

## **The Owl's Flight**



# The Owl's Flight

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Hegel's Legacy to Contemporary Philosophy

Edited by

Stefania Achella, Francesca Iannelli, Gabriella Baptist,  
Serena Feloj, Fiorinda Li Vigni and Claudia Melica

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## Preface

More than fifty years after the emancipatory movements raised by the cultural and socio-political revolution of 1968 and by the birth and spread of feminist movements all over the world, it is time to re-read, from new and thought-provoking perspectives, the role that Hegel attributed in his philosophy to female figures and the relevance that intellectuals, particularly women, ascribed to his thought. The time has come to re-evaluate the accusations of sexism usually addressed to Hegel in order to better understand if the feminine, understood as “other”, has always been necessary to his philosophical project.

This volume springs from the conviction, felt with particular urgency by all the editors, that there is a need to rethink our contemporary interaction with Hegelian philosophy. This need for a renewed comparison with Hegel intends to bring out elements of his philosophy that have not yet been adequately explored – such as the role attributed to the unconscious, to mental illness and to the feminine – as well as latent resonances of his conception of the absolute spirit. Similarly, we intend to take stock of Hegel’s legacy both in the feminist debate and more generally in the philosophy of the twentieth century, divided between rejection of Hegelianism and reconciliation with it.

A first important opportunity to address and reflect chorally on these issues was offered by the first *World WoMen Hegelian Congress*, held in Rome (26–28 September 2018) at the Department of Philosophy of the Sapienza University and supported by the University of Chieti, the University of Roma Tre, the University of Cagliari, the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies of Naples, the Sapienza University of Rome and the University of Parma. The international congress was organized with an important contribution of the whole Scientific Committee of the *Società Filosofica Romana* (SFR), and in particular of its president, Francesca Gambetti (Roma Tre University), under the patronage of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Inter-university Gender Observatory (GIO – *Osservatorio Interuniversitario studi di genere e pari opportunità*) directed by Francesca Brezzi.

That first occasion of intellectual exchange constituted the “antecedent” of the present philosophical project. In that collaborative context, we realized that there was still much to consider; for this reason we decided to invite scholars – valuing the participation of female scholars, often marginalized – from all over the world to give their specific contribution on a rereading of Hegel in an attempt to interpret the Hegelian heritage from different perspectives.

If the emancipatory currents of 1968, especially feminist ones, have challenged and rejected the prejudices arising from a reading of Hegel’s thought

marked in a patriarchal sense, in which, paradoxically, otherness was theorized, but the equality or intellectual superiority of women was excluded, today, more than 50 years after those pioneering emancipatory ambitions, there are the conditions for a fruitful “re-engagement” with Hegel and, more in general, with classical German thought.

This volume is the fruit of these premises, and we sincerely hope it can contribute to a contemporary re-evaluation of Hegel’s Philosophy. The starting point was therefore offered by the question of what Hegel can still communicate today, in a society that often fails in its aspiration to overcome all forms of discrimination. We have endeavored to assemble different contributions aimed at questioning Hegelian philosophy around emerging or sensitive issues such as gender, vulnerability, exploitation, interpersonal and affective relations, community, corporeity and neuroscience. These matters remain in fact the object of brilliant, but scattered, analyses that we strive to unify and problematize here.

For the final revision of the entire volume and the linguistic editing of the essays in German, we warmly thank Mateja Lara Schmidt (Roma Tre University).

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the publisher Walter De Gruyter for welcoming our volume among its prestigious titles.

Rome/Paris, April 2021

Stefania Achella, Francesca Iannelli, Gabriella Baptist,  
Serena Feloj, Fiorinda Li Vigni and Claudia Melica

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Alle Texte, die in: G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, hrsg. in Verbindung mit der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft von der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Hamburg: Meiner 1968 ff., bereits vorliegen, werden nach dieser Ausgabe zitiert.

- GW Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1968 ff.): *Gesammelte Werke*. Ed. by the Academy of Sciences of North Rhine-Westphalia. Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1989): "Frühe Schriften, I". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 1. Nicolai, Friedhelm/Schüler, Gisela (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 2 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2014): "Frühe Schriften, II". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 2. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 4 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1968): "Jenaer kritische Schriften". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 4. Pöggeler, Otto/Buchner, Hartmut (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 5 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1998): "Schriften und Entwürfe (1799–1808)". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 5. Baum, Manfred/Meist, Kurt Rainer (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 9 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1980): "Phänomenologie des Geistes" [1807]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 9. Bonsiepen, Wolfgang/Heede, Reinhard (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 10.1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2006): "Nürnberger Gymnasialkurse und Gymnasialreden" [1808–1816]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 10.1. Grotzsch, Klaus (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 11 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1978): "Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil" [1812–1813]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 11: *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band. Die objektive Logik*. Hogemann, Friedrich/Jaeschke, Walter (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 12 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1981): "Wissenschaft der Logik. Zweiter Teil" [1816]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 12: *Wissenschaft der Logik. Zweiter Band. Die subjektive Logik*. Hogemann, Friedrich/Jaeschke, Walter (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 14.1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2009): "Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts" [1820]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 14.1. Grotzsch, Klaus/Weisser-Lohmann, Elisabeth (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 14.2 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2010): "Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts. Beilagen". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 14.2. Grotzsch, Klaus/Weisser-Lohmann, Elisabeth (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 14.3 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2011): "Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts. Anhang". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 14.3. Grotzsch, Klaus/Weisser-Lohmann, Elisabeth (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.

- GW 17 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1987): "Vorlesungsmanuskript zur Religionsphilosophie". In: *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 17: *Vorlesungsmanuskripte I* [1816–1831]. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 20 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1989): "Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse" [1830]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 20. Bonsiepen, Wolfgang/Lucas, Hans-Christian (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 21 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1985): "Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil" [1832]. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 21: *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil. Die objektive Logik. Erster Band. Die Lehre vom Sein*. Hogemann, Friedrich/Jaeschke, Walter (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 25.2 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2012): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes II". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 25.2: *Nachschriften zu dem Kolleg des Wintersemesters 1827/28 und Zusätze*. Bauer, Christoph Johannes (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- GW 28.1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2015): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst I". In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Vol. 28.1: *Nachschriften zu den Kollegien der Jahre 1820/21 und 1823*. Hebing, Niklas (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.

Abbreviations for other works or text editions of G. W. F. Hegel

Siglen von anderen Werken bzw. Textausgaben Hegels

- Briefe* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1952–54): *Briefe*. Hoffmeister, Johannes (Ed.). 4 vols. Hamburg: Meiner.
- TW Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1986 ff.): *Theorie Werkausgabe. Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Auf der Grundlage der Werke von 1832–1845 neu edierte Ausgabe. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1971): "Frühe Schriften". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 1. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 5 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1986): "Wissenschaft der Logik I. Erster Teil. Die objektive Logik. Erstes Buch". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 5. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 6 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1986): "Wissenschaft der Logik II. Erster Teil. Die objektive Logik. Zweites Buch. Zweiter Teil. Die subjektive Logik". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 6. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 7 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): "Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 7. Mit eigenhändigen Notizen und den mündlichen Zusätzen. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 10 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1986): "Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse" [1830]. In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 10. 3: *Die Philosophie des Geistes. Mit den mündlichen Zusät-*

- zen. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 12 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 12. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 13 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1989): "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik I". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 13. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 14 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik II". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 14. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 15 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): "Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik III". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 15. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TW 18 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1970): "Geschichte der Philosophie I". In: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Vol. 18. Moldenhauer, Eva/Michel, Karl Markus (Eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- TJ Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1907): *Theologische Jugendschriften*. Nohl, Herman (Ed.). Tübingen: Mohr.
- VANM 3 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1983): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion". In: *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Vol. 3: Part 1: *Einleitung. Der Begriff der Religion*. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- VANM 4.1 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1985): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion". In: *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Vol. 4.1: Part 2.1: *Die bestimmte Religion*. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- VANM 4.2 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1985): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion". In: *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Vol. 4.2: Part 2.2: *Die bestimmte Religion. Anhang*. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- VANM 5 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1984): "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion". In: *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Vol. 5: Part 3: *Die vollendete Religion*. Jaeschke, Walter (Ed.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- VANM 13 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1994): "Vorlesung über die Philosophie des Geistes. Berlin 1827/1828. Nachgeschrieben von Johann Eduard Erdmann und Ferdinand Walter". In: *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*. Vol. 13. Hespe, Franz/Tuschling, Burkhard (Eds.). Hamburg: Meiner.
- VPR Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1974): "Philosophie des Rechts. Nach der Vorlesungsnachschrift von H. G. Hotho 1822/23". In: *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie 1818–1831*. Band 3. Iting, Karl-H. (Ed.), Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog.
- Heimann 1828–29 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2017): *Vorlesungen zur Ästhetik. Vorlesungsmitschrift Adolf Heimann (1828/1829)*. Olivier, Alain Patrick/Gethmann-Siefert, Annemarie (Eds.). Munich: Fink.

- Hoppe* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2005): *Die Philosophie des Rechts. Vorlesung von 1821/22*. Hoppe, Hansgeorg (Ed.). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Kehler 1826* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2004): *Philosophie der Kunst oder Ästhetik. Nach Hegel. Im Sommer 1826*. Mitschrift F. C. Hermann, V. v. Kehler. Gehrmann-Siefert, Annemarie/Collenberg-Plotnikov, Bernadette/Iannelli, Francesca/Berr, Karsten (Eds.). Munich: Fink.
- Wannemann* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1983): *Die Philosophie des Rechts*. Die Mitschriften Wannemann (Heidelberg 1917/18) und Homeyer (Berlin 1818/19). Ilting, Karl-H. (Ed.). Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

#### Abbreviations of English translations of Hegel's works

- DFS* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1977): *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*. Harris, Henry S./Cerf, Walter (Eds.). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- EL* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1991): *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*. Geraets, Theodore F./Suchting W. A./Harris, Henry S. (Trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett.
- EPR* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2003): *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Wood, Allen W. (Ed.); Nisbet, Hugh B. (Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ESL* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2010): *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline* (Part I: Science of Logic). Brinkmann, Klaus/Dahlstrom, Daniel O. (Trans. and Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ETW* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1961): *Early Theological Writings*. With an Introduction, and Fragments translated by R. Kroner. Knox, Thomas M. (Trans.). New York: Harper
- Hotho* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2014): *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art. The Hotho Transcript of the 1823 Berlin Lectures*. Brown, Robert F. (Trans. and Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- HPh* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1995): *History of Philosophy 1*. Haldane, Elizabeth S. (Trans.). London: Routledge.
- HS* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1983): *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Human Spirit 1805–6*. Rauch, Leo (Ed.). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- LA 1* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1988): *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art 1*. Knox, Thomas M. (Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Letters* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1984): *The Letters*. Butler, Clark/Seiler, Christiane (Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- LFA* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1975): *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Knox, Thomas M. (Trans.). 2 Vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- LHP 1* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2009): *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–26*. Vol. 1: *Introduction and Oriental Philosophy*, together with the Introductions from Other Series of these Lectures. Brown, Robert F./Stewart, J. Michael/Harris, Henry S. (Trans. and Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- LHP 3* Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1990): *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. The Lectures of 1825–1826*. Vol. 3: *Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. Brown,



- Robert F./Stewart, Jon M. (Eds.), with the assistance of Henry S. Harris (Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LNK** Hegel, G. W. F. (1995): *Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science. The first Philosophy of Right: Heidelberg, 1817–1818, with additions from the lectures of 1818–1819*. Stewart, J. Michael/Hodgson, Peter C. (Trans. and Eds.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LPH** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2001): *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. Sibree, John (Trans. and Ed.). Kitchener: Batoche Books.
- LPH 1857** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1857): *The Philosophy of History*. Sibree, John (transl. and Ed.), third German edition. London: Henry G. Bohn.
- LWH 1822-23** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2011): *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. Volume 1. *Manuscripts of the Introduction and Lectures of 1822–23*. Brown, Robert F./Peter C. Hodgson (Ed. and Trans.) with the assistance of William G. Geuss. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press.
- OC** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1971): *On Christianity*. Knox, Thomas M. (Trans.); Kroner, Richard (Int., Trans. of fragments). New York: Harper Torchbook.
- PhN 1** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2002 [1970]): *Philosophy of Nature*, Vol. 1. Petry, Michael J. (Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- PhN 3** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2004 [1970]): *Philosophy of Nature*, Vol. 3. Petry, Michael J. (Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- PhR** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2001): *Philosophy of Right*. Dyde, Samuel W. (Trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Books.
- PhS** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2018): *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [1807]. Pinkard, Terry (Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018.
- PM** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2007): *Philosophy of Mind* [1830]. *Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Wallace, William/Miller, Arnold V. (Trans.); Inwood, Michael J. (Revis. and Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- PR** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1967): *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Knox, Thomas M. (Trans.). London: Oxford University Press.
- PS** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1977): *Phenomenology of Spirit* [1807]. Miller, Arnold V. (Trans.). Oxford: Clarendon.
- PSS** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1978): *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*. Petry, Michael J. (Ed. and trans.) with introduction and explanatory notes. Dordrecht/Boston: Reidel.
- SEL** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1979): *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*. Harris Henry S./Knox Thomas M. (Trans.). Albany: State University of NY Press.
- SoL** Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (2010): *Science of Logic*. Di Giovanni, George (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The following abbreviations are used for works by other authors:

AA 7	Kant, Immanuel (1905): “Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht”. In: <i>Kant’s gesammelte Schriften</i> . Ed. by the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Vol. 7. Berlin: Reimer.
AA 15.1	Kant, Immanuel (1923): “Reflexionen zur Anthropologie”. In: <i>Kant’s gesammelte Schriften</i> . Ed. by the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Vol. 15.1. Berlin: Reimer.
AA 15.2	Kant, Immanuel (1923): “Reflexionen zur Anthropologie”. In: <i>Kant’s gesammelte Schriften</i> . Ed. by the Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Vol. 15.2. Berlin: Reimer.
ALR	<i>Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten</i> (1794). 2nd edition. Berlin: In der Buchhandlung des kön. preuss. geh. Comercien-Rathes Pauli.
<i>Rosenzweigs Bibliothek</i>	Waszek, Norbert (Ed.) (2017): <i>Rosenzweigs Bibliothek; Der Katalog des Jahres 1939 mit einem Bericht über den derzeitigen Zustand in der tunesischen Nationalbibliothek</i> . Freiburg: Alber.
<i>Song of Songs</i>	Berlinghof, Regina (Ed.) (2005–2006): <i>Das Hohelied, Der Gesang der Gesänge, The Song of Songs mit 16 Holzdrucktafeln von 1465</i> . Original text in Hebrew, German translation of Luther (1544), Rosenzweig-Buber translation (version of 1962) and King James English translation (version of 1987). Kelkheim: Yin Yang Media Verlag.

