



HAL
open science

Sentimental beings: subjects, nature, and society in romantic philosophy

Giulia Valpione

► **To cite this version:**

Giulia Valpione. Sentimental beings: subjects, nature, and society in romantic philosophy. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 2023, 31 (1), pp.79-102. 10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127 . hal-04162340

HAL Id: hal-04162340

<https://hal.science/hal-04162340>

Submitted on 14 Jul 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Public Domain

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

Giulia Valpione^{a*}

^a *Dipartimento di Lettere e filosofia, Università di Trento, Trento, Italy*

*Correspondence: giuliavalpione@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6969-7991>

Sentimental beings. Subjects, nature and society in Romantic philosophy.

This article examines the role played by ‘feeling’ (*Gefühl*) and ‘love’ within the philosophy of German Romanticism. After an introduction (I) to the actual debate on German Romanticism, paragraph 2 sketches an analysis of the concept of ‘*Gefühl*’ at the end of the 18th century and highlights the differences with its actual meaning. The successive three sections are dedicated to three pivotal figures of German Romanticism: F. Schlegel (III), Novalis (IV) and Baader (V). Similarities and differences between these authors will be emphasised. It will be demonstrated that they deny the reason-feeling opposition, and that ‘feeling’ and ‘love’ are at the heart of their ontology, epistemology and conception of subjectivity, conditioning the Romantic human-nature relationship and Romantic political philosophy. In the concluding remarks (VI), this paper explains how German Romanticism can still help to better understand the role of feelings in politics.

Keywords: political philosophy; German romanticism; feeling; love; subjectivity

I. Introduction¹

This article aims to fill a particularly evident gap in research, namely, the absence of analysis of the role of feelings in the political philosophy² of German Romanticism.

¹ I would like to thank the reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and for their suggestions and remarks.

² It should be noted that in this article, the expression ‘political philosophy’ will be meant in the brighter sense F. Schlegel also gave it, hence including the philosophy of history, the reflections on society (KA 12, 84), and the relationship between the individual and the community (KA 7, 15). Even if it could be stated that this conception neatly corresponds with what it is understood now as ‘political philosophy’ and that it is sometimes more similar to other disciplines such as ‘social philosophy’, I consider that ‘political

This lack is surprising for three main reasons:

(1) The insufficient attention paid today to the political philosophy of Romanticism—despite a revival (especially in the Anglo-Saxon world) of interest in this phase of European thought (Millán-Bruce, “El revival”)—is surprising. Without a doubt, this philosophical movement was the object of intense debates and interpretations in the 19th and early decades of the 20th century, and it seemed there was no need for further exploration because of the depreciative nature of those analyses. Indeed, German Romanticism has been almost immediately stigmatised as individualism, centred on a subject completely enclosed in its own inner world, subjugated to erratic desires, and therefore incapable of taking a stable political position: from Hegel to Carl Schmitt (Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*),³ this interpretation of Romantic philosophy stood as an obstacle that compromised any analysis of Baader’s, F. Schlegel’s and Novalis’ works from a philosophical-political point of view.⁴ Another group of interpretations contributed further to the common disregard of political romantic philosophy, which read German Romanticism as the cradle of fascist ideology.⁵ In the last 30 years, there have certainly been studies

philosophy’ is still the expression to be used in case of German Romanticism, because of historical-conceptual coherence.

³ Other interpreters have already demonstrated that Schmitt’s criticism against Romanticism is in fact an indirect criticism against the liberal politicians and theorists of his time. See: Galli, *Lo sguardo di Giano*, Pauly, “Carl Schmitts Kritik”.

⁴ See also: Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism* and Groh, *Die Gesellschaftskritik der Politischen Romantik*.

⁵ See: Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*; Droz, *Le romantisme politique*; Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*; Calvié, “Le début du siècle nouveau”. This interpretation is particularly strong in Baader’s case: Cesa, *La filosofia della società*. Indeed, Baader was studied by

attempting to highlight political positions in the *Romantik* that are far from the reactionary and fascist culture. Beiser's focus on Romanticism as an alternative to liberalism and conservatism (Beiser, *Enlightenment*) and the actual rediscovery of women's voices within Romanticism (to identify proto-feminist positions, e.g. Gjesdal and Nassar, *Oxford Handbook* - Gjesdal and Nassar, *Women Philosophers* - Valpione, "Philosophy and Its Institutions") go along with the extensive perspective of Löwy and Sayre (*Révolte et mélancolie*) on Romanticism seen as a political position that attempts to criticise capitalism,⁶ and with narrower studies focused on a more specific topic, i.e. the philosophy of history (Nivala, *The Romantic Idea* - Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie*). However, a more elaborate study is still to be conducted.

(2) The scarce attention paid to the concept of *Gefühl* ('emotion' or 'feeling') by the interpreters of German Romanticism is also surprising. Indeed, attention has generally been paid by historians of philosophy to other intellectual faculties: mainly to the (aesthetic or intellectual) intuition (Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender* - Beiser, *German Idealism* - Nassar, *Romantic Absolute*), but also to the imagination (Gentry and Pollok, *The Imagination*). As a consequence to that, the German Romantic concepts of feeling and of emotion have not yet been studied from a philosophical-political point of view.

This absence might suggest that feelings played no particular role within German Romanticism; however, such a judgement is erroneous. It is enough to browse

economists linked to the Austrian nationalist milieu in the 1920s, such as Johannes Sauter (*Die Grundlegung* and *Franz von Baaders*). It is to notice that, at the same time, Baader anticipated some ideas developed later by reformist and communist thinkers such as Lorenz von Stein and Friedrich Engels (Stammen, *Franz von Baader*, 616).

⁶ On Sayre's and Löwy's interpretation: Valpione, *Oltre la rivolta*.

through the analytical indexes in the critical editions of Schlegel's (*Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, hereafter 'KA'), Novalis' (*Schriften*, hereafter 'HKA') and Baader's works (*Samtliche Werke*, hereafter 'BSW') to notice the vast recurrence of the words *Gefühl* and *Liebe* (in the case of Novalis, even more numerous than the word '*Anschaung*', for instance, which nonetheless usually receive considerable attention from the interpreters).

A couple of exceptions still do not fulfil this gap. The first and most important one is Manfred Frank, who often refers to 'feeling' in Novalis' works. Nonetheless, he links this concept to the intellectual intuition, thus reducing 'feeling' to 'feeling the self' (Frank, *Selbstgefühl* and Frank, "*Unendliche Annäherung*").⁷ The second one is Kluckhohn (*Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik*), who equates 'feeling' to the 'internal sense' (p. 44). Both authors miss the complexity and multiplicity of meanings of the word '*Gefühl*' in the Romantic age, and how radically 'feeling' influences the Romantic conception of subjectivity in relation to nature, history or society.

(3) Finally, it is surprising that historians of political and social philosophy have not yet focused on the concept of *Gefühl* in Romanticism even under the impetus of the 'affective turn' (Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*; Hoggett and Thompson, *Politics and the Emotions*) of the early 2000s. These studies on affectivity on the one hand emphasised those traditions of thought that were mostly focused on emotions and on the other, analysed the role played by emotions in politics: how emotions enflame the struggles for emancipation (Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*), how they influence the political vote—opening up to studies (especially after Trump's election

⁷ A similar remark can be formulated also on Reid (*Novalis' philosophical fictions*), who nevertheless gives a (remarkable) interpretation of Novalis' *Hymns to the Night*.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

and after the Brexit referendum) that consider the voting citizen not as a purely rational subject but as moved by more or less fluctuating emotions (Tchalova and MacDonald, *The Interpersonal* - Fletcher and Hove, *Revising Emotions*)—and how they interact with international politics (Crawford, *Institutionalizing Passion*).

