



Philosophy as a way of life

Spiritual exercises in ancient, modern and contemporary thought

Research group in the Faculty of philosophy
Thematic focus 2023-2025: Attention

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Such is the lesson of ancient philosophy: an invitation to each human being to transform himself. Philosophy is a conversion, a transformation of one's way of being and living, and a quest for wisdom. (P. Hadot)

Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. (S. Weil)

From antiquity to the modern era the search for wisdom as a way of life has questioned us and this questioning continues to the present day. But how do we set out on this path? The research group—made up of doctoral students, doctors, researchers and professors from various disciplines—intends to engage with this question through meetings and initiatives dedicated, in a general way to the tradition of the spiritual exercises and, in a particular way to the exercise of “attention,” in philosophy, mysticism, psychology, literature.

Simone D'Agostino is Full professor, History of early modern philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. He is the author of *Esercizi spirituali e filosofia moderna: Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza*, Pisa 2017 (*Spiritual Exercises and Early Modern Philosophy: Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza*, Leiden – Boston 2023), and other papers on early modern philosophy, some of them focused on the spiritual exercises in Montaigne, Bacon, Descartes, Locke.

Arnold Ira Davidson is Robert O. Anderson Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago; Distinguished Visiting Professor of Humanities, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Membro Onorario del Corpo Accademico, Università Ca'Foscari, Venezia; Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, France. He is the author of P. Hadot, *The Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson*, Stanford 2008, and editor of many Hadot's and Foucault's books, in English, French and Italian.

Laura Cremonesi, Collège international de philosophie, Paris, and Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, specialises in Contemporary French Philosophy. She has written *Michel Foucault e il mondo antico. Spunti per una critica dell'attualità*, Pisa 2008, and edited *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*, London – New York 2016. She has translated some Hadot's books from French into Italian: *Studi di filosofia antica*, Pisa 2014; and *Studi di patristica e di storia dei concetti*, Pisa 2018.

Marco Cavallaro teaches Philosophy at Higher Institute for Religious Sciences, Mantova. He obtained his PhD at the Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome, with a dissertation published as *Cartesianesimo cristiano e cristologia cartesiana: Una proiezione teologica del pensiero di Descartes*, Milano 2021.

Ana Lucía Montoya Jaramillo, is Assistant professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. She obtained his PhD with a dissertation on “La fenomenología de la atención en Paul Ricœur. La generosidad del cogito encarna-

do.” She published some papers and reviews on Ricoeur. Main research areas: attention and existential phenomenology.

Ludovico Nisi has a PhD in Philosophy, La Sapienza University, Rome. His research focuses on the history of Western asceticism and mysticism, with particular regard to the sphere of meditative practices in the Christian tradition; in recent years he has dedicated his studies to the “Spiritual Exercises” of Ignatius of Loyola, focusing on the historical and cultural impact of Ignatian spirituality in connection with psychoanalysis. He’s the author of *Fuori dell’anima: Ignazio di Loyola e l’immaginazione*, Milano – Udine 2020.

Alessandro Vetuli obtained the double degree PhD in Contemporary Humanism at the LUMSA University, Rome, and the Doctorat canonique de Philosophie, Institut Catholique, Paris. His research focuses on the early modern Italian mystical texts, with a particular attention to the history and hermeneutics of spiritual imagery. He is the author of *Il linguaggio simbolico di Maria Maddalena Martinengo*, Napoli 2019, and other articles dedicated to the mystical literature.

Michele Sciotti O.P is currently an annual professor of History of Modern Philosophy and Christian Philosophy at the Dominican Philosophical Studio in Bologna. He obtained his PhD in Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome, with a dissertation on “La critica di Jules Lequier al cogito cartesiano.” His research interests involve various philosophical fields, mainly Cartesian philosophy, French spiritualism and phenomenology, with a particular focus also on Thomistic and scholastic Philosophy in general. Several are the publications to his credit.