Stefania Achella, Francesca Iannelli, Gabriella Baptist, Serena Feloj, Fiorinda Li Vigni and Claudia Melica

## **Editors' Introduction.**

# **The Owl's Flight. Hegel's Legacy in a Different Voice**

Despite Karl Marx's well-known metaphorical labeling of Hegel as a "dead dog", Hegelian philosophy at the beginning of the twenty-first century is anything but obsolete. Twenty years ago, a vibrant and historically dramatic century came to a close, during which scholars from around the world never ceased to engage with Hegel's rich input. Many ideological clashes have indeed seen Hegel playing a key role on various fronts. Furthermore, editions of his works produced a number of Hegelian renaissances in the last century. In particular, the rediscovery of Hegel's *Theological Writings* at the beginning of the twentieth century launched a great revival of his thought.<sup>1</sup> Such posthumous publication led the way to a revised interpretation of his theories. Most notably, Hegel's philosophy would no longer be strictly considered a rigid system. The *Theological Writings* revealed in fact a philosopher with multifaceted and lively interests, capable of discussing art and politics, economics and mathematics, psychology and history. It was then the turn of the genesis of the Jena Lectures, which provided an insight on the Hegelian laboratory, revealing a body of thought that was not at all monolithic and structured from the beginning. The publication of the Jena manuscripts threw a new light on the hard labor of the system's maturation and on its manifold involvements with the concrete lives and needs of human beings. At the end of the 1960s work started to fill a long-felt lacuna, namely that of a critical edition of Hegel's works. With the *Gesammelte Werke* edited by the Hegel-Archiv of the Ruhr-University in Bochum since 1968,<sup>2</sup> this work has even included in the last decades of the twentieth century the audience manuscripts of Hegel's famous Berlin Lectures. This has allowed a closer approach to his thought, well beyond the works he published in his lifetime, those edited, not always with philological rigor, by his students and those by other scholars after his sudden death.

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<sup>1</sup> The first publication of this text was edited by Herman Nohl, a pupil of Wilhem Dilthey, in 1907. See TJ.

<sup>2</sup> See GW.

Alongside those discoveries, the most influential ideologies of the twentieth century “manipulated” Hegelian philosophy in various ways. On the one hand, Hegel was highly appreciated as the advocate of innovative theories, such as those concerning the positive value of “practical recognition” and the possibility to reconcile particularism within a political organization. On the other hand, Hegel was harshly criticized as holding a deeply conservative position in aesthetics and politics – target of criticism were namely his notorious ideas on the end of art<sup>3</sup> and his apology of the Prussian state. Beside this close and constant relationship with Hegel, the twentieth century also distanced itself clearly from the German philosopher; in this regard, it could be considered as a period totally disconnected from Hegelian thought. Whereas Hegel focused on the human Subject in general and its ability to develop itself in a universal and spiritual direction, whereas his theories insisted on the importance of one’s self-awareness or personal self-consciousness and, at the same time, on the value of social institutions, twentieth-century philosophical thought with its many interpreters (one among many, Derrida<sup>4</sup>) seems to have paid considerably smaller attention to the human Subject and its active moral individual processes. In general, the Hegelian human Subject was radically dismissed as simply self-referential. It should also be added that twentieth-century claims downplaying the human Subject’s value were aimed at simultaneously dismantle the generally disputed Hegelian idea of system.

On the whole, in the twentieth century and in particular in France, the Hegelian system was understood by its enemies as a symbol of bourgeois and capitalist society, and as the expression of a philosophy of domination and subjection of differences. As a result, while working on the deconstruction of the notions of “subject” and “gender” based on historical-social conventions, the postmodern philosophical approach produced a markedly critical debate around certain themes in Hegel’s philosophy.

Differently, from a political point of view, in Germany, Hegel was considered, on the one hand, as the father of Marxism and, on the other hand, based on the line of thought of the Frankfurt School,<sup>5</sup> as the theoretician of bourgeois liberal culture.

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<sup>3</sup> It is here impossible to summarize what Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert has called an “endless discussion”. We refer the reader to section 5 of this volume and to the overview provided by Gethmann-Siefert 1993, Vieweg/Iannelli/Vercellone 2015, Lesce 2017 and Campana 2019.

<sup>4</sup> As Derrida states: “Nous n’en aurons jamais fini avec la lecture et la relecture du texte hégélien” (Derrida 1972, p. 103). On French Hegelianism: Jarczyk/Labarrière 1996; Baptist 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Marcuse 1941; Adorno 1963; Adorno 1966; Wiggershaus 1996.

A separate chapter could be devoted to the lively and tireless reception of Hegelian philosophy in Italy, which, starting with the first Neapolitan reception of Bertrando Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis, and continuing with Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, involved authoritative Italian intellectuals of various formations, mostly Marxist.<sup>6</sup> Against this background, since the 1970s, philosophies of difference and the feminist movement have proposed an articulated project of female political emancipation. As a manifesto of this experience, it will suffice to mention the well-known work of the Italian feminist theorist Carla Lonzi and her critical pamphlet, *Sputiamo su Hegel*.<sup>7</sup>

After many seasons of strong ideological readings, the attitude toward Hegelian thought has changed considerably in recent decades. A revision was indeed long due, for example, of its relationship with Marxism, but also with political economy and contemporary art. Important Hegel-inspired contributions have come from North America, where the so-called Pittsburgh school has laid emphasis on the topics connected to recognition, social reason and language.<sup>8</sup> As a result, American interpreters have been able to bring Hegelian philosophy back into the contemporary philosophical debate on a par with the other great modern philosophers.

Also thanks to those scholars, whose accounts encourage us to investigate Hegel's philosophy beyond now outdated rhetorical and historiographical models, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has once again become a key text to the understanding of Hegel's contributions. From the *Phenomenology* comes indeed the well-known sentence: "I that is we and we that is I" (*PhS*, p. 108). In this passage, Hegel describes the reciprocal relation between subjects that takes place within the concept "We". Not incidentally, it was precisely the research around the constitutive foundation of a "We" that has animated the feminist debate in the past.

Currently, gender studies are concerned with the difference between "gender" and "sexual" identity – that is, the difference determined by different social contexts (*die Kultur*) and the biologically determined context (*die Natur*). High levels of complexity and articulation have been reached by positions on the subject on various levels. Female identity is no longer limited to the natural element in terms of "sexual nature" only. In some parts of the world, distinctions linked to the biological nature of individuals even seem to have disappeared.

In the light of these changes in the cultural sensibility of our time and the rediscovery of the "dialogical" nature of dialectics, we think it is useful to turn

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<sup>6</sup> See Spaventa 2001; Labriola 1965; Croce 2006; Gentile 1913; Vitiello 2003; Achella 2017; Gallo/Koerner 2019; Iannelli/Vercellone/Vieweg 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Lonzi 1996. More on the context of this publication in section 2 of this volume.

<sup>8</sup> See Brandom 1994; Pinkard 1996; McDowell 2013.

once more to Hegel's thought and its dialectical stance. We also believe it necessary to ask ourselves whether the Hegelian dialectical process is apt to eliminate inequalities in the current epoch – neutralizing, as a consequence, even “sexual difference” – or whether it fails to free itself from such conditioning. The aim is to show which paths have been traveled so far and which ones could open up in the future.

In this spirit the present book is divided into five sections. The main hope is to unlock an innovative horizon of research and comparison engaging with a line of thinking that, like Hegel's, has not yet exhausted its theoretical implications for individual and collective life into society. The first section, *The Night of Reason*, shows the dark side of Hegelian philosophy: madness, dreams, passion. The second section, *Women for and against Hegel*, is an analytical review of how some women interpreters have dealt with Hegel's legacy (for example: Anna Brackett, Luce Irigaray, Simone de Beauvoir, Carla Lonzi). The third section, *Female Characters in Hegel's Philosophy*, investigates the constellation of the feminine in Hegel's philosophy through iconic figures such as Antigone, the Sphinx and Jesus' mother Mary. In the fourth section, *The Twentieth Century and Hegel: Subversion or Conciliation*, heterodox perspectives are examined that, in the re-reading or even subversion (Kojève, Adorno, Derrida, Deleuze) of Hegel's thought, uncover radically new potential in his theories. In the fifth and last section, *Rethinking the Absolute Spirit?*, the contributions focus on the possibility of rereading the absolute spirit, with all its controversies, with respect to the famous question of the end of art, and the problems related to religion and inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, up to the question of absolute knowledge. All these sections share the same “squint gaze” on Hegel. In the close scrutiny of Hegel's philosophy, special attention is given to the “difference”, inside or outside his thinking, and to whether this “difference” is to be understood as a philosophy other than his own or as an unusual way of reading the latent meanings of Hegel's theories.

After an introductory essay written by the editors, each section is opened by a contribution from a world-renowned expert in Hegelian studies (Rossella Bonito Oliva, Nuria Sánchez Madrid, Erzsébet Rózsa, Herta Nagl-Docekal, Myriam Bienenstock). Finally, the book is open by a contribution written by Birgit Sandkaulen, and it is closed by an essay written by Angelica Nuzzo. In Birgitte Sandkaulen's introduction the role of art is interpreted as a crucial problem in the so-called “philosophy of absolute spirit”. Hegel's argument is developed in previously unexplored directions, toward what Nuzzo defines as “letting go”, which opens up to an unprecedented conception of freedom within the context of Hegel's interpretations.

In conclusion, the volume's primary question is whether it is possible to deal with Hegel's conceptualization in a "different voice".<sup>9</sup> Can Hegel be investigated from a gender point of view? Can one think of Hegel as the precursor of a plastic anthropology? Can one find in Hegel the cue for a form of political community that respects differences? Even if at first glance such perspective may not be easy, it may throw new light on aspects of Hegelian research that probably have not been investigated enough. As a starting point we choose the great metaphorical image describing Hegel's philosophy, Minerva's Owl, which rises at dusk when history is at its end. Here, a female figure, a goddess, stands for the *logos*. Based on his historical background, Hegel's thinking might seem strictly masculine; nevertheless, just like Plato needed Diotima, as an illustration of his philosophy, Hegel quoted many times in his works several special women characters, such as Antigone, Iphigenia, and the Shakespearean poetic figures of Julia, Miranda, and Lady Macbeth.<sup>10</sup> The goddess image, the Owl, seems then to encourage a female re-interpretation. On the whole, we have regarded the connection between interest and criticism regarding Hegel during the last century as a productive intellectual and philosophical incitement to open further research routes. We really hope it will provide an additional chance for studies on Hegel's legacy in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. the famous book by Carol Gilligan (Gilligan 1982).

<sup>10</sup> More on this topic in section 3 of this volume.

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# Introduction

Birgit Sandkaulen

## Hegel's Theory of Absolute Spirit as Aesthetic Theory

**Abstract:** Hegel's philosophy of art is to the present day one of the most influential and attractive parts of his philosophy. In my contribution I argue for the thesis that art is not alone – together with religion and philosophy – an important figure of the absolute spirit. Much more than that, art as a complex expression of human culture is even the central form in which spirit understands itself. In contrast to Hegel's argumentation in the *Encyclopedia*, but in accordance with his *Lectures on Aesthetics* this can be seen in all aspects of difference associated with beautiful art.

### 1 A brief preliminary approach to Hegel's theory of absolute spirit

A fine paradox: On the one hand expressions like “absolute knowledge”, “absolute spirit”, even “spirit” could and can bring the whole Hegelian philosophy into discredit, because they seem to call up the field of association of an extreme *spiritualism*.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it was Hegel's theory of *absolute spirit* that initiated the success story of his philosophy. It would be worthwhile reflecting whether perhaps Hegel only survived in the precarious, political as well as scientific and philosophical disputes of the later nineteenth century, in which it allegedly came to the “collapse of German Idealism”, because he spoke of art, religion and philosophy in a completely new and exceedingly vivid way. He has not only founded disciplines such as the history of philosophy in the true sense, but has also – and this is even more important today – had the greatest

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<sup>1</sup> The difficulties of translating Hegel's term “Geist” into English are well known. In the following I will consistently use the term “spirit” and will not try to describe possible nuances with “mind”. The translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* by Wallace and Miller I tacitly change at the passages in question.

*interdisciplinary* success in the new field of the *humanities*. Art and literature studies, history of religion and religious studies only exist in the wake of Hegel. Critical dissociations from his conception are provisionally passed over here, because they form a natural component of every constructive process of reception. This also includes the current transformation of the humanities into cultural studies, against which I – from Hegel’s point of view – have no objections.

