HEGEL'S ANTIGONE: *SITTLICHKEIT* AS A CONCRETE UNIVERSAL

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Abstract. *In this paper, we will analyze Hegel's concept of the concrete universal in the context of his political thought. In particular, we will analyze it as it appears in the realm of Ethical Life* (Sittlichkeit) *of Objective Spirit, Hegel's notion of a socio-political world. In the first section of the paper, we will examine the relationship of interdependence and reciprocity between the universality of institutions and the particularity of individual citizens, focusing on how Ethical Life must always be conceived as a concrete universal which is dynamic, active, in motion, and thus vitalized by individual demands. Specifically, we will explore how Ethical Life indeed requires customs, and hence social practices or 'habits', but, as we shall see, these must always remain subject to revision, and the particular should never be entirely absorbed into the universal, lest the latter become a dead mechanism, a merely abstract principle. To illustrate this point, the second section of the paper will draw a parallel between social custom, on the one hand, and habit* (Gewohnheit) *as a moment of the Subjective Spirit, on the other. This comparison will show how the ethical community risks ossifying its Spirit if a social order becomes overly formal, as Hegel asserts in his* Lectures on the Philosophy of History. *The third section of the paper takes up the tragic character of Antigone in the* Phenomenology of Spirit *in order to demonstrate how the particular, with its individual demands, must always challenge the universal tendency to become formal and abstract. We will see how such an analysis of the concrete universal in the Hegelian political sphere leads to a reflection with feminist implications which must go beyond Hegel himself, precisely to remain faithful to the dynamism of his philosophy.*

Keywords. *Hegel; Antigone; Ethical Life; Feminism*

1. *Introduction*

In this paper, we will attempt to offer a political reflection on Hegel's concrete universal, focusing on the idea of Ethical Life presented in the Objective Spirit, but also using a particular case in

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Hegelian literature to save it from ossification – that is, the process of crystallization and death of Spirit, as the end of its activity. In this regard, the most striking example will be found in the character of Antigone, who, as our analysis will show, demonstrates how the particular – marked by the feminine – can keep the concrete universal alive and dynamic.

The paper will be divided into three sections. The first part will analyze the concept of the concrete universal in Hegel's Logic and transfer it into the political realm of Ethical Life. It will examine the functioning of the latter to show how total transparency between the individual and institutions can be found within it. Furthermore, it will be shown how the essential nature of Ethical Life lies in its being a concrete universal, i.e., never static but rather active, vital, and dynamic. In our view, this is made possible by the constant action of particular individuals contained within it but not subjected to it.

The second section addresses the problem of custom in the ethical world, drawing a parallel with Hegel's concept of habit in the Subjective Spirit. Through this parallel, the paper aims to illustrate the danger of custom in the political sphere, as Hegel represents it as a formal universal – a dead mechanism that, by suppressing the demands of individual particulars, would block the vitality of the concrete universal essential for the functioning of Ethical Life.

In the third section, we will analyze the character of Antigone as presented by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* to demonstrate how she represents an example of how the particular can and should counter the universal when it no longer recognizes itself in it. In this way, the particular prevents the universal from becoming mere formalism, making possible the speculative movement of the concrete universal in the political realm.

In conclusion we will see how from a feminist perspective it is necessary to overcome Hegel's conception of Ethical Life through his own idea of the concrete universal in the political sphere. In other words, it will be shown that to remain faithful to Hegel, one must go beyond Hegel himself.

2. *Ethical Life as Concrete Universal*

The concrete universal is a concept initially presented by Hegel in the Logic, where it is analyzed in contrast to what Hegel defines as abstract universality. Briefly delving into Hegel's logical analysis of these two types of universals can help us clearly understand what they mean to the author before moving on to their application in the Objective Spirit, that is, the socio-political world as envisioned by Hegel. Let us begin with two Hegelian quotations, taken respectively from the Preface to the first edition of the *Science of Logic* and the Introduction:

> The *understanding determines*, and holds the determination fixed. *Reason* is negative and *dialectical*, since it dissolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it is *positive*, since it generates the *universal*, and comprehends the particular therein. [...] In its truth reason is however *spirit* [...]. But spirit does not stay at the nothing of this result but is in it rather equally positive, and thereby restores the first simplicity, but as universal, such as it is concrete in itself; a given particular is not subsumed under this universal but, on the contrary, it has already been determined together with the determining of the difference and the dissolution of this determining[1].

> So logic must indeed at first be learned as something which one may well understand and penetrate into but in which, at the beginning, one misses the scope, depth, and broader significance. Only after a more profound acquaintance with the other sciences does logic rise for subjective spirit from a merely abstract universal to a universal that encompasses within itself the riches of the particular[2].

From these two quotes, we can grasp that the concrete universal is the universal capable of encompassing within itself the particularities without nullifying them but instead permeating them in their

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[1] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. by G. di Giovanni, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 10.

[2] Ivi, p. 37.

concreteness. In this sense, there is no opposition between the universal and the particular, as occurs in the case of the abstract universal, where the universal nullifies the particularity of individualities, suppressing them. As Robert Stern brilliantly states, «Hegel thus conceives of the concrete universal as 'the universal of the Notion,' insofar as it involves a dialectical relation to particularity and individuality, whereas the abstract universal does not»[3].

Therefore, on one hand, in the particular of the concrete universal, we see the proper realization of the universal[4]. On the other hand – and this is the point we will emphasize in this paper – the

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[3] R. Stern, *Hegel, British Idealism, and the Curious Case of the Concrete Universal*, «British Journal for the History of Philosophy», XV (1), 2007, pp. 115-153, p. 128. Cf.: «For this reason, Hegel's much utilized concept of *Aufhebung* means, in addition to cancellation, elevation and preservation, that *the universal is rendered concrete and enriched by its determinations*. The concrete universal is not complete *a priori*, but emerges as the result of the reciprocity between universal and particulars in the formation of a whole. [...] Reason is not and cannot be merely formal. In order to avoid formalism, Hegel believes that the minimum structure of rationality must be triadic. The triadic structure is a requirement of the reciprocal interdependence between universal and particular» (R.R. Williams, *Schleiermacher, Hegel, and the Problem of Concrete Universality*, «Journal of the American Academy of Religion», LVI (3), 1988, pp. 473-496, p. 490).