Even if they do not take Romanticism in consideration for a political-philosophical analysis of emotions and feelings, the contributions of sociologists, philosophers, and political scientists within the ‘affective turn’ highlighted two aspects that will return in this article: first, the terminological differences, that changed over time between ‘emotions’ and ‘feelings’; and second, they established the end of the opposition between reason and emotion (or feeling), a contraposition on which, however, much of modern thought has been based. In antiquity and Renaissance, political writings were largely devoted to the feelings, because the ruler had to first and foremost govern his own and others’ passions (Foucault, *Le gouvernement*; James, *Passion and Action*); on the contrary, in modernity, politics was first and foremost the necessary rational construction of an order that must be imposed at the expense of the emotional part of human beings; even further, following modern political philosophy, it is precisely against their emotional and passionate nature that politics exists (Hamilton, *Federalist*, No. 15).

Certainly, one of the reasons for the absence of a study on feeling in Romanticism is the difficult correspondence between concepts that we use today and those used by German Romanticism—shifts and differences that require historical-conceptual awareness. To this, it is to add the distance between different languages that sometimes makes a veritable translation impossible. This will be the focus of the next section of this article (II), in which I will present a brief mapping of the meanings

associated with *Gefühl* and *Liebe* in late 18th-century Germany. Thereafter, I will describe the different implications of the importance given to these two concepts in German Romanticism.

This article will focus in particular on three representatives of Romanticism in Germany: (III) Friedrich Schlegel, considered as the founder of the *Romantik*; (IV) Novalis, pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg, who worked together with Schlegel for the journal *Athenäum* (the main publication of Jena Early Romanticism); and (V) Franz von Baader, lesser known today than the other two, despite the fact that he radically influenced them (HKA 2, 529-30 - KA 2, 266, no. 97 - Grassl, *Aufbruch der Romantik*, 387–392) and despite his great political importance in his time (de Pascale, *Tra rivoluzione e restaurazione* - Grassl, *Einleitung*). These authors have been chosen not only for their indisputable pivotal role in German Romantic philosophy,⁸ but also for their original and consistent conceptions of *Gefühl*, as we will see in the next pages.

II. *Gefühl*, the senses, and self-consciousness

The German word '*Gefühl*', currently translated into English as 'feeling' or 'emotion', has a recent origin. In Wolfgang Schönleider's *Promptuarium germanico-latinum* (1616), the lemma *Gefühl* is absent, but the verb (*fühlen*) is listed with the meaning 'to perceive' (*empfinden*), while in Matthias Krämer's *Teutsch-Italiänische Wörterbuch* (1678), the term *Gefühl* is translated as '*tatto*' (the Italian word for 'touch'). The proximity to the sense of touch remains constant throughout the 18th century, during which '*Gefühl*' also began to indicate the subject's reactions of *Lust* or *Unlust* (as in

⁸ It is to notice that under the category of 'Romanticism' I do not include philosophers of Idealism (as is the case of Dupré, *The Quest of the Absolute*).

Kant's *Critique of Judgement*) on the occasion of a perception that implies an (even immediate) evaluative consideration by the subject (Meyer, "Gefühl ist alles!", 296).⁹ 'Gefühl' at the end of the 18th century indicated not only the passive perception of a quality but also a particular active involvement of the subject (Meyer, "Gefühl ist alles!", 293).

This introduction is sufficient to point out the richness of its meaning and the difference with its current use, even in the German language, and the difficulty of its translation (Dubost, "Gefühl, Empfindung", 476). This initial presentation is useful to start the analysis of this concept within the philosophers of German Romanticism, who elaborate the concept perfectly in line with the transformations taking place in those years. In this article, I have decided to translate 'Gefühl' with 'feeling' in an attempt to render the richness and ambiguity of the original German word also in English.

Herder, in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Human History* (1784-1791), refers *Gefühl* to the senses (*Werke* 6, 138), and in *Plastic* he speaks of "*tastende Gefühl*", thus understanding it as 'touch' (*Werke* 4, 247)¹⁰; this is the same meaning given to it by Franz von Baader, especially during his early stay in England between 1786 and 1793, during which he read Hobbes, Wollstonecraft, Godwin and indeed Herder. In his diaries written in those years, every sense is a sort of 'Gefühl' (BSW 11, 315). Senses are various kinds of feeling, that is, different ways with which the consciousness relates to the affected part of the body (BSW 11, 365). In other words, 'feeling' is the subject's

⁹ Thus, there is a similarity between 'Gefühl' and the meaning Antonio Damasio gives to the word 'feeling', as it is defined in "A Second Chance for Emotion" (15): "the term feeling should be reserved for the private, mental *experience* of an emotion." Emphasis added.

¹⁰ See also *Werke* 6, 137 and his *Zum Sinn des Gefühls* (*Werke* 4, 233-242).

perception of a reaction of a part of his or her body (skin, eyes, etc., BSW 11, 291). This implies a subjective dimension, but feeling is nevertheless a cognitive faculty, a way for the knowing subject to encounter its surroundings. Baader explicitly criticises those who divide feeling and reason, like Rousseau according to the German philosopher (BSW 11, 434).

The second meaning given by Baader to ‘*Gefühl*’ refers to the ‘feeling the self’, feeling one’s own body. In a short text on physiology (*Contributions to Elementary Physiology*, 1797), in a passage where he stresses the Kantian difference between internal intuition and apperception, Baader writes: “the human being feels (*fühlt*) him- or herself in those unavoidable (partly involuntary and partly voluntary) basic operations proper to every living being” (BSW 3, 214). In the same work, *Gefühl* is the perception by the I of itself, sometimes of a numbness due to the absence of a ‘You’, of an object to be opposed to (BSW 3, 228).

Feeling, as a fundamental element of consciousness, is central in Novalis’ philosophy, as well. Of great importance in his early elaboration of the concept of *Gefühl* was Fichte, as evidenced in particular by the collection of fragments entitled *Fichte Studies* (1795-96). In it, Novalis took note of his reflections on Fichte’s *Foundation of the Doctrine of Science*, which is divided into two parts: the *Foundation of Theoretical Knowledge* and the *Foundation of Practical Knowledge*. Indeed, one of the central concepts of the latter part (particularly from the *Fourth* to the *Eighth Theorem*) is ‘feeling’, which indicates a state of the subject generated by the encounter of the self-positing and infinite activity of the I with what hinders it, i.e. with its *Nicht-Können* (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, 419). In the same transcendental approach, for Novalis ‘feeling’ is that through which consciousness

arises; together with reflection, feeling constitutes the original act of self-positing by the I (HKA 2, 119-120, no. 22).

For Novalis too, ‘feeling’ is related to the senses. Likewise to Baader, feeling is both internal and external sense. After the *Fichte Studies*, Fichte’s influence on Novalis diminishes and in the *Werner Studies* (1798-99) the conceptual proximity between *Gefühl* and sensibility increases. Here the eye (which in Novalis’ words is but a particular sense, HKA 3, 458, no. 1011) is described as a feeling (HKA 3, 156). In the same years, as internal sense (HKA 2, 167, no. 212), feeling is also the perception that a human can have of his or her own health (HKA 3, 686, no. 672).

‘Feeling’ is also central in Friedrich Schlegel’s philosophy, who, in his lectures on transcendental philosophy given in Jena in 1800, describes human being as the combination of knowing, wanting, feeling (*fühlen*) and effort (*Bestreben*, KA 12, 7). Four years later, in his Cologne lectures, he asserts that the source of consciousness rests on the faculty of feeling and desire (KA 12, 141). Here again, feeling has two directions, namely: inwards, which is the immediate perception of the interiority of consciousness, and outwards, which is the immediate perception of another I (KA 12, 355).