With this short sketch (which might seem harmless at first sight) I have already said two things which will be important in the following and not nearly so harmless. First, I have at once merged Hegel’s “theory of absolute spirit” with Hegel’s three so-called “figures” of *art, revealed religion, and philosophy*. Thus I argue that there is no such thing as a “theory” of absolute spirit that could be identified independently of these three figures. This is also how I explain the often noted fact that Hegel says very little about the absolute spirit as such. In the introductory paragraphs to the philosophy of spirit in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* one learns something about the spirit as well as about the finite, subjective and objective spirit, but apart from a quite opaque definition – that it is “the unity of the objectivity of spirit and of its ideality or concept, a unity that is *in and for itself* and eternally produces itself” (PM, p. 20; GW 20, § 385, p. 383) – nothing about the absolute spirit. The situation is similar in the relevant final chapter of the *Encyclopedia*, whose extremely abbreviated opening passages become even more puzzling than they already are if one takes into account the central changes made in comparison to the Heidelberg *Encyclopedia*.

However, Hegel’s following remarks on the three figures art, revealed religion and philosophy are also extremely brief, which actually only confirms the design of the *Encyclopedia* as a whole to be, according to the title of the book, no more and no less than an “outline” for the more copious treatment in lectures. Secondly, in this sense I have long since referred to the great Berlin lectures and will continue to do so, even with a certain emphasis. The purism of Hans Friedrich Fulda, for example, to completely exclude the lectures from the discussion of the absolute spirit is completely incomprehensible to me, especially since it does not result in a particularly fruitful clarification (Fulda 2003). The problematic text and tradition of the lectures is well known, but not least Walter Jaeschke has reconstructed and made accessible the lecture collection as an integral part of Hegel’s work as far as possible.<sup>2</sup> I agree with the thesis that Hegel’s philosophy only exists if the lectures are included (Jaeschke 2003, p. 319f.).

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2 Cf. the series of Hegel’s *Lectures* published by Felix Meiner Verlag. In addition, the completion

After these necessary preliminary remarks, I turn to the theme of my contribution: *art as the central self-understanding form* (Selbstverständigungsform) of the spirit. I refer to the *Encyclopedia*, but also, in the light of what has just been said, to Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*. At this point, I disagree with the other puristic thesis that only the transcripts are authentic (Gethmann-Siefert 2005), but I adhere (after exact examination of the lecture transcripts) to the edition of Hegel's student and first editor of Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*, Heinrich Gustav Hotho.<sup>3</sup> What is decisive here, however, is my third thesis: I will argue that Hegel's theory of absolute spirit does not only not reveal itself independently of the three figures, but that with regard to these figures it *refers decisively* to art and philosophy of art. To put it sharply, I maintain that *the theory of absolute spirit is essentially an aesthetic theory*.

In a first step, I briefly examine the external indications. In the second step, I take advantage of Hegel's claim, which appears to be quite contrary at first sight, that in the case of the *beautiful* (more about this immediately) "it is *not* the absolute spirit which enters into this consciousness" (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 557, p. 544). Finally, in the third step, I discuss a problem that arises as the reverse side of my presentation. It will address the question of epistemic standards in their historical dimension.

## 2 The constitution of the absolute spirit and the liberation of art into a form in its own right

To initiate the first step again drastically: There is no field of the absolute spirit on its own on which one could "then" set up some figures. Nor can one say that the absolute spirit "exists" (or does not exist?) – the danger of such a hypostasis is suggested by many of Hegel's formulations, but he cannot possibly mean the metaphysics of a "Great Spirit". Whether he pursues an alternative metaphysics, I think, as I have explained elsewhere, is highly doubtful, but I will leave this question here to one side (Sandkaulen 2019, pp. 317–335). What since the Heidelberg *Encyclopedia* concludes the "philosophical sciences in outline" with the ab-

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of Hegel's *Collected Works* with the second section of critically edited and commented lecture transcripts will soon be reached.

3 Cf. also the recently published commentary volume on Hegel's *Aesthetics*, which comprehensively opens up the Hotho edition in constant comparison with relevant passages of the transcripts (Sandkaulen 2018a), as well as my own commentary on the Introduction to the Hotho edition "about the project of a philosophy of art" (Sandkaulen 2018b), where it becomes particularly clear that Hotho has done a brilliant job.

solute spirit, is obviously foreshadowed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, with two important changes.

First, Hegel expands the field of the absolute in comparison with the *Phenomenology* by interestingly giving up the special status of philosophy (which it has in the *Phenomenology* under the term “absolute knowledge”) together with the separation of religion and philosophy. Second, he emancipates art from its inclusion in religion, which in turn is restricted from this moment on to the revealed, i. e. Christian religion. However, this applies only to the *Encyclopedia*, because the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* for their part begin with natural religion, which leads to a certain parallelism of art and religion forms.

In fact, this has to do with the fact that Hegel remains convinced to the end that art in the emphatic sense cannot be understood without the dimension of the religious. In the Heidelberg *Encyclopedia* the section on art is therefore even yet titled “Religion of Art” and, according to the Berlin version, “the supreme sphere can in general be designated *religion*” (*PM*, p. 257; *GW* 20, § 554, p. 542). If at all, a *general* theory of absolute spirit would have to refer to this distinction of religion, which seems to directly contradict my thesis that in the theory of absolute spirit art plays a decisive role. But this is at most nominally the case. Obviously these are quite diverse homonymous determinations of religion, which must first of all be analyzed in their content and clarified.

Crucial for what I want to say at this point in an initially quite external indexation is that the *constitution* of the absolute spirit in the *Encyclopedia* coincides with the *release* of the aesthetic potentials of that sphere which in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* had been termed comprehensively “religion”. In the term “art religion” the accent shifts from religion to art. This shift in accent, i. e. the *release of art as a figure in its own right*, corresponds to the fact that Hegel gives no less than four lectures in Berlin on the aesthetics or philosophy of art. The productive inclusion of these lectures into the argumentation of the *Encyclopedia* is clearly visible.

### 3 Intermediate step: The immediacy of art

The second step. In order to make the systematic change in the position of art appear less dramatic, one might suppose that Hegel is merely concerned with clearing up the continuing ambiguity of art and religion. However, I have already emphasized that this would be an underestimation of what is going on: With its emancipation to a figure on its own, art at the same time advances to the *first* figure of the *absolute* spirit. But what does that mean? It is well known that the first is never the perfect with Hegel, and this is also true in the case of

art. Rather, both in the *Encyclopedia* and in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, there is a *teleologically* arranged order that places the three figures, art, revealed religion, and philosophy, in ascending order. I will come back to the historicity of this order; first of all I will focus on the *logic* of this teleology, which in its pointed form can only be found in the *Encyclopedia*.

What is striking here is that Hegel not only describes the form of knowledge in the figure of art as “*immediate*” (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 556, p. 543). This immediacy also seems to be of a very peculiar nature. Instead of marking a beginning, which – as always with Hegel – is in *deficit* though at least a *beginning*, art suffers in its immediacy from such strong deficits that on closer inspection it obviously does not yet attain the status of being a figure of the absolute spirit or, inversely, loses it again at the moment of its conquest of this sphere. Hegel literally speaks of the “*finitude of art*” (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 556, p. 543), as if it were falling backwards into the finite spirit – but where to actually? Into the objective or subjective spirit, and what would that mean? I have already mentioned that Hegel expressly states that it is “*not the absolute spirit*” that comes into consciousness here (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 557, p. 544). A little later, and this is also highly remarkable, a distinction is made between freedom and absoluteness. Beautiful art – what it has to do with beauty, I again pass over – beautiful art, according to Hegel, can therefore “*belong only to those religions in which the principle is the concrete spirituality that has become free within itself, but is not yet absolute*” (*PM*, p. 261; *GW* 20, § 562, p. 547).

And finally: As if Hegel had become aware that it is perhaps not quite plausible to withhold freedom from the dimension of the absolute spirit and to attribute it to a lesser figure, he operates at the end of *Encyclopedia*, § 562, with the figure of “*stages of liberation*”. According to this, beautiful art has achieved “*the purification of the spirit from unfreedom*”, but it is “*only a stage of liberation, not the supreme liberation itself*” (*PM*, p. 262; *GW* 20, § 562, p. 548). Now, one would like to interrupt this presentation at once here and object that the talk of the finiteness of art does not completely match the designation “*liberation stage*”. But this objection would not be of any use here, because the logical-teleological train of the presentation moves on powerfully. “*Beautiful art (like the religion peculiar to it) has its future in genuine religion*” (*PM*, p. 262; *GW* 20, § 563, p. 549). This may and must be understood historically, as will be discussed later. At this point, the accentuation of the logical movement from immediacy to mediation, to “*self-mediating knowledge*”, is sufficient to begin with so that the punch line is strikingly effective: namely the constitution of the absolute spirit which is for that reason *absolute* (and not only “*free*”) because it is “*as absolute spirit [...] for the spirit*” (*PM*, p. 262; *GW* 20, § 563, p. 549).

*Spirit is for the spirit*: Spirit in the emphatic sense does not “exist” like something one could point to, but spirit in the emphatic sense takes place in the form of the relationship to oneself – in the mode of self-understanding. I deliberately put a fine point on the result of this first stage. It is Hegel’s thesis that in the execution of self-understanding the award of the absolute spirit exists. And at the same time it must be noted that art apparently has no part in this award. It is questionable whether it belongs at all to the figures of the absolute spirit. What is certain is that Hegel explicitly formulates the mode of self-understanding in contrast to art. *Art is not a self-understanding form of the spirit.*

## 4 Diagnosing differences: The free reality of beauty

Let us take this result as a highly interesting intermediate result. It is remarkable how radically Hegel argues in the *Encyclopedia*, as if the dimension of the absolute spirit in unity with the determination of self-understanding would begin first of all with revealed religion. No less remarkable is the extent to which Hegel varies in characterizing the position of art. This is not the case in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*. On the contrary, that art is a figure of the absolute spirit, and precisely for the reason that it is a medium of self-understanding, cannot be called in question:

Now, in this its freedom alone is fine art truly art, and it only fulfils its supreme task when it has placed itself in the same sphere as religion and philosophy, and when it is simply one way of bringing to our minds and expressing the *Divine*, the deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit. In works of art the nations have deposited their richest inner intuitions and ideas, and art is often the key, and in many nations the sole key, to understanding their philosophy and religion (*LFA*, p. 7; *TW* 13, p. 20f.; cf. *GW* 28.1, p. 222).

Such statements give me the welcome motive to reverse the sense of direction of Hegel’s remarks in the *Encyclopedia*. It seems obvious to me, following the logic of the *Encyclopedia*, to bind the predicate “absolute” to the execution of self-understanding – spirit is for the spirit. However, contrary to Hegel’s argumentation in the *Encyclopedia*, the genuine form of this is offered by art. As the proprium of art *beauty* thus comes into play.

The term “beautiful art” is used ambiguously in the *Encyclopedia* – perhaps that’s what Hegel is aiming for. On the one hand, “beautiful art” means “classical art” – classical Greek art, which per se refers to the time index of the absolute

spirit. But “fine art” primarily also means the contrast to the purely technical arts and thus emphasizes the quality of beauty as an overarching quality that applies to all three art forms. Following the detailed presentation in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, these three forms are also named in the Berlin *Encyclopedia*: The *symbolic* art of sublimity, the *classical* art of beauty and the *romantic* art (of the unsightly) realize the *ideal of beauty* in different ways. The “whole beauty”, as the Hotho edition says, “decomposes” itself into “its particular determinations”:

This gives, as the *second* part of our study, the doctrine of the *forms of art*. These forms find their origin in the different ways of grasping the Idea as content, whereby a difference in the configuration in which the Idea appears is conditioned. Thus the forms of art are nothing but the different relations of meaning and shape (*LFA*, p. 75; *TW* 13, p. 107).

While the identification of beautiful art with classical art has brought the questionable attribution of *classicism* to Hegel's theory, the overarching determination of beauty offers the decisive and actually fruitful approach on which I rely. As has already been indicated, the ideal of beauty is to be determined as a complete mediation or penetration of two sides – of spiritual content and sensual form, of the idea and its representation. Thus, a content alone is not beautiful independently of its representation (in this sense, the juxtaposition of Hegel's aesthetics as so-called “content aesthetics” with Kant's formal aesthetics is wrong). But also it is not only a certain, harmonious or regular constitution of the form that is beautiful. Finally, beauty is not merely an external, formal connection between any idea and any corresponding form, but rather *the fitting of an idea into the work, which demands to be represented in the form appropriate to it, which it causes to appear concretely and has nothing else for its purpose*. Thus the beautiful structure intentionally consolidates itself, as it were, and separates itself from the world of the finite as a structure in its own right.

In other words: *Beauty in the form of beautiful entities creates its own form of reality*, which appears as its own reality to the same extent that beauty manifests itself in the *self-referential* fit of content and form. That's what matters, and what that means must be clarified more specifically. First and foremost, it seems quite absurd to contaminate, as it were, this reality, as Hegel does in the *Encyclopedia*, with the definition of “finitude”, – by doing so one loses sight of the fact that art objects are essentially no occurrences or products of the first and second nature. I will come back to that. It is also absurd to characterize art somewhat patronizingly as a “liberation stage” – this is too little in view of the fact (we will discuss this below) that art is to be thanked for the genuine *opening up of a sphere of freedom* in the first place, which in turn differs *absolutely* from “liberation stages” of the subjective and objective spirit.

But what Hegel calls the “*immediacy*” of art (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 557, p. 543) in order to indicate its deficit, namely, that the absolute spirit does not yet appear in the form of art, I can, on the contrary, take advantage of in the future. In contrast to other uses of immediacy in Hegel (especially at the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic*), it is not in the case of art something like an undifferentiated and therefore subcomplex *abstract* determination. On the contrary, Hegel calls the constitution of art immediate, because it creates a reality in the form of intuition which cannot make disappear completely that the fit of idea and form is a matter of the relationship of two sides, namely the *inscription of the spirit in nature in the medium of sensuous expression*. Beyond such representation and its peculiar gradation of difference, the phenomenon of art is literally inconceivable, and the fact that Hegel does take into account this fact of indelible difference is an advantage of his theory which can hardly be overestimated.