[4] Cf. F. Moseley, *O Universal e os Particulares na Lógica de Hegel e em O Capital de Marx*, «Revista Opinião Filosófica», VII (1), 2016, pp. 14-43, pp. 17-18: «O Conceito de Hegel tem três momentos: universalidade [*Allgemeinheit*], particularidade [*Besonderheit*] e singularidade [*Einzelnheit*] (às vezes traduzido como 'individualidade'). A ordem lógica exata de explicação é a seguinte: o ponto de partida do Conceito é o *universal*, que é a Essência, ou substância, que já fora identificada na Lógica da Essência. O Conceito, em seguida, segue a uma explicação dos *particulares*, a qual *pressupõe* a natureza do universal e acrescenta determinações adicionais a fim de diferenciar o universal pressuposto em suas formas particulares. Em outras palavras, os particulares são explicados como formas particulares do próprio *universal*, como 'autoparticularizações' do universal pressuposto. É neste sentido que a substância universal também é um 'sujeito' que cria suas próprias formas particulares. Finalmente, o Conceito passa a *singularidade*, na qual o universal alcança existência concreta e incorporação perfeita em uma forma particular».

particular holds value because a relationship of reciprocity and mediation is formed between it and the universal. Thus, even though it is contained within the universal, the particular does not lose its validity. Instead, in its changes, it can transform the determination of the universal itself, which, being concrete, takes into account every specificity it contains. In this sense, the concrete universal appears as vital, active, in constant relation with the particular, and therefore in perpetual change, unlike the abstract universal which, in its mere formality, is lifeless. As Willem deVries states:

> An abstract universal is a tag which can be hung on things otherwise quite indifferent to it in order to sort them out; a concrete universal, on the other hand, must reach to their very hearts and afford an explanation of their being. An abstract universal is static and unchanging because it is dead, a mere sum of otherwise unrelated features. A concrete universal, however, is alive, dynamic, and dialectical: it is essentially a part of a self-developing system[5].

We can now move on to Hegel's political and social application of the concrete universal, which finds its realization in the systematic sphere of Objective Spirit in what Hegel defines as Ethical Life (*Sittlichkeit*). Indeed, in this sphere, one can find an actualization of the concrete universal with a complete and reciprocal transparency between the individuals within the Ethical Life and its political institutions. Let us begin with an analysis of Ethical Life as presented by Hegel.

Ethical Life is presented by Hegel as the third moment of Objective Spirit, which involves Spirit engaging with an external world – the political and social realm – where it comes to fruition. In this moment, Spirit is, according to Hegel, «(i)n the form of *reality*, as a *world* produced and to be produced by it; in this world freedom is present as necessity»[6]. But what does this freedom consist of? Firstly, it is essential to emphasize, as Frederick Neuhouser points

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[5] W. deVries, *Hegel on Representation and Thought*, «Idealistic Studies», XVII (2), 1987, pp. 123-132, p. 128.

[6] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. by W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2010, p. 20.

out, that there are two different types of freedom: speculative and practical. While speculative freedom can be defined as the capacity of Spirit to recognize itself in that which is other than itself, what characterizes practical freedom is that «it always involves – is always realized through – practical engagement with the existent world»[7]. This means that «(s)ubjects who are practically free enjoy a species of being-with-themselves-in-an-other, but unlike speculative freedom, it is a being-with-self that comes about through some practical relation to the world»[8]. As can be easily deduced, in Ethical Life – the proper political life – we are dealing with the second type of freedom, the practical one. For Hegel, therefore:

> Ethical life is the *Idea of freedom* as the living good which has its knowledge and volition in self-consciousness, and its actuality through self-conscious action. Similarly, it is in ethical being that self-consciousness has its motivating end and a foundation which has being in and for itself. Ethical life is accordingly the *concept of freedom which has become the existing* [*vorhandenen*] *world and the nature of self-consciousness*[9].

Freedom is therefore present in the political and social world, and in this context, it consists of the dual and mutual recognition that occurs between individual citizens and universal institutions. In this sense, practical freedom must be present both subjectively and objectively: on the one hand, «an agent (or 'will') enjoys subjective freedom to the extent that he reflects on, and is able to find some subjective satisfaction in, his actions and relationships (his 'determinations')»; on the other, the agent «enjoys objective freedom, by contrast, to the extent that his determinations are prescribed by reason: they are the determinations to which a fully rational agent, in

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[7] F. Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 21.

[8] *Ibidem*.

[9] G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 189.

the circumstances, would be committed»[10]. In Ethical Life, the speculative union of subjective freedom and objective freedom has been achieved: individuals recognize themselves in social institutions because they, representing the Spirit of their time, reflect their rationality and freedom[11].

Sittlichkeit repurposes the organist trend, typical of the rational movement, in which the parts find their own meaning in relation to a dynamically functioning totality. In the concrete case of *Sittlichkeit*, i.e., the constitution of the modern European state,[12] the parts that find themselves working relationally are its constituent parts: the family, understood as «the immediate or *natural* ethical spirit»; the civil society, understood as «a connection of the members as *self-sufficient individuals* [*Einzelner*] in what is therefore *a formal universality*»; and the state, in which we find the «actuality of the substantial universal» in the structure «of public life which is dedicated to this»[13].

[10] A. Patten, *Hegel's Idea of Freedom*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 35.

[11] Cf. A.W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 196: «Hegel uses *Sittlichkeit* to signify two apparently quite distinct things: First, it refers to a certain kind of social order, one that is differentiated and structured in a rational way. Thus 'ethical life' is Hegel's name for an entire set of institutions – the ones anatomized under that heading in the *Philosophy of Right*: the family, civil society, and the modern political state. Second, how- ever, the term also refers to a certain attitude or 'subjective disposition' on the part of individuals toward their social life (PR § 141R), an attitude of harmonious identification with its institutions».

[12] «Hegel is not offering a prescriptive account of the right form of society in the way that (for instance) Plato does in the *Republic*. As Michael Hardimon has made clear, Hegel is describing what he sees as the essential tendencies within modern European societies in a way that is intended to bring out the rationality of these tendencies (hence Hegel's notorious equation of the actual with the rational) and so reconcile us (modern Europeans) to the societies we live in» (A. Stone, *Matter and Form: Hegel, Organicism, and the Difference between Women and Men*, in *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought. Beyond Antigone?*, ed. by K. Hutchings and T. Pulkkinen, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 211-232, p.230, note 10).

