

Hegel's Theory of Love as an Attitude to Life



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Abstract: For those who see Hegel as the philosopher of the closed system or the Prussian monarchy, it may come as a surprise or even a shock that love is one of the greatest and still inspiring topics of his philosophy. Hegel's theory of love can enrich contemporary discussions on the philosophy of emotions and the theory of feeling in many ways, provided that it is reconstructed in a philologically and hermeneutically correct, philosophically profound and astute manner. The present paper will discuss Hegel's views on love in two contexts. The first context is the history of progress summed up in his early considerations, which he treats in the field of tension between religion and philosophy. Within the extremely broad and manifold cultural horizon of the early works, Hegel assigns an existential meaning to love not only in an individual, but above all in an inter-individual sense. It is precisely in Hegel's treatment of love that one can recognise the first germs of his intersubjective model of human existence – including individual existence – as it appears in his mature philosophy (second context).

Keywords: Hegel on love; love and life; German Classical Philosophy.

I. Introduction

The idea of *unification*, inspired by Hölderlin and shared by both of them as the basic existential standpoint and attitude of human existence 'in life' has an outstanding significance for Hegel's interpretation of love¹. The notion of unification reveals how the young Hegel adds a *speculative* meaning to the existential dimension² of love. The

1 For the Hölderlinian-Hegelian theme of unification see Henrich (Henrich 2010, 9–41) and Jamme (Jamme 1983, 110–112). Taylor refers to the broader background of unification as a basic intention of German culture in the history of ideas (Taylor 1993, 27).

2 This model can be found in Hegel's principle and theory of recognition, which is one of the most attractive themes in Hegel's philosophy today. Ludwig Siep has provided an overview of the historical development of Hegel's notion of recognition, reconstructing 'pre-forms' like love in the Frankfurt fragments, unification in the "Spirit of Christianity", and recognition as a synthesis of love and struggle in the Jena writings. At the second stage of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* he emphasises the reconciliation of the self with the substance (e.g., Siep 1979, 104–105). Honneth (2001; 2008, 187–204) has re-actualised recognition under the perspective of modern freedom; for recognition as an intersubjective model see Quante (2009, 91–106); for the significance of

motivation of the later system also makes an appearance here; to which, however, Hegel still has an ambiguous relation in his early years³.

The second context treats love with regard to the construction of the system, which stands in the foreground of his thought in his Jena period, having an essential influence on the concept of love in the mature Hegel. The *speculative basis* provided by philosophy and the corresponding systematics become intertwined, which leads to a *reinterpretation* of love and its *new status*. The modified terminology also refers to a fundamental change: unification becomes tightly connected with *reconciliation*, which strengthens the speculative character and religion-related content of this philosophy in the Christian sense⁴. All this, however, does not mean that early motives are given up, as some may think. These motives are safeguarded in a modified form in the system as well, and maintain a *continuity* within the whole oeuvre⁵. Moreover, the new structure of the system with its speculative character also brings forth a set of ideas, the recapitulation of which has an effect with regard to the theme of love. In the context of the system, Hegel adds layers of meaning to love which correspond to the structure of the speculative system, but at the same time, in terms of content far exceed the scope of its external construction. Looking past the external-linear structure (logic, philosophy of nature, philosophy of spirit including the threefold structure of the latter), and observing the internal-relational and circular-dynamic structures of the system, one becomes aware of how multifaceted and thought-provoking the mature conception of love is. It is enough to refer to the *external, threefold, hierarchic arrangement* within spirit, which is also conceived as comprising three *internal dimensions of the concrete thematic* of spirit, and thus of love as well, to see how it can enrich the respective topic, in this case, the topic of love (for this interpretational suggestion of Hegel's system see Rózsa 2005, 13–37). But what do we mean by *concrete*?

On the first level of spirit, i.e., in subjective spirit as the *first dimension* of spirit,

recognition for contemporary practical philosophy see Siep (2009, 107–124). As for the term 'context' in the abstract: it is used here in the sense that Henrich attributed to it. This paper also attempts to find a perspective under which Hegel's work, and thus love itself in its entirety may be understood as one of his greatest themes. (Henrich 2010, 7). The distinction between two contexts exhibits some traits of today's broad application of the concept of context, but it does not give up the primary aim of investigating the work as a whole in the specific area of love and interpreting the latter as arising from the motives of the whole oeuvre.

3 Hegel's critical approach to the system is shown by his remark on the positivity of Christian religion over the "men of system" (Hegel 1986a, 180–181). It is only in Jena that Hegel starts to adopt a systematic form of philosophy.

4 Reconciliation is not to be reduced to Christian motives. In the very early years of Hegel as a student in Tübingen one already finds an interpretation of reconciliation, which can serve as a pattern of worldly, ordinary life as well. Instead, the mature Hegel treats reconciliation as a structuring principle of the system (cf. Rózsa 2005, 13–51).

5 The debate on Hegel's early motives, including the position of Dilthey on the theologians, and Lukács's account of Hegel as a politician, was treated at length by Pöggeler (1993, 22–23). As he states in his conclusion, Hegel's concept of *spirit* includes the early motives of love and life as well (Pöggeler 1993, 414–415). This also confirms the continuity of motives in Hegel's work, which was the main point made by Henrich (2010).

epistemically and metaphysically colored existential layers of love are introduced and elaborated systematically in the framework of a theory of emotions⁶. Such a *variegated and comprehensive theory of emotions* which Hegel develops in the three disciplines of subjective spirit (anthropology, phenomenology, psychology) are not to be found in any other author in modern philosophy. It is no accident that here Hegel refers only to Aristotle⁷. On the second level, in objective spirit as the *second dimension* of spirit, Hegel focuses on love as a constitutive element of basic *socio-cultural institutions*, namely marriage and the family. In the *third dimension* of spirit, love enters various cultural forms and constellations of *absolute spirit*. In art, love has a systematic place value where Hegel distinguishes between three forms or motives of modern romantic art (honor, love, loyalty). But love appears frequently in the philosophy of art in a phenomenological sense as well, when Hegel discusses concrete works or specific problems of the philosophy of art. In religion, love gains a further place value again: the idea that *God is love* becomes central to Christianity, which constitutes the historical and systematic climax of religion. In philosophy as the highest form of thought and ideas, love plays a role not in the modern sense, but in the ancient one: *philosophy as the love of wisdom* is emphasised by Hegel on numerous occasions. In addition, modern philosophy is for Hegel a *process of withdrawal from love* and the world of emotions, and consequently, from *wisdom as orientation in life* in a general sense⁸. This is explained by the claim that *philosophy strives after the criteria of scientific knowledge*. Hegel's attitude toward this approach of philosophy is fundamentally *ambiguous* from the Jena years on: he wants to maintain both meanings and functions of philosophy, the scientific and the therapeutic as well, which lends an *internal tension* to his mature philosophy, clearly visible in the thematisation of love.

What is important though is that one can find stimulating considerations on love both in the young and the mature Hegel. In what follows, these tension-filled, but at the same time attractive ideas on love will be investigated in two contexts, following Hegel's intentions. First, I will discuss love as an early motive. Second, I will treat it with reference to Hegel's mature system of philosophy. In the second context (or *Standpunkt* in Hegel) it will be investigated for the sake of example, how love as a Hegelian theme is to be understood in both senses of the system: one following the 'external', 'exoteric' structure,

6 Every stage of the external-linear structure may be understood as a dimension of a given thematic domain, in this case that of love as well. The respective topical domain is described by a complex set of concepts and their relations [*Verhältnisse*] in the given dimension [*Standpunkt*]. These perspectives provide the scientific character of the system, as well as the cultural function and determination of philosophy (Rózsa 2012, 121–144).

7 "The books of Aristotle on the soul, along with his discussions on its special aspects and states, are for this reason still by far the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of philosophical value on this topic" (Hegel 1979, § 378; Hegel 1986a, 10, 11).

8 The best-known formulation of this turn is in the *Preface* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: "To participate in the collaborative effort at bringing philosophy nearer to the form of science – to bring it nearer to the goal where it can lay aside the title of *love of knowledge* and be *actual knowledge* – is the task I have set for myself" (Hegel 1986a, 3, 14).

the other the 'esoteric' structure of the system⁹. The latter is taken as a complex of concepts and their relations [*Verhältnisse*] in relational-dynamic structures. The primary aim of this distinction is to highlight those *contentual and methodological advantages* that can be an inspiration for contemporary discussions of emotions and such human relationships as love.