As seen, Hegel himself presents this insight that art operates within gradations of difference as the deficit of art, on the basis of which in the *Encyclopedia* it is even denied the status of being a figure of the absolute spirit. For the moment I pass over this in order to first draw attention to Hegel’s diagnosis of difference. It is of the most varied kind. In the spectrum of the various arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry), – the discussion is found only in the *Lectures on Aesthetics* – it concerns the whole spectrum of the material used and shaped according to its potentials (light and color, for example, are something other than heavy stone).

The diagnosis of difference also concerns the three art forms, and thus not only symbolic and romantic art, the peculiarity of which, according to Hegel’s argumentation, consists almost in demonstrating differences: In the case of symbolic art, the beautiful fit of idea and form reveals itself as an underdetermined search movement (to be seen, for example, in the enigmatic figure of the Sphinx) and in the case of romantic art as an overdetermined release of random externalities (such as in the depiction of everyday scenarios in painting). What is particularly remarkable, however, is that Hegel also marks a whole series of differences in classically beautiful art or does not exclude classical art from art-like differences (which really should shield him from the label of classicism): the classical “*unity of nature and spirit*” is *only* a *unity* that still allows the difference between the two to be recognized (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 557, p. 544). In the serenity of the gods, as the Hotho edition says, the signs of mourning, too, have long been visible:

The blessed gods mourn as it were over their blessedness or their bodily form. We read in their faces the fate that awaits them, and its development, as the actual emergence of that



contradiction between loftiness and particularity, between spirituality and sensuous existence, drags classical art itself to its ruin (*LFA*, p. 485; *TW* 14, p. 86).

Hegel's diagnosis of difference furthermore includes the "disintegration" of art "into a work of external common reality, the subject producing the work, and the intuiting and venerating subject" (*PM*, p. 259; *GW* 20, § 556, p. 543); it includes the situating of art in the horizon of a "limited spirit of a people" (*PM*, p. 260; *GW* 20, § 556, p. 545) and finally it includes the difference that arises in and with the production of art: the difference between the genius in his "un-free passion" and the need for technical abilities in the production of art. "The work of art therefore is just as much a work of free willfulness, and the artist is the master of the god" (*PM*, p. 260; *GW* 20, § 560, p. 545).

There is nothing against reading this astonishing formulation in the sense of a double genitive: The artist does not create the work from arbitrary subjective motifs, but as it were on behalf of "God". However, just as much and even more in reverse, the representation of the idea – the representation of that which manifests itself in a culture as "the God" – is an idea first and foremost produced by art, existing in no way independently of its artistic expression. Quite unencumbered by the critical stance of the *Encyclopedia* this is formulated in the *Lectures on Aesthetics* as follows:

Yet when art is present in its supreme perfection, then precisely in its figurative mode it contains the kind of exposition most essential to and most in correspondence with the content of truth. Thus, for example, in the case of the Greeks, art was the highest form in which the people represented the gods to themselves and gave themselves some awareness of truth. This is why the poets and artists became for the Greeks the creators of their gods, i. e. the artists gave the nation a definite idea of the behaviour, life, and effectiveness of the Divine, or, in other words, the definite content of religion. And it was not as if these ideas and doctrines were already there, in advance of poetry, in an abstract mode of consciousness as general religious propositions and categories of thought, and then later were only clothed in imagery by artists and given an external adornment in poetry; on the contrary, the mode of artistic production was such that what fermented in these poets they could work out only in this form of art and poetry (*LFA*, p. 102; *TWA* 13, p. 140f.).

## 5 Self-understanding: The theory of absolute spirit as aesthetic theory

But what else – and with this I conclude this step – could this be than the *self-understanding of the spirit*? Art, as I had earlier put it, opens up a genuine sphere of freedom – now, with reference to the peculiar difference between spirit and

nature that is characteristic of art, I think this makes good sense. The difference, not less than the “*absolute negativity*”, belongs from the beginning to Hegel’s determination of the spirit as the Other of Nature (PM, p. 9; GW 20, § 381ff., p. 381f.). The stages of liberation of the subjective and objective spirit do not annul the reference to nature, but reveal the spirit in the “*positing* of nature as *its world*”, which “as reflection is at the same time the *presupposition* of the world as independent nature” (PM, p. 18; GW 20, § 384, p. 382). The achievement – and, as one should obviously add, the continuing challenge – of art is to realize this transformation of nature for the first time, while preserving difference, as “*Im-Andern-bei-sich-Selber-Sein*”.

I say *for the first time* compared to the subjective and objective spirit, because art (apart from decorative, wellness-promoting and moral instrumentalizations of art)<sup>4</sup> pursues no other purpose than that of cultural self-assurance. Literally for nothing else is the beautiful “good”, it has no extrinsic benefit or purpose, it is relieved of any instrumental aspects. And so it relieves those who gain the freedom in the “realm of beauty” to become aware of who they are and what interests them most, which can happen either in agreement or in explicit contrast to the political situation of a society. What “is man’s *need* to produce works of art?”, Hegel asks in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, in order to answer most vividly in the sense of a cultural-anthropological constant:

That man is a *thinking* consciousness, i. e. that man draws out of himself and puts *before himself* what he is and whatever else is. Things in nature are only *immediate* and *once*, while man as spirit *duplicates* himself, in that he is as things in nature, but he is just as much *for himself*; he sees himself, represents himself to himself, thinks, and only on the strength of this active placing himself before himself is he spirit (LFA, p. 30f.; TWA 13, p. 50f.; cf. GW 28.1, p. 229).<sup>5</sup>

Why and to what extent I support the thesis that Hegel’s theory of absolute spirit is, at its core, an aesthetic theory has thus, I hope, become clear. According to Hegel, self-understanding is not a process in the closed space of the subject, but rather a process of recognition in the medially mediated mode of reduplica-

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<sup>4</sup> In the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, Hegel explicitly distinguishes “free art” from such instrumental uses of art (cf. Sandkaulen 2018b, p. 6ff.).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the original text in German: “Das allgemeine und absolute Bedürfnis, aus dem die Kunst [...] quillt, findet seinen Ursprung darin, daß der Mensch *denkendes* Bewußtsein ist, d. h. daß er, was er ist und was überhaupt ist, aus sich selbst *für sich* macht. Die Naturdinge sind nur *unmittelbar* und *einmal*, doch der Mensch als Geist *verdoppelt* sich, indem er zunächst wie die Naturdinge *ist*, sodann aber ebensoviele *für sich* ist, sich anschaut, sich vorstellt, denkt und nur durch dies tätige Fürsichsein Geist ist”.

tion (*Verdopplung*). In the thematization and treatment of the difference between spirit and nature, art is not only the *genuine* form but in the historical process of cultures it is also seen as the *original* form, in which the reduplication in the conjunction of the negativity of spirit with the self-referentiality of beauty becomes vividly apparent. Why does Hegel exclude this wonderful finding in the *Encyclopedia* from the absolute spirit?

Obviously he is convinced that self-understanding is only really given when the spirit is completely with itself – without the reference to nature in the medium of the sensual, as it were, intervening. I am not sure whether this idea of total self-presence – even if it should eventually take place in “pure thought” – is at all attainable and desirable. It is, however, indispensable to state that Hegel can only then, if the aesthetic doubling opens up the sphere of the absolute spirit, assert that revealed religion is not about the retreat into total inwardness, but is also for its part a figure of this world – and likewise philosophy, which Hegel then actually determines as “unity of art and religion” (*PM*, p. 267; *GW* 20, § 572, p. 554).

## 6 Self-understanding once again: Aporia in historical regard

With a short third step I will conclude my considerations. This is about the historical constitution of the absolute spirit, which has already been mentioned here several times and which is inscribed in the logical-teleological presentation. Perhaps a concept like Kant's transcendental aesthetics is not affected by history, but I doubt it. At any rate it is clear that Hegel pursues in contrast to Kant a thoroughly cultural conception which is unthinkable without historical reference and locates art, religion and philosophy in the process from the oldest cultures via Greek antiquity to modernity. As far as art is concerned in this process, it supposedly coincides with the infamous “end of art” in the result, something that Hegel, however, does not say at all. In the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, Hegel speaks of the “past of art”, which fits in mirror image with the mentioned thesis in the *Encyclopedia* of the “future” of art in religion (Sandkaulen 2018b, p. 11 ff.). I don't want to deal here with the thesis of the past of art as such, or with the notorious question of what art in modernity is all about. If art is to be understood as a genuine and original form of self-understanding of the spirit in the dimension of the representation of cultures, then, I think, Hegel's thesis makes sense that, at the latest in modernity (according to Hegel, at the latest since the Reformation), it

can no longer assert such a “claim to sole representation”, even though of course it still exists.

But there is something else here which concerns me. The fact that Hegel speaks once of the “future” and once of the “past” with regard to art is connected with the different perspectives of the systemic form of the *Encyclopedia* on the one hand and the extra-systemic form of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* on the other, on which Hegel methodically reflected thoroughly in each case. Thus, the following problem does not seem to arise in the course of the system, which is quite obtrusive in the lectures – but which Hegel does not address satisfactorily here either. In contrast to the teleological-historical development of the figures in the system, the *Lectures on Aesthetics* speak from *the point of view of the present*, into which we can easily include our own present. This means: *For us*, for Hegel, for his audience and for us in the year 2018 and following, art in the full sense of its possibilities lies in the past – but in what epistemic mode can we understand this and, even more, integrate it into our own current self-understanding as a substantial (and as always possibly controversial) moment of our cultural identity?

The epistemic mode of intuition named by Hegel in the *Encyclopedia* does not solve the problem, but indicates it. According to Hegel, art has moved into the past precisely because, in a process of radical rationalization, we have outgrown the world view of intuition and poetic imagination and have left the form of intuition behind us. Instead of in the form of intuition, we find ourselves in the state of reflection. Hegel uses the expression “prose” for this. At first glance this is plausible, on closer inspection the expression is opaque. It does not explain in which mental attitude participants of prosaic living conditions can apparently nevertheless be impressed by art of Greek antiquity or Italian painting however broken by historical distance, nor does it explain whether and to what extent the concept (*der Begriff*), named by Hegel the epistemic mode of philosophy, is a case of rational prose. Finally, it remains unclear whether the unity of art and religion claimed for philosophy, which includes “a spiritual *intuitor*” (*PM*, p. 267; *GW* 20, § 572, p. 554), represents an exclusive philosophical knowledge or whether it is a knowledge that can be presupposed as generally communicable in the culture of the present and can be mobilized, so to speak, in the interest of a reflected appropriation of the past.

Once again I would like to make a particular point about the following: It is clear that Hegel’s theory of absolute spirit is about cultural self-understanding. I hope to have shown that the original and structurally decisive mode of this self-understanding is an aesthetic action. However, the self-understanding about the

conditions of appreciation of and participation in this action of aesthetic self-understanding seems to me to be the blind spot in Hegel's theory.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stephan Otto has discussed an analogous difficulty with reference to Hegel's psychology in its passage from intuition via imagination to thinking (Otto 2007, pp. 34–50).



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Section 1

**The Night of Reason**





Stefania Achella

# The Dark Side of Thought. The Body, the Unconscious and Madness in Hegel's Philosophy

**Abstract:** Is there a dark side to Hegelian philosophy? And if there is one, what is it exactly? This contribution aims to investigate those elements of Hegel's speculative contributions that cannot be traced back to the clarity of a narrow rationality, but that refer to another principle of reason, which includes the role of corporeity and the concepts of powerlessness and pain. As a result, the complexity of the Hegelian model of knowledge will be outlined. These aspects emphasize indeed the key role of elements of fragility and openness in the Hegelian system. A new reading of this latter, catering to contemporary needs as well, is therefore attempted.

## 1 A dark pit

There is a dark, nocturnal side concerning Hegel that has long remained silent. Maybe for the sake of discretion, Hegelian scholars have tried to obscure this aspect, preferring to show – also iconographically – the *ex-cathedra* philosopher, with his cold gaze and his ermine. This tradition begun very early on, with his pupil and biographer Karl Rosenkranz, who describes Hegel's life as “limpid”, “laborious”, “devoid of any glimmer of intrigue and secrets”, leading to the conclusion that his biography actually coincides with the story of his philosophy. Although Hegel was a careful phenomenologist of the spirit, scholars have portrayed him as a man without great moods or feelings – as if showing the fragility of his humanity could harm the integrity of the system. This choice reflects Hegel's own behavior, as he preferred to maintain a certain discretion in his private life, not handing over his feelings, except rarely, to letters and diaries. Within his system, though, the opposite is the case. Hegel dwells on the dark side of thought (see Magee 2013), on the role of negativity in the phenomenological itinerary, on nature's impotence as origin of the spirit; passion, impatience, and pain are key interpretative figures of human beings as well as of their thought.

The importance of this nocturnal side makes it clear that the dialectical process is never solved painlessly or definitively, and that tragedy stands at the origin of the ethical life. And indeed this choice is confirmed by Hegel's decision, in his anthropology – that is to say, the transition realm between the still

animal world (*Tierreich*) and the spiritual one – to place the origin of human beings in what he calls a “dark region”.

While reading once more Hegel’s remarks concerning the aurora of subjectivity, instead of a self-conscious subject, we find a series of perceptions, of sensations, of *Erlebnisse*, which show an originally confused state, in which the elements mix, overlap, and are far from resembling the clear and distinct ideas of Cartesian philosophy.

