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REDISCOVERING UNEXPLORED HEGELIAN CONSTELLATIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE *BILDUNG*

Abstract

The article, and the research project described therein, aims to employ the methodology of the constellation research conceived by Dieter Henrich in order to shed light on the feminine contribution to Hegel's life and philosophical path. Whereas studies on individual female poetic figures who have monopolized the attention of Hegel Scholarship in recent decades abound, there is a significant gap in the overall reconstruction of Hegel's historical interaction with the women of his time. Beyond individual studies dedicated to Hegel's wife Marie Helena Susanne von Tucher or the more controversial figure of his sister Christiane Luise, Hegelian constellations of the feminine have remained largely unexplored. Hence, exploring and rediscovering such constellations is not of circumscribable value as a merely biographical and corollary matter, but as a powerful magnifying glass that allows the appreciation of a number of qualifying aspects in the ethical, aesthetic and translational spheres, and which may reveal an emancipatory bearing of Hegel's philosophy for contemporary debate.

Keywords: Aesthetics, *Bildung*, Ethics, Feminine Constellations, Translation

The constellation research [*Konstellationsforschung*] conceived by Dieter Henrich at the end of the last century to reconstruct the birth and development of classical German Idealism¹ has subsequently been applied in other historical-philosophical contexts². Such 'genetic' methodology³ is essentially based on an investigative analysis aimed at discovering and reconstructing premises, interactions, and creative and speculative impulses offered within a restricted and shared 'space of thought' between prominent and overexposed figures and minor and obscured ones⁴. Undoubtedly, such a research methodology can also prove fruitful in other fields, e.g., literature, as well as sociology; its potential for contamination and 'cross-fertilization' is, however, still underestimated⁵.

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1 D. Henrich, *Konstellationen*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1991; Id., *Der Grund im Bewusstsein*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1992; Id., *Grundlegung aus dem Ich*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 2004.

2 See M. Frank, *Unendliche Annäherung: die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 1997; M. Tedeschini (ed.), *La ricerca per costellazioni: metodo, scostamenti, casi di studio*, Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici, Roma 2021.

3 D. Henrich, *Werke im Werden*, Beck, München 2011, p. 16.

4 See M. Mulsow, M. Stamm, *Vorwort*, in M. Mulsow, M. Stamm (eds.), *Konstellationsforschung*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 2005, p. 7.

5 See C.-G. Heidegren, *Constellation Research and Sociology of Philosophy*, in «Acta sociologica», 67, n.1, 2024, pp. 88-97.

Inspired precisely by this valuable method, the project titled *Hegelian Constellations of the Feminine: a Hyper-Archive for an Inclusive Bildung*⁶ was conceived to illuminate the private and public constellations – of the feminine that have remained in the shadow of Hegelian Idealism for too long, despite having contributed to its genesis, expansion and consolidation. By this we do not mean a patriarchal and sexist constellation, of which Hegel is ‘lord and master’, but rather an obscured and inadequately recognized constellation, then and now, from which Hegel (and not only Hegel) benefited, from which he took inspiration, and which can continue to offer relevant insights even today.

Whereas studies on individual female poetic figures who have monopolized the attention of Hegel Scholarship in recent decades abound, there is a significant gap in the overall reconstruction of Hegel’s historical interaction with the women of his time. Within this interpretive framework, despite the fact that great attention has rightly been devoted to Antigone⁷, the protagonist of women’s emancipation, close to the values of the earth, life, and respect for the dignity of bodies, very little attention has been paid to the real women who historically influenced Hegel’s life and thought. Beyond individual studies⁸ dedicated to Hegel’s wife Marie Helena Susanne von Tucher or the more controversial figure of his sister Christiane Luise, Hegelian constellations of the feminine have remained largely unexplored⁹.

Indeed, there have been numerous female figures mentioned, appreciated, and criticized by Hegel in his letters, works, and famous Berlin lectures, who have had a direct or indirect, and often overlooked, impact on Hegel’s thought and who, if rediscovered, can contribute to tracing new pathways in German Idealism.

Hence, exploring and rediscovering such constellations is not of circumscribable value