II. Love as a Basic Value "in Life" According to Hegel's Early Thought

The young Hegel considers love in the context of his philosophy of life¹⁰. In the early fragment *Entwürfe über Religion und Liebe* (orig. 1797–1798) love is presented both as an emotion and as physical attraction (see Hegel 1986a).

In the context of interpersonal relationships and with a rich cultural and historical background, physical attraction and the world of emotions express the 'real' totality in life, which has a fundamental tension or *contradiction* to it, which Hegel will place at the center of his own methodology in later years. In Frankfurt, however, Hegel treats love primarily as a basic point of orientation and a basic value 'in life', the essential character of which is the mutual relation between the self and the initially alien other. Love is a fundamental relation in life, serving as an archetype *qua* explanatory principle and as an ideal type *qua* norm in human relationships.

Love is tightly connected to *unification* in Frankfurt period (Kotkavirta 2004, 15–31). Love as unification is a *challenge and a task* in the existence of the individuals; the fulfillment of this task requires epistemically grasped acts of consciousness and ontological, i.e., practically conceived attitudes of the individuals in their lifeworlds. Love as an attitude to life, to the other, and to oneself is not absolute, and *ab ovo* cannot be absolute. There are always alternatives regarding the various relationships in life. One can even decide to reject love in favor of separation and opposition in interpersonal relations.

'Absolute relativity' is an extremely important idea, tackled by the mature Hegel as well. Human beings never exist in an absolute sense; their forms of life are always relative and relational¹¹. Love as a mutual relationship between one and the other unites them *in life relationally and not absolutely*. Since these relationships keep changing through

9 Kimmerle refers to the historical roots of the double perspective in the Hegelian system, which stands at the center of this interpretation: "The problem of philosophizing systematically almost spontaneously lets the possibility of a broader concept of philosophy enter the field of vision, which, as an alternative to closed thinking, emerges from tackling this problem" (Kimmerle 1982, 6).

10 Edith und Klaus Düsing have given an overview of the topic of love in Hegel's Frankfurt writings. They have focused on the ethical dimension of the topic of love (Düsing & Düsing 2004, 1–14).

11 On relationality as a Hegelian problem, it is interesting how Brandom's account ascribes it to a "rationalistic expressivism", which is characteristic of Hegel's own philosophical position: "Furthermore, his version of expressivism is also attractive because it is not only pragmatic and inferentialistic with regard to the conceptual, but also *relational* in the sense that the implicit and the explicit are both, at least partially, constituted by their mutual expressive reference" (Brandom 2001, 53). The present paper lays special emphasis on this internal-constitutive relationality in Hegel's philosophy.

life, they remain limited, relative, i.e., relational in nature. *Human beings always stand in relation to themselves and the others.* In this relation, one is always for oneself and for the other through the alien force of the other. *The other as alien*, possessing power and standing in opposition, is an unavoidable experience, and thus a structural element of human existence.

Human beings cannot ground their existence in an immediate way, only by separations and oppositions, which appear in the experience of strangeness, and submission through power. *Otherness, strangeness, and submission thus become constituents of love as unification in life.* The integration of oppositions in love in life is not an act of the distinctive intellect. It is rooted in the unifying (later speculative) reason. From this point on, love is always a relation, and not a singular feeling. This *relationality as intersubjectivity* of love and its significance for life is an idea of Hegel which has remained relevant until the present day.

The *extremes of life-experience*: separation, strangeness, and their opposite, *unification in love, are immediately and tightly connected in the early work.* This conception will later be modified by the introduction of ethical love, whereby life-experience becomes *institutionally* anchored through marriage and the family, and therewith life becomes connected to *actuality*. The need for stability, i.e., also for religion and philosophy, arises exactly from this life-experience, as Hegel states in his *Differenzschrift* (Hegel 1986a, II, 20–25)¹². From this time on, Hegel seeks the stabilising elements in life, not so much immediately in individuals, rather through institutionally mediated ethical ideas, norms, and feelings as components of actuality, and therefore of lifeworld as well. The “ethical feeling” of love in the mature Hegel refers to a new accent: it contains both substantial contents and the subjective form of everyone’s individual freedom. This constellation of the subjective form and the substantial content of life as lifeworld should serve as the highest stabilising element. However, love does not link us only to life, but to *death* as well. It is under the perspective of death that the single absolute: death itself appears. Love as unification in life can *turn transitoriness, death, and the end to their opposite: the immortal and endless, which opens a new perspective and possibility for life.* Love in this case becomes a sort of godly-created act, taking both anthropomorphic and theomorphic features in itself.

The elementary *closeness between love and death*, which comes to the fore here, far from being a merely speculative claim, is rather an experience of being in the existential sense. The attitude of pure feeling is stronger than the flight from death, exactly because

¹² Hegel identified a close link between the vacillating attitude of the modern individual and the need for philosophy and its stabilising function all his life. On this point, he has been influenced by various impulses. Schiller, first of all, played a special role: His *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* have influenced Hegel’s views on the function of philosophy just as much as the efforts of Kantian philosophy and German idealism to establish philosophy as the highest science in a systematic way. Schiller has not called only the modern character “vacillating” as Goethe, but the “spirit of time” as well (see Schiller 2000, 17–20). This issue was also a concern of Goethe. He described Hamlet as a “young, vacillating man”, with a “vacillating melancholy” (Goethe 1966, 309 and 312).

separations, and even the absolute separation, i.e., death can be overcome by love. This particular power of love with regard to both life and death is explained by Hegel with the fact that people in love enter a relationship of *equality*, which is the *exact opposite of the rules of market relations*. Love is an equal relationship: taking and giving are forms of consciousness and attitudes that consist in mutual interconnection.

Contact is a corporeal-bodily as well as a spiritual-intellectual and mental unity at the same time, the “union” of Plato, and not the ‘synthesis’ of Kant; an exchange of thoughts and feelings alike. This moment is the germ of a ‘second immortality’, which is the act of generation: an endless moment, the replacement of divine creation. “Unity becomes dissoluble in the child” (Hegel 1986d, 249). The beginning of a new life in generation is also the beginning of new oppositions, and an element in the existing circulation of life. Love is therefore a sort of *adaptation to the organic, but also to the cosmic order*, adding a new meaning to love, which enriches both the existential, self-centered, and simultaneously the intersubjective structure of love anchored in the lifeworld with further dimensions.

The ‘exceptional state’ of love as an experience of being is followed by the *everyday sobriety* of the modern lifeworld. Lovers are now connected with many *dead things* (Hegel 1986d, 249). The center of the modern individual’s life-activity does not consist only in “inwardness and love”. It might be the case in the private sphere, but this is not necessary. In addition, Hegel has not yet directly thematized marriage and the family. The spheres of life mentioned here, economy and the legal order link people to dead things: *property, possession, and wealth*. Hegel thereby has taken a decisive step on the road of self-positioning, primarily through his thorough examination of British economics from his Berne period (on Hegel’s reception of national economics see Riedel 1969, 91–98; Lukács 1973). The re-evaluation of love is detectable in this self-positioning as well. The encounter with dead things, which he had sharply criticized as *positivity*, goes through changes: the mentioned institutionalisation of these dead things is a strong sign of Hegel’s insight into the ‘objective order’, representing a decisive step on the road towards the mature concept of modernity¹³. This is the road that leads to Hegel’s theory of institutions.

Nevertheless, we are more fascinated by the young Hegel, who glimpsed in love the archetype and ideal type of human relationships. In the depths of love-based relationships, he has found such forces that could make us capable of transcending our finite and contingent existence, and could give an orientation to our life-activity, raising us above ourselves. All this may very well be so. But Hegel’s particular and in many ways still relevant achievement consists primarily in the fact that he directed our attention to the *prosaic side* of modern life-activity and its consequences in the structures of the lifeworld and ‘inner world’, as well as in love. That is exactly why his road in a few years’ time

13 Schiller’s expression ‘civil order’ is akin to Hegel’s term “objective order”. Schiller compares this to the attitude that deviates from the ‘civil order’ (Schiller 2000, 18–19). In contrast, Hegel discusses a structured objective order, whose components may be effective “objective guarantees” in the face of the vacillating attitude.

led him far beyond the limits of German idealism¹⁴. The *prose of actuality*, in the context of present- and actuality-oriented systematic, lends the mature conception new accents, in so far as the leading concept of actuality, which follows the leading concept of life in Hegel's story of development, relativises the particular potentiality of life which made it possible to overcome death, i.e., to bring finite life closer to the realm of infinity. This present- and actuality-oriented basic position of the mature system reduces significantly the potential of love in life, and its power over death in the mature Hegel.

