



ARTICLE

The Use and Misuse of Pleasure: Hadot *Contra* Foucault on the Stoic Dichotomy *Gaudium-Voluptas* in Seneca

MATTEO JOHANNES STETTLER
Deakin University, Australia

ABSTRACT. Chapter II of Foucault's *The Care of the Self*, 'The Cultivation of the Self,' is arguably one of the most controversial sections of the entire *History of Sexuality*. The diatribe over this chapter was initially mounted by Pierre Hadot's critical essay 'Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self.' Therein, Hadot objects to Foucault's dissolution of the Stoic doctrinal antinomy between *voluptas* ('pleasure') and *gaudium* ('joy') and, thereby, to the relegation of the latter notion to the subordinate status of 'another form of pleasure', on the one side, and of Seneca himself to the problematic rank of a sort of Epicurean on the other. The present investigation aims to unveil this aspect of the Foucault-Hadot *querelle* as only a pseudo-controversy engendered by Seneca recurring to two different terminological registers throughout his writings: the so-called *verbum publicum* and the *significatio Stoica*.

Keywords: Pierre Hadot, Michel Foucault, Seneca, pleasure, joy, philosophy as a way of life.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter II of Foucault's *The Care of the Self*, 'The Cultivation of the Self,' is undoubtedly one of the most suggestive and controversial sections of the entire *History of Sexuality* multivolume series. *Suggestive*, first, for it is philosophically situated at the intersection of an "ever-increasing tension" in Foucault's late research intentions: as Gros notes, that of "writing a reorganized history of ancient sexuality in terms of the problematic of techniques of the self" and, on the other hand, "to study these techniques for themselves, in their historic-ethical dimensions."¹ *Controversial*, second, for it eventually came at the center of many

¹ Frédéric Gros, "Course Context," in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982* (2005), 513-514. From Elden's remarkable reconstruction in *Foucault's Last Decade*, we apprehend that the second of these projects, originally envisioned by Foucault as "a book separate from the sex series" with the title *Le Souci de Soi*, never saw the light at the time of his premature passing. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth; The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 Vol. I*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1997), 255. Besides Chapter II and III of the eventually

discussions in contemporary literature. The diatribe was ignited early on by Foucault's coeval and conational philosopher and classicist Pierre Hadot and his critical essay 'Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self', explicitly conceived, as its title suggests, as a direct rejoinder to this precise chapter of Foucault's *The Care of the Self*.² Amid various critiques, Hadot rejects Foucault's presentation of Hellenistic-Roman ethics (and, more critically, of Stoic ethics) as "an ethics of the pleasure one takes in oneself."³ He objects to Foucault's dissolution of the Stoic antinomy between *voluptas* ('pleasure') and *gaudium* ('joy'), and, thereby, the relegation of the notion of *gaudium* to the subordinate status of "another form of pleasure", on the one side, and of Seneca himself to the problematic rank of an Epicurean of sorts on the other.⁴ On this precise point of contention of the Hadot-Foucault *querelle*, contemporary scholarship fragmented into a variety of more or less diverse interpretative positions, depending on their respective reception of Hadot's contentions. Re-echoing Hadot's own concerns, Davidson has argued that "it is misleading for Foucault to speak of the joy described by Seneca as 'a form of pleasure,'" concluding that "Hadot's interpretation of these ancient texts is the historically accurate interpretation."⁵ Montanari instead received Hadot's critique as fundamentally unwarranted as, he argues, Foucault did sufficiently manage to differentiate the notions of *voluptas* and *gaudium* by assigning them diverse modes of manifestation (exogenous *vs.* endogenous).⁶

published *The Care of the Self*, traces of this material are to be found in Foucault's 1981-1982 Lectures at the Collège de France (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*), the content of which, as Elden noted, "is much closer to what Foucault originally envisioned *Le Souci de Soi* would do than the actually published book of that title is." Elden, *Foucault's Last Decade*, 170.

² Note that elsewhere Hadot sets himself to "observe to what extent our [sc. his and Foucault's] interests and concerns converged by comparing the summaries of Foucault's 1981-82 course at the *Annuaire du Collège de France* and [his own] article 'Exercices spirituels.'" Pierre Hadot, "An Interrupted Dialogue with Michel Foucault: Convergences and Divergences," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa (2020), 228. As Gros noted, *The Hermeneutics* indeed "appears as a considerably expanded and developed version of one small chapter in *The Care of the Self* entitled 'The Culture of the Self'" (in Burchell's English translation), or, alternatively, 'The Cultivation of the Self' (in Hurley's). Gros, "Course Context," 508.

³ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (1995), 207. A reconstruction of Hadot and Foucault's respective position on this issue has recently been advanced by Cassiana Lopes Stephan, "Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault: sobre a felicidade estoica e a experiência da alegria," *Sapere Aude* 7:13 (2016). A classical contribution on the dialogue between Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot more generally remains Thomas Flynn, "Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 31:5-6 (2005). On Hadot's and Foucault's different conceptualizations of the spiritual exercises of the ancients, see Elettra Stimilli, "Esercizi spirituali o tecniche di vita? Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault a confronto," *Pensiero: rivista di filosofia* 46:1/2 (2008). More recently also Laura Cremonesi, "Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault on Spiritual Exercises: Transforming the Self, Transforming the Present," in *Foucault and the History of Our Present*, ed. Sophie Fuggle, Yari Lanci and Martina Tazzioli (2015).

⁴ Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 207.

⁵ Arnold I. Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (2005), 129 and 144, n23.

⁶ Moreno Montanari, *Hadot e Foucault nello specchio dei Greci: La filosofia antica come esercizio di trasformazione* (2009), 25-27. Other aspects of the Hadot-Foucault *querelle* are discussed by the same author in "La Filosofia antica come esercizio spirituale e cura di sé nelle interpretazioni di Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault," *Studi Urbinati, B - Scienze Umane e Sociali* 80 (2010).

However, the scholar who went the furthest in exploring this issue is undoubtedly Irrera, who devoted to it an entire article.⁷ According to the latter, not only does Hadot himself often fail to distinguish *gaudium* from *voluptas* in his own historical-doctrinal reconstruction of the philosophical works of antiquity,⁸ but, as the scholar is keen to qualify, in Hadot's own framework, the only way in which this distinction could possibly hold is by "*anchor[ing] the notion of practice to theories that are prior and foundational to it,*" such as his alleged "*theory of universality as normative exteriority.*"⁹ This realization brings Irrera to draw far-reaching conclusions for what concerns Hadot and Foucault's different methodological approaches, that is, the historical-doctrinal and the genealogical method, respectively:

It is clear that the taxonomic activity of the historian of philosophy, however supported by honest, meticulous and anyhow necessary philological work, can be performed only starting from the choice of determined paradigms – in this [sc. Hadot's] case, a theory of transcendence – a choice that sublimates into methodological praxis, and finally hides behind the alleged neutrality and non-judgmental character of philological analysis, or behind the more or less objective exposition of undisputable historical-doctrinal contents. The special Foucaultian method of inquiry [sc. the genealogical method] does without just these issues, and distinguishes itself from Hadot's, or any other historian of philosophy's, intentions of historical-doctrinal reconstruction.¹⁰

However correct Irrera might be in pointing out that Hadot himself often employs the notions of 'joy' and 'pleasure' somewhat interchangeably in his works, that Hadot's historical-doctrinal method – or, possibly even more radically, *any* historical-doctrinal method – of studying ancient philosophical texts should suffer from such severe theoretical biases strikes us as a radical and quite indefensible claim. As Hadot made clear on several occasions throughout his *oeuvre*, in fact, his method of inquiry – heavily influenced by the 'second' Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* as it was¹¹ – was originally devised precisely to

⁷ Orazio Irrera, "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self: Notes on 'A Dialogue Too Soon Interrupted' Between Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36:9 (2010); Cf. Federico Testa, "Towards a History of Philosophical Practices in Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot," *PLI: the Warwick Journal of Philosophy* (2016), 169, n2

⁸ Following Irrera, on this point, see also Matthew Sharpe, "Towards a Phenomenology of Sagesse: Uncovering the Unique Philosophical Problematic of Pierre Hadot," *Angelaki* 23:2 (2018), 129.

⁹ Irrera, "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 1008. "Given Hadot's own non-Heideggerian thinking of presence," Sharpe recently wondered "how Hadot might have responded to this critique." Matthew Sharpe, "Introduction: Situating Hadot Today," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa (2020), 8. Interestingly, Irrera's position was already sketched early on by Simonazzi, in the provisional conclusions of his study: "The activity of research should [...] deepen [...] the theme [...] of the necessity, in Seneca's stoicism itself, to 'conquer' [...] a universal point of view, only starting from which, perhaps Hadot would argue, it is possible to distinguish between the concept of *voluptas* and *gaudium*." Moreno Simonazzi, *La formazione del soggetto nell'antichità: La lettura di Michel Foucault e di Pierre Hadot* (2007), 194. Translation mine.