In all these authors, ‘feeling’ does not concern mere affectivity, intended as someone’s affection for someone (or something) else. As it will be shown in the next pages, *Gefühl* goes beyond the realm of self-consciousness: indeed, it plays a crucial role in Romantic philosophy, stressing the priority of relations over identity. In all three authors analysed, this involves a relational ontology (Novalis), a relational conception of the Self (Schlegel) and the idea that individuals belong to a common being that, as a magnetic field, determines them (Baader). But while for Novalis, Schlegel and Baader’s

early works ‘love’ and ‘feeling’ describe an immanent dimension, in Baader’s later texts, ‘love’ inserts a transcendental dimension.

Another common element to all three authors is the centrality of feeling in their epistemologies. In the next three paragraphs, it will be shown that they all refuse the idea of knowledge as the result of the imposition of the subject’s categories over a passive object and reject mechanistic and atomistic natural (and political) science in favour of a dynamic one. This position also leads to an original conception of the relationship between human beings and nature that shall overcome the human dominion on nature.

Moreover, the refusal (sustained by all three) of the opposition between reason and feeling leads to a redefinition of the first one, which is neither autonomous (Novalis and Schlegel) nor strictly individual (Baader). In Schlegel and Novalis, this has consequence also in their idea of freedom; in Baader’s later works, this is connected to his later conservative political philosophy.

Finally, the importance of feeling in these Romantic philosophers determines their philosophy of history: Novalis (III) stresses that the loving harmony among beings is at the centre of a utopian scenario, whereas Schlegel (§4) and Baader (§5) stress the importance of the connection between the present and the past.

III. Love and Novalis’ relational ontology

Novalis refers to feeling as the root of an intimate convergence between the I and nature. For him, in fact, feeling still relates to the senses, but it is both a heavenly sense (*Sinn*) and the most natural of all senses (because it is constitutive of the I, HKA 1, 96). Yet, it is the sense that was most attacked by philosophers that wanted to reduce nature to a mechanism, like a clock or a mill, of which the human being should be the chief:

“[that philosophy] positioned the human being at the top of the natural order and turned the infinite creative music of the universe into the monotonous clatter of an enormous mill, without any master builder or miller, and actually a true perpetual motion machine, a self-milling mill” (HKA 3, p. 515). Nevertheless, only through feeling it is possible for the human being to grasp the mysteries of nature, comprehend its most beautiful and intense colours (HKA 1, 96) and understand the harmony of nature, of which the human being is a part. *Gefühl* is the sense that shows the closeness between man and nature, possibility for the former to access the secrets of the latter and avoiding the distance between them imposed by the faculty of reason, which on the contrary leads to the objectification of nature and its reduction to a machine.

Feeling, the “heavenly sense” (HKA 1, 96), is a faculty particularly better developed in poets, who are thus able to perceive the secret spirit of life (HKA 1, 259). This capacity enables them to grasp the hidden harmony of nature (HKA 1, 95), which consists in the necessary interconnection of all its members: “natures form a homogeneous whole and [...] none can exist without the other” (HKA 1, 95). Through feeling, the human being is perceived as a microcosm, parallel and analogous to the macrocosm of nature (HKA 3, 669, no. 608): for this, the *Gefühl* is ethical (*sittlich*, HKA 3, 669, no. 608), insofar as it abandons the position of dominance on nature that the Enlightenment, in Novalis’ interpretation, gave to the intellectual human faculties.¹¹ Following *Christianity or Europe*—written in 1799 and published posthumously owing to F. Schlegel and against the advice of Tieck and Goethe (Samuel, *Einleitung*)—, in the

¹¹ Gusdorf (*Le Romantisme*) speaks of Romantic contrast against the “epistemological imperialism” (vol. 1, 397 and vol. 2, 144), in alternative to which Romanticism proposes a knowledge based on participation and reciprocity (vol. 1, 357).

Enlightenment the human being pretended to be at the pinnacle of all natural beings, also claiming to be able to cut all connections that bind him or her to them: this reduced nature to a mechanism (HKA 3, 515) and confined the human being to a prosaic existence (to a *Geschäftsleben*), withdrawn in itself (HKA 3, 509).

However, Novalis detected signs that allowed hoping in a better time to come: the development of romantic art and the new discoveries in natural science. In romantic philosophy, the studies on magnetism and electricity¹² had indeed changed the vision of nature, now seen as a field of connected forces that through their interactions produce matter (HKA 2, 381). Thus, for Novalis, nature is the result of vibrations and forces at play (HKA 3, 382, no. 634), where all the elements are interconnected—he described a “relational ontology” (Vercellone, *Nature del tempo*, 73). This is the reason why feeling is necessary: to offer the direction to follow in order to comprehend nature and its relationship with the human being. Thanks to *Gefühl*, the natural scientist too (and not only the poet) looks at nature conscious that the phenomena are interconnected and moved by magnetic and vital forces (HKA 3, 61) that run through nature, a *menstruum universale*, a universal bonding instrument (*Bindungsmittel*, HKA 3, 281, no. 235). Every science studies first and foremost relationships, processes and interactions—as Novalis explains in particular in his *Freiberg Natural Science Studies* (1798-99). Each singularity and individuality (be it a natural element or the human being) is constituted through the determinations developed through the relationship with other entities (“does

¹² On the influence of Alessandro Volta’s studies on German culture in the late 18th and 19th century: Agazzi, *The Impact of Alessandro Volta*. Secondary literature on the relationship between Romanticism and the natural sciences is very comprehensive and rich. For more on Novalis and the natural sciences: Mahoney, *Die Poetisierung der Natur* and Uerlings, *Novalis und die Wissenschaften*.

not the universal grow through individual relationships and the individual through universal relationships?”, HKA 2, 486, no. 5)¹³—the individual, for Novalis, is not an indivisible abstract element devoid of peculiarities, but the result of processes of ever greater determinations.¹⁴

This interconnection, spontaneous creativity and harmony felt by the subject in nature is part of nature itself (not only a projection of the knowing subject into nature), and it outlines the conception of the human community as well. Therefore, feeling is the heart of consciousness, a cognitive faculty, but also the harmonious structure of nature and, ultimately, the basis of a community to come. In this, Catholicism plays a crucial role in Novalis’ philosophy. Catholicism is more suited to Novalis’ politics of feeling for several reasons. First of all, Catholicism has a universalistic ambition (Kleingeld, *Romantic Cosmopolitanism*), towards the objective of bringing all of humanity back into relationships woven and governed by the clergy. Feeling is a sign of the interpersonal nature of the subject, a peculiarity that modern political philosophy wishes to deny; relationships, institutionalised in the hierarchy of the clergy, instead weave a texture of relationships and intermediate powers that oppose the atomisation of society by modern political philosophy.

The new humanity (HKA 3, 519) can awaken through love, the feeling *par excellence* (‘Gefühl’, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*), which in the Enlightenment had to make way for other human faculties. “Come, then, you too ..., get rid of the grey net and gaze

¹³ See: Stone, *Nature, Ethics and Gender*, p. 75.

¹⁴ For this reason, I consider more appropriate to speak of processes of individuation, rather than of individualities. On this, see: HKA 2, 533, no. 31; HKA 3, 126-127; HKA 3, 254, no. 79. Biareishyk identifies a materialistic-Spinozian background in Novalis’ conception of individuality (*Rethinking Romanticism with Spinoza*).

with young *love* at the grand magnificence of nature, history, humanity” (HKA 3, 521, emphasis added), he writes. Novalis does not intend, by this, to invoke a form of affectivity towards nature, but rather introduces the sense that allows grasping the relationships that connect and constitute human beings and nature. Indeed, the *Sinn* of love does not contrast the scientific approach to nature (which would imply that love towards nature was thus solely a sort of affection), but rather modifies, enlarges, and deepens the study of nature through the awareness of the intertwined bonds between all the members of nature, including the human being. Furthermore, inasmuch as love shows that all parts of nature are the results of relationships that lead to harmony and individualities,¹⁵ the sciences must overcome their disciplinary separations (HKA 3, 520): chemistry, botany, physics, and geology are interwoven in a dynamic encyclopaedic project (Desideri, “Nota di lettura”, 229-231). In a collection of political-philosophical fragments, written in 1797-98, *Faith and Love*, love is said to be the instrument that allows to see the similarities that intertwine the phenomena of nature (HKA 2, 485, no. 4), but here another characteristic is added to ‘love’: indeed, these fragments open with a poem in which it is described as the only key to maintain peace among humans (HKA 2, 483). It is only through love that the perfect constitution can be achieved (HKA 2, 500, no. 53). This constitution does not simply consist of laws—these concern for Novalis only a part of the human being, i.e. his or her intellect (HKA 2, 487, no. 15)—, but of true republicanism, which is “the general participation in the state as a whole, the intimate contact and harmony of all the members of the state”

¹⁵ This is the meaning of Novalis’ expression “Moralisation of Nature” (HKA 3, 247, no. 50), which refers to the introduction of individualities into the chaos of nature, introducing a principle of relationship into it.