[13] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 198. As Campello observes, this organization of ethical life may appear problematic in today's context: «Eine häufig diskutierte Frage in der

These three parts are connected and related to each other organically, in the following way. On the one hand, we find «the natural unit of the family», in which ethical life is «an immediate *feeling* [*Empfindung*], which is still without opposition»[14]. On the other hand, we find a series of individuals who, having left the immediate family environment to enter civil life, come up against other particularities. This process composes the civil society, in which universality is «still only its *inner* basis, [...] present only as a formal *appearance* in the particular»[15]. These two moments find their speculative relation-

jüngsten Hegel-Forschung bezieht sich auf die schwierige Einpassung der drei von Hegel ausdifferenzierten Sphären der Sittlichkeit – nämlich Familie, bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat – in den gewöhnlichen gegenwärtigen politisch-philosophischen Begriffsrahmen; denn im Laufe von fast 200 Jahren entwickelten sich in Bezug auf die drei von Hegel dargestellten Sphären – Familie, bürgerliche Gesellschaft und Staat – nicht nur erheblich neuen Konfigurationen, sondern es fand auch eine inhaltliche Ausdifferenzierung dieser Sphären statt, wodurch der von Hegel in jeder Sphäre spezifizierte Gehalt sich inzwischen verändert hat» (F. Campello, *Die Natur der Sittlichkeit. Grundlagen einer Theorie der Institutionen nach Hegel*, Bielefeld, transcript Verlag, 2015, p. 160).

[14] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 212. Cf. T. Nicolacopoulos and G. Vassilacopoulos, *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love: An Essay on Sexualities, Family and the Law*, Melbourne, re.press, 2011, p. 132: «From the outset [...] the family is presented as the 'immediate substantiality' of spirit that is specifically characterized by love. However, love is described as spirit's 'feeling of its own unity'. Furthermore, within the spiritual unity that is created by familial love one is self-conscious of one's individuality as a self-determined essence so that one is as a family member rather than as an independent person».

[15] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 219. Cf.: «(T)he dialectic of civil society begins at the point where many members of different families enter into relations with one another as independent persons and where these relations produce a 'system of complete interdependence' (*PhR*, § 183). The individuality which, in the family, is still tied to the community and to common interests and aims is thereby released into self-subsistent objective reality' (*PhR*, §181). As independent persons the individuals are now 'particulars 'who are related to a 'universal, i.e. the system of mutual dependence, in

ship within the state, creating a general structure where «the subjective *freedom* becomes the rational will, *universal* in and of itself»[16]. As Hegel claims, in the third stage of *Sittlichkeit*, the state, we find «the *self-conscious* ethical substance, – the unification of the principle of the family and the principle of civil society»[17], that is to say, the place where we find the reciprocal relationship between particularity and universality[18]. In this sense, we find freedom understood as mediated immediacy, universality become concrete: there is unity, but not as in the family in an immediate way, but containing in it the differentiation posed by the second moment of *Sittlichkeit*, i.e., civil, public life[19].

so far as they wish to realize their aims. It is this 'differentiation' between 'particularity' and 'universality which, according to Hegel's speculative interpretation, determines the nature of civil society» (K.-H. Ilting, *The Dialectic of Civil Society*, in *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, ed. by Z.A. Pelczynski, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 211-226, pp. 213-214).

[16] Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 228.

[17] Ivi, p. 236.

[18] Cf. C. Baumann, *Adorno, Hegel, and the Concrete Universal*, «Philosophy and Social Criticism», XXXVII (1), 2011, pp. 73-94, p. 81: «Hegel conceives of modern society as a whole, or what he calls the state, as a concrete universal. It is a self-determining and self-knowing social entity, having the triad structure of subjectivity. The first moment is an immediate unity with oneself, which means here: of the social with the individuals which are its part. The individual does not distinguish itself from the community, in the family and agriculture. [...] The second moment is difference. Here, in morality and civil society, the individual knows that it is individual and that society is separate from it. You could also say, inversely, that the social becomes apparent, 'aware of itself', as not identical to the individuals that constitute it. The third moment is a mediated unity. Here the individual realizes that the state corresponds to what its own reason shows it to be rational and that it can only be a fully human being in the state. The state, on the other hand, allows for subjective freedom of the individual and is structured just as a self-determining, thinking subject».

[19] Cf. J.M. Sterrett, *The Ethics of Hegel*, «The International Journal of Ethics», 1982, pp. 176-201, pp. 189-190: «The state is the actuality of the substantial will,

Now, we can understand how in Ethical Life the concrete universal is realized: citizens are not, as would happen in the case of the abstract universal, subjected to a universal that oppresses their individuality. On the contrary, they must recognize themselves and their individuality within political life itself, seeing their own rationality and Spirit reflected in the institutions. Indeed, Hegel states, «(t)he right of individuals to their *particularity* is likewise contained in ethical substantiality, for particularity is the mode of outward appearance in which the ethical exists»[20]. In other words, in Ethical Life, we are dealing with a concrete universal because we witness a concordance of the universal and the particular, where the latter element is not nullified in the name of the universal but is necessary for its constant enactment[21].

In this enactment by the particular, we can understand how it is essential for the concrete universal of the political world to be in constant movement and change. The particular, therefore, must always be capable of modifying the universal itself in cases where it no longer recognizes itself in it and does not see its rationality reflected in the institutions. This is understandable, as Hegel himself states that the ethical state «has its immediate existence [*Existenz*] in *custom* and its mediate existence in the self-consciousness of the individual [*des Einzelnen*], in the individual's knowledge and activity»[22]. With these words, Hegel wants to emphasize a point of

the vital union of the particular interest of its members with the relatively universal aims of man as man. Neither the family nor civil society is commensurate with such realization of individuals, though in both of these spheres a beginning is made from single to universal aims. This larger – the largest earthly – sphere takes up and fulfils all narrower ones. The state is universal or public reason, existing unreflectingly in the genius or spirit of its people, and objectively in its customs and institutions».

[20] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 197.