- 6 This is the two-year PRIN 20224KFTLP Project (October 2023-October 2025), coordinated by Francesca Iannelli at the University of Roma Tre in collaboration with the Research Unit of the University of Chieti-Pescara, directed by Stefania Achella, and the Research Unit of the University of Bologna, directed by Eleonora Caramelli.
- 7 P. Mills, *Hegel’s Antigone*, in «The Owl of Minerva», 17, n. 2, 1986, pp. 131-152; J. Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*, Columbia University Press, New York 2000. F. Iannelli, *Oltre Antigone*, Carocci, Roma 2006; K. Hutchings, T. Pulkinnen (eds.), *Hegel’s Philosophy and Feminist Thought: Beyond Antigone?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2010, pp. 233-252; A. Siani, *Unvollkommene Gerechtigkeit. Hegel, Antigone und die Menschenrechte*, in Th. Oehl, A. Kok (eds.), *Objektiver und absoluter Geist nach Hegel. Kunst, Religion und Philosophie innerhalb und außerhalb von Gesellschaft und Geschichte*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2018, pp. 191-212; E. Caramelli, *Antigone and the Phenomenology of Spirit Between Literary Source (vv. 925-928) and Philosophical Reading*, in S. Achella, F. Iannelli, G. Baptist, S. Feloj, F. Li Vigni, C. Melica, (eds.), *The Owl’s Flight. Hegel’s Legacy to Contemporary Philosophy*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2021, pp. 293-30.
- 8 H.-C. Lucas, *Die Schwester im Schatten*, in O. Pöggeler, Chr. Jamme (Hrsg.), «o Fürstin der Heimath! Glückliches Stutgard». *Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft im deutschen Südwesten um 1800*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1988, pp. 284-306. See also H.C. Lucas, *Zwischen Antigone und Christiane*, in «Hegel-Jahrbuch» 1984-1985 (1988), pp. 409-442; H.G. Haasis, *Im Schatten des großen Bruders*, in H. Haasis (ed.), *Gebt der Freiheit Flügel*, Rowohlt, Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1988, pp. 825-830; A. Birkert, *Hegels Schwester*, Thorbecke, Ostfildern 2008.
- 9 As first remarked in the article by F. Iannelli, *Hegel’s Constellation of the Feminine between Philosophy and Life. A Tribute to Dieter Henrich’s Konstellationsforschung*, in *The Owl’s Flight. Hegel’s Legacy to Contemporary Philosophy*, cit., pp. 239-255.

as a merely biographical and corollary matter, but as a powerful magnifying glass that allows the appreciation of a number of qualifying aspects in the ethical, aesthetic and translational spheres, and which may reveal an emancipatory bearing of Hegel's philosophy for contemporary debate: on interpersonal and affective relations, on women's rights¹⁰, on translation theory as a theory of otherness, as well as on the role of the feminine in art and to rethink the controversial thesis of the end of art, understood as a consequence of a discipline monopolized for centuries by male figures (in both practice and critical theory).

In this sense, the complex and protean notion of *Bildung* will constitute the speculative focus of the entire project and will be reconsidered starting from specific historical figures of the Hegelian constellation of the feminine (from the philosopher's private life as well as from the contemporary public life that saw the presence of female artists, literary women, translators, opera singers, etc.) that allow addressing a series of macro-questions in the ethical (I), aesthetic (II), and translational (III) spheres. To the polysemous notion of *Bildung*, which constitutes the speculative focus underlying the entire project, multiple studies have been dedicated in recent years, including from a gender perspective¹¹; however, there is a complete lack of research that interconnects the problematic knot among figures of the feminine, *Bildung* and Hegelian philosophy.

The intent of the project is to consider the construction of Hegelian idealism as the result of a subterranean and constant confrontation with feminine otherness in order to augment alternative narratives of *Bildung*, the resonances of which can be significant today. This reconstruction will flow into the *FemHab – Archive of the Feminine and Bildung in Hegel*, a digital hyper-archive in OA created in collaboration with Samsung Electronics Italia, in which the cultural evidence of some of the most important female figures of the 19th century will be indexed to produce a critical reflection on the value of the feminine and otherness in German Idealism. Filling that gap will make it possible both to enhance the philosophical achievements of Hegelian Idealism as the forge of European *Bildung*, and to sift out what reflections – unconsciously discriminatory – of that tradition are still discernible today, and in what terms they can be overcome through a critical rereading of the forgotten legacy of the feminine in the light of current sensitivity which is increasingly inclusive and respectful of all difference.

1. Kinship constellations

There is a hitherto unacknowledged nocturnal and enigmatic aspect of Hegel's thought that it is now time to bring to the attention of scholars. For almost two centuries, perhaps out of discretion, an attempt has been made to obscure this aspect, preferring to present the philosopher in an authoritative, even austere, manner, with his cold gaze wrapped in

10 On this point, see C. Magni's essay *Hegel e la questione femminile al crocevia con il diritto* in this issue of B@bel.

11 I. Bubenik-Bauer, U. Schalz-Laurenze, *Frauen in der Aufklärung*, Helmer, Frankfurt a.M. 1995; C. Dziudzia, S. Klimek (eds.), *Gelehrte Frauen der Frühaufklärung*, Springer VS, Wiesbaden 2022.

his ermine. Even his student and biographer, Karl Rosenkranz, described Hegel's life as 'limpid', 'laborious', and 'devoid of any glimmer of intrigue and secrets'. He even went so far as to conclude that his biography coincided with the history of his philosophy.

This portrayal of Hegel as a man devoid of emotional fluctuations was selected on the basis that it would safeguard the integrity of his system, as if showing the fragility of his humanity would damage it.