(HKA 2, 495-496, no. 37). Only in this case there can be freedom. Freedom is not at all the autonomy of reason capable to give itself its own law. Freedom for Novalis is an object of feeling—“the *feeling* of freedom..., the spontaneous contact with all members of the state” (HKA 2, 495-496, no. 37, emphasis added)—, in that it does not abstract from the connections with all other members of the community: freedom has to consider the relationships (HKA 3, 60) of mutual determination that constitute the multiplicity of the whole of nature (HKA 3, 382, no. 633).

However, love and feeling do not only concern present relationships. The epistemological transformation that occurred at the end of the 18th century in Germany, which affirmed the temporalisation of being (Lovejoy, *The Great Chain*, 242-287 - Reill, *Vitalizing Nature*, 69), affected Novalis’ philosophy as well.¹⁶ Thus, the reciprocal determinations that constitute nature and the human also involve the past and the future. For this reason, the new humanity envisaged in Novalis’ utopian image is defined by the relationship with the historical past—“love of the monuments of the ancestors and of the ancient, glorious family of the state” (HKA 3, 521, emphasis added). Love, therefore, even if it is not contrary to reason as such, cannot correspond to the ahistorical formal rationalism of modern natural law. Because of the role and peculiarities of *Gefühl*, men and women are placed within history, and they are the heirs of traditions.

Christianity or Europe has often been interpreted as a conservative text, due to its emphasis on Europe’s past and Catholicism (Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*). However, in the last 50 years, interpretations have re-evaluated

¹⁶ According to Frank (*Das Problem “Zeit”*), the self-consciousness of Romanticism assumes a temporal dimension because of its separation from the absolute.

Novalis' position,¹⁷ which is more properly a utopian one (Desideri, *Il velo di Iside*, 55-64).¹⁸ The European conditions described do not really refer to a past political and social situation. The reference to the future of mankind, and not only of Europe, corroborates this interpretation. Furthermore, the political and social situation outlined by Novalis is not the result of a linear progress—as in the philosophy of history of Enlightenment—or of a defined causal chain. The time of utopia is the suspended time in which present, past and future tend to mingle in an expectation. There is no invitation to accelerate the time towards the achievement of the prospected peaceful situation (HKA 3, 517), but rather to contemplate the image of a future peace, noting those elements that today presage its realisation. Novalis does not hope for an acceleration of time by shaping history according to a rational ideal—he writes, instead: “but when? Soon? This is not to be asked. Only: patience; it will come” (HKA 3, 524). He rather suggests guarding the moment,¹⁹ thanks to *Gefühl* and love that seize the bonds of nature and history.

In summary: under an epistemological point of view, it is through feeling that so much the poet as the scientist discovers the multiple ways in which we are connected to nature: since humans and nature are not separate realms, feeling is the faculty that allows us to approach nature without pretending to subjugate it, avoiding the reduction of nature to a pure mechanism, and allowing to discover the relationships and forces that constitute it. More radically, ‘feeling’ has a crucial role both in Novalis’ ontology,

¹⁷ Beiser, *Enlightenment*, 277.

¹⁸ Cf. Michaud, *La Politique de Novalis*.

¹⁹ “the unguarded moment (*unbewachte Zeit*) alone spoils the cleverest undertakings”, Beiser, *The Early Political Writings*, 68 (HKA 3, 512).

where relationships and forces precede identities, and in Novalis' political thought, which stresses the importance of harmony among humans through time.

IV. F. Schlegel: love as intersubjectivity at the heart of the Self

Schlegel distinguishes two different types of feelings: some are “merely subjective”, while others are “truthful” (*wahrhaft*, KA 12, 390). In “merely subjective” feelings, there is only “I-ness” (*Ichheit*), the folding of the subject in itself, and they include all the feelings linked to the animal nature of the human being, to his or her survival, such as fear or anger (KA 12, 390). “Truthful feelings”, on the other hand, “relate to the self and to the world at the same time” and pertain to the “infinite unity and fullness” (KA 12, 390), i.e. to nature and life. ‘Feeling’ means embracing the world (KA 12, 355), it is openness, the original relationship between the ‘I’ and its other—“union with another spirit, the feeling of comprehension (*Verständnisses*) and of concord (*Einverständnisses*)” (KA 12, 390)—, a relationship that constitutes consciousness itself. In Fichte’s *Foundation*, feeling is the perception of limits in the powers of the ‘I’ and it leads the ‘I’ to return to itself and to posit itself; in Schlegel, *Gefühl* is the opening, the relation in which subject and object are included and of which they are constituted. Thus, feeling is constitutive of human consciousness, and is almost paradoxically a relation preceding the separation between the I and the other, between the I and its surroundings.

In Schlegel, there is a triple meaning of the concept of *Gefühl*: (1) feeling is either one of the external senses (particularly the sense of touch) or an internal sense, with which the ‘I’ perceives itself; (2) it is a reaction of the self to a threatening situation; and (3) because love is a feeling (KA 12, 66), it is a constitutive element of the subject that entails both its condition of openness and the common space between

the I and the You; an openness which is not a gateway to abstractness, in that it is filled instead with what surrounds the subject, and thus, constitutes it as a being always placed within what is other than itself.

In Schlegel's lectures on transcendental philosophy, he sustains that the essence of feeling is love: that is, love (3) is actually the essence and the condition of the first two meanings of 'feeling'—(1) and (2). Indeed, love is first of all a sense (*Sinn*), thus falling within (1), the first characterisation of the concept of *Gefühl*. Simultaneously, it is the condition of possibility of all senses, as it is the condition of possibility of the encounter and of the contact between the subject and its object (KA 12, 369); thus, it is the condition even of the situations felt as threatening (2). To sense something, Schlegel writes, is to feel love for it; thus, love is the condition for understanding something (KA 12, 369). On the one hand, it is a sense, a cognitive faculty belonging to the knowing subject, and is described as an impulse directed in all directions (KA 12, 369), and on the other hand, it is also the very condition of consciousness (KA 12, 373).

It is also union of the I with its object, the You (KA 12, 350), the union of perceiver and perceived, knowledge in the unity of the two, a way of knowing that excludes the application of categories to an object that should assume the forms proper to the intuition and intellect of the knowing subject (KA 12, 350). Only in a second moment, a subject and an object are separated from this unity, thanks to the activity of the subject that returns to him or herself, positing a distinction from the object.

Love, that point of indifference between subject and object (KA 12, 53 and KA 18, 164, no. 489) is at the heart of both the self (KA 12, 53) and the life of nature, thus determining their belonging to each other: "Nature is love turned into fluid matter" (KA

18, 153, no. 359),²⁰ “Nature is love made free and moving” (KA 18, 254, no. 725), Schlegel writes. Love is also the beginning of the world (KA 18, 254, no. 725 and KA 12, 373) because love is encounter, magnetism and affinity: it is life (KA 12, 142 and KA 2, 264, no. 91). Love is not simply a different way to describe the *Tathandlung* of the Fichtian ‘I’ with which the self posits itself; rather, it is the belonging of both the self and nature to the immanence (of love)—which therefore characterises both—and conversely, love is the innate and intricate location of the subject within its other. Because of love, the self is, constitutively, between itself and the other than itself.²¹ If the Fichtian ‘I’ is the activity of positing, the basis that pervades and from which the individual self and its object unravel, for Schlegel the encounter, the relationship—love—is the basis of consciousness.

