.A (1989) POETRY AND THINKING : HEIDEGGER AND THE QUESTION OF RIGHTNESS. Revue Internationale de Philosophie [Online] Vol 43 (168) (1) pp. 64-79. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23946692.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ad31a90349e43041d3f2941e926641026&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6451%2Ftest&origin=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 20th July 2022]

Whitmarsh, T (2017) Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World. London: Faber & Faber Ltd

Whitmore, S (ed) et al (2015) The Silk Roads: Peoples, Cultures, Landscapes. London: Thames & Hudson.

Wilkinson, G (2018/2019) Going to the Pine: Four Essays on Basho. Franksbridge, UK: Geoffrey M. Wilkinson

Williams, P (With Tribe, A) (2000) Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction To The Indian Tradition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Williams, P (2009) Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations 2nd edition. New York: Routledge

Wolf, M (1994-1995) THE APHORISM. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics.* [Online] Vol 51 (4) pp. 432-439. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42577598.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ac7b5901d77c0400f623

ffa699d7c2853&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 13th September 2023]

Woolf, G (2015) ANCIENT ILLITERACY? *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies.* [Online] Vol 58 (2) pp. 31-42. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26343312.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Ad0ce01d15a504b4fb3d31da2fe9b2030&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=&initiator=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 25th August 2023]

Wright, D.S (1992) Rethinking Transcendence: The Role of Language in Zen Experience. Philosophy East and West [Online] Vol 42 (1) pp. 113 – 138. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1399693.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3Adb573080e9819e1d3b51a2047e9ba66d&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&origin=search-results&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 14th July 2022]

Yates, F (1999) *The Art of Memory*: Selected Works of Francis Yates Volume III. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

Young, J (2001) *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yu, J (2014) The Body in Spiritual Exercise: A Comparative Study between Epictetan Askēsis and Early Buddhist Meditation. Asian Philosophy. [Online] Vol 24 (2) pp. 158-177. Available at: https://www-tandfonline-com.ntu.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/09552367.2014.919752?needAccess=true [Accessed 30th November 2021]

Xinru, L (2019) Buddhism and Trade: Moving Eastwards From Gandhara to China. In: Susan Whitfield, ed. *Silk Roads: Peoples, Cultures, Landscapes, 1st ed.* London: Thames & Hudson