Unification as the *basic motive* of Hegel's work is what brings together and connects his various positions on love. The idea of unification becomes a *fundamental principle* in the mature system, where it is elaborated both in the external and the internal aspect of the system¹⁵. Even love in marriage and the family is discussed through the motive or principle of unification: love becomes an ethical, 'substantial unity' taking in itself such subjective elements as physical inclination and particular feeling. In it, a new composition emerges: the very *complementary structure of love*, which contains substantial-normative and institutional (ethical), as well as elements and aspects of subjective freedom dependent on the individual as a leading principle and basic value of modernity¹⁶.

Not only the appearance of the *historical aspect* and its Hegelian versions, but also the introduction of *ethical life* represent systematically decisive steps underlying this composition and the re-interpretation of love following from it. They offer a solution for a number of inconsistencies and incoherencies in the early concept which are questionable under the systematic perspective, without however making it necessary to eliminate the inspirational power of the early motive from later works. The early motive of unification can be preserved as a fundamental principle of the system in general. Nevertheless, it is important to note that from the Jena period, unification no longer finds its most appropriate shape in love. The previously eminent place of love is now occupied by *reconciliation*, which, regarding its cultural origins, is also a Christian idea. Hegel's position, however, is more complex in this context as well: reconciliation, just like love before it, cannot be subjected to a given cultural or religious tradition¹⁷. Just like love, reconciliation also becomes independent from concrete cultural and historical origins and context, being placed in an extremely wide and complex cultural and philosophical contextualisation,

14 Horstmann sums up Hegel's conception of love in Frankfurt as an exclusively speculative one, ignoring the relevance of the reception of British economics also for the topic of love, which has in turn affected the conception of actuality. Thereby he does not recognise the special significance of the introduction of the dimension of actuality with regard to the inclusion of the topic of lifeworld. Hegel's concept of life, however, is not to be simply identified with an "organicist metaphysics" (Emundts & Horstmann 2002, 22–24).

15 The expression 'basic motive' refers to decisive moments in the history of development. The expression 'fundamental principle' lays stress on the problem of systematic classification and foundations. Love has adopted both meanings in Hegel.

16 Complementarity as a Hegelian method has been emphasised by Moyar (Moyar 2004, 209–253).

17 Reconciliation is understood as (1) a structural principle of the system and (2) as a behavioural model for individuals (Rózsa 2005, 41–51).

acquiring its appropriate (scientific) form in the system. Note that from the Jena period, the systematic interpretation and classification of historicity and ethical life offer new opportunities for the integration of the early motives into the mature system, which is now dominated by *spirit* beyond the *idea*. These changes also refer to the early topic of love, which now has another place value and other contentual accents as a structural component of spirit.

III. Love in the System

Hegel discusses love in the framework of the encyclopedic system as well. In the esoteric, internal sense of the system, the stages of spirit are considered as giving different dimensions to the treatment of love¹⁸. This helps us reconstruct Hegel's views on *love as a totality* in a Hegelian sense, without straying into the cul-de-sac of the external, closed system.

In the context of the Hegelian system, love is understood as a more complex and higher form of identification "in life," *both in ethical terms such as community, solidarity, or responsibility, and in individual-subjective terms such as particular inclinations or feelings*; or even the *free decision* of certain individuals about marriage; or the right to one's own "particular existence," which everyone is deemed to possess. All these are explicated in detail in the complex structure of the system. For the reconstruction of the complex-systematic meaning of love, we shall address the following texts: The *Philosophy of Spirit* of 1830, the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* of 1820, the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art* of 1823, and the *Manuscript of the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1821.

III.1. Love in Subjective Spirit as (1) Gender Relation, (2) Feeling, (3) Practical Feeling

Hegel presents the internal structure of love in subjective spirit on the following dimensions: (1) love in gender relations; (2) love in feeling; (3) love in practical feeling (see the subjective spirit section in Hegel 1979).

On the first dimension of love in subjective spirit, the identity-building function of the *natural* and its contentual consequences are thematised. The concrete contentual determination of the natural unfolds immediately in reflective emotion, i.e., in the soul's own, internal existence [*Gemüt*]. It also unfolds mediately, in practically formed, but also readily found ethical-institutional forms (marriage, family), and their solidary-communal

18 This methodological significance has been discussed by Paul Tillich as 'multi-dimensionality'. He conjoined the protest of Protestantism and Renaissance against thinking in hierarchical levels. Instead of the latter, Tillich suggested a method which he called the "unity of multiple dimensions." When we use the metaphor of 'dimension' with full consciousness, we mean another type of encounter between our spirit and our world, than when applying the metaphor of 'level'. Using the metaphor of 'dimension' does not ignore the relevance of tensions and conflicts, which, however, do not derive from the difference of levels, but from those contradictory elements, that are present in the various dimensions of life (Tillich 1962, 79).

reflective forms (ethical feeling). These relations reveal how the function of the natural is built in a new sort of context, to which these natural elements are traversed through spiritual/social components, i.e., through reflective forms of consciousness, through specific human attitudes, socio-cultural shapes, and their correspondent practices and contents. These modified contents arise from ethical life, and from spirituality after all; and become *socio-culturally mediated* by and in its institutions, such as marriage and the family. They also and most importantly become manifest and real through the decisions and activities of the individuals with determinate, particular attitudes and motivations. *Love in gender relations* obtains its determinations before this background, in a manifoldly articulated field of tension between *natural determinations*, one's own *inner world* and *outer existence*. On the one hand, love is immediately reflected and existentially felt; on the other hand, it becomes mediated and reshaped. In other words, it is constructed in the institutions of ethical life (the family, marriage, and ethical feeling), and unfolds through particular practices of self-determinative and solidary individuals with their actual particular dispositions and attitudes. All this refers to the fact, that love in gender relations cannot be discussed appropriately without the perspective and the determinations of objective spirit.

In this *ab ovo*, love acquires a particular meaning for individuals seeking their identity; a meaning they had not possessed in this form earlier. Thereby Hegel does not neglect the destructive process of modernity either, in which love becomes less important; although it is not highlighted in subjective spirit, rather in objective and absolute spirit. We will return to this point later.

After love in gender relations, *feeling* as such is the next shape in subjective spirit, in which Hegel discusses a further dimension of love. First, it is addressed as *internalisation and incorporation* in sensation. The determination of corporeity in the individual is sensation as the result of sensing, which is "internalised [*innerlich gemacht*], recollected [*erinnert*] within the soul" (Hegel 1979, § 401). The internalisation of what is sensed is its first reflective form: sensation. Feeling, differentiated from sensation in the natural soul, is integrated in the *feeling soul*, in which individual-existential, general-epistemic, and, as a new contextualisation, particular-practical attitudes emerge, which will be both distinguished from, and connected with each other. This leads well beyond the dominance of immediate naturality in sensation as the first stage of pre-reflective human existence. Sensation in this aspect is the side of "passivity", "occurrence", in which the "immediacy of determination" "in feeling" becomes manifest. In feeling, however, this prevents the triumph of passivity through *selfishness*. As the thesis states: "I am what feels" (Hegel 1979, § 402). Selfishness as an early stage and provisional form of self-determination expresses a new shape of existence and of the cognition of the self in the framework of spirit.

Feeling is indeed a simple, yet higher form of existence compared to the form of existence in sensation, which is "the healthy cohabitation of individual spirit in its

corporeity.” This new form of existence has its roots in *incipient self-reliance*, through and in which a further contextualisation of individuality’s *own* attitudes and activities emerges. The new form of existence and the correspondent contextualisation of sensation, further differentiated in feeling, is also joined by specific, proper epistemic forms in incipient reflection, through and in practical attitude which has by now become focal.

The “totality of feeling” as a form of existence (“existence of feeling”) occupies center stage (Hegel 1979, § 405, Remark). Hegel speaks here of the “life” and the “existence of feeling,” and “concentrated individuality” as well. The latter will be called “heart” or “soul,” meaning one’s *own, inner world*. In this “inwardness of individuality”, different aspects of feeling become interconnected, such as the form of existence (existence of feeling or life of feeling), epistemic stages (“unfolding” of the individual’s consciousness), and practical attitudes, or motivational structures (i.e., purposes, ends, interests), as it is shown by Hegel in § 405 of the *Phenomenology*. The totality of feeling is no mathematical sum of feelings and sensations; it is rather a self-sufficient entity, called “concentrated individuality” by Hegel, which is closely related to heart and soul¹⁹. However, this sort of complexity and totality of the world of feeling is different from that of romanticism²⁰. The peculiarity in Hegel’s conception of the totality of feeling lies in the threefold dimensioning of the inner individuality of the feeling soul just mentioned, i.e., in its epistemic, existential, and practical dimensioning.

