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## Introduction to Philosophy of Pierre Hadot Or On to Spiritual Exercises

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*By focusing on the key concepts of the French philosopher Pierre Hadot – conversion and spiritual exercises – this article provides introduction of the views of this philosopher. Hadot's main research interest was ancient philosophy, and thus he has developed an innovative method for understanding the philosophy of this period. Hadot points out that from his point of view ancient philosophy was primarily a way of life and therefore must be understood as "spiritual exercises". This concept is understood as an effort in changing and transforming the self, which is called conversion in the philosophy of Hadot.*

*Keywords: Pierre Hadot, spiritual exercises, conversion, ancient philosophy.*

### Introduction

From the very beginnings of Western philosophy<sup>1</sup> thinkers have given countless definitions of philosophy from the position of their doctrines. Despite the fact that there have always existed many different interpretations of this discipline, an established stereotype of the philosopher as a theoretician has persisted even until today. It is a stereotype that depicts a professional, who is discussing abstract and theoretical questions within the grasp of the conceptual material known only by himself and others of his kind, alienating this reasoning from the on goings of the everyday life. By exploring the views of the French philosopher Pierre Hadot (1922 – 2010), this article will try to describe an alternative understanding of philosophy.

Pierre Hadot was a philosopher and historian whose general research focus was ancient philosophy. By describing his scientific efforts, the Latvian philosopher Igors Suvajevs points out that the works of Hadot can be divided in two distinct parts. (Juvajevs, 2008, 116) The first part is translations, reconstructed texts and commentary. Hadot has published works of Plotinus, Marius Victorinus, Ambrosius, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. The other part consists of his own researches and reflections: "Marius Victorinus" (1960), "Porphyry and Victorinus" (1968), "Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision" (1963), "Spiritual exercises and ancient philosophy" (1981), "The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius" (1992), "What is ancient philosophy" (1995), "Studies in Ancient Philosophy" (1998), "Philosophy as a Way of

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