The project *Hegelian constellations of the feminine: a hyper-archive for an inclusive Bildung* in general, and the research unit at the University of Chieti in particular, aims to shed light on these aspects. Despite the philosopher's preference for maintaining discretion regarding his personal life, there are numerous passages in his works that reflect his awareness of the complexities and potential tragedy inherent in the human condition. A sophisticated phenomenologist of the human condition, he effectively illuminates the shadow side of thought¹², as evidenced in his lengthy and now renowned passages on the role of negativity in the formation of subjectivity, the empowering influence of nature at the origin of the spirit, and the enduring struggle between life and death. The philosopher depicts the human experience through the lens of passions, impatience, and pain, emphasizing their pivotal role in understanding the human condition. The significance of this nocturnal aspect underscores the inherent complexity and ambivalence inherent in the dialectical process, which is never resolved painlessly or definitively. As Antigone poignantly illustrates, at the origin of every ethical community, of every individual choice, there is a tragedy.

A re-reading of Hegel's explanations in the classroom is sufficient to gain an understanding of the concept of anthropogenesis, as described by Kojève. This is the moment of transition between the immobile animal world [*Tierreich*] and the historical world of the spirit. In this context, the philosopher refers to the origin as a 'dark region'. This is a state suspended between dream and sleep, reason and madness, self-mastery and the upper hand of an irrational force. This experience is one that everyone has undergone to a greater or lesser degree, as Hegel himself recalls in his famous letter to Windischmann¹³.

In the initial stages of subjectivity, rather than a self-conscious subject, we encounter perceptions, sensations, and experiences [*Erlebnisse*] that are inherently confused, wherein elements intermingle, overlap, and diverge from the clear and distinct ideas associated with modern rationalism.

In order to shed light on the obscurity that marks not only the philosophical concept of life, but the philosopher's own life, it is then necessary to consider sources other than the tradition itself. This necessitates an examination of the female constellations in which Hegel grew up and within which he developed his system of thought. This process begins with an investigation of the private context of his family of origin, then progresses to an analysis of the family he formed, and concludes with an evaluation of the extent to

12 See G.A. Magee, *The Dark Side of Subjective Spirit*, in D. S. Stern (ed), *Essays on Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, SUNY Press, Albany 2013, pp. 55-69.

13 In his letter to Windischmann dated May 27, 1810, Hegel writes: «Everybody probably has such a turning point in his life, the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence» (Id., *The Letters*, English translation by C. Butler and C. Seiler, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1984, p. 561).

which the female and feminist tradition has influenced the legacy of his thought.

In the first context, the figures of his mother, Maria Magdalena Luisa Fromm (1741-1783), who was a learned woman, and Hegel's sister, Christiane Luise (1773-1832), stand out. Both Georg and Christiane received an unconventional upbringing within their family, a fact that would have a significant impact on Hegel's later views (see the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*) on the importance of equal education within the family unit. Until her premature demise, her mother served as a pivotal figure in Hegel's instruction, instilling in the philosopher a profound enthusiasm for *Bildung*. The role of his sister Christiane was of particular significance. She was a supporter of the Württemberg revolutionaries and an educator of the Berlichingen family. She had contact with renowned personalities of her time before being struck by psychotic crises. These crises may have prompted Hegel to pay particular attention to the main medical theories of the time, such as Pinel's positions to the theses of Mesmerism. This led to a keen interest in the subject of madness and the unconscious¹⁴.

From a theoretical standpoint, the philosopher evidently relegates the reflection of his relationship with his sister to the extensive meditations of *Phenomenology*, particularly those pertaining to the tragedy of Antigone¹⁵. The relationship between sister and brother is that of two free individuals who are not dependent on third parties, but are bound by the same blood. The relationship between siblings is not complicated by the influence of desire, which could otherwise create an uneasy and unequal dynamic. Rather, the bond between them is ὄμμαος, as they share the blood of the same mother and father¹⁶. In this relationship, therefore, the rift between desire and ethics that produces the inequality

14 See S. Achella, *The Dark Side of Thought. The Body, the Unconscious and Madness in Hegel's Philosophy*, in *The Owl's Flight*, cit., pp. 23-36, as well as the articles by G. Battistoni, F. Iannelli and K. Vieweg in F. Iannelli, M. Failla (eds.), *Philosophy and Madness. From Kant to Hegel and Beyond*, Mimesis International 2023.

15 The question of an incestuous relationship between Hegel and his sister has been extensively explored in academic literature: see J. Lacan, *The Seminar. Book VIII. The transference. 1960-1961*, edited by J.-A. Miller, English translation by B. Fink, Polity Press, Cambridge 2015. For further insight, see J. Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, cit., p. 66. For a more detailed reconstruction of Hegel's relationship with his sister, see F. Iannelli's fine essay: *Hegel's Constellation of the Feminine between Philosophy and Life. A Tribute to Dieter Henrich's Konstellationsforschung*, cit., pp. 239-255.