¹⁰ "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 1008-9.

¹¹ On the influence that Wittgenstein's thought exercised on Hadot, see his introductory remarks in Pierre Hadot, *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage* (2004). On the theme, also Sandra Laugier, "Pierre Hadot as a

repossess the philosophical works of antiquity from the hands of fundamentalist interpreters and to re-situate them in the "living *praxis*" from which they originally emanated.¹² The whole purpose of Hadot's methodological approach, to turn Irrera's claim on its head, is declaredly *to anchor the notion of theory to a series of practices that are prior and foundational to it*, those being the famous spiritual exercises which gave to his entire body of work perhaps its most recognizable *leitmotif*.¹³ As Hadot explains in *The Present Alone is Our Happiness*, that of Wittgenstein's 'language games'

is an idea that had guided all my works. When one is in the presence of a text, or an utterance, it is not sufficient to take this text or this utterance in the absolute, as though it had not been uttered by someone in particular, under particular circumstances, on a particular day, during a particular period and in a determinate context. This is a weakness of religious fundamentalists, and is in fact shared by many historians of philosophy or by philosophers who conduct themselves as fundamentalists. They approach a text as though it was the word of the gospel, as though God had pronounced it, and cannot be restituted in space and time. On the contrary, the historical and psychological perspective is very important in the history of philosophy, because it is always a question of re-placing the claims of philosophers into the social, historical, traditional, and psychological context in which they were written.¹⁴

As we shall contend *contra* Irrera, Hadot can reclaim a sharp distinction between the Stoic notions of 'joy' and 'pleasure' – or, equivalently, can negate to the Stoic notion of *gaudium* the status of 'another form of pleasure' – not so much because of an unescapable theoretical bias that would supposedly vitiate from the onset his historical-doctrinal method of analysis, as, quite contrarily, because of his failure to apply also in this case his historical-doctrinal methodology of analysis itself. In the present investigation, we thus follow closely Hadot's own "methodological imperative"¹⁵ and attempt to re-situate Seneca's use of the terms *voluptas* and *gaudium* in the rhetorical context of the two terminological registers that the Stoic philosopher introduces in his *Epistula* 59:¹⁶ the exoteric *verbum publicum* (literally,

reader of Wittgenstein," *Paragraph* 34, no. 3 (2011). Wittgenstein's influence on Hadot did not go undetected by Arnold I. Davidson, "Introduction: Pierre Hadot and the Spiritual Phenomenon of Ancient Philosophy," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (1995), 18-19. More recently, also José Miguel Fernández, "Spiritual Exercises and Language Games: The Influence of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Language on Pierre Hadot's Approach to Ancient Philosophy as a Way of Life," *Littera Scripta. Revista Filosofía* 3 (2022).

¹² Pierre Hadot, *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot. Philosophy as Practice*, trans. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa (2020), 57; also 84.

¹³ Hadot tells us exactly so also in the opening comments of *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (2004), 3. "Philosophical discourse," he writes there, "originates in a choice of life and an existential option – not vice versa."

¹⁴ Pierre Hadot, *The Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson* (2009), 134-135. On this methodology, see also Hadot's considerations in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 61. Also the 'Postscript' to *ibid.*, 280.

¹⁵ Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 274.

¹⁶ For Seneca's writings, the present investigation refers to the latest English translations of *The Complete Works of Lucius Annaeus Seneca* by The University of Chicago Press. For the *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* (*Epistulae* hereafter), I refer to Margaret Graver and A.A Long, *Seneca, Letters on Ethics: to Lucilius* (2015). For the

'public word') and the esoteric *significatio Stoica* ('Stoic meaning'). By doing so, we will be able to reconcile, on the very same textual ground, Hadot's and Foucault's respective accounts of Seneca's notion of *gaudium* – as seemingly referring to the *significatio Stoica* of 'joy' and the *verbum publicum* of 'pleasure,' respectively –, and thereby unveil this front of the Hadot-Foucault *querelle* as a 'pseudo-problem' engendered by Seneca's recourse to different terminological registers.¹⁷ As we shall try to demonstrate, depending on the specific rhetorical circumstances of each one of his utterances, Seneca refers to that joyful emotion ensuing from virtue either with the Stoic doctrinal meaning of 'joy' (*gaudium*) or with the vulgar meaning of 'pleasure' (*voluptas*), thus respectively erecting or collapsing at liberty the traditional Stoic distinction between *gaudium* and *voluptas*. This being its program, the present investigation is thus structured as follows: first, we introduce Foucault's analysis in the critical chapter II of *The Care of the Self* (Section I); second, I discuss in detail Hadot's criticism, as appeared in 'Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self'' (Section II); third, I will put to the test Foucault's and Hadot's respective interpretations by consulting Seneca's writings (Section III).

I. FOUCAULT'S TAKE: THE HEDONISTIC STRUCTURE OF THE GRECO-ROMAN SUBJECT

Chapter II of the *Care of the Self* opens with Foucault's chronicle of a significant phenomenon that emerged in the transition from the Classical to the Imperial era: the unprecedented degree of intensity reached by the problematization of the *aphrodisia*. Far from reflecting the coercive intervention of institutional authorities or the promulgation of more restrictive moral codes – such as those eventually in effect in the successive Christian epoch –, let alone the manifestation of an ascending individualistic preoccupation, Foucault prompts us to comprehend the tenor of this renovated emphasis on sexual austerity in the Imperial era in terms of the strengthening of the structure of reflexivity proper to the Greco-Roman self-constituting ethical subject – or, in his terms, of "an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constituted oneself as the subject of one's acts."¹⁸ Although retaining its *genus* in Greek culture, such a phenomenon, as Foucault chronicles, reached its apex of intensity and valorization – in other terms, enjoyed its "golden age" – precisely in the Hellenistic-Roman *ethos* of the "cultivation of the self."¹⁹

De vita beata (*De vita* hereafter) we refer to 'On the Happy Life,' as contained in the volume Elaine Fantham et al., *Seneca, Hardship and Happiness* (2014). For the Latin, our texts of reference are L. D. Reynolds, *L. Annaei Senecae Ad Lucilius Epistulae Morales*, II vols. (1965) and Pierre Grimal, *L. Annaei Senecae De vita beata. Sénèque, Sur le bonheur* (1969). For the *Epistulae*, references are given, as conventional, to the number of the letter and the paragraph. For the *De Vita*, similarly, references are given to the chapter and the paragraph.

¹⁷ I use Wittgenstein's term 'pseudo-problem' only in *sensu lato* to signify, as Gill noted, a question to which we should not attempt to find an answer but that we should try to dissolve in the realm of language. Jerry H. Gill, "Wittgenstein and the Function of Philosophy," *Metaphilosophy* 2:2 (1971), 137.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality* (1990), 41.

¹⁹ Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 45. On what Foucault calls "the period of the golden age of the culture of the self," see also *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82*, 30ff.

Critically, in the last section of the chapter, Foucault contends that this art of existence – an art that, in the distinctively Hellenistic-Roman phenomenon of the 'cultivation of the self', developed from, and came to rest upon, the Greek injunction *heautou epimeleisthai* ('care for oneself') – was grounded on the principle of *epistrophe eis heauton* ('conversion to self').²⁰ In the wake of Hadot's pioneering work on conversion,²¹ Foucault qualifies that such *conversio ad se*, in late antiquity, asked of Greco-Roman selves a radical transformation of the way in which they attended to specific activities and directed their attention so that they might continually take care of themselves.²² This intense and continuous form of ethical reflexivity, although being inscribable within the same horizon of the Pagan "ethics of control," Foucault specifies, finds in the Imperial era its articulation in *modes* and *domains* other than that, respectively, of the Greek self-*agon* and of an ontology of forces: that is, in his own words, other than "the agonistic form of a victory over forces difficult to subdue and of a dominion over them."²³ Foucault thus identifies two modes assumed by such ethical reflexivity in late antiquity: what we might refer to as the politico-judicial and the hedonistic modes of ethical self-possession – only the latter of which constitutes relevant material for the present reflection. Drawing a parallel with the preceding "heautocratic structure of the subject" in effect in classical Greece,²⁴ Foucault notes that in the Hellenistic period

the experience of self that forms itself in this possession is not simply that of a force overcome, or a rule exercised over a power that is on the point of rebelling; it is the experience of a pleasure that one takes in oneself. The individual who has finally succeeded in gaining access to himself is, for himself, an object of pleasure.²⁵

Having identified in this hedonism the constitutive principle of the Greco-Roman subject, Foucault does not recast the traditional Stoic antinomy between *gaudium* (or *laetitia*) and *voluptas* in its historical-doctrinal significance – that is, the contraposition between the domains of *eupatheia* and *pathos* –, but alongside three axes, only two of which hitherto identified by scholars: that is, in terms of (1) the moral genetics of these two states of the soul (endogenous *vs.* exogenous), as Montanari already noted;²⁶ in terms of (2) the temporal

²⁰ Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 64-65.