‘Love’ is not simply the affectivity of an individual towards something or someone but is the structural location of consciousness within a world that conditions it and makes it exist. Love is bonding, affinity and harmony that allows escape from chaos into the cosmos;²² it is life (KA 12, 142) and the beginning of consciousness (KA 12, 373), the source, therefore, of both the self and nature. Similar to Novalis’ philosophy, love also connects every human to history: “Love is universal, individual, mythical, physical, historical connection” (KA 18, 126, no. 42).

Thanks to this description of *Gefühl*, placed at the heart of consciousness, the relationship between feeling and rationality cannot be an opposition whereby one of the

²⁰ Cf. also: KA 18, 181, no. 666 and KA 18, 189, no. 753.

²¹ “The first thing in love is the sense for each other”, KA 2, 178, no. 87.

²² “Love is the spark of divinity through which the universe becomes nature”, KA 18, 153, no. 361; “Love oscillates between the universe and nature”, KA 18, 201, no. 52; KA 12, 373.

two faculties necessarily eliminates the other. For Schlegel, the two are not opposed, as rationality derives from love (KA 12, 141), from the mutual connection and influence of beings that the concept of love describes. Feeling certainly maintains its unique peculiarities that distinguish it from reason, but it also contributes to modify the idea of rationality to avoid the reason-feeling contraposition. The opposition between the two is indeed based on the idea that reason does not depend on experience or on other faculties, and is self-foundational and autonomous, while feelings would not be fully controllable and would be totally subjected to the experienced contingency. This self-foundational view of reason reaches the apex in Kant's morality, whereby freedom consists in the autonomy of reason, a source of necessary and a priori legislation, from which it is to derive a law established independently of the relationships and conditions lived by the subject. The centrality of *Gefühl* in Romantic subjectivity entails a departure from this model. The affirmation of the subject as structurally in between itself and what is other than itself entails, for F. Schlegel, that such autonomy of reason understood as self-foundation is not possible: reason is the result of past influences, cultures, and conditions. Reason and philosophy do not exist independently of history: „There is no pure philosophy” (KA 18, 24, no. 74),²³ “The results of idealism ... can be so summarized: 1) philosophy should be thoroughly historical ... [2)] our philosophy is itself history” (KA 12, 93).

According to Schlegel, Kant's and Fichte's philosophies are not complete or exhaustive insofar as they conceived, in their own transcendental investigation, of the self as a priori structure or as a self-positing activity, in both cases structurally

²³ The eighth thesis of Schlegel's dissertation presented in 1801 states: “We have to philosophise historically, not critically” (Schelling, *Briefe*, 584f.).

impermeable to history (KA 18, 32, no. 141 - KA 18, 33, no. 148 - KA 12, 286).²⁴
“there is no other self-knowledge than the historical self-knowledge” (KA 12, 270, no. 139). Through feeling, in other words, Schlegel can completely reassess the subject and philosophy in comparison to his predecessors—thus conceiving philosophy as a historical critique, a consideration of the (historical) conditions in which the subject remains.²⁵

Furthermore, the subject, constituted on the frontier between itself and its surroundings (in both space and time), cannot be contemplated isolating it, so as there is no human being truly in isolation: “The human being should be considered as a human society” (KA 12, 44), “Whoever wants to understand the human being in its entirety must look at it as in society” (KA 12, 46). Moreover, society is always historical, for Schlegel, thus impossible to be rationally derived *a priori* (KA 12, 44 - KA 7, 155-156). Hence, the subject is constituted in the fold of the historical society in which he or she lives. This implies that it is not possible to abstract from the relationships in which we always remain; it is not possible to consider the individual through abstraction. Even freedom is only possible within love (KA 18, 421, no. 1216), within the relationships that constitute the subject. Romantic freedom does not consist in *a priori* autonomy derived from reason (KA 12, 11).

To consider the human being independently of the relationships in which he or she is embedded implies failing to understand his or her nature. Considering feelings in

²⁴ In his early works, Schlegel already argues for the limitation of only *a priori* knowledge on the human being (KA 1, 627).

²⁵ This is also echoed in Schlegel’s theory of truth and his idea that every philosophical treatise must begin with a history of philosophy. See: KA 2, 179, no. 94; KA 2, 236-237, no. 384; KA 12, 110-111.

political philosophy goes beyond the passion-reason duality. Feelings, along with passions, are for modern political philosophy parts of the human spirit that clash with rationality, and therefore, this one must impose its own order by eliminating the possibility of feelings interfering in any way with the rational order. In other words, feelings are taken into consideration in modern political philosophy only in order to immediately deny them: reason would be the only possible source of sociality, which indeed relegates feelings to the private sphere.²⁶

On the contrary, *Gefühl* is the bond that holds all beings together and the modern natural law (that wants to exclude it from the political discussion) can come to nothing, according to Schlegel: the love that connects us to others, to nature, to our past implies that our actions affect all others, precisely because we are structurally tied to them – “There must be [...] causality in the whole, which, however, is certainly connected with the whole. This is none other than the *causality of love*” (KA 12, 83 - 52-53). Therefore, the centrality given by Schlegel to the concept of ‘feeling’ implies that his philosophy is focused on the relationships that structure and determine the human being. *Gefühl* implies that subjectivity is the result of intertwining relationships; thus, the subject’s actions cannot be abstracted from this field of influence. As a consequence, freedom is not autonomy (intended as the capacity of reason to rule independently from the experience), but rather: “The positive freedom of the human being takes place only in relation to the whole, it is only in love and in a community” (KA 13, 11). Conversely, autonomy still plays a role in Schlegel’s political philosophy, as love alone would lead

²⁶ On this conception lies the origin of the liberal consideration of the voting citizen as guided by reason alone, and not also by emotion and affectivity (Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen*).

the self to forget itself in its multiple relationships (KA 13, 88). Therefore, it must be limited through a loyalty to the self (KA 13, 88), through an established law; however, not out of simple rationality (against which *Gefühl* should therefore be opposed), but through the elaboration of traditional laws: feeling imposes at the origin of the subjectivity a structural relationship to what is ‘other’ to itself, but this opening allows the constitution of the self only if the self assumes habits and if the existing norms are adopted as its own.

For Schlegel, there is no state of nature, as it was rationally constructed in modern political philosophy; this construction overshadowed the *Gefühl* and the relationships that result from it (e.g.: KA 7, 536). The only natural condition of the human being is described through the examination of the social relation and the history of political institutions.²⁷ ‘Feeling’ in Schlegel’s philosophy, in other words, is not limited to a faculty among others, but transforms the way in which the human being is constructed. Similarly to Novalis, ‘feeling’ and ‘love’ entail the priority of relation over identity in Schlegel’s ontology and epistemology, but while Novalis focuses on the relationship among humans and nature and, only in a second stage, on the community, Schlegel concentrates most of its attention to redefine subjectivity, which is determined by societal and historical relationships.