In the Jena system drafts, Hegel describes this early condition of the subject as a baroque painting:

in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a night which turns terrifying. [For from his eyes] the night of the world hangs out toward us (GW 8, p. 187; HS, p. 87).

At this stage, the subject is only a set of images and perceptions; content without an order, on which consciousness has not yet “operated”. Confrontation with this darkness is the condition of possibility for the living being to become human. The process of subjectification must come to terms with this condition of darkness and unconsciousness.

For Hegel, however, there is no precise moment in which the subject originates; what he describes is not an evolutionary process. All subjects go through this indeterminate state, in which the distinction between the Ego and the world has not yet emerged.

The starting point is therefore the absence of self-consciousness, the darkness. A multiplicity of confused contents inhabit the animal soul – which is the first configuration of the human – in a chaotic and indistinct way. They are kept in a secret treasure chest, which, in a note in the margins of the Jena draft, Hegel defines as the “night of self-preservation” (*die Nacht der Selbstbewahrung*). This night, Hegel says, is the human being. In it, objects are preserved without being brought into focus by representation. This human being is “the interior of nature”.

There is still no subject–object split, between the human being and the world. The Ego, the principle of distinction, has not yet intervened. At this stage there is no separation between internal and external; the subjects do not “recognize themselves” as such. This condition is the essence of the human: “The human being is this night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity – a wealth of infinitely many representations, images, none of which occur to it directly, and none of which are not present. This [is] the

night, the interior of [human] nature, existing here – *pure self* –” (GW 8, p. 187; HS, p. 87).

How to get out of this darkness? Based on what Hegel writes in Jena, the different and disordered contents are recognized by the subject through a process of idealization, by which they will become images. The images “belong” to the spirit; this latter possesses them; it is the lord, as Hegel writes. The first contact, albeit unconscious, with what is outside the pure self develops through a reduction of the real to the “ideal”. This amounts to saying that an action of *recollection-internalization* takes place: the subject in its auroral phase swallows the contents coming from outside, making the space-time multiplicity sink into unconscious storage. The engine of this process is the *Erinnerung*, recollection, but it occurs as *Ver-innerlichung*, internalization. The first meaning applied by Hegel to *Erinnerung* is therefore equal to the negative moment of dialectics: by sinking the single and multiple into its immediate existence, memory hides rather than producing (Fulda 1991, p. 329); it reduces the empirical and sensitive contents to *eidos*.

By virtue of the work of a preserving memory, the particular intuitions, linked to a specific time and space – but generally isolated from the external place, from the immediate complex in which they were located – acquire eternity and ubiquity. Hence the passage to the sign and then to language, which manifests itself as “the power to give names”.

A few years after Jena, Hegel will gather these analyses in the anthropology section of the *Encyclopedia*. This section had a late elaboration. Unlike the accounts on phenomenology and psychology, that on anthropology, which deals with the biological constitution of the subject, finds its coherent formulation only in the *Encyclopedia* of 1817.

The main difference between the Jena drafts and the *Encyclopedia* with reference to the process of subjectification is not only the way the subject brings order to the chaotic content, but also the idea of human being. In this new formulation, the unconscious still plays a key role, but it is worth remarking that this “dark region” is no longer the result of a reduction to images, but rather the product of a double movement, both active and passive, of the subject, at the center of which the corporeity is now placed.

## 2 Corporeity and subjectivation

In the anthropology section of the *Encyclopedia* the process of subjectification finds its origin in the sensitive and bodily dimension. Hegel starts from the consideration that everything that presents itself in spiritual consciousness and rea-

son has its source and origin (*Quelle und Ursprung*) (GW 20, § 400 Anm., p. 397; *PM*, p. 70) in sensation expressed through the body. At this point in Hegel's description, the soul is still linked to its naturalness, but the moment of separation occurs through the translation, in symbolic forms, performed by the body (gestures, voice, face, etc.).

What is at stake here is no longer, as in Jena, the power to reduce reality into images, the *Einbildungskraft*, but rather the need to express a form of knowledge that finds first and foremost in the body its instruments of expression. Corporeity therefore assumes a central function in the process of subjectification, a role it did not have before.

The whole section on anthropology in the *Encyclopaedia* articulates the initial, material, phase of the spirit, showing that, even before the subject acquires consciousness, it already exists as a feeling of self in the form of the unconscious and of corporeity. Now the exit from darkness is not only the work of memory, but also the work of the body: through the senses, the body introduces into the soul multiple and indistinct contents. Already at this stage we are witnessing an initial form of knowledge, although it is not conscious knowledge. The predisposition of human beings to perceive through their apparatus of organs makes them different from other animals and allows them to have already the first forms of elementary knowledge. As it becomes increasingly clear, the operation that the subject performs on this form of primitive knowledge, linked to the body, determines a transition from the natural realm to the spiritual one. The outcome of this process of establishing the *Anthropos* as such is the moment of habit, when nature becomes second nature and bodily and material stimuli take on a rational and mental meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Within the framework of the soul linked to natural dispositions, to race, to temperament, a *Mitleben mit der Natur*, a close coexistence with nature is prominent, and the subjectivity of the sentient soul (*empfindende Seele*), to the extent that it only feels, is so immediate, so undeveloped, so undermining and differentiating, that it is not yet understood as a subjectivity as opposed to something objective.

Here the link to the body is immediate; and yet this very relationship of immediacy with nature, from which it takes its contents without being able to distinguish or recognize them, is the first step toward the human. The natural soul, in fact, begins to move away from indistinctness and to identify itself while establishing a close link to its own body. Although the soul is *forma corporis*, a

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<sup>1</sup> On the comparison between Hegel's idea of "habit" and current brain research, and the idea of nature as intrinsically marked by difference, cf. Federica Pitillo, *infra*, pp. 51–60.

substantial form, Hegel also states that the body is *Bestimmung*, determination and destination of the soul. The body qualifies then as an unconscious reservoir, filled by sense system, through which the body receives impressions, contents, hence sensations, from the outside. These contents are then unconsciously kept within the body.

In the sentient soul then an unconscious relationship between external sensation and spiritual interiority is established. Through sensation and hence the body, the stimuli that come from outside are transformed and give rise to a “natural bodiliness”, (“*natürliche Leiblichkeit*”) (GW 20, § 401, p. 398; *PM*, p. 72), the first step toward the *principium individuationis*.<sup>2</sup> Whereas Hegel had understood in Jena that what comes from the outside is internalized through memory, now, in the mature system, a role of equal constitutive value is attributed to the function of the body.<sup>3</sup> The process of somatization (*Verleiblichung*) allows the internal contents of the soul to flow outward. Reference should be made here to all of Hegel’s phenomenological accounts about modesty, fear, and spiritual feelings as finding expression through the body. At the same time, however, the body is also that through which the external world enters the subject and is then transformed into ideal images and contents.

### 3 From night to light: A precarious transition

While describing the transition from the unconscious to the conscious, Hegel mentions the sleep/waking relationship: waking up leads to the abandonment of the indistinct temporality of the night, and therefore to the distinction between past, present and future. In this respect, Hegel can claim that the day is younger than the night. Philosophy means to understand this game of light and shadow. Where darkness alone dominates there is still no humanity; this coincides with the *Lichtscheue*, “averse to light”, the light-shy (GW 11, p. 392; *SoL*, p. 488), or what is horrified by light, which is a pure coincidence of the self with itself, in other words, blind being, absolute necessity. Life as freedom begins

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Siep 1990, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> Laura Paulizzi’s contribution shows how the fusion and “apolitical” dimension of the mother–fetus relationship places the woman outside the scheme of recognition and therefore signals an aporia in the structuring of subjectivity, which in this way puts in crisis the ideal of universality of the scheme of recognition. Cf. Laura Paulizzi, *infra*, pp. 61–70.

with the swinging between darkness and light, full and empty.<sup>4</sup> Only in this difference lies the possibility of a determined choice, namely in the need to draw oneself out of the *nächtliche Schacht*, from the dark pit. From this pit, like the Baron of Münchhausen, human beings seem to save themselves from drowning in a swamp by pulling their own hair out. Freedom can be attained by coming out of the abyss into which human beings are originally plunged. As already stated in the *Differenzschrift*, speculation deals with this unconscious dimension.

For in its higher synthesis of the conscious and the non-conscious, speculation also demands the nullification of consciousness itself. Reason thus drowns itself and its knowledge and its reflection of the absolute identity, in its own abyss: and in this night of mere reflection and of the calculating intellect, in this night which is the noonday of life, common sense and speculation can meet one another (GW 4, p. 23; *DFS*, p. 103).

This transition from night to day, however, can be dangerous. It entails the risk of madness, a risk that is only human. This risk arises from the possibility that the process of the structuring of subjectivity might suddenly stop, that something might go wrong. Madness, which we can define as a “disease of dialectics”, is the inability of the law par excellence, that is, the dialectics, to reach its fulfillment. It thus shows in negative relief subjectivity and its weakness. In the margins of the Jena drafts, Hegel adds a description of the emergence of subjectivity: “The power to draw the images out of this night, or to let them sink” (GW 8, p. 187, my translation).<sup>5</sup>

The transition from darkness to light cannot be guaranteed. The power of thought is possibility: bringing these images to light, determining the birth of the subject, or surrendering to oneself, letting those images remain shrouded in darkness. This latter option is madness. Faced with this possibility are human beings at their origin, always exposed to the risk of insanity.<sup>6</sup> The lengthy

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<sup>4</sup> The contribution of Carmen Belmonte investigates the question whether through Hegel’s thought it is possible to reflect on the existence of a universal human freedom well beyond sexual and racial distinctions. See Carmen Belmonte, *infra*, pp. 71–78.

<sup>5</sup> In the note inserted in the text by Hoffmeister, Hegel writes: “Macht aus dieser Nacht die Bilder hervorzuziehen, oder sie hinunterfallen zu lassen –”.

<sup>6</sup> See the contribution of Rossella Bonito Oliva, which combines the nocturnal and unconscious side with the “magical” dimension. Through this point of view, the author namely before focuses on a different relationship between the sexes and on the role on the feminine in Hegel’s thought. Although Sophocles’ *Antigone* in the *Phenomenology* recalls the classic patriarchal and masculine scheme, Bonito Oliva argues that the *ghenos* becomes for Hegel “condition of the possibility of plural and multiple figures of a spiritual existence” (*infra*, pp. 37–50). The magical world, as Hegel calls the deep bond that unifies the mother to her womb, as Bonito Oliva highlights, shows the role of the unconscious, in the constitution of identity in Hegel’s thought.

analysis that Hegel devotes in his lectures to madness – reported as annotations to the *Encyclopedia* – lets us grasp the importance of this aspect which, as is well known, touched him very closely.<sup>7</sup>

The deterioration of the mental health of Hölderlin, who, starting in 1802, began exhibiting the symptoms of a psychiatric disorder, and in 1807 was hospitalized in the clinic of Professor Ferdinand Autenrieth in Tübingen;<sup>8</sup> the illness of Hegel's son Ludwig and of his sister, Christiane<sup>9</sup>, locked up in the Zweifalten asylum in 1820, where she took her own life a year later, just a few months after the death of her brother Georg; the crisis of hypochondria that Hegel himself experienced in the years he spent in Nuremberg in the precariousness of a career in the balance, among economic difficulties and emotional instability; all these experiences show Hegel's familiarity with the universe of madness. And maybe this is why he always describes insanity with great sensitivity. In his letter of May, 27<sup>th</sup> 1810, replying to Windischmann who complained that he was in a condition of restlessness and instability because of his studies on magic, Hegel states that he is familiar with this disorientation:

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7 As Rosenkranz added, Hegel is interested in mental illness not only due to his personal experience, but because it was also the problem of his time (Engelhardt 1991). See Rosenkranz 1844. Rosenkranz traces Hegel's interest in irrational and unconscious phenomena back to his stay in Nuremberg, also in connection with Schubert's studies on madness as the loss of "spiritual receptivity" and the relapse into the material sphere. Moving from a Neo-Platonic conception, for which the body presents itself as a prison of the soul, Schubert recognizes the importance of the sphere of the unconscious and re-evaluates the language of dreams as a ciphered language, which is able to embrace more things, precisely because it is not subject to the limitations of time. See Schubert 1968.

8 Hegel probably felt the need to protect himself from the pain of his dearest friend's madness. In June 1803, Schelling met Hölderlin and worried about his health. He begged Hegel to host him in Jena, informing him that the poet was absent, he only translated from Greek, and he completely neglected his personal care; and although his speeches were still consistent, he had the attitude of a madman. Hegel's answer is kind: "Even more unexpected [was] Hölderlin's appearance in Swabia. And in what shape! You are certainly right that he will not be able to recuperate there. Yet, what is more, he is beyond the point where Jena can have a positive effect on a person. And the question now is whether, given his condition, rest will suffice for him to recuperate on his own. I hope that he still places a certain confidence in me as he used to do, and perhaps this will be capable of having some effect on him if he comes here" (*Briefe I*, p. 74; *Letters*, p. 66). Schelling and Sinclair often made remarks in their letters to Hegel about their friend's health; Hegel reacted to these solicitations only in 1807, and for the last time, in a letter to Sinclair. We do not have Hegel's letter, but it is clear from Sinclair's reply that there had been a request from Hegel to be informed about Hölderlin's conditions.

9 On the figure of Christiane Hegel, cf. Kriegel 2010; Francesca Iannelli, *infra*, pp. 239–254.

this descent into dark regions where nothing is revealed as fixed, definite, and certain; where glimmerings of light flash everywhere but, flanked by abysses, are rather darkened in their brightness and led astray by the environment, casting false reflections far more than illumination. Each onset of a new path breaks off again and ends in the indeterminable, losing itself, wresting us away from our purpose and direction (Hegel to Windischmann, Hegel 1969, p. 314; *Letters*, p. 561).