²¹ In *The Hermeneutics*, Foucault acknowledges explicitly his debt to Hadot's 1953 article 'Epistrophè et metanoia dans l'histoire de la philosophie,' which he considers as "an absolutely fundamental and important analysis." Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82*, 216. Hadot's text has recently been published with an English translation by Andrew Irvine as "Epistrophe and Metanoia in the History of Philosophy," *Philosophy Today* 65:1 (2021). Hadot has produced two other texts expressly devoted to the notion of conversion, only one of which has been translated into English to date. Pierre Hadot, "Conversion," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020). See also the shorter Pierre Hadot, "Conversio," in *Discours et mode de vie philosophique*, ed. Xavier Pavie (2014).

²² Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 64-65.

²³ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 66. See also Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82*, 214. There Foucault writes, in reference to one of the defying axis of the Greco-Roman model of the *conversio ad se*: "You experience a pleasure in yourself, an enjoyment or delight."

²⁶ Montanari, *Hadot e Foucault nello specchio dei Greci*, 25-27.

modes of their manifestation (stable *vs.* unstable), as Irrera pointed out;²⁷ and, as I shall add, also in terms of (3) their qualities (serene *vs.* violent). As Foucault writes, in a passage that is worth reporting at length: this "pleasure that one takes in oneself,

for which Seneca usually employs the word *gaudium* or *laetitia*, [...] is defined by [1] the fact of not being caused by anything that is independent of ourselves and therefore escapes our control. [...] It is characterized as well by [2] the fact that it knows neither degree nor change, but is given as a 'woven fabric,' and once given no external event can rend it. [...] [It] is a state that [3] is neither accompanied nor followed by any form of disturbance in the body or mind.²⁸

According to Foucault's reconstruction, *gaudium* or, equivalently, *laetitia*, is thus a form of pleasure that is (1) endogenously generated, (2) temporally stable, and (3) qualitatively nonviolent. This state of the *animus*, Foucault is keen to observe, for Seneca, can be contrasted "point by point"²⁹ – that is, on the (1) endogenous-exogenous, (2) stable-unstable and (3) violent-nonviolent axes – with another sort of pleasure, which thus presents itself as (1) exogenously generated, (2) temporally unstable, and (3) qualitatively violent. In Seneca's writings, the term *voluptas*, Foucault writes, in fact

denotes a pleasure [1] whose origin is to be placed outside us and in objects whose presence we cannot be sure of: a pleasure, therefore, [2] which is precarious in itself, undermined by the fear of loss, and [3] to which we are drawn by the force of a desire that may or may not find satisfaction.³⁰

"In place of this kind of [3] violent, [2] uncertain, and [1] conditional pleasure," that is, *voluptas*, Foucault concludes, supporting his contention by referring to Seneca's *Epistula* 23, "access to self is capable of providing a form of pleasure that comes, [3] in serenity and [2] without fail, of [1] the experience of oneself,"³¹ namely, *gaudium*. If Foucault seems to be aware of this threefold distinction traceable between *gaudium* and *voluptas*, we now have to ask, as Irrera himself did,³² why he insists on considering them *just* two 'different forms of pleasure,' as Hadot lamented. Can there be, ultimately, any justification for the Foucauldian historical-doctrinal indifference to the Stoic dichotomous domains of *eupatheia* and *pathos*? As we shall now consider, for Hadot, surely there is not.

²⁷ "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 997.

²⁸ Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 66. Additions mine. Note that the order of the phrases of this passage has been re-arranged to provide a more linear exposition of the threefold axis that, according to Foucault, characterizes the Stoic notion of *gaudium*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.* Additions mine.

³¹ *Ibid.* Additions mine.

³² "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 997.

II. HADOT'S REBUTTAL: THE PURITY OF INTENTION OF THE STOIC MORAL CONSCIENCE

Hadot presented his critical 'Reflections on the Idea of 'The Cultivation of the Self'' on the occasion of the *Rencontre Internationale* given in Paris between the 8th and the 11th of January 1988 to commemorate the fourth anniversary of Foucault's death.³³ Having taken note of Foucault's references to his early works,³⁴ Hadot seized that opportunity to "offer a few remarks with a view to delineating the differences of interpretation [...] which separate us, above and beyond our points of agreements," as he himself puts it.³⁵ As anticipated in the introductory section, Hadot rejects Foucault's construal of Greco-Roman ethics (and, more critically, Stoic ethics) as "an ethics of the pleasure one takes in oneself" – a position which, to his regard, presents "a great deal of inexactitude."³⁶ Challenging him on the same textual ground – Seneca's *Epistula* 23 –, Hadot finds Foucault "a little off-hand [*un rien désinvolte*]"³⁷ at the moment in which he allegedly conflates the notions of *voluptas* and *gaudium*, thereby consigning, on the one side, the notion of *gaudium* to the subordinate status of "another form of pleasure," and, on the other, Seneca himself to the inappropriate rank of a sort of Epicurean.³⁸ As Hadot points out in his last interviews, when asked to summarize the distance that separated him from Foucault:

My first divergence concerns the notion of pleasure. For Foucault, the ethics of the Greco-Roman world is an ethics of pleasure that one takes in oneself: This could be true for the Epicureans, who Foucault ultimately speaks of rather little. But the Stoics would have rejected this idea of an ethics of pleasure. They were careful to distinguish pleasure and joy.³⁹

Far from being a sterile philological cavil, for Hadot, the Stoics carefully delimited both conceptually and terminologically the sphere of *hedone* ('pleasure') from the domain of

³³ Hadot's article first appeared in English as Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Notion of 'The Cultivation of the Self,'" in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher* (1992). Three years later, it was eventually republished in *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995) – with the relevant exclusion of the report of the discussion following Hadot's presentation.

³⁴ Foucault mentions Hadot both in *The Use of Pleasure*, and, more critically, in a fundamental note of *The Care of the Self*. In the former, he confesses to have "benefited greatly" from Hadot's works. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality* (1990), 8; also 271. In the second, Foucault refers the reader back to Hadot's early collection of essays *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* for "an interesting discussion of these themes" revolving around the cultivation of the self. Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 243.

³⁵ *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 206.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 207. That Hadot's critique of Foucault is in turn "a matter of factual inexactitude" was more recently Giorgio Agamben's claim in *The Use of Bodies: Homo Sacer IV* (2016), 99. *Contra* the latter's intervention in the Hadot-Foucault *querelle*, see recently Matthew J Sharpe and Matteo J Stettler, "Pushing Against an Open Door: Agamben on Hadot and Foucault," *Classical Receptions Journal* 14:1 (2022).

³⁷ Hadot, Pierre. "Foucault dans le texte," *Philosophie Magazine* 36 (2018), 91. Translation mine. Excerpt from Pierre Hadot, *La philosophie comme manière de vivre* (2001), 214-215.

³⁸ *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 207. Similarly, see also Hadot, "The Figure of the Sage in Greek and Roman Antiquity," 199.

³⁹ Hadot, *The Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson*, 136.

eupatheia ('good feeling')⁴⁰ precisely because they abstained from grounding the realm of moral life on the principle of pleasure. According to Hadot, the Stoics jealously endeavoured to preserve "the purity of intention of the moral conscience," thus inaugurating that trajectory of moral reflections which eventually culminated with Kant and modern deontological ethics.⁴¹ From the point of view of Hadot's historical-doctrinal reconstruction, in the ultimate analysis, "it seems difficult to accept that the philosophical practice of the Stoics [...] was nothing but [...] a pleasure taken in oneself," as Foucault allegedly maintained⁴²

Two main conclusions may be drawn from this preliminary analysis. On the one side, while differentiating the two notions alongside the three axes described above, Foucault does expand the semantic scope of the notion of pleasure to embrace both *voluptas* and *gaudium/laetitia*, as Hadot lamented – whether rightly or not is a matter to be ascertained in due time. On the other, however, Foucault does *not* seem to be committed to the view for which this latter 'form of pleasure' *qua gaudium* is to be understood as the ultimate end of the Stoic moral life, that is, its *summum bonum* ('the supreme good'), as it was for the Epicureans. Foucault settled this issue early on in the imputed chapter 'The Cultivation of the Self,' where he made clear that it is "[the] relation to self that constitutes the end of the conversion and the final goal of all the practices of the self,"⁴³ and not that 'form of pleasure' that is associated with the self's successful access to itself, namely *gaudium*. In this

⁴⁰ *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 207. The somewhat confusing contraposition of *eupatheia* and *hedone* is Hadot's, even though, for a Stoic, it would make more sense contraposing the domains of *pathos* and *eupatheia* on the one side, and the spheres of *hedone* and *chara* on the other. *Chara* ('joy') is in fact only one of the three *eupatheiai* ('good feelings'), alongside *boulesis* ('wish') and *eulabeia* ('caution'). While *hedone* ('pleasure') is one of the four *patheiai* ('passions'), alongside *epithumia* ('desire'), *phobos* ('fear'), and *lupe* ('pain'). On this, see Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (1992), 104 and 114.