[21] «Therefore ethical life cannot just be regarded as a substantial unity, but must have the form of the unfolded *idea*, as a *concrete universal*» (C. Hofmann, *Autonomy and the Concrete Universal: Moral Subjectivity and its Function in Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, «Hegel Bulletin», XXXV (2), 2014, pp. 252-272, p. 266).

[22] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 275.

fundamental importance. On one hand, it is true and necessary that for the sustenance of *Sittlichkeit*, there must be a transparent recognition between the individual and the institutions, which become so customary that they are developed into a «*second nature*»[23] for the individual. Habit, or custom, thus represents a fundamental and necessary condition for the actualization of Ethical Life. On the other hand, however, it is important that this second nature does not become stagnant, meaning that it does not lose the dynamic character typical of the concrete universal, under the risk of decay into mere dead, abstract universality. In this sense, the individual must always be free to challenge the institutions themselves, and it is precisely through such questioning – which may initially appear dangerous to Ethical Life, as it puts the immediate transparency between the individual and the institutions at stake – that the greatest danger of *Sittlichkeit* itself is overcome, namely its ossification. In the words of A.S. Walton:

> If human beings are capable of using concepts and expressing them in their actions, then it follows that they are, in principle, capable of questioning those concepts, or at least understanding what is involved in doing something different. Obeying the state, for example, expresses a particular set of understanding about what is appropriate. But this also presupposes being able to see that there is an alternative set of understandings in which not obeying the state might be taken to be appropriate[24].

The issue of the ossification of communities is a problem taken seriously by Hegel, and one to which he dedicates part of his reflections, especially in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. Furthermore, this problem can be better understood through a parallelism with habit, which Hegel discusses in his Anthropology. These will be the topics discussed in the following section.

[23] Ivi, p. 195.

[24] A.S. Walton, *Hegel: Individual Agency and Social Context*, in *Hegel's Philosophy of Action*, ed. by L.S. Stepelevich and D. Lamb, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press, 1983, pp. 75-92, p. 85.

3. *The Ossification of Spirit*

Hegel divides the Subjective Spirit, the first section of the *Philosophy of Mind*, into three parts. The first of these is entitled Anthropology. This section marks the delicate transition from the *Philosophy of Nature*, which ended with the realization that the natural realm is incapable of positing a concrete universal, to the *Philosophy of Mind*. Placed between the natural and spiritual realm, Anthropology represents for Hegel the subjective Spirit that is «in *itself* or *immediate* [*an sich oder unmittelbar*]» and is thus «a *soul* or *natural mind* [*Seele oder Naturgeist*]»[25]. This stage of the subjective Spirit is divided into three moments: the natural soul, the feeling soul and the actual soul. *Gewohnheit,* as that which is habitual or customary, is a moment of the feeling soul. The feeling soul differs from the natural soul in that there is no longer an immediate identification between individual, transient sensations and the substantiality of the soul itself; rather, a differentiation between soul and body begins to emerge. The feeling soul itself is divided into three moments. In the second moment, the soul is presented as self-feeling (*Selbstgefühl*), which is problematic because at this stage the soul can be totally overwhelmed by a particular sensation, causing it to fall into a state of madness. This immersion of the self as it is overcome by particular sentiments is resolved by the third moment, namely 'habit' (*Gewohnheit),* in which the soul is neither immersed in sensations nor entirely distinct from them, but possesses them: «when my feelings are reduced to habits, they continue to be *mine*; what they cease to be is *me*»[26]. From the initial passages dedicated to

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[25] Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 25.

[26] J. McCumber, *Hegel on Habit*, «Owl of Minerva», XXI (2), 1990, pp. 155-164, p. 158. Habit has been much discussed lately in the debate about Hegel and naturalism, as it plays a crucial role in the passage from nature to spirit. Elisa Magrì subdivides the debate about the treatment of habit into three macro-categories. A first interpretation sees habit as a process of liberation of spirit. The other two are related to the naturalist debate: the first sees habit as crucial for the development of skills and abilities that pave the way to consciousness; the second focuses on the

this topic, Hegel emphasizes how habit is a moment linked to the abstract universal:

> That the soul thus makes itself into abstract universal being, and reduces the particularity of feelings (of consciousness too) to a determination in it that just *is*, is *habit*. In this way the soul has the content *in possession*, and contains it in such a way that in such determinations it is not actually sentient, it does not stand in relationship to them by distinguishing itself from them, nor is it absorbed in them, but it has them in itself and moves in them, without sensation or consciousness. [...] This self-incorporation of the particularity or bodiliness of the determinations of feeling into the *being* of the soul appears as a *repetition* of them, and the pro duction of habit appears as *practice*. For, since this being is, in relation to the natural-particular material that is put into this form, abstract universality, it is universality of reflexion (§175): one and the same item, as an external plurality of sensation, is reduced to its unity, and this abstract unity is *posited*[27].

In this sense, for Hegel, habit is a mechanism, something lifeless that repeats itself and it is, therefore, not active or dynamic. With habit firmly established, we always know where we are going, much like a machine, as there can be no changes brought about by the specific movements of individual sensations and corporeality. Instead, these are subsumed and silenced within a merely abstract universal. On the one hand, Hegel acknowledges something positive in habit, as it ensures the soul's possession of the body and thus represents an essential movement for the becoming of Spirit[28]. On the other hand,

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problem of the development of reason in concrete experience (see E. Magrì, *Zweite Natur und Sittlichkeit: Über Hegels Auffassung von Inhabitanz*, in *Objektiver und absoluter Geist nach Hegel: Kunst, Religion und Philosophie innerhalb und außerhalb von Gesellschaft und Geschichte*, ed. by T. Oehl and A. Kok, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 213-232, pp. 213-214).

[27] Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 131.

[28] Cf.: «(H)abit is the most essential feature of the *existence* of all mental life in the individual subject, enabling the subject to be *concrete* immediacy [*concrete Unmittelbarkeit*], to be *soulful* ideality [*seelische Idealität*], enabling the content [...] to

Hegel cannot help but observe that habit is something «lifeless, contingent», asserting furthermore that it is precisely «the habit of living which brings on death»[29].