V. Baader’s erotic philosophy

The importance of the concept of ‘love’ in Franz von Baader’s works is so remarkable

²⁷ See Schlegel’s later works and lectures: for example, the last part of *Development of Philosophy in Twelve Books*, or the *Lectures on Universal History* (1805-6), in which family relations, estates, and customs constitute the political order.

that his philosophy is referred to as ‘erotic philosophy’ (Baader, *Erotische Philosophie*). As for the other authors discussed here, love pertains (also) to the field of knowledge: the true understanding that allows to fully understand nature is not the “mechanical” knowledge—using Baader’s words—in which the knowing subject shapes the known object imposing its own categories. Knowledge, in the proper sense, is for Baader “dynamic.” In it, knowing subject and known object coexist driven by a mutual desire, as a two-way relationship of influence: a “loving give and take” (BSW, 13, 83). This idea constantly returns in his work, but the political role of feeling and particularly of love changes over the years, in Baader’s philosophy. These revisions are mostly due to the introduction of a religious-theological topic consequently to his reading of St. Martin’s, Bonald’s and Jacob Böhme’s works, and they demonstrate once again the common interpretation that stretch a difference between the political thought of Early and Late Romanticism (Baxa, *Gesellschaft und Staat - Stanguennec, La philosophie romantique*).

In one of his earlier studies of natural philosophy (*On the heating material*, 1786), Baader equates love to the forces of attraction and affinity investigated by physics and chemistry. He defines love as a universal bond that connects and intertwines all beings. It is not only a cognitive faculty capable to grasp the natural bonds between phenomena or beings but also the affinity and attraction between elements, so as it is the relationship between the knower and the known: love is a force pushing different parts of matter to move towards union. According to Baader, the attractive affinity of love makes the creation of forms and of the cosmos out of chaos possible (BSW 3, 33). Equated with a natural force, love does not concern the affectivity between two human beings but rather a web of relationships involving both

the subject and nature. Like Novalis and Schlegel, for Baader too, ‘love’ conditions the conception of the subject and of its relationship with the object. *Liebe*, indeed, is a *Wechselprozess* of giving and receiving (BSW 13, 83) that manifests itself in knowledge, volition and agency (BSW 5, 201): in neither of these cases is there a subject that imposes itself on a passive object, because in all three the two poles of the relationship influence and are active elements in the relationship—“whoever takes a gift that I offer him, in a mediated way is making a gift to me, insofar as he makes possible in me the flow of a new gift” (BSW 5, 201).

So as it was for Schlegel and Novalis, even in Baader’s philosophy the emphasis and priority are on the relationships that regulate the life of human beings and nature, and not on the identity of the elements regulated. Stressing the identity instead of the relationships and differences would imply, following Baader, to adhere to atomism, which he repudiates from a philosophical-natural, political and anthropological perspective. Indeed, in all the spheres in which it is applied, atomism separates and breaks up the factors that determine the elements studied—abstracting the objects analysed from their constitutive relationships—reducing them to atoms without peculiarities. Even love, from an atomistic point of view, becomes a simple impulse (*Trieb*) of one element towards another (BSW 6, 15), a unidirectional tension between identical elements. However, as magnetic charges envisage a diversity between two poles (one negative and one positive), so does love maintain the differences that characterise the various elements it involves. The intimate bond of love “breathes between the poles of diversity” (BSW 6, 15), determining constantly new elements (BSW 6, 19).

Romantic love is not affection for another person, but rather a framework to which the different individualities are entangled, so that they belong to the same collective being (*Gemeinwesen*). Love does not force individuals against each other through a push (be it a *Trieb* or a real *Druck*), but rather unites them from their interiority through attraction (*Zug*, BSW 6, 13). This force is linked to the forces of magnetic attraction that in those years were central in the criticism addressed by German *Naturphilosophie* against the mechanistic view of nature. According to mechanism, nature can be described as a collection of atoms in motion due to collisions and not due to attractive forces determined by the quality of matter (Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism*). For Baader, instead, nature (so as the human community) is a field of magnetic forces, and it permeates, changes and determines the bodies placed in it. Still, his philosophy is influenced not only by the scientific discoveries of the time, but also in later works by Bonald²⁸ and St. Martin: that is why the connections that constitute the community are not immanent (like the natural forces, following his earlier texts), but refer to transcendence: the communitarian “connection can only be understood as an essence (*Wesen*) that lives in them [human beings] and at the same time is superior ... to them” (BSW 6, 13). The shift from a “theory of immanence” (*Immanenzlehre*, BSW 5, 252) to a philosophy of transcendence is parallel also to the political shift in Romanticism towards conservatism and identitarian politics.

The love that connects human beings to each other is equated with the love that connects humanity to nature. However, in Baader’s works succeeding those on natural philosophy (indicatively from the beginning of the 19th century), these connections

²⁸ On Baader’s interpretation of Bonald: Spaemann, *Der Ursprung der Soziologie*.

involve a transcendent element. In both declinations of love (towards other human beings and nature), it derives from the same source, namely, God. It is no longer a question here of the affinities and immanent natural forces that had allowed Schlegel to call Spinoza a “philosopher of love”, but rather a transcendent dimension is inserted: love, a divine sentiment, descends upon human beings and expands horizontally just as it descends towards non-intelligent creatures (BSW 5, 258), binding human beings and nature inextricably. Moreover, like in Novalis’ and Schlegel’s philosophy, love is not about the affectivity of an individual, but is a texture that constitutes reality (BSW 5, 258), including the social and political institutions. Even between two lovers, the relationship does not consist of a bond between two people, because a third pole takes over: God loves itself through the people involved and through their relationship (BSW 1, 61).

The society defined by Baader explicitly differentiates from the one described by the theories of the social contract, in which the only natural bond between human beings is that of the permanent fear of potential (or actual) war. Whether the theory of the social contract is based on a negative anthropology (as in Hobbes’) or a positive one (as in Rousseau’s philosophy), it is grounded on the idea of individuals abstracted from their common element, the “common God” (BSW 6, 14)—so Baader—which lives in humans and is at the same time superior to them (BSW 6, 13). It is not possible for individuals to escape from this bonding divinity, even if the individuals try to put themselves at the centre (of nature or society). Nonetheless, when this tentative is pursued, the very concept of love is perverted, becoming a selfish principle: “love yourself above all else” (BSW 6, 15).

In a text on de la Mennais (*Review of 'Essay on Indifference regarding religion' by de la Mennais*) published in 1826, Baader distinguishes two different types of societies: one in which everything is related to the individual, and the other one called “society of love”—in which individuals are in constant relation to society through intimate connecting forces (BSW 5, 199). In this later text, these intimate connections affect not only Baader’s philosophy of society but also his theory of knowledge. Strongly influenced by Bonald and St. Martin,²⁹ he criticises here the rationality conceived by modern philosophy, particularly by Descartes, who, according to the romantic philosopher, based his thinking on the principle of individual reason understood as sovereign and infallible. This implied placing the foundation of any certainties on the intellectual faculties of the individual (BSW 5, 195). In fact, Baader writes that the human beings can ground their convictions only in the common beliefs of society (BSW 5, 195), i.e. in common ideas, prejudices and traditions. An individual’s attempt to abstract from these common elements is a mistake from a theoretical point of view and a crime from a practical and political perspective (BSW 5, 196). Just as love in earlier texts was described as the framework in which everyone is entangled, Baader now writes that in a community “just as they all move at once, so for the movement of intelligence and thought” (BSW 5, 196). In the same vein, echoing St. Martin, Baader returns to the difference between the feeling experienced by a single individual and the proper concept of *Gefühl*: this is in the proper sense *Gemeingefühl*, a unifying factor that bonds together all the members of a community and the only way to

²⁹ See Baader’s texts on them: BSW 1, 57-70, BSW 1, 43-120 and BSW 6, 291-314.

knowledge (BSW 5, 205-213). Without *Gefühl*, only individualism and senselessness are given (BSW 5, 205).

In *Social-philosophical Aphorisms*, Baader argues that the recognition of the reciprocity of the cognitive relationship leads to culture (*Cultur*), a specific relationship between man and nature that conflicts with the industrial development (*Industrie*) and with the mechanistic approach to nature, which according to Baader hides a purely economic and exploitative intent (BSW 5, 275-6). However, Baader's perspective does not anticipate a form of ecological awareness, as the love of nature then primarily results as an attachment to the homeland, whereby social institutions are considered in their connection to the *Grund und Boden* (BSW 5, 310), thus losing any cosmopolitan dimension implied in ecology (Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, 76).