⁴¹ *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 207. Translation modified. I've rendered Hadot's French *conscience* with the English 'conscience,' rather than 'consciousness.' Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (2002), 325.

⁴² *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 208.

⁴³ Foucault, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 65. That this is the case can be best appreciated by looking at one of Foucault's most interesting case studies in the Hellenistic-Roman practices of the self, that of the *hupomnemata*. "Such is the aim of the *hupomnemata*," Foucault writes in his essay 'Self Writing,' "to make one's recollection of the fragmentary *logos* [...] a means of establishing a relationship of oneself with oneself, a relationship as adequate and accomplished as possible." Michel Foucault, "Self Writing," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (1997), 211. Similarly, see also Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," 272. It is worth noting that it is at this point that Hadot's critique of Foucault on the Stoic notion of *gaudium* gets entangled with his wider critique of Foucault's lack of consideration for the Stoic notion of cosmic consciousness. That these two Hadotian lines of argument are "interconnected" was noted by Irrera, "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 996. Following the latter, see also Stephan, "Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault: sobre a felicidade estoica e a experiência da alegria," 234. Somewhat similarly, also according to Wimberly: "From Hadot's perspective, Foucault's aims would seem to be heading in the wrong direction, toward *voluptas* and away from the Universal." Cory Wimberly, "The Joy of Difference: Foucault and Hadot on the Aesthetic and the Universal in Philosophy," *Philosophy Today* 53:2 (2009), 199. Simonazzi proposed a similar reading of the debate when he wrote that "he [sc. Hadot] states that 'Foucault presents the ethics of the Greco-Roman world as an ethics of pleasure that one takes in oneself,' while, on the contrary, according to Hadot, the main purpose of this ethics is to go beyond the individual self." Simonazzi, *La formazione del soggetto nell'antichità: La lettura di Michel Foucault e di Pierre Hadot*, 121. While agreeing with Irrera et al. on this point, we think nonetheless that Hadot's criticism on Foucault's misuse of the notion of pleasure might find its separate resolution.

sense, for Foucault, the practices of ethical self-constitution of the Stoics were not solely concerned with that pleasure that one takes in oneself, as Hadot wrongly presumed, but they *also* procured 'a form of pleasure' – as seen above, a very specific one –, issuing as a by-product of a successful ethical reflexivation, that is, of the establishment of a stable and accomplished relationship of the self with itself.⁴⁴ As we shall see in the following, this reading is substantiable by solid textual references.

III. SENECA'S TERMINOLOGICAL REGISTERS: VERBUM PUBLICUM AND SIGNIFICATIO STOICA

Anyone even remotely acquainted with later antiquity, even a self-declared novice Hellenist or Latinist like Foucault himself,⁴⁵ would certainly concur with Hadot in claiming that the Stoic *summum bonum* – that in which, according to the philosophers of the Porch, *felicitas* ('happiness') resides – "does not consist in pleasure but in virtue itself, which is its own reward."⁴⁶ "True happiness [*vera felicitas*]," as Seneca asserts unmistakably in the *De Vita*, "is located in virtue."⁴⁷ Nonetheless, we must grant Foucault that Seneca was one of those Stoic philosophers who regularly confronted Epicurus in his writings and who availed himself abundantly – and, as we shall see, often not unproblematically – of the notion of *voluptas*, even on those occasions in which, from the point of view of the Stoic doctrine, one would have expected the recourse to the more traditional term *gaudium*.⁴⁸ A primary point of reference concerning these notions – a reference left unnoticed by both Foucault and Hadot – is provided by Seneca's *Epistula* 59.⁴⁹ There, after having employed the term *voluptas* to denote the 'great pleasure' (*magna voluptas*) that he derived from Lucilius' correspondence, as we shall see, Seneca disambiguates the term by explicitly

⁴⁴ That, for the Stoics, *gaudium* accompanies virtuous actions without being itself the objective of said actions is what Hadot himself tells us elsewhere. Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (1998), 240. That *chara* is a by-product of virtue, a so-called *epigenema*, can be seen in SVF III 76.

⁴⁵ "I am neither a Hellenist nor a Latinist" was Foucault's disclaimer in *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*, 7.

⁴⁶ Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self,'" in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (1995), 207.

⁴⁷ Seneca, *De vita beata*, 16.1.

⁴⁸ As DeLacy noted, in discussing the role of poetry in Stoic literature: "[t]he term *hedone* is also used in a favourable sense, even in contexts where strict usage would have required *chara*." Phillip DeLacy, "Stoic Views of Poetry," *The American Journal of Philology* 69:3 (1948), 250. Similarly, see also Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (2015), 71. Following the latter, see Jennifer A. McMahon, "Beauty as Harmony of the Soul: the Aesthetic of the Stoics," in *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference of Greek Studies 2009*, ed. Marietta Rosetto, Michael Tsianikas, George Couvalis and Maria Palaktsoglou (2012), 57. On Seneca's notion of *gaudium* and its relation to the Stoic tradition, see Margaret Graver, "Anatomies of Joy: Seneca and the Gaudium Tradition," in *Hope, Joy, and Affection in the Classical World*, ed. Ruth R. Caston and Robert A. Kaster (2016).

⁴⁹ The relevance of this passage is highlighted by Evenepoel, "The Stoic Seneca on *virtus*, *gaudium* and *voluptas*," 46-47. By the same author, see also "Seneca on *virtus*, *gaudium* and *voluptas*: Some Additional Observations," *Antiquité Classique* 85 (2016).

distinguishing the two terminological registers by which he usually speaks of it: what he calls 'the common parlance' (*verbum publicum*) and the 'Stoic meaning' (*significatio Stoica*).⁵⁰

A. VOLUPTAS: PLEASURE QUA FALSE JOY

Voluptas, taken in its common connotation, Seneca qualifies to Lucilius, is "the word we generally use to refer to a glad feeling of the mind [*animi hilarem adfectionem*]." ⁵¹ Conversely, in the Stoic doctrine – or, as Seneca himself writes, "if we make words adhere to our statutes [*nostrum album*]" –, the term *voluptas* comes to acquire its distinctive negative acceptance, denoting something that, ultimately, "is discreditable [*rem infamem esse*]" ⁵² – a "fault [*vitium*]." ⁵³ Even a pleasure as innocent as that derived from a friend's correspondence – a surge conventionally deemed honourable by ordinary individuals – is enough of a reason, in the context of *Epistula* 59, for awakening Seneca's suspicion and, ultimately, for issuing a warning against a potential *falsum bonum* ('false good'):

I was not wrong to say that I derived great pleasure [*magnam...voluptatem*] from your letter. For even though the untrained person may be rejoicing for an honorable reason, still I refer to his emotion [*adfectum*] as pleasure [*voluptatem*], because it is unruly and swift to revert to the opposite state, and because it is set in motion by belief in a false good and is uncontrolled and excessive.⁵⁴

Significantly, at the end of *Epistula* 59, Seneca borrows a line from Virgil's *Aeneid* to define *voluptates* as *falsa gaudia* ('deceiving or false joys'). Addressing his contempt to *voluptas*-seeking individuals, Seneca writes:

When people have worn themselves out with wine and lust; when their vices outlast the night; when the pleasures [*voluptates*] they have consumed beyond the narrow limits of the body begin to suppurate; then in their misery they speak aloud that familiar line of Virgil:

⁵⁰ Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 59.1. Seneca's distinction of these two terminological registers should certainly be read on the background of his use of philosophical language. Regarding the latter, as Armisen-Marchetti concluded, "Seneca's effort oscillates, in a constant dialectic, between a necessary technicality and a desired simplicity. A necessary technicality: Seneca has an excellent knowledge of stoicism and he is careful to render its concepts with scrupulous precision. But also a deliberate simplicity: the philosopher does not want to deviate from common language [...]. The simplicity of the discourse is a response to the requirements of ancient philosophical teaching and the direction of conscience." Mireille Armisen-Marchetti, "La langue philosophique de Sénèque: entre technicité et simplicité," *Antike und Abendland* 42:1 (1996), 84. Translation mine. While the term *significatio Stoica* does not seem to compare elsewhere in Seneca's writings (or in any other Stoic Latin text), as far as I could ascertain, Seneca uses the term *verbum publicum* in *De beneficiis*, VI, 34.3, in reference to the standard and commonplace greeting 'Good day.' More interestingly, Seneca distinguishes the *verbum proprium* and the *verbum quasi publicum* for the notion of 'friend' in *Epistulae*, 3, 1.