To encourage his colleague, Hegel confesses that he too lived in this state of soul – or, as he makes clear shortly afterwards, in this state of reason. In the *Encyclopedia* he theorizes that madness is a state in which reason lives; reason does not abandon the mentally ill. Hegel's letter continues:

For a few years I suffered from this hypochondria to the point of exhaustion. Everybody probably has such a turning point in his life, the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence in which he is forced through a narrow passage by which his confidence in himself and everyday life grows in strength and assurance – unless he has rendered himself incapable of being fulfilled by everyday life, in which case he is confirmed in an inner, nobler existence (Hegel 1969, p. 314; *Letters*, p. 561).<sup>10</sup>

Hegel therefore places madness in that space between the conscious and the unconscious, from which subjectivity springs; in this sense the chapter on Anthropology, where the philosopher treats the subject of madness, refers to a border-space. The entire chapter on Anthropology is presented as a moment of transition: from nature to spirit. The mentally ill are incapable of controlling the abyss of sensations and intuitions that pass through them, which come from their body and from the outside world.<sup>11</sup> Thus madness presents itself as a spatial and temporal disease. Spatiality is spoiled by the inability to relate physical-

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**10** Hegel's reply follows Windischmann's letter of April, 27th 1810, in which the scientist told him about his investigations into the evolution of the human spirit and his aim of investigating all forms of this evolution: "beginning with the first and full magical power of the Impenetrable – and of Nature surging forth everywhere – over man, proceeding through the isolation and interlocking of moments, and ending with the penetration, illumination, and complete magical power of Spirit itself, which dissipates all magical incantation and constitutes the clarity and freedom of life itself". In the same letter Windischmann also confessed to him the difficulties and his terrible moods made worse by his research into magic: "For about two weeks I have in fact found myself in the worst of mental states. It was precipitated by an attack almost resembling apoplexy. My situation, which in any case was already painful, thus came to weigh on me like a rock on the chest. A profound hypochondria and semiparalysis had taken hold of me, and everything I do and write disgusts me" (Hegel 1969, p. 306; *Letters*, p. 559). The work to which Windischmann refers will then be published in 1813 (Windischmann 1813).

**11** On the role of corporeity in the emergence of madness, see Mariannina Failla, *infra*, pp. 103–113.



ly, bodily, to the world. The subject seems to be unable to untangle the “rhapsody of perceptions” that come from outside, so one remains entangled, involved, in a particular determination, giving in to a permanent dystonia, to the *verrücken* – a term that in German indicates displacement, even spatial: *Verrücktheit*, derangement, dislocation, displacement; to the loss, even physical, of self-perception (see GW 20, § 408, p. 412; *PM*, p. 115).

But madness is also a disease related to temporality. Temporality is broken in the inability of the subject to establish a continuity between past and present – a disease of memory. In madness – as the long pages of the *Psychology*, in the last section of the *Encyclopedia* dedicated to memory and remembrance, will show – the process of conscious temporalization is lost. Madness is the inability to reactivate the *nächtlichen Schacht*, the dark pit, the horror in face of this enormous information, the anchorage to a single moment in the past: the subject becomes incapable of finding itself in the present, where one feels attracted and rejected at the same time.

In madness, the human being carries out a reactivation of the soul in the time of consciousness, but in an anachronistic and deceptive way. This process, Hegel explains, can occur in the formation of the spirit. Therefore, it is not a question of understanding how the spirit plunges into madness, but rather of why the soul in its path is unable to rise beyond the unconscious, to overcome the temptation of madness. In mental illness, human beings are unable to make their original weakness productive: their awakening does not correspond to the beginning of time and the world of the spirit (Bonito Oliva 1995, p. 171). The coherent path that makes every life a peculiarly human life is interrupted (Bonito Oliva, 2008, p. 145; Anzalone 2014, pp. 108 ff.). Unconsciousness and madness are the moments in which this darkness manifests itself (see Berthold-Bond 1991; Mills 2002; Ciavatta 2010) and takes over in triumph.

## 4 A madness of reason?

Madness is not an abstract loss of reason; just as, Hegel explains, physical illness is not the total loss of health, but it is precisely the condition of contradiction. While healthy subjects, through ideality, do not lose the sense of the whole of their subjectivity and consider their individual world as an ordered totality, within which they place the contents that come from their corporeity, mentally ill persons enter into a real contradiction between the whole systematized in their consciousness, and a particular determination that is fixed in them and

that they can no longer place and order within their world, nor submit to themselves as subjects (see Wolff 1991).<sup>12</sup> Madness breaks out

when it [the human being, SA] remains ensnared in a particular determinacy, it fails to assign that content the intelligible place and the subordinate position belonging to it in the individual world-system which a subject is. In this way the subject finds itself in the contradiction between its totality systematized in its consciousness, and the particular determinacy in that consciousness, which is not pliable and integrated into an overarching order. This is derangement (GW 20, § 408, p. 412; *PM*, pp. 114–115).

Madness is therefore the extreme moment of contradiction from which human beings can arise or in which they can succumb. In madness two personalities live together at the same time, the rational one and the particular. They know each other. Unlike what happens in the relationship between sleep and wakefulness, the subject is unable to remove this duplicity of personalities. The relationship between these two opposites gives rise to an only apparent dialectic, in which the natural, dark element of the soul ends up prevailing.

Unlike somnambulism, in which the two personalities do not know about each other, in madness next to the subjective reality there is also the objective one, but as two separate worlds that cannot integrate. This coexistence of a subjective and an objective sphere, explains why the mentally ill know that they are in the asylum and can perform certain tasks and activities. In madness the greatest fracture is experienced.<sup>13</sup>

In clarifying what happens in madness, Hegel uses as an example precisely the error of naive idealism, presenting it as a kind of philosophical “madness”, where an attempt is made to give absolute validity to subjective content. Madness therefore consists in holding on as firm and true to a subjective representation that contradicts reality.<sup>14</sup>

This dominion of the interior over the exterior can be at the origin of mental illness. The risk lies not only in the isolation and prevalence of a single aspect,

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<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Andreozzi analyzes the relationship between madness and inter-subjectivity. Starting from Hegel’s *Anthropology*, the author aims to show how, through madness, Hegel advocates the need to recognize the immanent and inter-subjective relationship that constitutes the subject. Cf. Giovanni Andreozzi, *infra*, pp. 79–89.

<sup>13</sup> An original approach to madness is presented by Caterina Maurer (*infra*, pp. 115–125), to show how Hegel does not consider the so-called emotional dimension as a threat to mental health, but rather as indispensable for the subject to act, decide, know and relate to the outside world.

<sup>14</sup> The incorrigibility of one’s own conviction, even in the face of contradicting evidence, will represent one of the substantial aspects in the definition of the schizophrenic delirium in the twentieth century. See American Psychiatric Association 2013.

but also in the inability of the soul to regulate its relationship with the outside world. Mental illness, Hegel clarifies, is that condition in which individuals relate with no mediation to concrete content, while their weighted consciousness of themselves and of the intellectual connection with the world forms a different state (see GW 20, § 406, p. 409f.; *PM*, p. 95f.). This condition, we would say today, is schizophrenia, in which between the world and the subject there is no effective relationship of exchange.

The question arises, then, what is the relationship, according to Hegel, between madness and normality? There seems to be here a significant difference between Kant and Hegel. For Kant, mental illness is a “disorder and deviation from the rule of the use of reason” (AA 7, p. 216, transl. 2007, 321). The only general character of alienation is the loss of common sense (*sensus communis*), the *Gemeinsinn*, and the appearance of a logical singularity (*sensus privatus*), the *Eigensinn* (AA 7, p. 219): for example, a man sees a burning light on his table in broad daylight, while another man beside him does not see it, or he hears a voice that no one else perceives. The madman is excluded from the possibility of thinking according to the laws of experience. Kant is guided by a *logic of otherness*:

The more the madman separates himself from the general rules of thought until he enjoys a particular rule for his thinking, the more he is really mad. In essence, alienation implies a hermetic withdrawal in oneself, which does not accept nuances in its principle. Reason, for Kant, is like reason itself, a pure form to which objects can correspond. Reason is a viewpoint on objects, but it is a viewpoint radically cut off from the ‘true knowledge of things’ (Swain 1997, p. 5; AA 7, p. 220).

Hegel’s discourse contrasts with that of Kant. For Hegel, madness is not the loss of reason. This is why the mentally ill know that they are in a madhouse; they know their guardians; they know, concerning to their companions, that they too are ill. They joke among themselves about their madness; they are employed in all kinds of services, and sometimes they are also made guardians. If it is true that there are two personalities in the insane, the two personalities do not constitute two states, but are both in the same state, in a way that these two personalities who deny each other touch and know each other. “He knows himself divided, he feels his division, according to this one and only subject he has left!” (Swain 1997, p. 15). Hegel’s position shows proximity to Pinel.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Foucault places Pinel’s position, as well as that of Hegel, within an anthropological perspective that instead of freeing human beings, chains them to their nature in a deterministic way. As Foucault states: the mentally ill is “libre d’abandonner sa liberté et [de] s’enchaîner à la folie”

Pinel recognizes similarity beyond difference – a similarity that includes differences, and that allows him to recognize “le fou” as a human being. The madman ceases to be demonic. Sure, they are human beings. But they are special people, sick people. Mad people are recognized in their humanity, and that is a very big step. They are “sick” humans, who need to be “treated”. The recognition of the madman’s humanity comes at the price of medicalization.

A similar approach can be found in Hegel. He considers *Wahnsinn* (*delirium*) the highest form of madness. This form is characterized by the awareness of one’s split, nevertheless the sick person is unable to overcome their subjective representation and tries in every way to make the actual reality coincide with it. The therapy relies on the presence of the spirit, of a residual rationality, which can be supported by physical and psychic treatment – on this point Hegel even echoes Pinel’s theories<sup>16</sup>. The patient must in any case be treated as a rational being.<sup>17</sup>

Hence this state is a breakdown and distress within the mind itself. – The genuine psychological treatment therefore keeps firmly in view the fact that derangement is not an abstract loss of reason, whether in respect of intelligence or of the will and its responsibility, but only derangement, only a contradiction within the reason that is still present (GW 20, § 408, p. 414; *PM*, p. 115).

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(Foucault 1961, p. 614). For an analysis of the relationship between Hegel and Foucault and possible affinities, see Alice Giuliani’s paper, *infra*, pp. 127–137. In this regard, we can bring Hegel’s discourse closer to that of Freud, who states: “Even when it comes to states as far removed from the reality of the outside world as confused hallucinatory states (amentia), the sick, once cured, declare that, in a corner of their mind, according to their expression, a normal person had kept himself hidden, letting himself unfold before them, like a disinterested observer [...] We can probably admit that what happens in all similar states is a psychic split. Instead of a psychic attitude, there are two; one, the normal one, takes into account reality while the other, under the influence of impulses, detaches the ego from the latter. The two attitudes coexist, but the result depends on their relative powers” (Freud 1924, p. 77).

**16** Moral treatment is not, as Foucault might suggest, a treatment through morality, the imposition of a certain morality, but rather a treatment through words. Pinel’s successors will say that for this treatment to be effective it will be necessary to organize an adequate space. These two criteria of treatment and the search for an adequate organization of space are characteristics that can serve to distinguish institutional psychotherapy from classical psychiatric practice, on Hegel and Pinel, cf. Giulia Battistoni, *infra*, pp. 91–101.

**17** On the relationship between philosophy and madness, cf. Feloj/Giargia 2012. On the problem of mental illness starting from the experiments in French and English institutes and their legacy in Germany, starting from Reil’s inquiries, see Poggi 2000, in particular chapter XI, pp. 545–608. In the debate between Reil, Steffens, and Heinroth, one finds many aspects also included in Hegel’s accounts. On the role of reason to overcome mental illness, see Heinroth 1818.

In madness human beings can at any moment lose the path of subjectification, stopping somewhere or getting lost. This means that there is no sure foothold from which to begin the process of subjectification.

The choice to start from this nocturnal side in Hegel, as well as to choose darkness as a *leitmotiv*, allows us to apply a new perspective to Hegel's philosophy and his dialectical process, and ultimately see how the dark dimension is not an element that disappears once and for all in the constitution of the subject, but is rather a persisting aspect in the process of subjectification. The bodily relationship between mother and child, the contradiction that occurs in madness, the role of the unconscious, all these issues and their investigation will allow us to create a different atmosphere around Hegelian philosophy and to re-evaluate its real, concrete, corporeal dimension.

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Rossella Bonito Oliva

# The Feminine in Hegel. Between Tragedy and Magic

## A Case of Unconscious Recognition

**Abstract:** This paper will take its starting point at the figure of Antigone taken up by Hegel at various moments of his reflection. For Hegel, the Greek tragedy in general is the terrain from which to draw emblematic figures, not so much of heroes and heroines, but of moments of passage. Antigone is a sister, rebellious against the tyrant's law, a symbol of the passage from one symbolic universe to another. Indicating the tragedy on one side and the magic on the other, this paper aims to focus on the resistance in the unconscious of a symbolic *translated/betrayed* in the cultural becoming: the magic of the spirit. The relationship between nature and culture intersects with the individual psychic structure in which the hierarchy between male and female is rooted. It is not the "best of all possible worlds", but the place where to find – also through Antigone – the clues of a dissonance, of an outside that has its incidence in the Hegelian dialectic.