Nonetheless, the idea that 'feeling' plays a role in political Romantic philosophy only as patriotism³⁰ is misleading. Indeed, *Gefühl* structures (in the early phase of German Romanticism) the individuality, giving the priority to relations that constitute the dynamic basis the individual results from: society is not simply a political identity that the individual shall love; quite on the contrary, love is what enables to see identity (i.e. the individual, a specific communities, etc.) as the result of multiple relationships, of a universal entanglement among the existing beings. That said, the transcendent element in Baader's philosophy decrees the introduction of a principle of authority. Love is no longer an immanent factor, proper to human beings and as inevitable as the laws of magnetism. In Baader's later works, love is described as the totality of common beliefs and traditions entrusted to a community by God and that because of its divine

³⁰ Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut*.

origin become the legitimising source of all authority (BSW 5, 196). ‘*Gefühl*’ and ‘love’ as they were described by Schlegel, Novalis and Baader’s early works—i.e. the texture of relationships that constitutes subjectivity and the political institutions—now become the divine source of legitimacy and justice. As Baader wrote, “just as our reasoning cannot be the rule of our reasoning, so our feeling cannot be the rule of our feeling” (BSW 5, 235): *Gefühl* derives from a transcendent source.

VI. Conclusions

In this article, I outlined the metamorphoses that changed the meaning of ‘*Gefühl*’ between the late 18th and early 19th century in German Romanticism. Considered first and foremost as part of the human being’s senses, it was then described by the Romantics as the determining factor of subjectivity that structures the self as openness to the other—be it nature, community, or history. This is particularly evident when considering a particular declination of *Gefühl*, namely, love. ‘Feeling’ is then the faculty that enables the subject to understand that human beings are situated and determined by relationships in which they are always surrounded. This way, feeling is not opposed to reason, but rather is a non-propositional cognitive faculty (Meyer, “*Gefühl ist alles!*“, 293) that allows us to feel part of something, to feel us within a framework that is around and inside us.

Thus, this perspective on romantic authors contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of feelings in politics. If actual theoretical-political studies almost exclusively focus on the role of the emotions when it comes to making a decision—be it the voting choice or the emotional drive in governmental resolutions—a consideration of the history of the concept makes it possible to identify a dimension of feeling that departs from the question of political representation.

Even studies emphasising how feeling and emotion are characteristics of a conservative (Robinson, *Authority of feeling*) or a radical and progressive politics (Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*) do not seem to investigate the nature of feeling, and relegate it to the individual dimension, as feeling of the individual. The romantic philosophers examined here show that a politics of feeling suggests more radically that relationships precede and structure individuality. Admittedly, in some elaborations of ‘emotion theory’, feeling is read as sociologically and historically structured (Harré, *The Construction of Emotions*), i.e., the individual emotion is the outcome of a social construction; thus, individual emotion is the result of institutions and traditions that indicate the collective nature of feelings. However, the *Romantik*, also departs from this position because for the romantic philosophers *Gefühl* is not so much determined by the community in which one lives, but it is the ‘feeling’ itself that implies community life, also structuring the community in a peculiar way, where every individual is entangled in a political and social field.

As we have seen, also as a confirmation of the distance between the political philosophy of Early German Romanticism and its later declinations, this priority and determining dimension of feeling brings Baader, after an earlier and less identitarian phase, closer to a clear patriotism. Even if ‘feeling’ played a role in Baader’s later conservative and identitarian political philosophy, the interpretation of romantic feeling only as patriotism obscures the radicality and richness of the implications involved in the centrality of *Gefühl* in Romantic philosophy. Love and feeling, particularly in Early German Romantic philosophy, implies the priority of relationship above the individuality, the interpersonal structure of the subject, the utopia of a peaceful human

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

coexistence and the idea of a harmonic relationship with nature, where there is no space for the dominion of human beings over it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Agazzi, Elena. "The Impact of Alessandro Volta on German Culture". In *Nuova Voltiana. Studies on Volta and His Times*, vol. 4, edited by Fabio Bevilacqua and Lucio Fregonese, 41—52. Milano: Hoepli, 2002.
- Baader, Franz von. *Erotische Philosophie* [Erotic Philosophy]. Edited by Gerd-Klaus Kaltebrunner. Frankfurt a.M: Insel, 1991.
- Baader, Franz von. *Sämtliche Werke* [Collected Works]. 16 Vols. Edited by Franz Hoffmann. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1987.
- Baxa, Jacob. *Gesellschaft und Staat im Spiegel deutscher Romantik* [Society and State in the Perspective of German Romanticism]. Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1924.
- Behrens, Klaus. *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie (1794-1808). Ein Beitrag zur politischen Romantik* [Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophy of History (1794-1808). A Contribution to Political Romanticism]. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984.
- Beiser, Frederick C. *German Idealism. The Struggle Against Subjectivism (1781-1801)*. Harvard MA: Harvard UP, 2002.
- Beiser, Frederick C. *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Beiser, Frederick C. *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Biareishyk, Siarhei. "Rethinking Romanticism with Spinoza: Encounter and Individuation in Novalis, Ritter, and Baader". *The Germanic Review* 94 (2019): 271-198.
- Calvié, Lucien. "'Le début du siècle nouveau'. Le débat intellectuel et politique en Allemagne autour de 1800". *Archives de Philosophie* 81, no. 3 (2018): 523-536.
- Cesa, Claudio. "La filosofia della società di Franz von Baader e i 'proletari'". *Studi Senesi* 75, no. 1 (1963): 304-334.
- Clough, Patricia Ticineto, and Halley Jean, eds. *The Affective Turn. Theorizing the Social*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

- Crawford, Neta C., “Institutionalizing Passion in World Politics: Fear and Empathy”.
International Theory 6, no. 3 (2014): 535-557.
- Damasio, Antonio R. “A Second Chance for Emotion”. In *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion*, edited by Richard D. Lane, and Lynn Nadel, 12-23. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Desideri, Fabrizio. “Nota di lettura”. In Novalis, *Opera filosofica*, vol. 2: 225-265. Torino: Einaudi, 1993.
- Desideri, Fabrizio. *Il velo di Iside. Coscienza, messianismo e natura nel pensiero romantico* [Isis’ Veil. Consciousness, Messianism and Nature in Romantic Thought]. Bologna: Pendragon, 1997.
- Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, digitalized version in *Wörterbuchnetz des Trier Center for Digital Humanities*, Version 01/21,
<https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemid=G04006>, last visited on 07.05.2022.
- Droz, Jacques. *Le romantisme politique en Allemagne* [Political Romanticism in Germany]. Paris: Colin, 1963.
- Dubost, Jean-Pierre. “Gefühl, Empfindung”. In *Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies*, edited by Barbara Cassin, 475-480. Paris: Seuil—Le Robert, 2004.
- Dupré, Louis. *The Quest of the Absolute. Birth and Decline of European Romanticism*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2013.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* [Foundation of the Doctrine of Science]. In *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* [Complete Edition by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences], vol. I, 2, edited by Reinhart Lauth and Hans Jacob. Stuttgart: Frommann–Holzboog, 1964.
- Fletcher Joseph F., and Hove, Jennifer. *Revising Emotions of Three Post-9/11 Moments*. In *Emotions, Community, and Citizenship. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Rebecca Kingston, Kiran Banerjee, James McKee, Yi-Chun Chien and Constantine Vassilou, 176-201. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2017.
- Foucault, Michel. *Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres* [The Government of Self and Others]. Paris: Seuil, 2008.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