16 For more on this topic, see E. Caramelli, *Antigone and the Phenomenology of Spirit: Between Literary Source (vv. 925-928) and Philosophical Reading*, cit., pp. 293-30, here pp. 296-297. As Caramelli observes, Antigone's ethical constitution is shaped by the logic of 'the same', which is evident in the heroine's readiness to undertake all tasks independently. In this regard, it is worth noting the contribution of Nicole Loraux's study, which, drawing upon this attitude of Antigone, offers an interpretation of her monadic identity. For further reference, see N. Loraux, *La main d'Antigone*, in «Metis», 1, 1986, pp. 165-196, p. 170. In this regard, Caramelli observes that: «It is paradoxical that, while Antigone evidently seeks to liberate herself from the curse of the Labdacids – the unavoidable consequence of which she acknowledges in her monologue – she nevertheless finds herself, despite the few words spoken by Ismene, once again in a state of self-imposed silence and oblivion. This ultimately leads to her own destruction. In terms of immediate ethics, Antigone provides an exemplary illustration of how ancient subjectivity, characterized by a one-sided pathos, was ill-equipped to accept otherness and thus unable to cope with contradiction» (E. Caramelli, *Antigone and the Phenomenology of Spirit*, cit., p. 297).

between male and female appears to be overcome. In this context, the ethical relationship has not yet assumed dominance, allowing for the equal recognition of the distinction between the internal and external, the familial and the political, and the individual self beyond the boundaries of gender. Accordingly, recognition is contingent upon the equilibrium between kinship ties and those that are devoid of any sexual or emotional attachment.

In such a relationship, there is no mixing of external elements, such as biological foreignness or the separation introduced by desire with respect to the ethical bond. Consequently, each of the two siblings recognises the other and is recognised. The relationship between brother and sister represents a unity of male and female that is not characterized by recognition as a separation, distinction or dissimilarity; rather, it is a relationship of identity in difference. The recognition of individuality that exists between them is not contingent upon each other; it is a relationship capable of transcending the indifference or ethical contingency that is characteristic of the relationship between a husband and a wife.

The second context is that of the family constructed by Hegel, at the center of which is Marie Helena Susanne von Tucher (1791-1855). In addition to assuming the role of his sister in the vicissitudes of life, von Tucher will also prompt the philosopher to conceptualize the conjugal relationship as an equal and interchangeable sentiment-based relationship, thereby facilitating a realistic vision of marriage.

Indeed, the Berlin Hegel demonstrated awareness of the institution of marriage as a fundamental yet fragile entity, shaped by the constant process of adaptation. While not presenting himself as a proponent of female emancipation, Hegel nevertheless regarded women as legal subjects on a par with men and conceived of marriage as a bond built on love and the free decision of both parties. He even goes so far as to advocate for divorce should the differences between the spouses reach the limit of total «Entfremdung»¹⁷.

Nevertheless, as numerous feminist scholars have demonstrated, this form of acknowledgment of women remains inadequate. The third aspect, which forms the subject of analysis, is the 'diffractive' reading that feminist and women thinkers have made of Hegelian philosophy. Despite the tendency to discredit Hegel, the German philosopher has continued to exert significant influence in 20th-century philosophical discourse. Initially, he was regarded as the father of a Western tradition that was to be rejected. Subsequently, he was repositioned as a figure through whom certain categories of thought could be rediscovered, enabling the re-evaluation of the role of corporeity, the unconscious, and the irrational, which lie at the heart of Hegelian thought.

Since the end of the 20th century, the objective of the most thought-provoking Hegelian interpretations has therefore been to demonstrate the fragilities, inconsistencies, opacities and resistances inherent in the text¹⁸. This has enabled the identification of aspects that are

17 See E. Rózsa, *Von Antigone zur anständigen Frau. Hegels Frauenbild im Spannungsfeld zwischen der Phänomenologie des Geistes und der Rechtsphilosophie von 1820*, in *The Owl's Flight. Hegel's Legacy to Contemporary Philosophy*, cit., pp. 259-275.

18 On this point, see F. Iannelli, S. Achella, C. Magni (eds.), *Subversion and Resistance in Hegel: Paradigms, Figures, Resonances*, in «B@belonline», 9, 2022.

typically excluded from the conventional interpretation of Hegelian philosophy, which are now acknowledged in a reading that emphasises the ‘dark side’ of his thought.

Our analysis aims to contribute to the ongoing investigation of Hegel’s philosophy by exploring previously overlooked aspects of his work. It seeks to provide new insights into areas of Hegelian research that have not been sufficiently examined, utilising the tools of his thought to illuminate its depth and richness.