⁵¹ Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 59.1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 59.2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 59.1. That in this passage the term *hedone* is given "some definite technical sense" was also noted by Richard P. Haynes, "The Theory of Pleasure of the Old Stoa," *The American Journal of Philology* 83:4 (1962), 417. However, there seems to be nothing to indicate that Seneca's distinction between the *verbum publicum* and the *significatio Stoica* belonged to the Stoa as a whole, however certainly possible that might be.

⁵⁴ *Epistulae morales*, 59.4.

*For you know how we spent that night, our last, amid deceiving joys.*⁵⁵

Indulging themselves, they spend every night amid deceiving joys [*falsa gaudia*], as if it were indeed their last.⁵⁶

It would thus seem that, when understood in its traditional Stoic acceptance, any form of *voluptas* – from the simplest (that derived from a friend's letter) to the wildest (spending nights of unconsidered self-indulgence) –, for Seneca, denotes an amenability to seek after a *falsum bonum*, and it is thus best characterized as a *falsum gaudium*. In such capacity, as Hadot correctly maintained, *voluptas* seems to be irremediability set against *gaudium*.⁵⁷

B. GAUDIUM/LAETITIA: JOY QUA TRUE PLEASURE

According to Seneca, the term *gaudium*, intended in its Stoic acceptance, is brought forth solely by acting in conformity to *virtus*, that is, to the *verum bonum* ('true good'):⁵⁸ "joy [*gaudium*] pertains only to the wise person, for it is the elevation of a mind toward goods that are real and its own."⁵⁹ Even though only the sage, the Stoic ideal of perfection,⁶⁰ would be able to experience this *status animi* in his own or in his Stoic companion's virtuous conduct,⁶¹ as Seneca points out in *Epistula* 59, referring now to the common and vulgar acceptance of the term *gaudium*,

in our ordinary speech we often say that we are overenjoyed [*magnum gaudium*] that one person was elected consul, or another was married or that his wife has given birth, events which, far from being causes for joy [*gaudia*], are frequently the beginnings of future sorrow. For it is an attribute of joy that it never ceases or turns into its opposite.⁶²

⁵⁵ *Aeneid*, 6.513-514.

⁵⁶ *Epistulae morales*, 59.17-18.

⁵⁷ For the opposition *voluptas-gaudium*, see *SVF* III 431-4, and 438. Cf. also Seneca, *De vita beata*, 3, 4.

⁵⁸ Cf. pleasure as *falsum bonum* ('false good') in Seneca *Epistulae morales*, 59.4. For *gaudium* as deriving from virtuous conduct, see also Cicero, *De finibus*, V, 69.

⁵⁹ *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 59.2.

⁶⁰ It was a rather conventional feature of Hellenistic-Roman ethical reflections to be framed around the words and deeds of the sage, who functioned as the very "transcendental ideal" for people to conform with. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 57. See especially Hadot, "The Figure of the Sage in Greek and Roman Antiquity," But also Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 220.

⁶¹ Seneca, *De vita beata*, 4.4. Also according to Graver: "Unlike the ordinary flawed person who delights wrongly in empty things, the wise person who is the Stoic ideal [...] would experience joy in his own character and good deeds or those of virtuous friends. [...] To experience it [sc. joy], Lucilius must perfect his character since only a fully virtuous and wise person possesses the genuine goods that are the proper object of joy." Graver and Long, *Seneca, Letters on Ethics: to Lucilius*, 517. Seneca repeats several times in the *Epistulae* that joy is a state of the soul reserved to the sage. See *Epistula* 27, 3-4; 72, 4-5; and 124, 23-24.

⁶² *Epistulae morales*, 59.2. Also Graver reminds us of what "distinguishes joy as a philosophical idea from joy in the common or pretheoretical sense of that word. While both Greek and Latin speakers could in general speak of joy or rejoicing (*χαρά/χαίρειν*, *gaudium/gaudere*) as what anyone might experience in response to perceived good fortune, Stoic philosophers restricted those terms to their normative inquiry into the inner experience of the optimal agent," that is the sage. Graver, "Anatomies of Joy: Seneca and the Gaudium

It is exactly this *gaudium*, as technically understood by the Stoics (that is to say, the *verum gaudium* originating in *virtus*), rather than the one commonly conceived by ordinary people (that is to say, the *falsum gaudium* deriving from the vain goods of fortune),⁶³ that Seneca is exhorting Lucilius to learn how to experience in the much-discussed *Epistula* 23, the interpretation of which Hadot and Foucault so profoundly disagreed over. "Don't rejoice in empty things [*Ne gaudeas vanis*]," Seneca reminds his pupil there; this is the *fundamentum* ('foundation') – or, better, as Seneca immediately qualifies, the *culmen* ('pinnacle') – of any good mind (*mens bona*).⁶⁴ At a first reading, it would thus seem that Hadot is quite justified in calling out Foucault on his interpretation of this *Epistula*, for, as the former argued, there "Seneca explicitly opposes *voluptas* and *gaudium* – pleasure and joy – and one cannot, therefore, speak of 'another form of pleasure,' as does Foucault [...] when talking about joy."⁶⁵ And yet, although *gaudium*, or *laetitia*,⁶⁶ does remain Seneca's doctrinal term for the joy ensuing from virtue, in the very context of *Epistula* 23, this *status animi* is successively counted among the ranks of other *voluptates* in a manner that seems to depose in favour of the Foucauldian interpretation. In fact, in discouraging Lucilius from chasing any of the goods of fortune, Seneca tells his pupil that he is not depriving him of *voluptates* ('pleasures'), for he still wishes that his heart may be filled with *laetitia* – a statement which would seem to implicate that, for the purposes of the present utterance, this joyful state associated with virtue might, after all, be regarded as 'another form of pleasure,' as Foucault claimed:

Do this above all, dear Lucilius: learn how to experience joy [*disce gaudere*]. Do you now suppose that because I am removing from you the things of fortune and think you should steer clear of hopes, those sweetest of beguilements, I am taking away many pleasures [*multas voluptates*]? Not at all: what I want is that gladness [*laetitia*] should never be absent from you. I want it to be born in your own home – and that is what will happen if it comes to be inside of you. Other delights [*ceterae hilaritates*] do not fill the heart; they are trivial feelings that merely smooth the brow. Surely you don't think that every person who smiles is rejoicing [*gaudere*]! The mind must

Tradition," 133. See also the scholar's comments on Seneca's *Epistula* 23 in Graver and Long, *Seneca, Letters on Ethics: to Lucilius*, 517.

⁶³ Note that the emotion which Seneca referred to with the *significatio Stoica* of the term *voluptas* (*Epistula* 59, 18-18) and the one referred to with the *verbum publicum* of the term *gaudium* (*Epistula* 59, 2) can be both characterized as a *falsum gaudium* because both are unstable emotions susceptible of eventually turning into their opposite, while for Seneca the *verum gaudium* is an uninterrupted and unchanging emotion. This seems to suggest that the emotion that ordinary people vulgarly call *gaudium* corresponds to what the Stoics doctrinally designate as *voluptas*. As we shall see, exactly the opposite seems to hold for the *significatio Stoica* of the term *gaudium*, to which Seneca sometimes refers with the non-doctrinal meaning of the term *voluptas*. See especially footnote n72 *infra*.

⁶⁴ *Epistulae*, 23, 1.

⁶⁵ *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 207.

⁶⁶ As both Foucault and Hadot recognized, Seneca seems to refer indistinctively to the joy provoked by conducting oneself in accordance with *virtus* as either *gaudium* or *laetitia*. See Seneca, *De vita beata* 4.4; 15.2; and 22.3. Note that in *Tusculanae* IV, 66, Cicero distinguishes *gaudium* from *laetitia*, the latter characterizing an exaggerated form of joy.

be energetic and confident; it must be upright, superior to every trial. Believe me, real joy [*verum gaudium*] is a serious matter.⁶⁷