Meury José Carrasquero Delgado is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. Doctoral research topic: “Transformar el mundo humano: Redescripción metafórica y refiguración narrativa en Paul Ricoeur.” Topics of interest: language, reality, metaphor, narration, hermeneutics.

Giulio Conidi is doctoral student, Department of Philosophy, University of Salento (Lecce)/Philosophische Fakultät, Universität zu Köln. His research focuses on the history of the term ‘attention’ (*attentio*) between late Scholasticism (Suárez, Descartes) and its development in the German philosophical context, from the second half of the 17th century (Clauberg, Thomasius) to the Wolffian school (Baumgarten, Meier). The aim of the project is to investigate the links between the two fundamental aspects of the attentional phenomenon (cognitive and moral) in light of the translations and changes in philosophical vocabulary.

Noemi Faustini is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. She is exploring the Kabbalistic influences on Simone Weil’s concept of nothingness within the impersonal and decreed being. Investigating the notions Weil absorbed through the Jewish Parisian scholarship before the Second World War, she focuses on how this conception reached Weil and the level of reception that Weil had of Kabbalistic notions. She has collaborated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, École Normale Supérieure (PhilOfr – République des Savoirs), and is currently a guest researcher at Bar Ilan University, Israel.

Gabriel Gauci is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome, and lecturer of philosophy at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Gozo, Malta. The topic of his dissertation is “*Discretio* e soggettività in Giovanni Cassiano e Gregorio Magno,” moving from Michel Foucault’s interpretation of the notion and practice of *discretio*. His main areas of interest are: latin patristic philosophy; spiritual exercises in late antique Christianity; Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault.

Eugenio La Rosa teaches Religion, High School, Rome, and is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. Doctoral research topic: “Ernst Jünger in Italia, un bilancio critico.” He published “Jünger, tecnica nichilismo e religione: una nuova ipotesi di ricerca,” in C. Caltagirone, ed., *L’umano e le sfide della tecnica*, Brescia 2019; “Rivoluzione antropologica e resistenza spirituale nel pensiero di Ernst Jünger,” in C. Caltagirone – L. Cucurachi, ed., *La condizione techno-umana tra eccesso ed eccedenza*, Brescia 2001.

Pavlo Mykytyn O.S.B.M. is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. His current research “Morale e sensibilità: la coltivazione dei sentimenti in Kant” focuses on the possibility of cultivation of emotions in Kant’s philosophy.

Godfrey Mwansa R.D. is doctoral student, Faculty of philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome; and lecturer of philosophy, Istituto Filosofico-Teologico “San Pietro,” Viterbo. The topic of his doctoral dissertation is “On personal identity and narrative identity: Between Ricoeur and Locke.”

Simona Palumbo is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. Doctoral research topic: “L’attenzione tra illusione, realtà e coscienza in James Sully”. Topics of interest: James Sully; attention; the debate between philosophy and psychology late 19th early 20th century. She published “Il problema della conoscenza in James Sully,” *Mizar* 2 (2019); and James Sully, *Illusioni: Uno studio psicologico*, Lecce 2021.

Federico Rigoni is doctoral student, Faculty of Philosophy, Gregorian University, Rome. Doctoral research topic: “L’immagine in movimento. Fonti, sviluppi ed esiti della riflessione bergsoniana sull’attenzione.” Topics of interest: Bergson, Deleuze, De Certeau, Lacan and the relationship between philosophy, psychoanalysis and mysticism.

Matteo Johannes Stettler is doctoral student, Department of Philosophy, Deakin University, Melbourne. The working title of his doctoral dissertation is “Aristotle’s *Protrepticus* in the Christian Tradition: On Ancient Spirituality and its History.” His article “The τóπος of the Goods of Fortune in *Consolatio* II and III: How to Console and Exhort Boethius” is forthcoming on *Aevum*; he co-authored with Prof. Matthew Sharpe articles for *Classical Receptions* and *Philosophy Today*.