### 1

In this article I have chosen to focus on two perspectives of the "feminine", as described by Hegel. Setting aside the so-called "Fragment on Love", which is undoubtedly the most discussed topic in critical literature, the tragedy of Antigone and of Oedipus' family is the representation of the crisis of "beautiful ethicality", and of a heroine who represents its breakdown. Hegel states in *Aesthetics*, however, that in ancient tragedy, there is no place for the various descriptions of the inner soul and of its peculiar character, nor for the interweaving and the specific intrigue, for participation in the simple struggle and its outcome, in the conflict engaged between the essential powers of life and the gods who govern the human heart and who have as individual representatives the tragic heroes (see GW 28.1, pp. 504–508; *Hotho*, pp. 430–436).

Therefore, Antigone is not a protagonist of tragedy in the sense that this term conveys in the modern era. The bipolarism of Sophocles' heroes and heroines represents the conflict between opposing demands that transcend individuals – if we accept Hegel's assertion that the objective of tragedy is the ethical right of

conscience, the legitimacy of the act in itself and for itself on the uncertain border between nature and culture. Sophocles' tragedy, especially the Oedipus trilogy, represents the dissolution of the most archaic family structure (see Bonito Oliva 2008, pp. 37–52).

The fate in which the man senses what he has lost creates a longing for the lost life [...]. This sensing of life, a sensing which finds itself again, is love, and in love fate is reconciled. Thus considered, the trespasser's deed is no fragment; the action which issues from life, from the whole, also reveals the whole (*OC*, pp. 243–244).

Tragedy does not narrate, in the modern sense of the term, but translates the myth by maintaining the boundary between what can be expressed and what cannot, which both come into play in the conflict between the powers of life and the gods: individuals are heroes only for their exceptionality – authors of facts, not of conscious actions. With Sophocles' *Antigone*, tragedy attains its “absoluten Exempel der Tragödie”; the heroine challenges Creon by appealing to the right of kinship and to the laws of the gods of the underworld, but the whole evolution of the tragic conflict leads to the reality determined by individual actions. Between *Antigone* and Creon, the climax of the tragedy seems to be fueled by words; these words, rather than expressing feelings that they are aware of, are actually revelatory to the characters themselves. Their words betray their obstinate opposition as well as revealing what they have in common beyond their awareness and will: they share the family and the state, and they become unconscious representatives of these two structures. *Antigone* and Creon share the same territory that has nevertheless lost its precise boundaries. Before their conflict, the family itself – that of Oedipus – had revealed its very fragility: the monstrosity of incest, the curse of the father which must be borne by his children, the fratricidal struggle. The family no longer cares, but its bonds persist in a contradictory form. The communal life of the members of the family and of the *polis* requires a higher order, a law that brings an end to civil war, a law that distinguishes the private from the public, the elementary sharing of the blood ties of the family from the rules of communal life. The ethical *pathos*, or rather that which makes humans become one with a particular quality, is a “totally penetrating passion”: a fusion between *pathos* and will from which the figures of a spiritual world take shape. In the one-sidedness of the reciprocal claims, in the struggle between “the essential powers of life and the gods that govern the human heart”, philosophy grasps the movement of the spiritual, from which also emerges the distinction, not as yet fully apparent, between feminine and masculine. In our opinion, the pages of the *Phenomenology* dedicated to *Antigone* express the construction of the symbolic universe that frames the division



of roles, of *pathos* between masculine and feminine. In that ethical determination (*Bestimmung*) that affirms itself in the family regulated by law, masculine and feminine are determined one through the other: one does not exist without the other (see Butler 2000).

In the anthropological treatment of the relationship between the two sexes, the family is the ethical determination (*Bestimmung*) of this relationship; its fulfillment lies in the spiritual domain. However, it is interesting to note that precisely within the family there is a magical excess in the mother-son relationship with respect to actual generation which, as we shall see, transcends the ethical translation of *eros* from motherhood to the family itself. The first degree of the philosophy of the subjective spirit, the immediate spirit, is the soul in which the “mind finds the material on which its character is wrought” (*PM*, § 389, p. 29). From the first determinations of the soul, (the sleep of the spirit) – from physiological qualities and changes of the different stages of life, including sexual differences, through the articulation between sleep and wakefulness – psychophysical unity is determined in the reciprocity between active and passive, between internalization and externalization. In this passage Hegel introduces the magical mother-son relationship. Magical is not meant here as extraordinary or miraculous; rather it is used to describe something that, as an activity of the spirit, has its own potential, even though it remains on the threshold between the visible and the invisible; but it also has its own passivity in the physiological and external solicitations that the pregnant body receives. From this relationship, something that is “more-than-life”, which is specific to the human being, has already been created. This mutual dependence bears the marks of the feminine: somehow involuntary, empathetic, on the border between sleep and wakefulness, between unconsciousness and consciousness, which transmits the sensations of the mother’s body, but also the whole symbolic unconscious universe, the experience of the woman, to the body that is forming in the womb. This is almost the first pulse of the spirit, pregnant with the relational potential of the spiritual exemplar. Only a few paragraphs before this, in the distinction between masculine and feminine, Hegel ascribed parenthood to the female gender, and ascribed to the family its ethical determination through the care of parental ties. This type of relationship, which is also biological, is at the same time somehow more than natural too; it is magical, but it remains unconscious, involuntary, and an almost inherent part of the “ethical determination (*Bestimmung*)” of the woman. When the relationship that is no longer natural between the sexes conditions the familial organization and therefore the role of women in society, that magical relationship is both an unconscious excess and a medium between the first pulse of the spirit and the formation of the spiritual reality; between individual life and human life, life within a symbol-

ic horizon which opens up to ethical determination (*Bestimmung*). Motherhood is the fulfillment of the feminine being, and the family is her home, determined by the relationship between the sexes, meaning the division and regulation of roles according to what is most appropriate for each one.

That mythical passage from the beautiful ethicality of the polis to the State in which the subordination of the family to the law of the State arises, is, fundamentally, neither chronologically nor ontologically of this ethical determination (*Bestimmung*) of the wife and mother, but already *in fieri* in the biological body. The tragic conflict between the law of blood ties and the law of the state has coagulated into the “magical power of the genius” which acts in the sedimentation of the unconscious. There is no visible, explicable passage, but it is the stabilized datum of the translation of nature into culture. Just as the servant-master struggle in the transition from conflict to the lordship-servitude relationship marks the beginning of intellectual activity, in the same way this relationship affirms the assumption of the principle of reality in the complex articulation of human relations. The unfortunate story of Oedipus’ family lies on the mythical horizon that forms the backdrop to the regulated relationship between masculine and feminine. From the family, the ethical principle of communal life takes shape, which is also nourished through a symbolic universe that becomes universal, lasting, historical and unconscious. The belonging to and assumption of this symbolic universe both mark the beginning of the historical world, of culture and the affirmation of the principle of reality. In the case of the lordship-servitude relationship, the realization of the existence of the other and the division of roles have diluted selfishness and conflict; in the ethical, as in the spiritual world, the cruel entombment of Antigone whilst still alive symbolizes the destiny of the feminine within the community. The spiritual nature does not lose dynamism and plasticity, but marks precise and deep boundaries within the symbolic universe. Sophocles’ tragedy stages the unexplainable and reconstructable interval between conflict and the composition of the work of “each and every one”, from which law takes shape as an abstraction, and within which the family forms its juridical character with the distinction between private and public. The “ethical determination (*Bestimmung*)” of the relationship between the sexes is the regulation of this same relationship, its principle of order, which has been a performative factor of masculine and feminine since unconsciousness. This is the constitutive structure of the difference between the sexes as a relationship between the sexes. The differentiation between masculine and feminine is finally determined by the parental bonds inscribed in a symbolic universe – the one in which we still live, a timelessness within the time of culture – which shapes sexually separate psychophysical units, and defines the paths of their relationship (see Bourdieu 1998). The result becomes the object of masculine thought

and the conditioning of feminine thought, taking on the asymmetry of that relationship as its structure: the assumption of a consolidated reality that produces effects on the human form of life; a historical unconsciousness or a symbolic universe which, despite the misfortunes of the subject, continues to be ascribed to “the name of the father” (see Lacan 2005).

## 2

In highlighting these two passages, I am aware that I am going over ground that has already been covered by feminist critical thinking that has denounced the paternalism and machismo of the Hegelian system. Over time, however, with the experience gained by women in social and political spheres, an obsession with opposition and demand in women’s reflections has given way to a more articulated viewpoint on the processes of identification, focusing attention on the dialectic of recognition. In the course of time, having experienced the limits of a mere political and social opposition in the name of gender, feminists have discussed the possibilities of a more careful analysis of the dialectical processes of female identification. This analysis includes questions on the meaning of nature and culture within the universal that is fixed in the symbolic universe and in intersubjective relationships; it includes the involvement, perhaps unconscious and involuntary, of women in the construction and legitimization of this universe. In the feminine narration of the feminine, parts of the feminine mind have re-emerged, rooted in the perception of the feminine body, interwoven with her memory, and with the resistant myths of ordinary life in science and philosophy. Persistent and resistant factors have emerged, which it is necessary to come to terms with in order to find, within one’s own roots and one’s own flesh, an “otherwise” of conflict and claim.

In order to fully understand this, it will no doubt help to draw upon the dialectic of Hegelian recognition, certainly not for its outcomes, but rather for its passages. The section dealing with the re-evaluation of the subjective spirit within the *Encyclopaedia* supports this reading. The subjective is both the territory and the border of feminine existence, but it is also a point where the combination of observation and anticipation brings to light the structures in which the feminine appears assimilated into the ways of subjection and subjectivation, of differentiation and homologation within the practices of the universal. Starting from the movement of subjectivation, from the analysis of the constitution of the subject as the center and source of one’s actions in the articulation of the concrete universal, the Hegelian itinerary gives one the opportunity to grasp the dynamic connection of moments rather than elements, and to see the inter-

weaving of differences rather than opposition, as a possible cipher for the human form of life. The resolution of the opposition between difference and identity, between the individual and universal – also in the case of the feminine – focuses on experience, and thus on the pliable and intersubjective determination of bodies within cultural sedimentations, and in the configuration of the universal through the mechanisms of recognition, inclusion and exclusion. The ways in which difference, even feminine difference, enters into the processes of universalization in relation to identity leaves more than one trace of the power of the symbolic universe – even before the force of laws – on the processes of identification.

### 3

Spirit is the substance and the universal self-equal, lasting essence – it is the unshakable and undissolved *ground* and point of origin for the doing of each and all – it is their *purpose* and goal [...] is just as much the universal *work*, which as a result engenders itself through the *doing* of each and all as their unity and equality (*PhS*, p. 254).

It is a question of spiritual reality, of an intersubjective and dynamic universe in which the life of a being, of a universal as a work, takes shape: what is no longer natural has become spiritual. It is the moment in which the relationship between self-awareness and conscience takes the place of the relationship between subject and object, in which everything that constitutes experience is not a thing or a fact, but bears the marks of the ideal translation of the whole constellation of the relationships of individuals of this spiritual nature. The common horizon brings into play bonds, and these bonds bring into play physical bodies; these bodies involve the differences and cultural backgrounds of communal life. Every single individual is firmly linked by mutual dependence, even though in immediate ethicality the bond is still suspended between the bond of blood and the feeling of the community as a whole; between communal living, and feeling oneself to be, and thinking of oneself as part of, the community. As long as the most elementary parental bond prevails, the whole of ethics remains within its quiet immediacy, and the individual is an “*unreal* shadow without any core” almost on the border of the spiritual life (*PhS*, p. 259). The whole of ethics is rooted in *pietas*, in the unconscious as a law, “*unwritten* and *unerring* law of the gods” (*PhS*, p. 251). Unwritten, yet powerful, *pathos* until it merges with the will. In Sophocles’ trilogy Hegel identifies in the tragic story of Oedipus’ family the representation of an insurgent contradiction: the right of the gods – unwritten and infallible – is broken by parricide and incest, by the overlapping roles of

fathers, mothers, sons, brothers and sisters. The unconscious incest, the curse of Oedipus, the blind and selfish affirmation of the will to power over attachment to the destiny of the community, have all generated the emergency of a civil war which the prohibition of Creon tries to remedy.

That ban, that law of the day – the government of the community in danger – is in opposition to the ancient law of the night – the law of blood that resists in the hostile *pathos*/will of Antigone. The law of Creon serves only to generate violence and fear on the border between the private part of the family and the public part of the community; it is not the result of the work of every single individual. It does not obliterate the family, but by denying the sister the opportunity to bury her brother it distinguishes its ethical meaning (see *PhS*, p. 267). The law of the night, which is evoked by the woman, and the law of the day, which is put forward by the tyrant, oppose each other, and therefore do not achieve the necessary unification: they no longer embody the family bond nor do they have the true force of the law. Neither of them can have absolute value; it is “an upward movement of the laws of the netherworld towards the actuality of daylight and to conscious existence” (*PhS*, p. 267). Creon and Antigone, in their one-sidedness, instead, embody the conflict between the two laws; they do not grasp their coexistence, the necessary passage from one to the other. They cannot see past what they feel and what they want; they experience the conflict within themselves, and through their words the unresolved knot between *pathos* and desire becomes evident.