2. *Artistic constellations*

As is inevitable, Hegel was a child of his time, in which women, except in extraordinary cases, such as that of the painter Angelika Kaufmann (1741-1807)¹⁹, were mostly confined to the family circle²⁰. On the other hand, in his own philosophical reflection, we see a progression that – from Jena to Berlin – leads the philosopher to push beyond the rigid boundaries of his era and reject those prejudices about female frivolity that still prevailed for Kant. It follows that Hegel’s relationship with the feminine universe, both in his private and public existence, is at best ambiguous and intricate. Suffice it to mention that Hegel knew, directly or indirectly, (in some cases even personally) well-known female figures of his time, such as Madame de Staël (1766-1817), Karoline von Günderrode (1780-1806), Bettina von Arnim (1785-1859) and Caroline Michaelis-Schlegel-Schelling (1763-1809)²¹, to name but a few. He also admired and followed with great interest the artistic activities of emerging and established singers and artists of the time. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that Hegel particularly appreciated the literature of Th. G. Hippel, an author in favor of women’s emancipation who published the essay *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* in 1792, although there are numerous remarks in the Berlin lectures, particularly on the Philosophy of Right, that tend to circumscribe women’s expressive freedom in the private and family sphere, considering women’s artistic genius a kind of *fata morgana* and women’s political talents ineffective.

Hegelian biography is interwoven with social and intellectual interactions with talented and progressive women of his time, including first and foremost with the novelist Caroline Paulus; the soprano Henriette Sontag; the actresses Friederike Robert and Auguste Crelinger-Stich; the pianist Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix and auditor of Hegel’s last aesthetics course in 1828-29. Finally, another artist for whom Hegel had immense admiration must be considered: the legendary Pauline Anna Milder-Hauptmann, acclaimed throughout Europe and whom Hegel applauded with great enthusiasm in Berlin and whom he frequented in the Berlin salons.

19 Kaufmann is explicitly quoted by Hegel in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right* of 1824-25 (GW 26: 3, p. 1287).

20 S. Benhabib, *Hegel, die Frauen und die Ironie*, in H. Nagl-Docekal, H. Pauer-Studer (eds.), *Denken der Geschlechterdifferenz*, Wiener Frauenverlag, Wien 1990, pp. 19-36, in particular pp. 32-36.

21 See D. Nassar, K. Gjesdal, *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century: The German Tradition*, Oxford University Press, New York 2021; S. Damm, *Caroline Schlegel-Schelling: Ein Lebensbild in Briefen*, Insel, Frankfurt a.M.-Leipzig 2009.

Some of Hegel's important endorsements of the talents of famous women in the Europe of his time are expressed during the Berlin Lectures on the Philosophy of Art of 1820-21, where he mentions the contralto Gentile Borgondio (1780-1830), who was trained at the school of Andrea Costa, and the world-famous soprano Angelica Catalani (1780-1849)²², for whom Hegel had a genuine veneration. What is peculiar is that H.G. Hotho, auditor of the Lectures and then editor of the *Aesthetics* (1835-38; 1842) after the master's sudden death in 1831, did not consider these female references at all for his posthumous edition, which has been the standard text of the most important translations of Hegel's *Aesthetics* worldwide in the 19th, 20th and in some cases still in the 21st century, contributing to the reputation of a sexist Hegel, since his edition does not mention any living woman whatsoever²³.

Therefore, it will prove valuable to consider whether it is precisely in Hegelian Idealism that one can find the matrix for a counter-narrative that can recognize and enhance the aesthetic-political role of the aforementioned women artists and seek the most innovative aesthetic-philosophical resonances then advanced, in order to screen their potential for contemporary application.

In addition to this historical-philosophical reconstruction, the Research Unit of the University of Roma Tre will explore, from the extraordinary figures of women artists who stand out in the Hegelian constellation of the feminine, the existence of subterranean and forgotten paths for 'alternative' narratives of the history of Western *Bildung*²⁴ that would offer new prerequisites for investigating the intermittent and subterranean paths through which Hegelian idealism still continues to inspire the art of our time, in that insatiable search for progressive self-awareness and recognition of otherness.

Given that in the most recent art history – from Danto to Belting, from 'Global Art History' to Visual Studies – an ambitious operation of 're-engagement' with Idealism has already begun²⁵, we will seek for new hermeneutic principles to reread the controversial and much-discussed theory of the 'end of art'²⁶ also as the end of a 'masculinist' history of art. Starting from some suggestions – as yet little explored (among the few exceptions, Subrizi²⁷) – offered by Hegelian notions of self-consciousness and recognition, an

22 C.E. McGuire, *John Bull, Angelica Catalani and Middle-Class Taste at the 1820s British Musical Festival*, in «Nineteenth-Century music Review», 11, n. 1, 2014, pp. 3-31; A. Serravezza, *Hegel e Angelica Catalani*, in «Musica/Realtà», 108, 2015, pp. 87-113.

23 F. Iannelli, A.-P. Olivier, *En traduisant Hegel. Traducendo Hegel. Aesthetic theory and/in Translation practice*, in «Studi di estetica», n. 1, 2022.