Feeling has a particular significance for Hegel exactly because one can find in it both the principle and the origin of self-sufficiency, the precursors of individual existence’s self-determination, and its incipient reflexivity (awakening), as well as the basic elements of practical attitude (purpose, end). All this is based on the current shape and stage of individuality, i.e., selfishness. That is how Hegel describes selfishness, its three levels of meaning, and their relations.

After discussing the *general questions of meaning and structuring of feeling*, Hegel gives an introduction to the problems concerning the *particularity of feelings*, which he treats in a critical, but constructive manner. *Self-awareness* is the sphere where the feeling totality as individuality is investigated with reference to its *particular feelings* (Hegel 1979, § 407). This sort of thematisation is also of outstanding importance for *love*, which does not now belong to the general structure of feeling; it is here a *particular feeling*. It is also important to note, however, that, although Hegel addressed the particularity of feeling in the context of self-awareness, the topic of the particularity of feeling still does

¹⁹ “This concentrated individuality also reveals itself under the aspect of what is called the heart and soul of feeling. A man is said to be heartless and unfeeling when he looks at things with self-possession and acts according to his permanent purposes, be they great substantial aims or petty and unjust interests: a good-hearted man, on the other hand, means rather one who is at the mercy of his individual sentiment, even when it is of narrow range and is wholly made up of particularities” (Hegel 1979, § 405, Remark). Hegel definitely refers here to the conventional sense of feeling in ordinary thinking.

²⁰ Hegel ascribed a comprehensive significance to the world of feelings in the sense of ordinary thinking, and not in the exclusive sense found in romanticism.

not have a distinguished place value for his conception of love in a general sense.

In the chapter on *Phenomenology*, self-awareness is converted into the shape of *self-consciousness* as a higher form of the existence, the cognition, and the practical attitude of individuality. Self-consciousness constitutes a further provisory stage of *self-determination*, which Hegel discusses systematically as a central topic in morality. Self-determination is at the same time a more comprehensive concept, which integrates in itself self-sufficiency, self-certitude, self-awareness, and selfishness, and represents one of the crucial features of Hegel's basic practical-philosophical standpoint. Desires and appetites are at this stage motivational structures requiring fulfillment or satisfaction. *Satisfaction* as a central element is now bound with the intersubjective structure of *mutual recognition*, which takes the place of the egocentric position of self-awareness. The subject is no isolated individual, but an *inter-subject*, expressing a profound change in the forms of being and knowing. One of the new characteristics related to this radical change is the future-orientation of practical attitude, which has extensive consequences for the forms of being and knowing, and becomes manifest in *foresight* as a practical attitude (Hegel cf., § 434). It is now that *love can gain an intersubjective and practical-ethical meaning and place value*. It is "the form of consciousness of the substance of every essential spirituality, the family, the homeland, the state, as well as all virtues, love, friendship, fortitude, honor, and glory" (Hegel cf., § 436, Remark). The result of these considerations is, that *both the individual-contentual particularity of love and its general-intersubjective meaning, i.e., its epistemic and its general-existential-substantial, ethical aspects can be integrated in love in the framework of the family*.

In the chapter on *Psychology*, Hegel first discusses theoretical spirit under the chief concept of *Intelligenz*, which is enfolded and expressed by the activity of cognition as such. Hereafter practical spirit will be thematised under the chief concepts of *will and freedom*. For the current issue of love, the *context of practical feeling* is of special significance. Hegel refers here to the *discord of feeling in the practical*. The fundamental determination of practical spirit is to "*bring freedom into existence*", i.e., "*into contents and ends of activities*" as practices. This existence is fully manifested through the practical will (Hegel cf., § 469). At this stage, "real freedom" in its existence is ethical life; revealing that practical feeling is not about "subjective" or "selfish", but "universal content", which then becomes "end" for the actual practices of the individual (Hegel cf., § 469, Remark). This context elucidates that "the ideas of God, right, ethics, pertaining as they do solely to thinking spirit, may also be felt" (Hegel cf., § 471, 291). Yet the form of feeling should be transcended; feeling as a "faculty of the soul" attains its reality through reason, which encompasses all faculties: feeling, volition, and thinking²¹. This comprehensive sort of reason will then become contextualised and concrete through ethical life in objective spirit. This new practical

21 At this locus, complexity and totality should be clearly distinguished in Hegel. Complexity has its roots in the dynamic structures of concepts and their relations; in contrast, totality is bound to the linear structure of the system, which necessarily leads to closing.

attitude has a particular status with regard to practical feeling, and thus to love as well.

Immediate individuality as the immediate subject of this attitude provides the first point of departure in practical motivations, in the field of instincts, inclinations, and passions. This way practical feeling develops itself into *happiness*, which constitutes one comprehensive fundamental motivation for the practically oriented individual (the other one is freedom) (Rózsa 2006, 280–286). Happiness comprehends all practical motivations, wherein the diversity and ambivalence of the world of feeling, and therefore its deficiencies also become clearly visible.

The subjectivity, arbitrariness, and capricious nature of emotionality including love should not be eliminated as it was e.g., in Kant. In Hegel, contingency is an inevitable structural feature of practical feeling and the particular, individual-concrete motivations of practices. Hegel's thematisation of the world of practical feelings is a sort of permanent *recollection of the existentially ambivalent, epistemically deficient specifics of the world of feelings*, which derives partly from the distinguished perspective of thinking for philosophy. An inspiring component in practical feeling is the tension between happiness as the sum of feelings or sensual motivations *and* freedom as a basic motivation of rational-spiritual beings, which Hegel intended to solve in favor of freedom even in the Kantian sense, without however intending to exclude the world of feeling and the world of sensuality from human existence.

The question arises, why Hegel has still not thematised particular feeling in its particularity after all. He has in fact given an explanation. He has advanced a comprehensive explanation of the focal formal-structural points of feeling, for whose particular content, however, as Hegel puts it, “scientific reflection” is not adequate. It shows that the philosophical method of reflection and description of the world of feeling is a rather limited one, which can only concentrate on certain focal formal-structural points. That is why he speaks of “formal practical feeling”. This methodologically founded consideration and restraint remains valid in the realm of love as well. As he writes: “pleasure, joy, pain, and so on, shame, repentance, contentment, etc. are only modifications of formal, practical feeling in general, although they do in part differ from it on account of their content” (Hegel 1979, § 472, Remark). The general features of the world of feeling can only be treated philosophically in a formal and structural manner. On the other hand, its particular specifics, which have highly divergent and subjective-arbitrary features in the individuals' world of feeling, cannot be properly approached by the apparatus of philosophy, i.e., its conceptuality.

What is the benefit, then, of Hegel's conception of feeling? First, Hegel treats the whole world of the soul in its structured complexity, without repudiating, however, the specifics of particular feelings like love, but also without meandering in the arbitrary, subjective contents of these feelings. He rather focuses on the general structures of the world of feeling in diverse contexts, which constitutes the “totality of feeling” as an autonomous, internally structured, inner world, and which integrates in itself both consciousness

and conscious, but also unconscious elements as well. Yet consciousness, or the unconscious as referential relations of thinking with its eminent status for philosophy and its conceptuality were in Hegel's eyes not purely epistemic deficiencies, but structural characteristics of individuality's inner world, to which the totality of feeling belongs as well. This inner world of individuality is to become one of the central cultural forms of modernity, as it is emphatically expressed in art and religion (for more on inwardness see Taylor 1996, 207–372).

The structured inner world of self-awareness with this totality and tautness, as well as practical feeling with the focus of motivational structures of practices obtain an outstanding significance for Hegel's reading of the modern lifeworld and life-activity, but also of modern art in the realm of music, dramatic art, and poetry. Everything that is available and altogether conceivable in the inner world of the modern individual, can become the subject and inspiration of works of art in modernity²². Love's status and contentual determination in modern art is exactly dependent on this background.²³. Thereby Hegel has incorporated an important element of the intellectual world of early Romanticism in his systematic philosophy, lending his position on the autonomous world of feelings an exciting and more powerful emphasis. The spheres of feeling thematised in subjective spirit acquire a particular role for the interpretation of subjective religiosity as well, as components of modern religion in the Hegelian sense (for subjective religiosity see Rózsa 2008b, 135–154).