This is not the only occasion in the entire Senecanian *corpus* in which, somewhat confusingly, the Stoic philosopher opts to refer to an *eupatheia* (such as the *gaudium* or *laetitia* deriving from virtue) using the term that traditionally connotes its opposite state of the soul, that is a *pathos* (such as *voluptas*), thus suspending, at least terminologically, the doctrinal antinomy between them. As Bocchi most interestingly noted,⁶⁸ that seems to occur also in the *Naturales quaestiones*, 6, 2, 2, where Seneca elaborates as follows on an exhortation delivered to the Trojans by Aeneas in the Virgilian epic: "If you want to be afraid of nothing [*si vultis nihil timere*] regard everything as something to be afraid of [*cogitate omnia esse metuenda*]."⁶⁹ Interestingly, on this occasion, Seneca recurs to using, evidently in its untechnical acceptance, the term *metus* ('fear'), the *pathos* of a future evil, in order to refer to its rationally justified correspondent: namely, *cautio* ('caution'), the *eupatheia* of an apparent future evil. As Bocchi pointed out when commenting on this passage of the *Quaestiones naturales*, with an observation that we wish to extend here also to the *Epistulae* – two texts which, relevantly enough, were addressed to Lucilius –, Seneca most likely resorts to using *metus* and *voluptas* to designate their corresponding *eupatheiai* because he lacks the appropriate terms for what Graver calls the 'progressor emotions' of the *proficiens*,⁷⁰ as both *gaudium* and *cautio* are traditionally considered unachievable by the latter and to belong only to the Stoic sage. In the *Quaestiones naturales*, as Bocchi noted, "Seneca, unable to use *cautio* for ordinary cases, finds himself without a term that expresses the attitude of serene expectation of future events typical of those who are not completely immune to the passions: therefore, the philosopher's choice falls on a term [*sc. metus*] that is at this point used with implied correction."⁷¹ A similar consideration, we would like to suggest, holds for the term *gaudium* in the *Epistulae*: given that Seneca could not possibly use it for ordinary cases such as Lucilius', he finds himself lacking the term to express precisely that rationally justified state of enjoyment of a present good (namely, virtuous conduct) experienced sporadically by an individual who is still working his or her way through the path of wisdom: thus, he resorts to using its corresponding *pathos*, namely *voluptas*, in a non-doctrinal sense, that is, in a *significatio non Stoica* or in its *verbum publicum*.⁷²

⁶⁷ *Epistulae*, 23, 3-4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Seneca, *Quaestiones naturales*, V, 2, 2. Translation by Harry M Hine, *Seneca, Natural Questions* (2010).

⁷⁰ Margaret Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (2007), 191-121. Brennan similarly referred to these states of the *proficiens*' soul as 'veridical emotions.' Tad Brennan, "The Old Stoic Theory of Emotions," in *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Juha Sihvola and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (1998). Graver explains the origin of these emotions elsewhere. See "Pre-emotions and Reader Emotions in Seneca: *De ira* and *Epistulae morales*," 293.

⁷¹ Bocchi, "A proposito di Seneca critico: l'ambivalenza al servizio dell'allegoria," 228, n17. Translation mine. That *gaudium* "pertains only to the wise person" we have seen above at *Epistulae*, 59, 2. That also *cautio* belongs exclusively to the sage can be gathered, according to Bocchi, by reading *Epistulae* 85, 26, where such state of the soul is characterized as *vitare mala*. *Ibid.*

⁷² Referring to the joy that he derived from reading Lucilius' correspondence with the non-doctrinal meaning of the term *voluptas* is, I think, exactly what we find Seneca doing at first in the opening of *Epistula* 59, 1, where that state of the soul is defined as an *adfectio hilaris animi* ('glad feeling of the mind'). Importantly, *hilaritas continua et laetitia* ('an unceasing cheerfulness and joy') is exactly the way in which Seneca refers in

Several other examples of the same lexical procedure can be detected in other Senecan writings, especially in the *De vita beata*.⁷³ At the beginning of this work, we find Seneca expanding the Stoic standard definition of the happy life – that is, “the life in agreement with its own nature [*vita conveniens naturae suae*]”⁷⁴ – into six different definitions, for, as he explains, recurring to the simile of the army, on which we shall have to return,

Our good [*bonum nostrum*] can also be defined in a different way – that is, the same proposition can be grasped with different words. Just as one and the same army is spread out more widely one moment and compacted more tightly the next, [...] but no matter how it has been ordered it has the same strength and the same will to stand up for the same cause – so the definition of the highest good [*summi boni*] can sometimes be spread out and extended, and at other times be compressed and collected into itself.⁷⁵

As Asmis has argued, one of Seneca's aims in laying down these six definitions – on the specific content of which we shall not linger here – was to provide a correction to that “entrenched perception” whereby the Stoic *virtus* was “a stern and cheerless ideal – hardly such as to make a person happy.”⁷⁶ To do so, as the scholar claims, Seneca decides to place in almost all his definitions of the Stoic *vita beata* much emphasis on the joy ensuing from virtuous conduct, as against the triviality of bodily pleasures. In the first definition, thus Seneca tells us that “when pleasures and pains have been rejected, a huge joy [*ingens gaudium*] comes in to replace those things that are trivial and fragile and actually prompt self-disgust – a joy unshaken and unvarying.”⁷⁷ In the second, he assures us that “the mind looking down on the things of fortune” does so “joyous in virtue [*virtute laetus*].”⁷⁸ Similarly, in the fifth definition, Seneca doubles down on the difference between joy and pleasure: virtue is always accompanied by “an unceasing cheerfulness [*hilaritas continua*] and a joy [*laetitia*] that is deep and comes from deep within”⁷⁹ – a state of the soul with which “the tiny, trivial and impermanent movements of that meager thing, the body” cannot certainly rival.⁸⁰ Interestingly, however, the contraposition between the stable joys attending to virtue and the fleeting pleasures deriving from the goods of fortune does not prevent Seneca from mixing things up terminologically in the fourth definition, where he refers to the former state of the soul (which is doctrinally referred to as *gaudium*) by using the doctrinal term traditionally

a doctrinal manner to the joy ensuing from virtue in *De vita beata*, 4, 4. This seems to be the case, even though later on in the very same *Epistula*, Seneca evidently shifts terminological register, referring to the doctrinal meaning of the term *voluptas*. Cf. Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 59.4. On this complicated passage of *Epistula* 59, where Seneca evidently struggles to find the right vocabulary to correspond with Lucilius, see Graver, “Pre-emotions and Reader Emotions in Seneca: *De ira* and *Epistulae morales*,” 294-295.

⁷³ That there exists “a non-technical and less connoted acceptance of the term [*voluptas*], as a generic synonym of *gaudium*” in Seneca’s *De clementia*, I, 1, 1, was Malaspina’s claim. Ermanno Malaspina, *L. Annaei Senecae De clementia libri duo: Prolegomeni, testo critico e commento* (2005), 233. Translation mine.

⁷⁴ Seneca, *De vita beata*, 4, 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4, 1.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Asmis, “Seneca's On the Happy Life and Stoic Individualism,” *Apeiron* 23:4 (1990), 223

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, 2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4, 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

reserved for the latter (*voluptas*, although with the qualifier *vera*), thus suspending terminologically their dichotomous relationship: "One may also define it [sc. the Stoic *summum bonum*] in such a way as to say that that human being is happy [*beatum*] [...] to whom true pleasure will be scorning pleasures [*cui vera voluptas erit voluptatum contemptio*]." ⁸¹

At this point in the argumentation of the *De vita beata*, there intervenes a fictitious interlocutor with patent Epicurean sympathies who advances his reserves on the Stoic definitions of the happy and virtuous life that Seneca has just laid out. While recasting the old-age conflict with the Epicureans concerning the incompatibility of virtue and pleasure, Seneca ends up conceding to his interlocutor that *voluptates* may even be part of the Stoic conception of the happy life, provided that they have "the same status for us as auxiliaries and light-armed soldiers have in an army camp, where they must serve rather than give orders." ⁸² Interestingly, for our purposes, pressed by his fictitious interlocutor to address another Epicurean position, namely, "do not cultivate virtue for any other reason than that you hope for some pleasure from it," Seneca resorts once again to defying the joy attached to virtue with that term that in the Stoic doctrine traditionally designates its corresponding *pathos*, namely, *voluptas*, which is thus here evidently employed in its *significatio non Stoica*:

First, just because virtue is going to provide some pleasure [*voluptatem*] does not mean that this is the reason why it is sought. It does not provide pleasure, you see, but provides it also. Nor does it toil for pleasure: rather, its toil will attain this as well, even though it is seeking something else. ⁸³

To this, Seneca suggestively adds the following rhetorical image of cultivation ('of the self,' one might be tempted to add), which seems to corroborate Foucault's take on the so-called hedonistic structure of the Greco-Roman subject, as above analyzed:

Just as in a field that has been plowed for corn some flowers grow up in between, yet all that work was not undertaken for this little plant, however much it pleases the eyes (the sower had another outcome in mind, and this supervened) – so too, pleasure [*voluptas*] is not the reward or the motive of virtue but an accessory [*accessio*]; and it is not approved of because it gives pleasure, but, if approved of, it gives pleasure also. ⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid., 4. 2. As Asmis already noted, "In this gnomic statement (4, 2), Seneca exceptionally uses the term *voluptas* instead of *gaudium* to refer to the joy of a virtuous mind, in order to score a rhetorical point." Asmis, "Seneca's On the Happy Life and Stoic Individualism," 232, n46. To this reading, Dyson has objected in "Pleasure and the *Sapiens*: Seneca *De vita Beata* 11.1," *Classical Philology* 105:3 (2010), 315, n11. For a similar use of *voluptas*, see *Epistulae morales ad Lucilius*, 18, 10. See also *solida voluptas* in *Ad Helviam matrem de consolatione*, 5, 5. Cf. also *De beneficiis*, 7, 2, 3-4, where the Stoic and Epicurean *voluptates* are compared: "the pleasure that is worthy of a human being and worthy of a real man is not to fill up the body [...]; it is freedom from disturbances." Translation by Miriam T. Griffin, *Seneca, On Benefits* (2011). For a similar usage, see also *De beneficiis* 4, 13, 1-2.