Hegel characterizes habit as a second nature, using the same term that is also present in Ethical Life. The author used it to emphasize the dual character of habit, which is both natural (i.e., immediate) and spiritual (i.e., mediated, the product of reflection). The term 'nature' is used to indicate how habit is something that is instituted not through reflective decisions, but in an immediate and direct way: habit has become part of our being, our nature. In this sense, «habit allows individuals to navigate from the most basic to the most complex activities unreflectively, trustingly, and even with dexterity»[30]. The term 'second' reminds us that, in habits, the process of mediation results in an immediacy different from a

belong to it as _this self_, as _this_ soul [...] in its very being [_in seinem Seyn_]» (ivi, p. 133). Magrì mainly emphasizes this positive aspect of habit, which has in common with memory the task of allowing an extension of the individual's autonomy and freedom (see E. Magrì, _L'auto-riferimento del corpo vivo. Sull'abitudine in Hegel e Merleau-Ponty_, in _Hegel e la fenomenologia trascendentale_, ed. by D. Manca, E. Magrì and A. Ferrarin, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2015, pp. 81-100, p. 90). For Magrì, the problem of Spirit's death is not particularly relevant in Hegel's account, since «neither habit nor memory can replace conscious agency and choice. [...] Hence, the explorations of habit and memory lead to the appraisal of thought for the realisation of a specific sort of freedom, i.e., the freedom of thought _as such_, which is subjected to the manifold of experience as well as to physical constraints» (Ead., _The Place of Habit in Hegel's Psychology_, in _Hegel's Philosophical Psychology_, ed. by S. Herrmann-Sinai and L. Ziglioli, London, Routledge, 2016, pp. 74-90, p. 76).

[29] Hegel, _Philosophy of Mind_, p. 133. Cf. S. Lumsden, _Second Nature and Historical Change in Hegel's Philosophy of History_, «International Journal of Philosophical Studies», XXIV (1), 2016, pp. 74-94, p. 86: «Once a habit is forged it wants to repeat itself regardless of the circumstances. Habit in this sense can be a blind application of the universal that does not respond to particularities, which means it can be disconnected from or inappropriate to the world in which it seeks to express itself. Despite being a product of spirit, habits are not lived as spirit, they are lived as nature».

[30] R. Zambrana, _Bad Habits: Habit, Idleness, and Race in Hegel_, «Hegel Bulletin», XLII (1), 2021, pp.1-18, p. 5.

merely natural one, since it is reached through a spiritual process. This means that when we act in accordance with habits, even though we perform actions in an unreflective and immediate way, these actions differ from natural immediacy because they have been formed through a spiritual process of mediation that consists in a modification of the body by the soul[31].

As seen earlier, for Hegel, in the political world of Ethical Life, it is essential to have this second nature typical of habit in the anthropological field, which is translated into social custom in the political realm [32] . But it is also fundamental that the self-

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[31] An elaboration of the body begins with the creation of habits, so as to make it a mirror of the soul. But different authors underline how this should not lead us to believe that the soul simply dominates the body. Rather, there is a reciprocal exchange between these two components: if the body needs to be shaped by the soul, at the same time the soul can never be actual until it is embodied. Julia Peters emphasizes this reciprocity between body and soul in the moment of habit: «Am Phänomen der Gewohnheit zeigt sich also für Hegel, wie sich Geist und Körper grundsätzlich zueinander verhalten: Es zeigt sich, dass Geist wesentlich verkörpert ist und dass dieser unser Körper, den wir haben, wesentlich 'vergeistigt' ist – dass Geist und Körper wesentlich eins sind, ohne dass dies reduktionistisch zu verstehen wäre» (J. Peters, *Hegels Begriff der Gewohnheit: Zwischen Philosophie des Geistes und Ästhetik*, «Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie», LXVI (3), 2018, pp. 325-338, p. 326). Perfect correspondence between interiority and exteriority will follow, achieved through a speculative union whereby body and soul are reflected in each other in a mutual exchange. Precisely for this reason, Catherine Malabou argues that habit represents an example of dialectical syllogism: «a synthesis of the universality of the concept and the particularity of judgement, producing as its result a singularity which is no longer merely immediate but actual». This parallel with the dialectical syllogism is made possible by the fact that in habits, the «soul has become the place for the creation of a structure joining particularity [...] and universality» (C. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, London, Routledge, 2005, p. 37).

[32] Pierpaolo Cesaroni argues that custom is a political completion of the Hegelian habit, since the habit itself, in order to be acquired, cannot be just *mine* but must be shared with other people belonging to my spiritual community. See P.

consciousness of the individual always remains alive and vigilant. When this second element is lacking, one moves towards what Hegel has defined as the ossification of Spirit, meaning the loss of the vital and dynamic character that makes Ethical Life a concrete universal and not merely an abstract one. This brings us to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, where Hegel lucidly analyses the consequences of the final attainment of a mere identity between subject and institutions: «spirit, when it has achieved itself and has what it wants, no longer needs its activity»[33]. Moreover, Hegel emphasizes that «I have an interest in something only insofar as it is still concealed from me or insofar as it is my purpose [*Zweck*] but is not yet fulfilled [*noch nicht erfüllt*]»[34]. In this sense, the concrete universal ceases to be such in a political sense when the resistance and change posed by continuous attention to the individual are lost. When the individual and the universal simply coincide without that mediating character between them, the latter falls back into mere formalism, suppressing individualities. With habit or custom, the essential movement and dynamism necessary for the survival of an Ethical Life are lost. Thus, Hegel asserts, nothing else but the natural death of the community can occur:

> Habit is an activity with nothing to oppose it; it retains only the formal property of temporal continuity, and the depth and richness of its ends need no longer be expressed. It is, so to speak, a superficial and sensuous kind of existence whose profounder significance has been forgotten. Thus both individuals and nations die a natural death [*so sterben Individuen, so sterben Völker eines natürlichen Todes*]. And even if the latter live on, their existence is devoid of life and

Cesaroni, *Hegel: Habit, Custom, and Government*, «Conceptos Históricos», VI (9), 2020, pp. 86-109, pp. 97-98, and in particular fn 26, where the author states that «(t)he Hegelian concept of habit is therefore completed in the political concept of custom» (ivi, p. 97).

[33] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Volume I: Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822-1823*, trans. by R.F. Brown and P.C. Hodgson, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2011, p. 160.

[34] *Ibidem*.

interest [*eine interessenlose, unlebendige Existenz*], because
the needs which created them have been satisfied, and
nothing remains but political stagnation and boredom [*eine
politische Nullität und Langeweile*][35].