The subsequent contextualisation of love takes place in *objective spirit*, where modern, subjective freedom, and thereby the place value of individuality is highlighted in the environment of organisations, laws, and institutions, as it has already been mentioned inside subjective spirit in the free spirit.

III.2. Love in Objective Spirit

In the framework of objective spirit, Hegel adds a further meaning to love at the intersection of "worldly existence" as the spheres of law, social and economic structure, or politics on the one hand, and the 'sphere of particular existence' as a particular actuality of single free individuals and associations on the other. This peculiar, particular existence as lifeworld in the dimension of objective spirit is based on institutions on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on decisions of free individuals mutually recognizing each other. Thus, marriage and the family constitute complementary structures, i.e., subjectively and

22 "As however the whole content is held together at the point of subjective human feeling, and every process is transposed herein, also the circle, on the other hand, becomes infinitely larger, and comprises the most boundless diversity" (Hegel 1998, 183).

23 Hegel also explains the roots of change brought about by romantic art. In classic art, one asserts: "nothing can be more beautiful". This, however, is inappropriate for spirit. "Spirit must have itself on the basis of its own existence, and create itself an intellectual world. It is here that inwardness completes itself in itself. And this freedom of spirit is what now constitutes the principle. Thereby appearance contains another relation, which surpasses beauty. (...) The principle is that of absolute inwardness" (Hegel 1998, 179–180).

intersubjectively determined frames of life for subjects and at the same time institutions as well, in which love acquires a new meaning through this specific contextualisation. It becomes the “disposition of ethical life.” Ethical life, which had borne significance so far for the contents of particular practical acts, comes to the fore in this new context, and determines not just the subjective, but also the *substantial content of love*.

Hegel discussed love in its three aspects, which can also be called reference points, or ‘standpoints’. First, it is viewed as a natural determination. Hegel refers now to the natural side of love, which is also a look back at natural philosophy (Hegel 1986b, § 161; Hegel 1979, § 518, 319–320). Marriage contains “the moment of natural vitality”, even “life in its totality.” The “whole of love” presents itself here not immediately in feeling as in subjective spirit, but natural vitality, which constitutes the “actuality of the species and its process”. Love in gender relations, which had been connected to the natural soul within subjective spirit, also returns therewith. Here, however, it is treated under the perspective of “actuality” and its processes, the general “standpoint” appropriate to objective spirit. Second, love is understood as “inner existence,” which is associated to feeling and temper in the shape of the feeling soul within the framework of subjective spirit. Love as inner existence, however, is not conceived individually and in the shape of the feeling soul as it was in subjective spirit, but incorporated in the *institutional* framework of marriage and the family. Actuality and institutions thus constitute the proper reference points for the first two approaches and determinations of love in the framework of objective spirit. Thereby love gains a normativity which had been unknown at earlier stages.

Third, love appears as *spiritual, self-conscious love*, which evolves into a complex sphere exactly through this manifold transformation process. That is how love becomes crystallised in its conscious forms and in its actual, i.e., institutional embeddings as a reflected, conscious, self-determination, but also as an intersubjective, institutionally and normatively insured, fundamentally interpersonal relationship. On this differentiated horizon, love is assigned to individuals who understand and determine themselves as family-members. *Ethical life* provides this horizon and the most appropriate point of reference for ethical love.

In the context of objective spirit, it becomes “substantial unity”, also expressed as “actual union”. The connection of ethical life with substantial unity as the highest identity is rooted in the context of objective spirit, which is in turn constituted by new relations, *complementary relations* of spheres of actuality, institutions, and ethical life, i.e., of substantiality and subjectivity, institutions and various shapes of individuality. In these manifold relations as the proper contexts of objective spirit, love takes up several different components of subjective *and* objective spirit, which can now lend love a substantial content and substantiality as a specific normativity in general. In this correlation, the *ethical in life* is no longer treated in a natural philosophical or organic context: life gets conceived as an ethically modified, but at the same time self-determined *lifeworld*.

Under the systematic perspective of Hegel and as part of the conceptual background

of modernity, love is conceived as an as an “ethical disposition,” in which the three aspects of its “actuality” and dynamic are brought together, as it has been emphasised. First, the natural components of the bodily-corporeal; second, the internally structured world of feelings *qua* *Gemüt* as the totalizing shape of feelings, which constitutes a subjectively determined “inner world,” or “subjective intimacy.” Third, the intersubjectively-mutually determined and existing relation of free individuals to each other, to organisations, institutions, and norms in the ethical life of the ‘modern world’. Therefore, love is primarily an ethical relationship, which should be understood as a complex arising from these three aspects [*Standpunkten*]. Hegel’s interpretation of love is ruled by the last aspect of ethical life, and is therefore called an ‘ethical disposition’. This third, preferred interpretational level of love refers to the mutual, common, *solidary, responsible attitude* of human beings towards each other, and thereby to themselves in the setting of ethical life, which in turn also integrates the “natural inclination” and the “inner existence” of love in itself. The proper locus for unfolding and asserting these aspects is the actual ‘particular existence’, the lifeworld of the actual particular individual.

Hegel is also critical of marriage and the family as institutions of the lifeworld, as in his conception, institutions should serve people, and not to be served by them. Their primary function is to restrain the radical phenomena and extreme excesses of modern freedom in the various spheres and phenomena of modern life. The effectivity of institutions can be measured exactly on how they can comply with this task and perform it. This expectation also holds for marriage and the family as institutions of love, which are both desirable love (cf. Rózsa 2007, 103–120).

From the start, love is *not of an institutional, but above all of an ethical character*: it has its existential and/or anthropological roots in the *intersubjective* nature of human existence. Love can only be realised, experienced, and fulfilled in a modern, collective, i.e., not simply traditional, but mutually recognised form. Thus, the higher ethical content of love is not to be confused with marriage and the family as its institutional forms. Ethical love is of a *substantial* nature: principally, it is connected to its substantial content, and not to its institutionally regulated form. The institution of love is indeed also “ethical,” which is expressed not only by the sanctity of marriage and traditional values²⁴. The ethical should not be separated from the respective concrete attitudes and practices of individuals in their actual, profane world, since it can be practiced exactly in the latter, where the ethical comes “alive”. That is why *the ethical is based primarily on the persons’ own, free decision, and not on institutions; these persons, in turn, do not understand and determine themselves as subjects only, but as ‘intersubjects’ as well*.

Ideality and reality are interconnected in ethical life. The overtaking of actuality and the totality of individual existence as lifeworld in the content of love does not necessarily degrade and trivialize it; love can also become richer this way. The perspective of actuality,

24 On the sanctity and substantiality of marriage in general, see Hegel’s discussion in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (§ 163).

both as a principle of reality and the ground of concrete ethical norms, contents, and relations, brings a new aspect into the theory of love. Hegel does not therefore see only losses in the modern, profane, prosaic world, but also *new alternatives, perspectives, and forms of both life and love*. Love becomes a constitutive element of ethical life in modernity. Ethical love is an attitude appropriate to the modern world, the infinite subjective principle of which, freedom as a 'value', acquires a special accent in this context as well. But ethical love also integrates in itself particular inclinations and desires. Not in an immediate, but in a reflected, rational, and mediated way, through legally and normatively grounded practices. "Free consent" is one of the first practical expressions of the right of self-determination, in which the reflective, mediating, rational attitude comes to the fore. In Hegel's case, consent is also a requirement for marriage.

Subjective freedom does not mean freedom *from* constraints; on the contrary, it is freedom *to* lead a rational life. Rational life can be realised through activities of self-determinative individuals communicating with each other in a mutually recognised, constrained, and at the same time controllable framework of life. In this articulated framework, the *first subject of modern freedom* is not individuality as the solitary individual, but the *inter-subject*. In this connection, also love is *ab ovo* of an intersubjective, dialogical nature. For Hegel, this seems apt to ease the tensions arising in human relationships in modernity, i.e., to secure life in modernity through appropriate institutional forms of cohabitation, as well as appropriate acts of consciousness ("rational insight") and practical attitudes ("rational stance towards actuality") and ethical contents, at least in the private sphere (Hegel in the Preface to 1986b, 22–28). Subjective-ethical love as a first rank content of the institutional forms of private life (marriage and the family) gains thereby a *stabilizing function* in the life conduct of the persons in question. They understand and determine themselves as free not in general, abstract acts, but in concrete, mutual ones. They make decisions not in an abstract and isolated way, but in their respective actual situations, and through concrete, rational insights and dispositions, in which they can and will observe the *consensually* originated and controllable, affirmed and affirmative *community of their lives*, and manage its consequences. Thus, for Hegel, love is not an end in itself, for it has a "main goal" (Hegel 1986b, § 164): it serves the *minimisation of tensions and conflicts* in the interpersonal relations of modern private life, and offers *consensual possibilities* to solve these conflicts. The essence of love is exactly this determination, which Hegel calls the "speculative nature of substantial relations" (Hegel 1986b, § 164).