24 On the trail of the stimulating suggestions of Pollock and Parker, see, e.g., G. Pollock, R. Parker, *Old Mistress. Women, Art and Ideology*, Routledge, London 1981; G. Pollock, R. Parker (eds.) *Framing Feminism: Art & the Women's Movement 1970-85*, Pandora, London 1987.

25 H. Aldouri, *Search for a Method: A Reassessment of Hegel's Dialectic in Art History*, «Journal of Art Historiography», 20, 2018, pp. 1-25.

26 See, e.g., K. Vieweg, F. Iannelli, F. Vercellone (Hrsg.), *Das Ende der Kunst als Anfang freier Kunst*, Fink, München 2015; F. Campana, *The End of Literature, Hegel, and the Contemporary Novel*, Palgrave-Macmillan, Cham 2019; A. Siani, *Hegel and the Present of Art's Past Character*, Routledge, London 2023.

27 C. Subrizi, *La storia dell'arte dopo l'autocoscienza. A partire dal diario di Carla Lonzi*, Lithos, Roma 2020. See also Ead., *Autocoscienza e storia in Taci, anzi parla di Carla Lonzi*, in F. Iannelli, F. Ver-

attempt will be made to reshape the art-historical narrative of modernity with particular attention to forgotten and submerged female figures as pioneers for an interpretive turn on the role of the feminine in European *Bildung*.

3. *Translational Constellations*

As early as the 1960s, great interest developed in Hegel's view of language, but it is only recently that the importance of the translation paradigm in this frame has emerged²⁸. A crucial question must be asked: why would this topic be important for a rethinking of the *Bildung* in Hegel and beyond Hegel?

Let us try, then, to reflect briefly on the first problem; that is, Hegel's philosophy under the prism of translation. We can start with a *Leitmotiv* of Hegelian philosophy, not to accept in philosophical discourse anything that claims to impose itself as a given. In this context, the assumption – or rather, the prejudice – that between language and thought there is a subordination of one to the other is exactly something that is taken for granted. Thought, i.e., meaning, would be the *primum*, that essence with respect to which language would be a mere veil, which could be put on or taken off without changing what it covers.

In contrast, Hegel, in his first major work intended for publication, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – a *hapax legomenon* in the history of philosophy, and even in the philosophical career of its author – insists above all on the centrality of a critique of this conception of language. Indeed, in the *Preface* to the 1807 work, he undertakes a critique of the ordinary conception of language and an investigation into what the language of philosophy should be. The preface itself begins, not by chance, with a questioning of the status of the preface in a book of philosophy (which otherwise risks becoming «not only superfluous, but in light of the nature of the subject matter, even inappropriate and counterproductive»²⁹).

In contrast to any rhetoric that takes for granted the form and function of the language it uses, Hegel questions the constitution of philosophical discursiveness and its canon, challenging the peculiar productivity of philosophical language with respect to the hegemony of the ordinary way of understanding words, which predominates even among philosophers. By shedding light on the relationship between language, thought and experience, the *Preface* performs, one could say, a poetic operation par excellence³⁰:

cellone, K. Vieweg (ed.), *Approssimazioni. Echi del Bel Paese nel sistema hegeliano. Wirkungsgeschichte della filosofia di Hegel in Italia*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2022, pp. 381-398.

28 Reference is to the pioneering studies of J. Simon, *Das Problem der Sprache bei Hegel*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1966, and Th. Bodammer, *Hegels Deutung der Sprache*, Meiner, Hamburg 1969.

29 G.W.F Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. by T. Pinkard, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2018, p. 3.

30 In their essay on translation in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, A.-P. Olivier and F. Iannelli speak, not by chance, of Hegel's «poetics of translation» (F. Iannelli, A.-P. Olivier, *En traduisant Hegel. Traducendo Hegel. Aesthetic theory and/in Translation practice*, cit., p. 159).

here, language questions first and foremost its own power, and at the same time its own limits. This is the theme underlying what Hegel calls the «speculative sentence [*spekulativer Satz*]]»³¹, a locution by which he understands the specificity of the philosophical use of language. Hegel is thereby posing a problem that constitutes, on closer inspection, the generative core of his apprenticeship as a writer of philosophy. The fact that he then chose to present his thought in a different way (the syllogism of the *Science of logic* or the encyclopaedic form of the *Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*) confirms the importance of the question in the *Preface*, which is based on a critique of the conformism of a philosophical discourse that forgets to question itself first and foremost.

In the *Preface*, Hegel is indeed concerned with the central role of the expressive moment in philosophical truth: that the movement that takes place within the sentence, which eludes those who claim to conceal language by using it as a mere tool, «must be given expressed»³². As has been observed, this need is not dictated by a demand for completeness, but, once again, by the questioning of the relationship between philosophical discourse and experience. It is precisely by surrendering itself to the word, in fact, that thought can give rise to a true experience of itself. And it is here that the maximally ‘critical’ moment of thought emerges, because the most effective critique of the philosophical canon is always and also self-critical.