This brings us to the next section of the paper, where we will
reflect on how it is possible to ensure the continual presence of the
particular, so that Ethical Life stays alive and dynamic, maintaining
its status as a concrete universal. Specifically, the analysis will focus
on the character of Antigone as treated by Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Indeed, Antigone is an ideal example of how individuals can resist and undermine a universal that claims to subsume every
difference and particularity within itself.

4. *Antigone as a Character of Particularity*

The character of Antigone is presented in the section of The *true*
Spirit. The Ethical Order, which is the first moment of the sixth section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, entitled Spirit. As Hegel emphasizes from the very beginning of that section, the element of analysis
will be the contradiction generated by the splitting of the unique ethical substance into two laws, whose clash and whose impossibility of
resolution will lead to the collapse of the ethical moment. For Hegel,
this is embodied by the Greek *polis*. Hegel shows how these two laws
represent two modes, strongly antithetical to each other, in which the
ethical Spirit finds its manifestation: divine laws, on the one hand, and
human laws, on the other. The contrast between the two laws is not
simply a conflict between justice and tyranny but is precisely a contrast between two spheres of justice that have their own ethical justification. As Alberto L. Siani points out:

> Zumindest in Hegels Interpretation stellt die *Antigone* jedoch keineswegs einen Konflikt zwischen ewiger Gerechtigkeit und tyrannischer Staatsmacht dar. [...] In der *Antigone*
> findet die Opposition zwischen zwei Rechten statt, die beide

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[35] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction*, trans.
by H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 59.

einer höheren Gerechtigkeit untergeordnet sind. Diese höhere Gerechtigkeit fordert, dass beide Seiten eben als Seiten anerkannt werden, und nicht jeweils als sittliches Ganzes. Der tragische Konflikt ist somit das Zustandekommen der sittlichen Gerechtigkeit[36].

Hegel asserts from the outset of this section that the ethical essence «condenses itself instead into the twofoldness of a law of singular individuality and a law of universality»[37], which confront each other in an antithetical and exclusive manner. On one side, we find Antigone, representing «the *simple* and *immediate essence* of ethical life»[38]. Her law is the divine law, linked to the family sphere, as it represents that place in the natural ethical community where forms of relationship are still marked by immediacy. Thus, individual members are bound by their relationship with the unmediated substance that is the family. Human law, represented by Creon, signifies that effective community capable of wrenching the individual from the immediacy of family needs, bringing it to a universal and communitarian awareness of ethical values. In divine law, the sense of the individual (of the individual family unity) is valid, while in human law, the universal sense of the community prevails. Therefore, the former is characterized by an inner feeling, still in-itself, linked to the natural destiny of the female sex. On the contrary, the male element is destined for human laws, as it can achieve effective and universal ethicality, being «the form of *actuality conscious of itself*»[39]. Stefania Achella brilliantly points out how the two laws, as

[36] A.L. Siani, *'Unvollkommene Gerechtigkeit': Hegel, Antigone und die Menschenrechte*, in *Objektiver und absoluter Geist nach Hegel*, ed. by T. Oehl and A. Kok, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 191-212, pp. 192-193.

[37] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by T. Pinkard, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 257.

[38] Ivi, p. 258.

[39] Ivi, p. 257. Cf. C.J. Correia, *Mitos e Narrativas. Essaios Sobre A Experiência Do Mal*, Lisbon, Centro de Filosofia da Universidade de Lisboa, 2003, p. 79: «Na sua reflexão sobre a *feminidade* e a *condição viril*, no primeiro texto referido da

laws of the family and of the state, respectively, contrast in the different recognition of the particular and the universal, a tension that comes to light in the different relationship of these two moments to an individual's death:

> The form in which this contradiction takes shape in the tragedy, through the clash between Creon and Antigone, translates into the contrast between *the law of the day*, that of the *polis*, and the law of the family, *the law of the night*. In the background, the contrast between masculine and feminine. According to Hegel, this distinction of competences is also exemplified by the different 'elaboration' of death. It is no coincidence, on a side note, that death is the undisputed protagonist of Sophocles' tragedy. Within the political community the individual dies, must die, to generate the immortal universality of the community; therefore, the individual is not recognized as this individual. Within the family, instead, death allows individuals to rediscover their own individuality through the funeral ritual organized by their relatives[40].

We can thus grasp how Antigone and Creon represent, respectively, the value of the particular and that of the still-formal universal, clashing with each other and failing to reach a mediation. The result of this failed mediation, as already hinted, can only be the end of the Greek ethical world and the transition to a higher spiritual level. What we would like to focus on is a reflection on the figure of Antigone, who, by bringing to light the right of the particular against the universal, challenges the latter. Indeed, in its apparent victory over the particular, the universal, as Hegel argues, actually loses its own truth. Creon's universal loses precisely because it is incapable of recognizing the validity of Antigone's individuality, which represents its

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Fenomenologia do Espírito, o feminino (*das Weiblich*) representa a conjugação dialéctica entra a autenticidade espontânea e a inditmidade absorvente. O masculino, pelo contrário, distraído com a imagem do seu poder, transforma a espontaneidade em exercício de poder, apresentando motivações supostamente desinteressadas (a cidadania, o interesse público, o bem comun) para os seus actos».

[40] S. Achella, *RECOGNIZING FEMALES: Hegel's Antigone-device*, «Itinerari», LX, 2021, pp. 255-270, p. 261.

own root. It is unable to become a concrete universal, remaining rigidly formal, fixed in its abstractness, forgetting the importance of mediation with the particular. In Hegel's words:

> Neither of the two alone is in and for itself. In its vital movement, human law originates from the divine law, the law in force on earth originates from the law of the netherworld, the conscious law originates from the unconscious law, mediation originates from immediacy, and all just as much return to that from whence they came. In contrast, the netherworldly power has its *actuality* on the earth, and through consciousness, it becomes existence and activity[41].