This "speculative nature of the substantial relations" of love in marriage will be included in the socio-cultural and historical context of modernity as well, in which *love acquires a stabilisatory function in the life-activity of the modern individual*. Speculative, ethical substantiality "divides itself up in order that its vitality may thereby achieve a concrete unity" (Hegel 1986b, § 165). Ethical disposition as love divides itself up in this context of the speculative, in which, however, precisely vitality and concreteness are accented, as *gender roles*. Hegel has discussed this in many respects patriarchal-traditional

way. The historical roots of this attitude may be traced back to his interpretation of Antigone in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Rózsa 2008a, 455–473). Nevertheless, there are important ideas to be found in his interpretation of gender roles, some of which may give new impulses to contemporary discussions.

This insight has motivated him to search for a way, by which these collisions, even if they cannot be solved, can at least be limited. It was before this background that he conjoined substantiality *and* subjectivity as the two fundamental structural levels of modern societies. In this mutual conjunction and constraint, which is also characteristic of ethical love, he raised the question how the modern individual's lifeworld might be stabilised. This fundamental intention constitutes the central topic of his *Philosophy of Right* and his theory of modernity in general.

One of the most important aspects of his position consists in the fact that the person's situation in modernity should be viewed, understood, and conceptualised first of all under the perspective of *colliding structures and tension-relations*²⁵. One therefore cannot explain Hegel's theory of institutions in an adequate manner without taking note of his theory of subjectivity. This constellation of colliding structures is exactly the core of his interpretational suggestion regarding the topic of love as well. That is why love cannot be detached from collisions and crisis phenomena in Hegel²⁶. What he looks for in love also, is an appropriate pattern for practical behaviour, which is, first of all, not for philosophers. A distanced identification with modernity in the "apprehensive", i.e., theoretical behaviour, and in the "self-preserving," i.e., practical behaviour of the single individual would be the programmatic center of Hegel's position. He has presented love as an identity problem of the modern individual in this conceptual framework, thematizing it in the mentioned wider context.

III.3. Love in Absolute Spirit

In the *third dimension* of spirit, love is thematised in various cultural forms and shapes, which constitute the 'exoteric' aspect of the also 'esoterically' located and discussed *absolute spirit*. In art, love has a special internal-systematic importance when Hegel distinguishes between *three forms (motives) of modern, romantic art*, to which, in addition to honesty and loyalty, love also belongs (Hegel 1998). But love also frequently emerges phenomenologically in the philosophy of art, when Hegel discusses concrete works or characters (Achilles, Romeo, Juliet, etc.). Love is also connected to certain philosophical

25 Comprehension, justification and self-preservation are theoretical and practical elements of rational conduct, distinguished and mutually related to each other by Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right* (Preface to Hegel 1986b, 26–27).

26 On the antagonisms and collisions in law, morality, and ethical life, Hegel wrote the following: "They can come into collision only in so far as they are all in equal measure rights". 'Right' in this respect means not abstract right, but "something sacred", which expresses the concept of freedom as the "highest determination of spirit" (Hegel 1986b, § 30). Hegel refers here to the mutual limitation of individual spheres, with a subsidiary remark: "only the right of the world spirit is absolute in an unlimited sense".

problems of art, e.g., when Hegel attends some questions of drama theory, such as genre problems with regard to the thematic of love. In religion, love obtains another place value once again: *God as love* is moved to the center of Christian religion, which is the historical and systematical climax of religion in general. Note that the power of love over death, and thus the ‘germ of immortality’, which had been crucial in the Frankfurt years, is no longer to be found in the 1821 manuscript of the philosophy of religion. But the overtaking of “modern conditions” in the problematic of love in the field of religion brings about yields as well. In philosophy as the highest form of thinking and thought, love in the modern sense no longer plays any role, while in the ancient, it does: *Philosophy as the love of wisdom* is emphasised by Hegel in several connections (Hegel 1998, 10). Modern philosophy is a process of the alienation of love and the world of emotions, and thus also *of wisdom as a fundamental orientation in the life of single individuals*. This has to do with the *approximation of philosophy to the criteria of scientific research*. Since the Jena years, Hegel sought to preserve both meanings and functions of philosophy, i.e., its modern, scientific, and its ancient, socio-cultural and individual-therapeutical meaning and function. These ambivalent conceptions lend a highly interesting tension to his mature philosophy²⁷. On the other hand, the overtaking of the modern world in the fundamental problematic of philosophy also induces collisions with prosaic, vulgar elements of this world, which then have a controversial effect on the status of love. These tensions are found in the thematisation of love in and through art and religion.

The treatment of modernity and its consequences in the social, economic, and political sphere, as well as their actual and prospective future effects on the forms and phenomena of art and religion handles the theory of love within the framework of art. It is within this broader framework that we can understand Hegel’s position, which states that *the highest in love as well as the lowest has its roots in the controversial nature of modernity*. The extreme ambivalence of love is not accidentally reflected in the phenomena of romantic art.

III.3.1. Love in Art

In *romantic art*, love attains a particular place value, in so far as it is based on the *principle of inwardness*. Inwardness is on the one hand a component of the basic principle of “infinite subjective freedom” of the “modern world” in general; on the other hand, it is the proper principle of modern, i.e., romantic art. Through this principle art rises to its highest stage, and becomes able to express the “highest in human” with reference to the Absolute. This revaluation through inwardness in the framework of absolute spirit exalts also the meaning of love in romantic art as the art of inwardness. In contrast, in Greek art as the art of beauty, love has no special role to play, as Hegel emphasises in various

²⁷ This profound tension in Hegel’s philosophy is manifest in the distinction of the esoteric and exoteric dimension of philosophy, which kept haunting Hegel all his life. In the 1830 *Encyclopedia*, he repeats his claim that philosophy should preserve and apply the ‘exoteric view’ in order to be capable of thematizing the phenomena and the structures of actuality (Hegel 1979, 383 and 393).

connections. Apart from one example, which Hegel treats at length, and this is Achilles of Homer. Although this certainly causes some theoretical inconsistencies in Hegel's position, from the viewpoint of the phenomenology of art, it is also a win, exposed by the wonderful interpretation of Achilles's greatness precisely in his love relations.

Love is discussed further in the conceptual context of drama theory, i.e., circumstances, situations, thinking and feeling, reaction, acts and actions. In this drama-theoretical, systematic contextualisation of the conceptual environment of love, action is of outstanding importance, with reference to feeling as well. In consequence of the strong action-theoretical contextualisation of the art-philosophical conception, Hegel conceives love as *motivation and content* of certain activities of individuals under certain circumstances. Thereby he approaches love to the central concept of objective spirit, namely *actuality*, which has a special status in Hegel's social philosophy. This reveals most clearly Hegel's *socio-philosophical and action-theoretical extension of the art-philosophical and drama-theoretical conception of love*.

Love does not arise from nothing, from pure feeling, as the romantics and some *bel esprit* might suggest. Love has its origins in highly diverse circumstances, which then through various feelings in the soul, a sphere that has developed into a self-sufficient world, become reflected, conceived, but above all experienced. Thus, love belongs to the specific, human modes of existence not only in the young Hegel, but also in the mature one; just as in Kierkegaard (1975) or later in Sartre (Sartre 1960). The reflected and experienced circumstances will be transformed through feeling, disposition, and temper, and thereby crystallised as motivational structures, among which love can belong as well, and which can later initiate highly diverse actions. It also means that love is not to be understood as a mere human reflective form and form of existence, as it was in the feelings embodied in subjective spirit, but they become involved in actions as well, for which they become their motivation and/or content.