And where did Hegel experience it, where did he learn it, this ultimate critical and self-critical force of writing practice? The fact that his first published work (in 1798 anonymously) is a translation – a translation from the French of the *Lettres de Jean-Jacques Cart à Bernard de Mural, trésorier du Pays de Vaud* – may not be a mere biographical contingency. On the contrary.

As Franco Fortini pointed out in the *Lectures on Translation* he delivered in 1989 at the Istituto di Studi Filosofici in Naples, translation primarily entails a «decentralisation, a disorientation as in a systematic variation»³³; it is precisely this temporary disorientation that constitutes the eminently critical moment of translation. In his essay on *Traduzione e rifacimento*, Fortini stated that there is no moment more critical than translation, because translating means questioning the constitution of the canon, questioning the productive vitality of the target language with respect to the hegemonic languages, and asking oneself what it means to be a speaking subject in the linguistic universe of reference. In this sense, translation has a political value precisely because, if and when it is confronted with the contradictions of the relationship between language and experience, it is «the literary operation par excellence»³⁴. Moreover, at a preliminary stage in the pre-

31 See, on this topic, *inter alia*, W. Marx, *Absolute Reflexion und Sprache*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 1967; J.P. Surber, *Hegel's Speculative Sentence*, in «Hegel-Studien», 10, 1975, pp. 211-230; G. Wohlfart, *Der spekulative Satz*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1981; J.P. Surber, *Hegel's Philosophy of Language: The Unwritten Volume*, in S. Houlgate, M. Baur (eds.), *A Companion to Hegel*, Wiley-Blackwell, New York 2011; E. Caramelli, *Eredità del sensibile. La proposizione speculativa nella Fenomenologia dello spirito di Hegel*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2015.

32 G.W.F Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, cit., p. 40.

33 F. Fortini, *Lezioni sulla traduzione*, ed. by M.V. Tirinato, Preface by L. Lenzini, Quodlibet, Macerata 2011, pp. 113-116.

34 F. Fortini, *Saggi ed epigrammi*, ed. by L. Lenzini, Mondadori, Milano 2003, pp. 818-838, p. 826.

sentation of his system, at the height of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*, Hegel qualifies philosophical activity as a practice of translation «in the form of thought and concept» (§ 5) of representation and experience.

In the reconsideration of the Hegelian notion of *Bildung*, it therefore becomes important – from a point of view that only superficially may appear very far removed from Hegel – to compare the aspect that makes Hegel a translator of experience and a critic of philosophical language with the culture of women translators of his time.

Translations of some women thinkers and writers are, in fact, a strategic site of language criticism and expansion of the literary canon; by their virtue, a predominantly male canon begins to speak with a woman's voice. The translation choices of some of Hegel's contemporary women authors deliver hitherto marginalised female texts into the canon of German-language literature³⁵.

In this context, it must be emphasised that the textuality to be translated is also a discourse with a unique prosody and rhythm; therefore, it is enunciation. As such, every discourse is also a site of subjectification. Translation implies a new discourse and, above all, a new subject.

It is therefore important to promote the centrality of translation in opposition to the «éffaçante»³⁶ model, which, by sticking to the grid of correspondence between sign and sign, renders the translator invisible³⁷. Research into the subjectivity of the translator, on the other hand, allows us to enhance the political potential of translation practice. Far from being a transparent and irenic commutation, translation moves from the recognition of the intertwining – not infrequently polemical – between language, writing and historicity, and is therefore a praxis that is anything but minor. It is precisely a gender perspective that mobilises the full potential of the genre of translation.

From this point of view, the Research Unit of the University of Bologna aims to investigate the topic of Hegel and the inclusive *Bildung* from the prism of translation and women translators of his time³⁸.

35 See, on this topic, A. Sanmann, *Die andere Kreativität. Übersetzerinnen im 18. Jahrhundert und die Problematik weiblicher Autorschaft*, Winter Verlag, Heidelberg 2021; M.-L. Spiekermann, *Dorothea Margareta Liebeskind (1765-1853): Übersetzerin zwischen wissenschaftlicher Literatur und Unterhaltungsromanen englischer Autorinnen*, in B. Wehinger, H. Brown (Hrsg.), *Übersetzungskultur im 18. Jahrhundert. Übersetzerinnen in Deutschland, Frankreich und der Schweiz*, Hannover, Welterhahn 2008, pp. 141-64; A. Piper, *The Making of Transnational Textual Communities: German Women Translators, 1800-1850*, in «Women in German Yearbook», 22, 2006, pp. 119-144; B. Hannemann, *Weltliteratur für Bürgertöchter: Die Übersetzerin Sophie Mereau-Brentano*, Wallstein, Göttingen 2005; S. Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, Routledge, London 1996.