Hegel thus pays particular attention to how both the universal and the particular lose sight of the importance of their relationship with the other element, opposing each other rigidly. The connection is reciprocal, and not only does Creon not see Antigone, but Antigone herself does not see Creon[42]. In other words, the particular itself fails to recognize the value and importance of mediation

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[41] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, p. 265. Cf. C. Willet, *Hegel, Antigone, And the Possibility of Ecstatic Dialogue*, «Philosophy and Literature», XIV (2), 1990, pp. 268-283, p. 275: «Dialectic cancels all oppositions, including that between essence and accident or abstract universal and bare particular. The dialectical resolution, or mediation, of opposites presupposes a demonstration that opposites are reversible. Only then can we know that the truth of one-sided claims lies in their mediation. For example, while Creon claims the universal interests of the state, his claim immediately converts into the demands of a tyrant, who, in his particularity, lacks ethical import. Similarly, Antigone's devotion to a particular person against the common interests of the state must be shown to convert into a duty to universal law».

[42] «Creon and Antigone get it wrong, something which becomes apparent as their self-understandings of their action shift in the light of their deeds. What was understood to be fundamentally ethical – obedience to requirements grounded in a realm beyond self-consciousness (the realm of the same gods in the different forms of the Penates and the gods of the City) is revealed to be inadequately ethical, precisely because of Creon's and Antigone's unwillingness to recognise the limitations of their particular ethical stance, limitations which are not to be understood

with the universal. As mentioned earlier, the aspect of the relationship we want to focus on is the figure of Antigone and, therefore, the failure of the universal to recognize the particular[43]. In this sense, Antigone, through her act of rebellion, represents the strength of particularity. By refusing to be subsumed and nullified within an increasingly formal universal, she chooses to assert her position and value. Antigone can thus best represent what a functional Ethical Life needs in order to remain vital and dynamic, as a concrete universal. She embodies that which can disrupt an increasingly formal universal system, even leading to its destruction through her own demise. In this way, she allows for a constant struggle against the ossification of Spirit, continually placing obstacles that require consideration for a renewed modulation of the universal itself. This is clearly underlined by Simon Lumsden:

> In *Antigone*, Creon refuses to recognise the validity of the 'ethics of the family' (the laws of the underworld). He sees Antigone's attempt to uphold these laws as undermining the security of the state. In any conflict of interests, the laws of state outweigh those of the underworld. Creon cannot, therefore, grant the validity of Antigone's wish to respect the laws that govern her ethical world (the family and rights of passage). [...] Ultimately, the failure of Creon to recognise

simply as external – human limited by divine, divine by human but as internal to the stance in question» (K. Hutchings, *Antigone: Towards a Hegelian Feminist Philosophy*, «Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain», XXI (1/2), 2000, pp. 120-131, p. 128).

[43] Cf.: «Hegel seems to hold that Greek culture actually survived the clash between divine law and human law by incorporating elements of the former into the latter, *but that it thereby did not accomplish the work of spirit in an adequate way*. It did not succeed, that is, in resolving the opposition between individuality and universality that, within Greek culture, initially manifested itself merely in the form of an opposition between divine law and human law. In Hegel's view, the mode of human law that resulted from the incorporation of divine law had, at some point, to emerge as a one-sided paradigm as well» (K. de Boer, *Beyond Tragedy: Tracing the Aristophanian Subtext of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, in *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought. Beyond Antigone?*, pp. 133-151, p. 139).

the legitimacy of Antigone's position causes the destruction of exactly that which he is trying to protect through his opposition to Antigone — the state and his family. The precise moment Creon recognises that he has erred in not seeing the 'truth' in Antigone's duty to her brother and to the laws of the underworld, coincides with the recognition that sending Antigone to her death would be catastrophic for the future of his own family dynasty[44].

To better understand the position advocated here, we will refer to the feminist debate that revolves around the figure of Antigone, specifically analyzing the views of those authors who argue for the revolutionary character of this tragic character[45]. Victoria I. Burke,

[44] S. Lumsden, *Tragedy and Understanding in Hegel's Dialectic*, «Idealistic Studies», XXXI (2-3), 2001, pp. 125-134, p. 129. Andreja Novakovic underlines how it is essential to guarantee an abstraction from our immediate habit correlated to a specific kind of law, in order to have a political pluralism: «What Hegel has in mind is that single-mindedness prevents such an agent from performing the act of abstraction, namely, from stepping back from one law and evaluating his or her action from the perspective of the other. Antigone was exclusively a sister and thus unable even to entertain Creon's point of view, and Creon was in turn unequipped to take Antigone's standpoint into consideration. This incapacity accounts for their subsequent failure to see that the other's action accords with norms that are equally essential to the social order they share. While this ability to abstract may not have been sufficient for resolving this particular conflict, Hegel suggests that it is revealed to be a necessary condition for sustaining a common social world in the face of ethical conflicts that will inevitably erupt in a society that exhibits even a minimal degree of pluralism, as beautiful ethical life clearly does» (A. Novakovic, *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 131-132).

[45] The feminist debate can be divided between those who see Antigone as defeated by the Hegelian dialectic, and others who value its revolutionary character. In the words of Kimberly Hutchings and Tuija Pulkkinen: «Hegel's treatment of Antigone has provided sometimes a vehicle and sometimes a reference point for debate over the ethical and political implications of different modes of feminist thought. Does Antigone demonstrate the fallacy of masculinist philosophy's exclusion of women from history and the public sphere? Does she represent a heroic 'other' to masculinist political community and, therefore, the antithesis between feminist

criticizing Luce Irigaray's reading, points out how the author has missed an essential point in the Hegelian consideration of the character of Antigone. In fact, the author states, Antigone manages to find herself – unlike the other family relationships between the sexes – in a free and independent relationship with her brother. In this sense, Antigone and Polynices demonstrate the possibility of a bond of sexual difference based on reciprocity and equality, and this precisely because in such a relationship there is freedom from sexual and reproductive desire. The absence of such desire, in fact, makes it possible to break free from a dialectical dimension of domination of the male sex over the female, and so of the universal over the particular. Indeed, for Burke, it is crucial to emphasize how Antigone's movement as a particular, through the act of burying her brother, represents what awakens the mere formal universal, enabling the progression and speculative advancement of Spirit:

> In the progress of the *Phänomenologie* Antigone's burial ritual and the wrath it provokes in Creon destroy the Greek ethical order, opening the way for the formation of modern political institutions. But the Hegelian process of sublation is a *preservation* as well as an operation of cancellation. The *Aufhebung* (sublation) both elevates and cancels; it elevates the opposition between divine and human laws into a new dimension. Antigone's burial ritual initiates the process of overcoming the dichotomy between the divine and human spheres as separate opposed spheres, but it also establishes the enduring nature of the mutual dependence of the two polarities. Immediate unconscious norms and the reflective publicly endorsable

political aspirations and the masculinist state? Or is she the site of a crisis of representation that troubles any feminist aspiration to a purer politics?» (K. Hutchings and T. Pulkkinen, *Introduction: Reading Hegel*, in *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought. Beyond Antigone?*, pp. 1-15, p. 6). In the first group, which will not be analyzed here, we can find S. Benhabib, *On Hegel, Women and Irony*, in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by P. Jagentowicz Mills, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, pp. 25-44; and L. Irigaray, *The Eternal Irony of the Community*, in *Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel*, pp. 45-58, as its foremost proponents.

norms are dependent and mutually reinforcing, even in modernity[46].

Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, like Burke, emphasizes how the relationship between brother and sister is one of equality and reciprocity. Mills, however, develops her defense of Antigone in a different way than the previous author. For her, in fact, it is essential that the relationship between brother and sister is also broken. This happens when the brother, as a male, enters the universality of community life, and the sister, as a woman, remains in the family context, but as a wife and in another family. The particularity of Antigone, according to the author, lies precisely in the fact that she enters into the life of the *polis*, a place that was not intended for women, the particular, but for men, the universal. In this sense, she perfectly embodies the conflict within the Greek *polis* between the particular and the universal, bringing to light the problematic nature of a universal becoming too formal, forgetting the importance and value of the particular:

> Woman has no contradiction to negate between herself and 'first nature' – she lacks negativity because she remains confined within the sphere of 'mere animal life' and thus remains 'unreal insubstantial shadow'. But Antigone moves beyond the limits Hegel tries to impose on her when she moves into the political sphere on behalf of the sphere of the family and becomes, like man, a participant in both spheres. She does not represent the principle of particularity which changes the community through intrigue, but openly insists on the rights of the family, the rights of 'first nature,' within the *polis*. Unlike other women, it becomes possible for Antigone, subordinating herself to the universal, to know herself as *this* particular self and thus to epitomize the tragic conflict between particular and universal which Hegel claims characterizes the ancient Greek, pagan world[47].

[46] V.I. Burke, *The Substance of Ethical Recognition: Hegel's Antigone and the Irreplaceability of the Brother*, «New German Critique», XL (118), 2013, pp. 1-27, p. 10.

[47] P.J. Mills, *Hegel's Antigone*, «The Owl of Minerva», XVII (2), 1986, pp. 131-152, p. 146.

5. *Conclusion: Antigone and Feminism*

The example of Antigone can show us how to avoid the ossification of Ethical Life, which, through habit, risks falling into the mechanism of the formal universal, leading to its spiritual death. Antigone, the eternal irony of the community, can indeed show us how the particular should not be forgotten in the movement of the concrete universal. Specifically, we can read her character as a representative of the female world in a patriarchal system. In this way, she becomes the key to rebellion against patriarchal rules, which have become highly abstract and formal, suppressing the voices of women. Thus, we can use this interpretation to critique Hegel himself and the gender division within his political philosophy. Indeed, the model of Ethical Life presented by Hegel is a model in which, as women, we can no longer recognize ourselves, as it imposes a clear patriarchal differentiation of gender roles. On one side, the feminine is relegated to the passive realm of the family; on the other, men are able to enter public life:

> Man therefore has his actual substantial life in the state, in learning [*Wissenschaft*], etc., and otherwise in work and struggle with the external world and with himself [...]. Woman, however, has her substantial vocation [*Bestimmung*] in the family, and her ethical disposition consists in this [family] *piety*[48].

As Erzsébet Rózsa points out, it is Hegel himself who gives us the tools to think about the unease that arises in the tension between private and public life, and thus between the role of women and the role of men:

> Die spätere Entwicklung der Emanzipation der Frau und deren Folgen für Strukturen des Privatlebens konnte er (*Hegel, SL*) natürlich nicht vorhersehen. Allerdings hat er am Beispiel des Mannes einige typische Phänomene von Spannungen im modernen Privatleben aufgezeigt, die sich im 20. Jahrhundert dann auch auf die soziale Rolle der Frau ausgedehnt haben. Er hat Spannungen innerhalb des Privatlebens bzw. Kollisionen zwischen der Privatsphäre und der beruflichen Sphäre, der 'Privat-person' und der 'substantiellen Person' angesprochen,

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[48] Hegel, *Elements*, p. 206.

die für die Identität und die Integrität unserer Persönlichkeit bis heute von großer Bedeutung sind. Der Kontrast zwischen dem 'Recht der Individuen an ihrer Besonderheit' und dem Recht von Gemeinschaften wie Ehe, Familie oder Partnerbeziehungen repräsentiert eine Konfliktsituation, mit der sich jeder auseinandersetzten muss[49].

Modern and contemporary women can no longer recognize themselves in such a worldview since feminism, in all its forms, has demanded the dismantling of this strongly male-centric and patriarchal imposition. If we were to remain anchored in Hegel's ethical world, it would end up losing its dynamism and activity, as patriarchy would suppress the voices of women demanding entry into public life and the dismantling of patriarchal values. To maintain the ethical world as a concrete universal, and thus to remain faithful to Hegel, we must transcend Hegel himself by proposing new forms of *Sittlichkeit* that involve a renewal of the roles of men and women. In this sense, it is precisely through the particularity of the feminine that we can break the formal universal of patriarchy, finding forms of Ethical Life that correspond to the concrete universal and thus demanding new forms of rationality in institutions where individuality, especially amongst women, can be reflected. In this regard, «woman has manifested herself for the first time by interrupting the monologue of patriarchal civilization»[50], hindering its process that has become too formal and detached from the reality and rationality of feminine particularity. To conclude with Hegel's own words:

> While the polity gives itself stable existence only by disrupting familial happiness and by dissolving self-consciousness in the universal, it creates an internal enemy for itself in what it suppresses, which is at the same time essential to it, or it creates an enemy in the feminine itself[51].

[49] 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*, ed. by S. Achella *et al*., Berlin-Boston, Walter de Gruyter, 2022, pp. 255-272, p. 270.

[50] C. Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*, Milan, Et al., 2010, p. 8 (my translation).

[51] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, p. 275.