The human being is a richness of multiple relations. This richness is manifest in one's stance towards the world, to God (or gods), to other people, and to oneself. The richness recollects itself *subjectively* in the soul as a subjective totality of feelings and passions. "From many sides, but as a whole" – is Hegel's standard, by which *greatness as a substantial quality of an individual* is to be measured and determined. We have a *substantial* element to cope with here, which, however, has its immediate place in the inner world. The whole as a normative quality of an individual is also substantial. It is not an arithmetic sum of subjective, accidental relations, feelings, and passions, but not a purely speculative concept, either. The whole is the norm evaluating and structuring the richness of relations, which makes it possible to prevent the failure or even disintegration of the individual among the diversity of relations, feelings, and passions, whose danger belongs to modern existence, by offering appropriate modes to handle these tensions.

For the Greeks, the greatness of a subject or a great character can be measured by his or her love. Homer's Achilles is "a great subject", whose development is demonstrated

by Hegel in the *multi-level, and at the same controversial richness of his love*. On one side, we see a highly valuable, highly differentiated, but also controversial love; on the other, hatred and cruelty, all in the same subject; moreover, in one of the greatest subjects ever portrayed in the universal history of art. Behind this differentiated interpretation of Achilles's love, one can sense a qualification and value-orientation based on substantial norms; a sort of model, by which the love of other subjects and characters can be measured. It is highly interesting, but not incomprehensible, how the loves of Achilles and Romeo do not lie far from each other, in spite of the centuries and millennia separating them. Achilles and Romeo are closely related in their greatness of subject or character. They are akin in their love as well. In contrast, Juliet is subject to one single passion, which inevitably leads to her fall. This extremely self-centered and also self-destructive love, however, is most beautifully represented by Juliet.

It is important for the explanation of romantic art, that Hegel distinguishes between religious and worldly love. Expressing religious love in art is a new kind of challenge brought about by Christianity, which can only exceptionally be met. The heads of Christ have nothing to do with the classic ideal. It is human earnest that should be expressed in Christ, and love, which hits the middle, stands between the beauty of the ideal and the natural shape, as Hegel claims (Hegel 1998). However, it requires that which is most difficult: the "content of divine love or the idea of love. Real, existing human love is laid out in another figure (...). This is maternal love" (Hegel 1998, 186–187). Hegel's problem here is, that the 'idea of love' in itself is not relevant for art. The 'actuality of love' is not just ideal, spiritual, but also sensual. The pure, spiritual actuality of love as the idea of love may have in principle been appropriate for the Greek. But only in principle, for the appropriate place of love, inwardness was not available for them. On the other hand, the idea of love, expressed in Christ, is inadequate for artistic representation. This new sort of love hits the middle between the beauty of the ideal and the natural shape. The beauty of the ideal and the natural shape stand in a relation of tension, which is, however, artistically uninteresting. It belongs to the nature of love, which Christ represents, and which is even more powerfully expressed in religion, and can be experienced in belief as subjective religiosity. The beauty in the idea of love in Christ offers no appropriate standard for the artistic representation of love. Partly because sensuality and its expression in its own shape become problematic. The Greeks' expression of beautiful sensuality is completely out of the question here. The now emerging ugly in the suffering body is contrasted with love, which is, at the same time, highly appraised as an idea. This is the religious idea of love, which, however, eliminates the sensual, although the latter is indispensable for art: religious love is 'without lust'. Thereby art cannot let the 'real, existing, human love' appear on Christ. In contrast, the love of Mary as maternal love can successfully be expressed by art, since it is "real, existing, human love". The most intimate love of Mary is one without lust, of course. Still, sensuality does not vanish completely from this maternal love: Hegel speaks of the natural unity, which is present for her in her son. Hegel's main point is that

the appropriate medium for expressing and mediating the love in Christ's sense is not art, but religion.

Pure divine love is conjoined with the lowest in human in a way which was unknown to Greeks. For them, the 'nobility of the soul' always remained unaffected by pain and passion. In Christendom, by contrast, *pain became a constitutive element* not only of subjective freedom, but also *of love*²⁸. This infinite tension between ideal, purely divine and sensual actual love constitutes the particularity of love in the religious circle of romantic art. The moments accentuated by Hegel allow, even serve the artistic representation of this sort of love of Mary, for which painting is the most appropriate medium.

The result of these novel tendencies is that the "rigor of the sensuality of the ideal" is no longer promoted; instead, the 'height of intimacy' becomes the ideal (Hegel 1998, 185). Intimacy, however, is a complex and rather complicated world in itself. The multifariously tense relation of the soul and single feelings is shown in the love of Juliet (Hegel 1998, 150). The love of Juliet is a characteristic example of how the *inner world is severed from the lifeworld*, and the subjective totality of the inner world becomes one-sided²⁹. Unlike Romeo, Juliet is incapable of handling relations in the lifeworld. The richness of aspects in human relationships and in relations with the outside world are self-evident for Romeo, but for Juliet, who is a "precious jewel", are totally alien. "Such a soul is Juliet: unfamiliar with the world like a child; one passion has inflamed her, and she has the power to sacrifice everything for it. Other bonds are unknown to her" (Hegel 1998, 195).

In Juliet's love, there appears the worldly circle of romantic art. Here, in the worldly circle, love is placed in new contexts. "Human being acquires a worldly heart, and has in it an affirmative" (Hegel 1998, 191). In this circle, there are three different forms/motives: honor, love, and loyalty. These motives are not ethical shapes, like e.g., virtue. Honor is now prowess not for a commonwealth, therefore not a virtue. Similarly, love here is passion, and not marital, ethical, mutual, responsible love. The collision of these motives is also characteristic of modernity, as can be seen in *Romeo and Juliet* or in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

We now regard love as a motive under another perspective, under which the particular meaning of love in the worldly circle of romantic art is highlighted (Hegel 1998, 192). The phenomenon of love serves as an example for Hegel to call attention to a striking difference between classic and romantic art, or the ancient and modern world. In a modern piece of art, the "highest in human" can be expressed, contemplated, and enjoyed; however, it might be the ugliest and the lowest in human. The topic of love in romantic art possesses both aspects of love, it contains both the highest and the lowest. It is these deep, internal tensions that can awaken an interest for artistic portrayal. Hegel

28 The close link between freedom and pain is thematised by Hegel in one of the introductory paragraphs of the philosophy of spirit, where he defines the essence of spirit. It is not love as an affirmative relation, but pain as negativity that is constitutive for spirit (Hegel 1979, § 382).

29 Hegel emphasises the relevance of lifeworld for romantic art in his philosophy of art, saying: "Every individual has to beat its own path of life for itself" (Hegel 1998, 193).

serves with a number of examples, but “love in marriage does not belong to those topics which are interesting for art”³⁰.

The “prose of ordinary life”, which is a primary feature of the modern world, also *pervades the motives of art, among them love*, which is one of the three motives of romantic art. It brings about considerable changes in the topic of love in newer art. By placing the prose of ordinary life into the center, those spheres and phenomena, in which the motives of romantic art (honor, love, loyalty) stand in focus, are now put aside. Marginalizing love and honor, as well as introducing new motives – e.g., the extreme subjectivity of characters or formalism – run parallel with what can later lead to the “end of art”. Hegel, however, does not follow this direction; he seeks how art integrates in itself the ordinary lifeworld, and how it can profit from it. He is much more interested in the prosaic side of life, and not its end.

III.3.2. *Love in Religion*

The existential experience of “each and every” person, that I have a vacillating attitude towards the world and myself, and therefore “cannot help myself” (Hegel 1993-1995, II, 80) motivates me to recognise a higher entity. This basic motive in human existence leads to the alternative, which preserves, or rather, which can and should preserve love in Christendom before the background of the modern world, understood in the Hegelian sense as a post-enlightenment, disenchanted one. The need for religion and the demand for something firm create an extreme degree of tension in Christian religion, which, precisely in and through love, promises the satisfaction of these existential needs. This contextualisation of love before the background of the concept of modernity is Hegel’s focus in the third volume on consummate religion, which he then attaches to the central topic of objective spirit.

Hegel has focused on three aspects of the topic of love in religion. The first point is, where and how he introduces love as a *motive of religion*. In this respect, it is very interesting that he treats love in and through religion in an action-theoretical framework as well. Second, the question arises, where and how love achieves its *highest systematic place value and its particular meaning* in the domain of religion. In this context, he reviews critically the young Hegel’s dogmas on Christendom, among them the dogma of universal human love. He also criticises the romantic position of “sentimentality,” which conjoins “endless love” and contingent “being in love” in an immediate manner. In a brief excursion it is also asked how – through the absolute as divine – *love can obtain and preserve a meaning which is not to be underestimated even in a religiously critical, post-enlightenment,*

³⁰ Hegel makes the following ironic remark on the process of becoming prosaic and its consequences for the topic of love in art: the individual “struggles with hard actuality, and the end can only be that the individual sows its wild oats, and resigns to objectivity. The end will be that he enters the great chain of the world, gets a family, a position, and a wife, who – so highly idealised before – is now just a woman, no better than the rest”. This ‘prosaic stuff’ contributes to the end of art, passing over to humor (Hegel 1998, 197–198).

skeptic, and agnostic world.