Only by deciding to act does the individual emerge from his/her fleeting *unwirklichen Schatten*; but the deed results in conflict: the lack of conciliation inside Antigone and Creon, as well as externally in the hostility between family and community. “It is nature, not the accident of circumstances or of choice” (*PhS*, p. 268) that decides the conflict and the different orientation of the will: each individual remains closed within his own nature, conscious of his/her own law, blinded by obstinacy; but the necessary unification within the community is provoked only by the awareness of the consequences of the facts, by the explosion of the conflict. In disobeying Creon, Antigone knows she is challenging the authority of the state, but she is not able to overcome the exitless perimeter of *pathos*. She is insulated, living in a unilateral dimension, a fusion of passion and duty: she does not deny the crime and her guilt, but she does not even assume full responsibility for it (see Lacan 1986). Only through suffering will she understand the consequences of her action and recognize her guilt. Antigone has, however, moved the immovable, has brought out into the open the fact that the conscious is connected to the unconscious, her own self is connected to the self of strangers, the offense is connected to the subsequent suffering. She has presented a deeper and more powerful reality than Creon’s violence,

a conditioning that is resistant to the authority of prohibition. By following her passion Antigone does not cancel out either of the two laws – by obeying one and opposing the other; her denial of one in the name of the other shows her lack of regard for her own present, her isolation from the community. Her act (*Tat*) does not affect the opposition and the opposite movement: a “pure will” that does not translate into the imperative, Hegel tells us, but what is valid in her conscience is “the immediate self-consciousness of ethical substance” (*PhS*, p. 250). In Creon’s condemnation, on the other hand, violence does not result in a new law, since the tyrant shares a familial bond with his victim; it does not erase the remote unconscious recall despite his exercise of power. There is no consolation or conciliation for Antigone – who remains suspended, so to speak, between life and death, between the indistinct urge of the unconscious and the violence of the prohibition. Creon, challenged by his son and his wife, receives neither consent nor recognition, since his edict leads to the ruin of his family and he is therefore unworthy of the government of the *polis*. The relationship between the sexes in ethical space does not resolve the opposition as long as conscious life is hostile to the unconscious, as long as condemnation becomes a laceration of the Self. Antigone is aware, and yet at the same time unaware, moved by her unconscious feelings for her brother; therefore she remains in some way suspended on the border between two worlds: voice of the symbolic universe and victim at the same time of a symbolic universe that sanctions her marginalization. Antigone’s challenge, the recklessness of her act, does not resolve the conflict inside each individual or within the community. In that emblematic tragedy, “the differences that ethical substance gives itself” in the no longer immediate articulation of ethical space have not yet come to light. Only in the emergence of these differences do all the moments of this articulation acquire “their individuality determined in self-awareness by nature distinct”. Here the “originally determined nature” draws the boundary between every single person from whom originates the movement “of the effectuality down towards the ineffectiveness; of the human law [...] towards danger and the proof of death” and of the “hellish law up towards the effectuality of the day”, of which the first is convenient (*zukommt*) to man, and the second to woman.

The union of man with woman constitutes the active mediating middle of the whole, and it constitutes the elemental unit which, estranged into the extremes of divine and human law, is just as much their immediate union [...] a downward movement of the human law, which has organized itself into self-sufficient members, towards danger and trial by death – and an upward movement of the laws of the netherworld towards the actuality of daylight and to conscious existence. Of these movements the former falls to man, the latter to woman (*PhS*, p. 267).

## 4

In ethics, the feminine will find the object of her desire; the purity of Antigone, without consolation or conciliation, is destined to smash into reality, while the destabilizing *pietas* is to be channeled into the law: the view of the law must precede and accompany the action of the law so that tragic conflict will be mediated (*aufgehoben*). *Mediated* does not mean cancelled out, but shifted to another level, elevated, to a reciprocal relationship that maintains differences, whilst stripping away their one-sidedness. With these differences brought back to the relationship, one gives what is *zukommt* to the woman (see Butler-Malabou 2010). This is what has been consolidated in culture as historical unconsciousness; it is the object of knowledge as the first figure of the immediate spirit – somehow on the threshold between the leap from the natural, which always inaugurates the spiritual being, and the coming to light through the consciousness of the subject. The subject-object relationship does not yet appear in the form of its objectivity for the consciousness, but appears only as a given, and is also determined in the relationship between the sexes. This is a relationship that allows itself to be observed, but which, no longer natural but not yet spiritual, acquires its meaning which the philosopher grasps in its completed movement. It is not a question of the actualization of a potentiality in a metaphysical sense, Hegel recalls, but of what emerges from the observation of the empirical in its complete unfolding: the determination of the indeterminate being into sexual difference. However, it does not even obey natural determinism, but is assumed in anthropology and thought of in the reality of the spirit, because it repeats itself over time in different ways through, and in, the alert life of the spirit: a universal structure acting in the relationship between the sexes which covers the history of humanity. Combining the observation with the anticipation of the determined (which was originally undetermined), philosophy grasps the “ethical determination” (*Bestimmung*) of that relationship, or of what that relationship has become: the building of the family and kinship in the figure of human life. The parental bond therefore represents both the objectification and the historical existence of a natural latency such as sexual attraction, and is also a clue to a leap from nature to culture – an event – through which biological life is translated into spiritual life. The relationship between the sexes is where “we find the individual subject to a real antithesis, leading it to seek and find *itself* in *another* individual” (Hegel 2020, § 397, p. 62).

This is a distinction of subjectivity which does not go beyond the sensation of ethics, of love (here Hegel uses, not by chance, *Empfindung*, a relation to something given and not yet elaborated on through the process of subjectifica-

tion), but it also represents the possibility of no longer being natural. This is not a generic and abstract possibility, but a trace of the determination of the spirit by itself. Already in this first moment, the power to be of the spirit is the tension between the objective universal present in the unconscious, and the given existence – its own existence and that of the present world – in which that world becomes reality with existence as its product. This is what happens when “the sexual tie acquires its moral and spiritual significance and function in the *family*” (Hegel 2020, § 397, p. 62). The relationship is opened towards the other, but it generates an opposition between differences, between masculine and feminine, which will be resolved at a higher moment, in the universal embodied in the family bond. The family mediates the opposition and makes the unconscious, sedimented in the examples of the spiritual being, an effective reality. The family is the frame and background for the relationship between the sexes that has removed opposition.

With the objectification of this now unnatural relationship between the sexes, its determination is the first moment of ethics in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. The *eros* is composed of *ethos*; the blood bond does not generate hostility, thanks to the renunciation of “the natural and single personality”, in view of a unity that poses “self-limitation” as true liberation. Renunciation and self-limitation do not derive from a command or a duty, but from the operation that each individual – subjectively free – performs from within. The family is therefore not only a contract, but a legal entity whose members are accidental. These “accidents” are distinguished by gender difference, by roles, by active and powerful virility and by passive and subjective femininity (see *EPR*, § 166, p. 206). There is a self-limitation from which the family as a whole assigns the helm of history to man and the safekeeping of its products to woman. We are only at the first stage of ethics.

The *one* [sex] is therefore spirituality which divides itself up into personal self-sufficiency with being *for itself* and the knowledge and volition of *free universality*, i. e. into the self-consciousness of conceptual thought and the volition of the objective and ultimate end. And the *other* is spirituality which maintains itself in unity as knowledge and volition of the substantial in the form of concrete *individuality* [*Einzelheit*] and *feeling* [*Empfindung*]. In its external relations, the former is powerful and active, the latter passive and subjective. Man therefore has his actual substantial life in the state, in learning [*Wissenschaft*], etc [...] so that it is only through his division that he fights his way to self-sufficient unity with himself. In the family, he has a peaceful intuition of this unity, and an emotive [*empfindend*] and subjective ethical life. Woman, however, has her substantial vocation [*Bestimmung*] in the family, and her ethical disposition consists in this [family] *piety* (*EPR*, § 166, p. 206).

The private and public homes of women are one and the same. The female body, which is too important for the generation and survival of the human being to be



submitted and assimilated like that of a servant – or is perhaps so naturalized as to disturb the concrete virile individuality – is displaced from the public space. She is assimilated into her work and in the movement of spiritual reality, but at the same time on the margins, at the service of a community in both an external and internal position. The symbolic universe establishes this female passivity, and heals the latent tragic hostility between the law of the night and the law of the day, between the feeling of *pietas* and the strength of the law. Woman's self-limitation repeats the sacrifice so that the relationship between the sexes does not turn into disorder, so that the order assimilated into the unconscious of the spiritual being can become an effective reality in individuals. In another space, however, she becomes the repository and guarantor of this result. The conflict is mediated (*aufgehoben*), but there remains a specificity to indicate a "different use" of that belonging to the spiritual being (see Sözer 2018).

This symbolic universe emerges from the obtuse forms of sleep and unconsciousness. It determines the activity of the senses, whose understanding requires a psychic physiology, and shapes the psychosomatic unity of each new life in the forms produced by the spiritualization of the living. The accultured body or an embodied culture becomes a "monad with infinite periphery", open and pliantly available to the communal world. The first immediate movement, still unconscious, is a magic of the spirit, a power to be, the *ghenos* as a foundation and condition of the possibility of plural and multiple figures of a spiritual existence. The mother-woman is the medium of this movement, but the magic term indicates an excess of the contents of this unconsciousness. These contents belong to the mother but remain below the threshold of consciousness: they are not the result of her specific action as universal, and at the same time they do not really become the object of her reflection.

The feminine participates in this magic, and perhaps from the magic of this unconscious universe the naturalization of the masculine dominion that marks the bodies of women and men, which draws geographies and spaces, and which is translated into theories and beliefs, is prepared. If man is the arm of history, woman is the unconscious weaver of its continuity. Beyond the relationship between the sexes, beyond the loving relationship from which generation produces full unification between lovers, motherhood is a magical symbiosis between the maternal body and the fetus: symbiosis rather than relationship, a physiological transmission of psychophysical content that has nothing in common with the inheritance of the genetic traits of other living beings. The woman cannot help being inspired by *pietas*; she can only limit herself in this feeling; she cannot but be a mother and see this as her highest fulfillment – almost her destiny, no longer tragic, to the extent that the limitation originates, albeit in a passive way, from the woman herself. There remains one possibility, in which the

woman cannot be replaced or neutralized, which designates the strength of the woman and her dignity as a person: generation. In everything that is left, so to say, to women there is another world, elsewhere – which, thanks to her apolitical nature, resists even in the symbolic universe, which sacrifices her.

According to Hegel, the mother is in fact “the genius of the child”; pregnancy establishes a total selfhood (see *PM*, § 405, p. 89), a two-in-one that is not only physiological, but psychophysical: a “subjective substantiality of an Other” that has only a formal existence which only after birth becomes specific in the sexed body. Substantial subjectivity is a dynamic and, at the same time, inarticulate selfhood which feeds the life that is no longer natural of the fetus. That dependence on the mother’s body prefigures the need for care, the risk of exposure to the world, the interweaving of that life with other lives which typifies each new life. It remains an inarticulate relationship in the pregnant womb, but it makes the mother the subject of the child even in her unstructured and involuntary being, still unconscious. That unity is destined to be superseded by the autonomy of the mature subject, but that relationship remains magical: within the mother and for her. The mother is entrusted with the “intensive form of individuality”, its articulation, its advancement and governance: all that has been transmitted and incorporated into the concrete relationship with others, with the world. Magic, the unconscious and the *pietas*, are assigned to the feminine, but this naturalized or systematized exile constitutes a “second” nature, a creation that as nature is immediate and as culture is the product of a process. From these customs, from these mental habits, the identification of the feminine and the masculine follows in their perennial interconnection in communal life, in communication and in psychic and social organization: every form of individuation is produced from these and through these. It is not only a process of subjective assimilation, but the objective fixation of roles and rights in the world. Although historically determined, it has a greater duration and frequency than any event or change. In this middle-earth, as with any magic, something resists that is not brought to completion, which does not make itself visible. For the woman and for the man an unresolved resistance remains, albeit associated with, or rather, positioned in the feminine. Within the emotional sphere lie bonds beyond the atomism that threatens every community; *pietas* remains, nevertheless, the foundation of ethics. An “otherwise” possibility is left open within the process of subjectivation, a difference that remains hidden in the mythology of the origin of the community, which, not only in Hegel, holds “the name of the father”. In the symbolic universe the disorder of the imaginary is healed. Drawing inspiration from Hegel’s way of thinking, we can note that the magical relationship compensates for the possible risk of conflict in the tragic representation of the origin of the community. In the layers that have not yet been opened even

by the dialectic that recognizes a sort of magic, there is a latency of the feminine, of a difference: a sort of plasticity, turned upside down at the limits of the symbolic universe, which in the negation remains unexceeded, which supports the two-in-one of which the mother-son relationship is an emblematic example. This I-You opens up to the empathic relationship, and does not retreat in the face of fragility, but allows us to imagine autonomy without cancelling out dependence. If the differentiation of roles within the Hegelian system stabilizes the community – its identification of the virile with the ability to fight against danger and death, and of the feminine with the ability to generate and preserve *pietas* in the world – it does not console and does not reconcile. In this “other”, which cannot be explained by history, and which goes beyond history, there are reasons and resources to explore. There is a reality that inevitably emerges. Perhaps it is not what Hegel really thought, but we would like to say that it is what he might have thought, or perhaps even suspected, when in a letter, confessing a moment of mental impasse, he spoke of the power of the “magic of the spirit”. He writes to Windischmann: this magic is in the

dark regions where nothing is revealed as fixed, definite, and certain; where glimmerings of light flash everywhere but, flanked by abysses, are rather darkened in their brightness and led astray by the environment, casting false reflections far more than illumination [...] Everybody probably has such a turning point in his life, the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence in which he is forced through a narrow passage by which his confidence in himself and everyday life grows in strength and assurance-unless he has rendered himself incapable of being fulfilled by everyday life, in which case he is confirmed in an inner, nobler existence (*Letters*, p. 561).

If this internal world finds its home in the feminine, this “other” world indicates other paths and other ways of thinking about communal life. Giving voice to this magic – which, according to Hegel, threatens the forces of man, upsetting the certainties of everyday life – can mean shaking the certainties of male domination in order to remodel, through the experience of each one of us, the modes of relationship that even the feminine-masculine dichotomy reduces to a single dimension. Unconsciously Hegel gives us a clue, to think outside the dichotomy and the ideal of an identity that does not take into account the shifts in meaning that genders and roles encounter from the changing horizons of each individual experience (see Bonito Oliva 1995).

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