- Frank, Manfred. *Selbstgefühl. Eine historisch-systematische Erklärung* [Feeling the Self. A historical-systematic explanation]. Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 2003.
- Frank, Manfred. “Unendliche Annäherung”. *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* [“Infinite Approximation”: The Beginning of Philosophical Early Romanticism]. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997.
- Frank, Manfred. *Das Problem “Zeit” in der deutschen Romantik. Zeitbewusstsein und Bewusstsein von Zeitlichkeit in der frühromantischen Philosophie und in Tiecks Dichtung* [The Problem “Time” in German Romanticism. Time-Consciousness and Consciousness of Temporality in Early Romantic Philosophy and in Tieck’s Literary Work]. Paderborn: Schnöningh, 1990.
- Galli, Carlo. *Lo sguardo di Giano. Saggi su Carl Schmitt* [Janus’ Gaze. Essays on Carl Schmitt]. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008.
- Gaukroger, Stephen. *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility. Science and the Shaping of Modernity (1680-1760)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Gentry, Gerad, and Pollok, Konstantin. *The Imagination in German Idealism and Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Gjesdal, Kristin, and Nassar, Dalia, eds. *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century. The German Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Gjesdal, Kristin, and Nassar, Dalia, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Women Philosophers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
- Grassl, Hans. *Aufbruch der Romantik. Bayerns Beitrag zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte 1765-1785* [The Dawn of Romanticism. Bavaria’s contribution to German Intellectual History 1765–1785]. München: Beck, 1968.
- Grassl, Hans. *Einleitung* [Introduction]. In Franz von Baader, *Gesellschaftslehre*, edited by Hans Grassl, 9-55. München: Kösel Verlag, 1957.
- Groh, Andreas C. *Die Gesellschaftskritik der Politischen Romantik* [The Social Critique of Political Romanticism]. München: Winkler Verlag, 2004.
- Gusdorf, Georges. *Le Romantisme* [Romanticism]. 2 Vols. Paris: Payot, 1993.
- Hamilton, Alexander. *The Federalist*. <https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-11-20>. Accessed on May, 2022.
- Harré, Rom, ed. *The Construction of Emotions*. New York: Blackwell, 1996.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

- Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Werke* [Works], edited by Günter Arnold, Martin Bollacher, Jürgen Brummack, Christoph Bultmann et al. Frankfurt a.M: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985-1997.
- Hoggett, Paul, and Thompson, Simon, eds. *Politics and the Emotions. The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*. New York: Continuum, 2012.
- James, Susan. *Passion and Action. The Emotion in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kleingeld, Pauline. "Romantic Cosmopolitanism: Novalis's *Christianity or Europe*". *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46, no. 2 (2008): 269-284.
- Kluckhohn, Paul. *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik* [The Idea of "Good" in German Romanticism]. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1966.
- Kurzke, Hermann. *Romantik und Konservatismus: Das "politische" Werk Friedrich von Hardenbergs (Novalis) im Horizont seiner Wirkungsgeschichte* [Romanticism and Conservatism: The "Political" Work of Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) in the Perspective of the History of Its Historical Influence]. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1983.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.
- Löwy, Michael, and Sayre, Robert. *Révolution et mélancolie. Le romantisme à contre-courant de la modernité* [Revolt and Melancholy. Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity]. Paris: Payot, 2007.
- Lukács, György. *The Destruction of Reason*. New York: Verso Book, 2021.
- Mahoney, Dennis F. *Die Poetisierung der Natur bei Novalis. Beweggründe, Gestaltung, Folgen* [The Poetisation of Nature in Novalis. Motives, Shaping, Consequences]. Bonn: Bouvier, 1980.
- Marcus, George E. *The Sentimental Citizen. Emotion in Democratic Politics*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University: 2002.
- Meinecke, Friedrich. *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Merchant, Carolin. *The Death of Nature. Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: Harper Collins, 2020⁴.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

Meyer, Verena. "Gefühl ist alles! Zur semantischen Genese einer Erfahrungskategorie".

In *Emotional Minds*, edited by Sabrina Ebbersmeyer, 291-310. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

Michaud, Stéphane. "La Politique de Novalis". *Dix-huitième siècle* 6 (1974): 225-234.

Millán-Brusslan, Elizabeth. "El revival de la *Frühromantik* en la filosofía anglofona".

In *La actualidad del primer romanticismo alemán. Modernidad, filosofía y literatura*, edited by Naim Garnica, 337-86. Buenos Aires: TeseoPress, 2020.

Mosse, George L. *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964.

Nivala, Asko. *The Romantic Idea of the Golden Age in Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophy of History*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Novalis. *Schriften* [Works], edited by Richard Samuel, Hans-Joachim Mähl, Gerhard Schulz. 5 Vols. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960-2006.

Pascale, Carla de. *Tra rivoluzione e restaurazione. La filosofia della società di Franz von Baader* [Between Revolution and Restoration. Franz von Baader's Philosophy of Society]. Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1982.

Pauly, Walter. "Carl Schmitts Kritik der romantischen Freiheit" [Carl Schmitt's Critique to Romantic Freedom]. In *Romantik und Freiheit. Wechselspiele zwischen Ästhetik und Politik*, edited by Michael Dreyer and Klaus Ries, 261-80. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014.

Reid, James D. "Novalis's philosophical fictions: Love, reason, and the given from the *Fichte-Studies* to the *Hymns to the Night*". *European Journal of Philosophy* 28, 2020: 703-22.

Reill, Peter Hanns. *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Robinson, Emily. "Authority of feeling in mid-twentieth century English conservatism". *The Historical Journal* 63, no. 5 (2020): 1303-24.

Samuel, Richard. *Einleitung*, in HKA 3, 497-506.

Sauter, Johann. "Die Grundlegung der deutschen Volkswirtschaftslehre durch Franz von Baader (1765-1841)". *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* 68 (123), no. 4 (1925), 433-87.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

- Sauter, Johann. “Franz von Baaders romantische Sozialphilosophie”. *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 81, no. 3 (1926): 449-81.
- Schelling, Caroline. *Briefe aus der Frühromantik* [Letters from the Early Romanticism], vol. 2. Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1913.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* [Critical Edition of Friedrich Schlegel’s Work], edited by Ernst Behler, Jean-Jacques Anstett, and Hans Eichner. München: Schönningh, 1958-.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Political Romanticism*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Spaemann, Robert. *Der Ursprung der Soziologie aus dem Geist der Restauration. Studien über L.G.A. de Bonald* [The Origin of Sociology from the Spirit of the Restoration. Studies on L.G.A. Bonald]. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1998.
- Stammen, Theo. “Franz von Baader (1765-1841)“. In *Politische Theorien des 19. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Bernd Heidenreich, 605-628. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002.
- Stanguennec, André. *La Philosophie romantique allemande* [German Romantic Philosophy]. Paris: Vrin, 2011.
- Stone, Alison. *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism*. London: Rowman&Littlefield, 2018.
- Tchalova, Kristina, and MacDonald, Geoff. “The Interpersonal Is the Political: The Role of Social Belongingness in Emotional Experience and Political Orientation”. In *Emotions, Community, and Citizenship. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Rebecca Kingston, Kiran Banerjee, James McKee, Yi-Chun Chien and Constantine Vassilou, 154-75. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.
- Uerlings, Herbert. *Novalis und die Wissenschaften* [Novalis and the Sciences]. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997.
- Valpione, Giulia. “Philosophy and Its Institutions. Politics at the Heart of the Canon”. *Hegel Bulletin*, forthcoming.
- Valpione, Giulia. “Oltre la rivolta e la malinconia. Dibattito attuale e prospettive di ricerca sul ‘Romanticismo politico’” [Beyond Melancholy and Rebellion. Current Debate and Research Perspectives on ‘Political Romanticism’]. *Filosofia politica* 3 (2018): 511-522.

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 01 Dec 2022,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2144127>

Vercellone, Federico. *Nature del tempo. Novalis e la forma poetica del Romanticismo tedesco* [Natures of Time. Novalis and the Poetic Form of German Romanticism]. Napoli: Guerini, 1998.