The exposition of love as a religious motive is found first of all in the *historical context of the ancient Greeks*: love as a religious motive first emerges with Aphrodite (Hegel 1993–1995, II, 76). As Hegel asserts: “Aphrodite, who is worshipped, is the love of the individual itself” (Hegel 1993–1995, II, 78). The Greek, however, possess this motive in an undeveloped form. Love is understood by them as *pathos and sheer misery*. “Hippolytus in *Phaedra* becomes hapless, because he only worships Diana and neglects love, which brings its own punishment; the hunt is his *pathos*, he does not know love” (Hegel cf., 78). Love as a relation to the divine remains unevolved here: the Greek do not actually know love in and through the divine as the absolute highest. Neither *pathos*, nor misery in love can express this highness.

Hegel introduces love as a religious motive in close connection with the cult” – “He understands the cult as follows: “Cult in its determinate concept is the motion of the individual to posit itself from its separation to identity with the Absolute, to give itself the certainty of unity with it – the feeling, that it elevates itself to the love of it” (Hegel cf., 16). Cult is understood as a practical act of overcoming separation and as an act of positing the identity of the individual and the absolute. This practical act as a specific kind of action also unfolds the feeling of the individual to elevate itself to the love of the absolute. The movement of the individual who is divided in its existence, to posit itself as identical with the absolute, and to give itself certainty of this unity, first appears in the *feeling of love*. Love posits the *identity* of the divided individual with the absolute, and thereby with itself in feeling. This identity is thus *felt* and not *thought*. The divided individual is dependent on feeling, for thinking only appears in a yet inappropriate form.

Love as a distinguished relation to God is to be assessed in the foreground of Hegel's anthropology. In this connection, Hegel emphasises “actual human being,” who, among others, is a loving being. This also refers to the dimension of lifeworld. The ‘unity with universal powers’ is to be understood through the motives and actions of ethical individuals with particular motivations (Hegel cf., 76). This can provide the general ground for the stability of their respective *lifeworld*, although not, or not necessarily for the *existence* of the individuals. In the lifeworld, the person always finds solutions and has always enough space for its actions and activities. On existential grounds, however, it is *dependent on something higher, and thus needs the infinite as love of and for the divine*. This existential dependence on God as love is discussed by Hegel in the 1821 philosophy of religion in the broad and multi-level *context of his practical philosophy*. He explains before this systematic background that – in the context of ethical life – individuals are not just thinking and willing beings, but also loving ones. They unfold themselves in all spheres of their universal-ethical and at the same time particular-active life. This consideration is tightly connected to his conception of modernity. Greek religion was theoretic and poetic, that of the Romans was practical and prosaic. Christian religion as the religion of modernity, even in its post-religious phase after the enlightenment creates a new

synthesis, in which “infinite love” occupies central position.

What constitutes this religiosity, which has its roots – in principle – in infinite subjective freedom? To interpret and to determine oneself in love is the *union* of one’s theoretical and practical attitude to oneself, to others, to the world, to God. In fact, God means exactly this synthesizing love. “God is love, and as such, remains One” (Hegel cf., 17). Love, however, is more than unity and One: it is also immediate identity. Human being is the immediate subject of this love as it becomes more complex. Hegel thereby has included subjective freedom in the religion of modernity. “God as love is both infinite subjectivity and immediate identity” (Hegel cf., 17). These infinite and finite, immediate aspects of love are conjoined and mediated with each other. That is the speculative side to eternal love, which, however, is no longer pure, in so far as it contains motives and aspects of the modern, finite kind of love as well.

Hegel introduces three aspects of love here. First, he speaks of the *natural aspect of love*, in which a first unity is accomplished. He has already referred to it as sexual love in subjective spirit, and also in the philosophy of art. Then he treats “love as ethical unity in the family,” which he presents in his *Philosophy of Right* as an institution of objective spirit. Hegel also refers to a further aspect of love in spirit, namely that it is available for *everyone as an example for self-consciousness*. This provides “the eternal example for self-consciousness”, which can later be iterated in the particular history of each and every individual. This manifests the meaning of *love as a behavioural model for everyone*, which Hegel discusses subsequently at length.

The way to “veritable”, speculative-complex, ideal and actual love leads from the natural human being through the ethical to the self-conscious spiritual one. The inner acquires a particular meaning for the individual, in so far as it conceives itself as an elevation in an inner world, the access to which is open for everyone: “This universal divine heaven of the inner” as subjective-substantial is conducted by Christ to moral and other commandments, “the particular forms of which are in particular relations and situations” (Hegel cf., 52–53). It is in this context that love is pronounced as a moral commandment in Christendom (Hegel cf., 51).

Hegel distinguishes between three sides of Jesus’ teaching. First, he speaks critically of the Mosaic lawgiving. This is an “outward act”, which has no value, since it is only the disposition which gives the act its “infinite value”. Second, he makes the mentioned remark on the “elevation in an inner world, the access to which is open for everyone” (Hegel cf., 51). Third, he writes the following: “He conducts this universal divine heaven of the inner, this substantial, in a more determinate reflection, to moral and other commandments, which are nothing else than particular forms in determinate relations and situations” (Hegel cf., 52–53). He regards critically not only the Mosaic law, but also the dogma of universal human love in Christendom. This critique states that “in an abstract, extended sense of its scope as human love in general”, it becomes the “love of all human beings,” that is “a lame abstraction”. His argument is as follows: “the human being and the human

beings that one can love are single and particular; a heart that seeks to enclose whole humankind is an empty straddle to sheer fantasy – the opposite of what love is” (Hegel cf., 53). Against the separation of love from the actual lifeworld, Hegel refers emphatically to the meaning of particular relations: “Love in Christ’s sense is moral love of one’s neighbor in a particular relation, in which one stands to him” (Hegel cf., 53).

The change of perspective, which is characteristic of religion in modernity is motivated by the *fear of death*. It is the finite human being of modernity that fears death. God as infinite, eternal love can overcome this fear of finiteness, without, however, taking away the meaning of the modern individual’s own life. *Binding finite life to the problem of death not only through God’s eternal love, but also through everyone’s own determination of life is one of the most decisive points of Christian religion*. This point in Hegel’s account is not a dogma, but the *highest meaning constituent* of life and death for the particular individuals of modernity. At the same time, one can also observe the marginalisation of love in modernity. The reformed churches and the modern world are internally related. In both, “everything becomes profaned” (Hegel 1993–1995, III, 91). “The rational absconded in the form of private law and weal” (Hegel cf., 95). “The search for private weal and pleasure” is “on the agenda only because I subjectively think, I only recognise so much. – Pleasure: love without pain” (Hegel cf., 95). Private law and private weal become central elements in the modern world, which radically transforms the Christian tradition of love. Nevertheless, Hegel was sober enough to describe these changes in an objective manner. One outcome of these developments is “love without pain,” which is thus not an infinite one: this sort of love is based on the present, or rather the present as an instant. Its content comes from pleasure as private weal. This loss of perspective leads to a contentual impoverishment in the world of ideas and in the emotional world of modernity. The marginalisation of infinite love stands in close correlation with the marginalisation or even elimination of the problem of death from the modern world of ideas, as well as with the marginalisation and elimination of moral commandments; which has far-reaching significance for the individuals’ life conduct. Hegel foresaw these tendencies of modernity, which started to unfold only decades after his death. He knew that infinite love as the highest horizon for a meaningful human existence was about to vanish from our culture still grounded in Christendom. Thereby the constitutive elements of love, as well as the problematic of suffering and death would be marginalised. Love in the field of tension between life and death would lose its significance not only as the higher horizon of life, but also as a conscious, reflected experience and interpersonal relationship, based on mutual recognition and responsibility. Without seeking to revive the past of the entire Christian culture of love, Hegel diagnoses those phenomena, which mark the emergence of these novel tendencies; and all this in a sober tone and a realistic way. These tendencies still influence our own concept of love and our practices in love-relationships. Without even knowing it. That is another reason why Hegel’s understanding of love is worth reinvigorating.

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