⁸² *De vita beata*, 8, 2. Cf. footnote n85 *infra*.

⁸³ Ibid., 9.1. Hadot mentions this passage in *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, 240. As Irrera rightly noted, here "Hadot talks indifferently about pleasure, rather than only about joy." Irrera, "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self," 1004.

⁸⁴ *De vita beata*, 9.1.

As his present purpose is that of addressing exclusively the consequentialist conception of virtue held by the Epicureans and thus the relationship that should ideally intervene between virtue and its corresponding state of the soul (whether it be pleasure for the Epicureans or joy for the Stoics), rather than the very definition of the *summum bonum* (pleasure for the Epicureans, virtue for the Stoics), Seneca finds it fitting here to temporarily archive the Stoic doctrinal antinomy between *gaudium* and *voluptas* in order to put into better focus his point and make his case in favor of the Stoic deontological view of virtue: if the Epicureans sought virtue for the *status animi* that it produces, namely, *voluptas*, the Stoics, he tells us, pursue virtue for itself, quite independently from its *epigennema* ('by-product') or, as we are told here, its accessory (*accessio*), which Seneca decides on this occasion to designate with the non-doctrinal term *voluptas* (rather than *gaudium*).⁸⁵

CONCLUSION

It is our contention that one way in which we might make sense of Seneca's terminological liberality in referring to the joy attached to virtue – the very problematic passage from his usage of *voluptas* in its *verbum publicum*, to which Foucault seems to refer, to that of *gaudium* in its *significatio Stoica*, as seemingly brandished by Hadot – lies in a passage of the *De vita* that significantly precedes the above quoted definition of the Stoic happy life, where this *eupatheia* is referred to as *vera voluptas*.⁸⁶ There, as we have seen, Seneca claims that the Stoic *summum bonum* – which is usually defined as "the life in agreement with its own nature [*vita conveniens naturae suae*]" – "can also be defined in a different way – that is, the same proposition can be grasped with different words."⁸⁷ We are inclined to argue that something similar might be said for the definition of that state of the soul that, according to the Stoic doctrine, always accompanies the possession of virtue, namely joy.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Evenepoel is of the same impression when he lists *De vita beata*, 9, 1-2, as one of those occasion in which Seneca refers to the joy brought about by virtuous conduct as *voluptas*. Evenepoel, "The Stoic Seneca on *virtus*, *gaudium* and *voluptas*," 47. Cf. Asmis, "Seneca's On the Happy Life and Stoic Individualism," 239: "In his flower image, Seneca is not describing joy, but the short-lived, intermittent pleasures that follow upon the attainment of natural ends. As in his comparison of pleasures to auxiliaries [*De vita beata*, 8, 2], he views pleasures as spontaneous, unsought 'accessions', or *epigennemata*, that come when we 'preserve' natural endowments." Yet, as the scholar knows well, also *chara* is for the Stoics an *epigennema*. Asmis must have evidently been confused by Seneca's use of the term *voluptas* in a non-doctrinal manner to refer to the joy deriving from virtue, even though she is well aware that Seneca "exceptionally" does so for rhetorical purposes. *Ibid.*, 232, n46. In conclusion: what Seneca "subverts" here is thus not his "doctrine," as Asmis thinks, but only his doctrinal terminological register (that is, his *significatio Stoica*). *Ibid.*, 239. On the relationship between the *epigennemata* of pleasure and joy, see Anthony A Long, "Aristotle's Legacy to Stoic Ethics," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 15 (1968), 80

⁸⁶ It must be noted that it is precisely this sort of "contradictions, and lack of rigor and coherence" of the philosophical works of Greco-Roman antiquity that originally prompted Hadot to interpret ancient philosophy as a set of spiritual exercises and, ultimately, as a 'way of living.' Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, 61. For this, I sense, Hadot's rigidity in the interpretation of Seneca's technical vocabulary, and, thereby, his associated critique of Foucault's flexibility, is even more lamentable.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 4, 1.

⁸⁸ The validity of this assumption rests on the fact that, in *De vita*, Seneca defines almost each one of the six definitions of the Stoic *summum bonum* in terms of the joy that accompanies it. As much as the Stoic good

In fact, such a definition also seems to be a fluid and dynamic one and to be graspable with different *verba*: very much like Seneca's metaphorical army, the definition of the joy deriving from virtue may itself assume diverse configurations – at times expanding its semantic coverage to be assimilated to the notion of *voluptas*, as reflected in the Foucauldian interpretation, at others, compressing it, so as to re-establish the doctrinal antinomy between *gaudium* and *voluptas* that is so central to Hadot's reading of Stoic ethics – every time depending on the circumstances of each specific utterance and the interlocutors involved therein.

As we have seen, in the *Epistulae*,⁸⁹ – a text which is significantly addressed to the *proficiens* Lucilius –, Seneca cannot help but designate in a non-doctrinal manner the so-called 'progressor emotion' of joy experienced by his pupil with its corresponding *pathos*, namely, *voluptas*, as the state of *gaudium* remains, from a doctrinal point of view, the prerogative of the Stoic sage. Whenever a point of contention with the Epicurean school is instead being debated, such as in *De vita*, we found Seneca similarly resorting to defying the joy attending to virtue with the vulgar acceptance of the term *voluptas*. In those cases in which what is at stake is the difference between the Stoic and Epicurean *summum bonum*, Seneca usually refers to the restraining of pleasures as being itself the source of a higher and more noble form of *voluptas*: namely, *vera voluptas*.⁹⁰ The same holds for those passages in which he is addressing the difference between the consequentialist and deontological conceptions of virtue held by the Epicureans and the Stoics, respectively. There Seneca finds it similarly useful to temporally suspend the doctrinal antinomy *gaudium-voluptas* and to refer in a non-technical way to the *accessio* of virtue as a form of *voluptas* in order to get his point across better to his hostile interlocutor.⁹¹

Conversely, when his discourse is centered around the figure of the Stoic sage, and it is not addressed to interlocutors extraneous to the School of the Porch, Seneca does not hesitate to employ the term *gaudium* in its *significatio Stoica* to refer to the unceasing joy that always accompanies virtue, thus fully adhering to the doctrinal antinomy *gaudium-voluptas*.⁹² If the pieces of evidence collected so far are sound, and our reasoning on the latter is correct at least as much as we hope they both are, then the double semantic register with which Seneca quite liberally employs the notion of *gaudium* and *voluptas* throughout his writings has allowed us to reconcile on the same textual ground Hadot's and Foucault's respective accounts of the joyful state ensuing from virtue, the former being seemingly guided by the doctrinal acceptance of the term *gaudium*, the latter by the vulgar acceptance of the term *voluptas*. It is worth noting, in conclusion, that such results have

(i.e., virtue) can be defined pointing to a virtuous individual "to whom true pleasure [that is, joy] will be scorning pleasures," we are legitimated in assuming that Seneca's following considerations concerning the fluid and dynamic definition of the Stoic 'good' shall apply as well to the state accompanying it, that is, joy. *De vita beata*, 4, 2.

⁸⁹ Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 23, 3-4.

⁹⁰ *De vita beata*, 4, 2. See *solida voluptas* in *Ad Helviam*, 5, 5. The contrast between Stoic and Epicurean pleasures in *De beneficiis* 4, 13, 1-2; 7, 2, 3-4.

⁹¹ *De vita beata*, 9, 1.

⁹² *Epistulae*, 59, 2.

been reached by attending closely to Hadot's own historical-doctrinal method of reading ancient texts (and not casting doubts on its presuppositions, as Irrera did) – a method which, however, the French scholar himself, like those fundamentalist philosophers and historians of philosophy that he so harshly reproached, has failed to stand by on this occasion.