36 H. Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, Verdier, Paris 1999, p. 19.

37 Cfr. L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation. Second Edition*, Routledge, London-New York 2008.

38 On the research subject Hegel and translation, see A. Sell, *Perspektiven der Übersetzung in Hegels Gesammelten Werken*, in B. Plachta, W. Woesler (Hrsg.), *Edition und Übersetzung. Zur wissenschaftlichen Dokumentation des interkulturellen Texttransfers*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 2002, pp. 71-80; the recent publication on *Hegel and/in/on Translation*, ed. by S. Hrnjez, E. Nardelli, in «Verifiche», 49, n. 1-2, 2020; S. Pieroni, *Interdisciplinarietà come "Aufhebung" del linguaggio. Un problema per*

At least four case-studies of authors whose productions were read by Hegel, or which it is reasonable to assume were known to him, will be considered within this framework. The first is Sophie Mereau (1770-1806), who translated – among other works – from French the letters of Ninon de Lenclos (1620-1705), Madame de Lafayette’s novel *La princesse de Clèves* (1678), Montesquieu’s *Lettres Persanes*, and from Spanish the short stories of Maria de Zayas. Second, Dorothea Schlegel (1764-1839) who, in 1807, translated Madame de Stäel’s novel *Corinne, ou l’Italie* from French, where the theme of translation becomes a vertiginous *mise en abyme* (indeed the protagonist Corinne translates *Romeo and Juliet* into Italian and plays the tragedy in public, achieving an extraordinary success and revealing the originality of Shakespeare’s genius together with that of the translator). Third, we will study the figure of Dorothea Tieck (1799-1841), who from 1819 onwards contributed, together with her father Ludwig, to the translation of Shakespeare’s works initiated by August Wilhelm Schlegel (1789-). While Ludwig Tieck contributed to the revision of the translations already begun, Dorothea contributed six translations of her own (*Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Cimbelino*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Winter’s Tale*, *Macbeth*). The Schlegel-Tieck edition came out between 1825 and 1833, but Dorothea continued her work as a translator, also devoting herself to some of Cervantes’ works, among others. The other translator figure who will be investigated is Meta Forkel-Liebeskind, whom Hegel personally frequented in Bamberg, and who translated the works of Ann Radcliffe, Elizabeth Inchbald, Charlotte Turner Smith and the libertine letters of Madame du Deffand, among many others, between 1788 and 1812.

The materials in this study are the texts in which these authors reflect on their authorial activity as translators, writers and correspondents. According to a critical spirit not only of language but also of culture, in correspondence and in the paratexts of translations such as prefaces and forewords, these authors question their role and the public context in which they operate. By advancing the demand for an autonomous and recognisable voice, these intellectuals thus practise a discursiveness aimed at demystifying what is passed off as given and at promoting a creative language that conveys emancipation and knowledge.

4. Conclusions

It is evident then – as Mulsow³⁹ stated – that constellations are «vielschitige Komplexe» (‘multi-sided complexes’) that provoke a synergy of ideas, issues and individuals. The project *Hegelian constellations of the feminine: a hyper-archive for an inclusive Bildung* therefore aims to reactivate such constellations on several levels, both by investigating the biography of the female figures involved – but mostly underexposed – and their interwoven relationships with Hegel, and by considering the existential and

la filosofia della traduzione, «Rivista italiana di Filosofia del Linguaggio», 12, n. 1, 2023, pp. 71-82; see also E. Caramelli, *La cultura luterana della traduzione e Hegel. La traducibilità della poesia nelle Lezioni di Estetica*, in «Dianoia», 25, 2017, pp. 535-60.

39 M. Mulsow, *Zum Methodenprofil der Konstellationsforschung*, in M. Mulsow, M. Stamm (Hrsg.), *Konstellationsforschung*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 2005, pp. 74-97.

intellectual resonances of these figures, as well as of their artistic, literary or translating activity on Hegelian thought.

Such a novel perspective will make it possible to better explore not only the shadows that marked Hegel's existence, but also his thought, as well as to identify forgotten figures who influenced Hegel's 'Denkraum', giving voice to those marginal and obscured female figures of both the philosopher's private life and the contemporary public life, thus first and foremost contributing to offering greater collective awareness of the cultural loss due to the more or less conscious removal of the contribution of the feminine at the threshold of modernity.

This approach will gain an uncommon viewpoint that will enable the development of new forms of emancipatory and alternative narratives, thanks to the reconstruction of such a forgotten cultural legacy. To these readings and their valuable inclusive potential, the project intends to contribute, with the aim of shedding new light on certain aspects of Hegel's reflection that have not been sufficiently investigated, in order to take a step beyond the prejudices of the time in which Hegelian philosophy was conceived. Thus, using conceptual tools – such as that of *Bildung* and *Anerkennung* – forged also thanks to his thought, whose depth and richness does not yet seem exhausted but, on the contrary, always appears capable of offering new spaces for intellectual exercise, it also intends to sensitize the younger generations to respect the contribution that the feminine has made and continues to make for a society that is non-discriminatory, respectful of diversity, and in dialogue with different cultures and traditions.