References

- Agamben, Giorgio, *The Use of Bodies: Homo Sacer IV*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Annas, Julia. *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Armisen-Marchetti, Mireille, "La langue philosophique de Sénèque: entre technicité et simplicité," *Antike und Abendland* 42:1 (1996), 76-84. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110241549.76>
- Asmis, Elizabeth, "Seneca's On the Happy Life and Stoic Individualism," *Apeiron* 23:4 (1990), 219-256. <https://doi.org/10.1515/APEIRON.1990.23.4.219>
- Beardsley, Monroe C., *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015.
- Bocchi, Giuseppe, "A proposito di Seneca critico: l'ambivalenza al servizio dell'allegoria," in *Analecta Brixiana*, ed. Alfredo Valvo and Gian Enrico Manzoni, 221-231. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2004.
- Brennan, Tad, "The Old Stoic Theory of Emotions," in *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Juha Sihvola and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, 21-70. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1998.
- Cremonesi, Laura, "Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault on Spiritual Exercises: Transforming the Self, Transforming the Present," in *Foucault and the History of Our Present*, ed. Sophie Fuggle, Yari Lanci and Martina Tazzioli, 195-209. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015.
- Davidson, Arnold I., "Introduction: Pierre Hadot and the Spiritual Phenomenon of Ancient Philosophy," In *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, 1-45. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995.
- Davidson, Arnold I., "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," In *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, 123-148. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- DeLacy, Phillip, "Stoic Views of Poetry," *The American Journal of Philology* 69:3 (1948), 241-271. <https://doi.org/10.2307/291357>
- Dyson, Henry, "Pleasure and the *Sapiens*: Seneca *De vita Beata* 11.1," *Classical Philology* 105:3 (2010), 313-318. <https://doi.org/10.1086/658630>
- Elden, Stuart, *Foucault's Last Decade*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.
- Evenepoel, Willy, "The Stoic Seneca on *virtus*, *gaudium* and *voluptas*," *L'Antiquité Classique* 83:1 (2014), 45-78. <https://doi.org/10.3406/antiq.2014.3847>
- Evenepoel, Willy, "Seneca on *virtus*, *gaudium* and *voluptas*: Some Additional Observations," *Antiquité Classique* 85 (2016), 211-216. <https://doi.org/10.3406/antiq.2016.3893>
- Fantham, Elaine, Harry M. Hine, James Ker, and Gareth D. Williams. *Seneca, Hardship and Happiness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

- Fernández, José Miguel, "Spiritual Exercises and Language Games: The Influence of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy of Language on Pierre Hadot's Approach to Ancient Philosophy as a Way of Life," *Littera Scripta. Revista Filosofía* 3 (2022), 1-22.
- Flynn, Thomas, "Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 31:5-6 (2005), 609-622. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453705055492>.
- Foucault, Michel, *The Care of the Self: Volume 3 of the History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth; The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 Vol. I*, ed. Paul Rabinow, 253-280. New York: The New Press, 1997.
- Foucault, Michel, "Self Writing," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, 207-222. New York: The New Press, 1997b.
- Foucault, Michel, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82*. New York: Picador, 2005.
- Gill, Jerry H., "Wittgenstein and the Function of Philosophy," *Metaphilosophy* 2:2 (1971), 137-149. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9973.1971.tb00234.x>
- Graver, Margaret, *Stoicism and Emotion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Graver, Margaret, "Anatomies of Joy: Seneca and the Gaudium Tradition," in *Hope, Joy, and Affection in the Classical World*, ed. Ruth R. Caston and Robert A. Kaster, 123-142. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Graver, Margaret, "Pre-emotions and Reader Emotions in Seneca: *De ira* and *Epistulae morales*," *Maia: Rivista di letteratura classica* 69:2 (2017), 281-296.
- Graver, Margaret, and A.A Long, *Seneca, Letters on Ethics: to Lucilius*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015.
- Griffin, Miriam T., *Seneca, On Benefits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Grimal, Pierre, *L. Annaei Senecae De vita beata. Sénèque, Sur le bonheur*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969.
- Gros, Frédéric, "Course Context," in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, 507-550. New York: Picador, 2005.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Reflections on the Notion of 'The Cultivation of the Self'," in *Michel Foucault, Philosopher*, 225-232. Exeter: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
- Hadot, Pierre, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Reflections on the Idea of the 'Cultivation of the Self'," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, 206-213. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.
- Hadot, Pierre, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Hadot, Pierre, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2002.

- Hadot, Pierre, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2004.
- Hadot, Pierre, *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage*. Paris: Vrin, 2004.
- Hadot, Pierre, *The Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Conversio," in *Discours et mode de vie philosophique*, ed. Xavier Pavie, 133-137. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Foucault dans le texte," *Philosophie Magazine* 15 (2018), 91.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Conversion," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa, 90-103. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.
- Hadot, Pierre, "An Interrupted Dialogue with Michel Foucault: Convergences and Divergences," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa, 227-234. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Hadot, Pierre, "The Figure of the Sage in Greek and Roman Antiquity," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa, 186-206. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Hadot, Pierre, *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot. Philosophy as Practice*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Hadot, Pierre, "Epistrophe and Metanoia in the History of Philosophy," *Philosophy Today* 65:1 (2021), 201-210.
- Haynes, Richard P., "The Theory of Pleasure of the Old Stoa," *The American Journal of Philology* 83:4 (1962), 412-419.
- Hine, Harry M., *Seneca, Natural Questions*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Irrera, Orazio, "Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self: Notes on 'A Dialogue Too Soon Interrupted' Between Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36:9 (2010), 995-1017.
- Laugier, Sandra, "Pierre Hadot as a reader of Wittgenstein," *Paragraph* 34:3 (2011), 322-337.
- Long, Anthony A., "Aristotle's Legacy to Stoic Ethics," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 15 (1968), 72-85.
- Malaspina, Ermanno, *L. Annaei Senecae De clementia libri duo: Prolegomeni, testo critico e commento*. Alessandria: Ed. dell'Orso, 2005.
- McMahon, Jennifer A., "Beauty as Harmony of the Soul: the Aesthetic of the Stoics," in *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference of Greek Studies 2009*, ed. Marietta Rosetto, Michael Tsianikas, George Couvalis and Maria Palaktsoglou, 54-63. Modern Greek: Adelaide, 2012.
- Montanari, Moreno, *Hadot e Foucault nello specchio dei Greci: La filosofia antica come esercizio di trasformazione*. Milano: Mimesis Edizioni, 2009.
- Montanari, Moreno, "La Filosofia antica come esercizio spirituale e cura di sé nelle interpretazioni di Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault," *Studi Urbinati, B - Scienze Umane e Sociali* 80 (2010), 343-353. <https://doi.org/10.14276/2464-9333.189>

- Reynolds, L. D., *L. Annaei Senecae Ad Lucilius Epistulae Morales*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Sharpe, Matthew, "Towards a Phenomenology of Sagesse: Uncovering the Unique Philosophical Problematic of Pierre Hadot," *Angelaki* 23:2 (2018), 125-138.
- Sharpe, Matthew, "Introduction: Situating Hadot Today," in *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot: Philosophy as Practice*, ed. Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa, 1-29. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
- Sharpe, Matthew and Matteo J. Stettler. "Pushing Against an Open Door: Agamben on Hadot and Foucault," *Classical Receptions Journal* 14:1 (2022), 120-139.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/crj/clab007>
- Simonazzi, Moreno, *La formazione del soggetto nell'antichità: La lettura di Michel Foucault e di Pierre Hadot*. Roma: Aracne Editrice, 2007.
- Stephan, Cassiana Lopes, "Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault: sobre a felicidade estoica e a experiência da alegria," *Sapere Aude* 7:13 (2016), 228-239.
<https://doi.org/10.5752/P.2177-6342.2016v7n13p228>
- Stimilli, Elettra, "Esercizi spirituali o tecniche di vita? Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault a confronto," *Pensiero: rivista di filosofia* 46:1/2 (2008), 95-111.
- Testa, Federico, "Towards a History of Philosophical Practices in Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot," *PLI: the Warwick Journal of Philosophy* (2016), 168-190.
- Wimberly, Cory, "The Joy of Difference: Foucault and Hadot on the Aesthetic and the Universal in Philosophy," *Philosophy Today* 53:2 (2009), 191-202.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday200953261>

Author info

Matteo Johannes Stettler
mstettler@deakin.edu.au
Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Deakin University
Melbourne, Australia

Matteo Johannes Stettler is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at Deakin University (Australia), and a Deakin University Postgraduate Research Scholarship (DUPRS) holder. He collaborates with the research groups "Philosophy as a Way of Life," of the Pontificia Università Gregoriana of Rome, and "Forms of Life and Practices of Philosophy" (particularly the "Art of Living" line of research) of the NOVA Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA) of Lisbon, which he visited for a few months in 2022. Stettler has co-authored with Matthew Sharpe specialistic articles for *Classical Receptions* and *Philosophy Today*, and he has written essays, book reviews, and translations for a variety of non-specialist journals and magazines. His latest publication is "The τῶπος of the Goods of Fortune in *Consolatio* II and III: How to Console and Exhort Boethius" for *Aeuom*.

Acknowledgment

A first version of this paper was drafted for a graduate seminar on the second and third volumes of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* ('Political Philosophy: Advanced Course') held by Dr. David Lloyd Dusenbury at KU Leuven (Belgium) in the fall of 2018. During the same year, a revised version of the paper was presented at the 8th HIW Annual Graduate Student Conference hosted by the same institute. The author wants to thank all the participants at the seminar and the conference, as well as the two anonymous reviewers, whose many suggestions helped give this contribution its final form. A special thanks goes to Willy Evenepoel, who kindly rendered himself available to correspond and share with me his authoritative view on Seneca's notions of joy and pleasure.