In-ek-con-sistence. Erwin Schadel and the Bamberg School of Triadic Ontology

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This article introduces the Bamberg School of triadic ontology and Erwin Schadel's philosophical perspective, outlining his interpretation of being as in-ek-con-sistence. It reconstructs his Neoplatonic and Augustinian sources and shows how triadic ontology provides a rational framework for conceiving being as dynamic relational unity, later echoed in the metaphysical syntheses of Comenius and Leibniz.

Keywords: Triadic ontology, Erwin Schadel, Heinrich Beck, Trinitarian metaphysics, In-ek-con-sistence.

1. Introduction

In this article, I aim to draw attention to the relatively unknown "Bamberg School of triadic ontology" and its main representatives, Heinrich Beck and Erwin Schadel (editors of the series *Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik* [*Writings on Triadics and Ontodynamics*], 30 volumes[1]). The philosophical work of the Bamberg School has exemplary significance for *triadic ontology* and for philosophical reflection more broadly, yet its remarkably rich intellectual heritage risks being overlooked in contemporary mainstream thought. The Bamberg School took up and further developed the line of research that had been initiated by authors such as Theodor Haecker (in his debate with Erich Przywara) and Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg with their view of an *analogia trinitatis*[2], and that was later called *trinitarian ontology* by Clemens Kaliba[3]. This line of research has been embraced in different ways by various representatives since the second half of the twentieth century[4] and has also inspired a new editorial series[5]. The term *triadic ontology* instead of *trinitarian ontology* – as used in reference to the Bamberg School – is meant to indicate a strictly philosophical approach that addresses only rational arguments for the triadic character of both the Absolute and the basic structure of finite reality (an approach that stands in analogy with a tradition represented in particular by

1 - https://fis.uni-bamberg.de/entities/publication/904f65ca-7f91-48cc-817e-2a0d4d929827. The last volume in the series, not included in the list at the previous link, is Beck's philosophical autobiography: H. Beck, *Episoden und das Ganze. Werden einer philosophischen Existenz. Autobiographisches* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 30), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2012.

2 - Cf. Th. Haecker, *Schöpfer und Schöpfung*, Jakob Hegner, Leipzig 1934; H.E. Hengstenberg, *Das Band zwischen Gott und Schöpfung* (1940), 3rd revised edition with the subtitle *Entwurf einer analogia trinitatis* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 5), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1991.

3 - Cf. C. Kaliba, *Die Welt als Gleichnis des dreieinigen Gottes. Entwurf zu einer trinitarischen Ontologie* (1952), 2nd edition with a preface to the new print by H. Beck (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 4), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1991.

4 - Among others: Ferdinand Ulrich, Klaus Hemmerle, and the German-Hungarian philosopher Béla von Brandenstein (https://www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/disciplinae/bvb) in the German-speaking world; Antonio Rosmini's pupil Michele F. Sciacca, Piero Coda and the Sophia Hemmerle-School (https://trinitarian-ontology.org), Giulio Maspero (https://www.relationalontology.org), and Massimo Donà in the Italian-speaking world; the Trinitarian Comenius-School (Karel and Pavel Floss) and its ideal continuation in Eduard Fiedler's "Triertium" research group in the Czech-speaking world (https://www.triertium.cz); John Milbank and the "New Trinitarian Ontologies" movement in the English-speaking world, inaugurated by the conference held at the University of Cambridge in September 2019.

5 - *Studies on Triadic Ontology and Trinitarian Philosophy* (Verlag Karl Alber): https://www.nomos-shop.de/de/series/series/view/id/B001356300. The first volume of the series appeared in February 2025: E. Fiedler - P. Frývaldský (edd.), *Trinitarian Ontologies. Towards a Trinitarian Transformation of Philosophy*, Verlag Karl Alber, Baden-Baden 2025.

authors such as Werner Beierwaltes and Jens Halfwassen, who endeavoured to reconstruct the triadic coherence of ontology in relation to the Platonic and Neoplatonic heritage and its history of influence)[6].

Starting from a reconstruction of Beck's foundational intuition of a triadic ontology, centred on the basic act of being as the *in-one-another* of *reality*, *ideality* and *bonity*, this article focuses on Schadel's comprehensive account of triadic ontology as an "*in-ek-con-sistent*" rhythm of enactment, developed within a systematically intended perspective on the history of ideas and mentalities.

2. Heinrich Beck's Foundational Intuition of a Triadic Ontology: The Ground-Act of Being as In-One-Another of Reality, Ideality and Bonity

Heinrich Beck (1929–2024) was a professor of philosophy in Bamberg, Germany, until 1997. At the centre of his thinking stand the philosophical question of God[7] and the intuition of a *triadic ontology*[8]. Beck's research project *Kreativer Friede durch Begegnung der Weltkulturen* (*Creative Peace through the Encounter of World Cultures*), which he carried out in collaboration with representatives of all world cultures, has produced numerous publications[9]. However, his strictly

6 - However, the term *triadic ontology* does *not* imply a dualism between philosophy and theology (as in the modern diastasis between rationalism and fideism). According to the Bamberg School, in the sense of a cooperation between philosophy and theology, non-Christian philosophers can, on the one hand, contribute to the clarification of the divine principle of reality: for example, Plato, who asked about the "cause of all things" and saw it in the unity of *Being*, *Idea* and *Good*, as well as Parmenides, Plotinus and Proclus with their sphere or circle symbolism, which represents the perfection of being as an indwelling of *centre*, *radius* and *circumference*. On the other hand, statements in the holy texts (also non-Christian texts) can stimulate philosophical-ontological insights: for example, the "ex ipso, per ipsum, in ipsum" of Rom. 11:36 or the "sum qui sum" of Ex. 3:14.

7 - Cf. H. Beck, *Natürliche Theologie. Grundriss philosophischer Gotteserkenntnis*, Pustet, München-Salzburg, 1988^2.

8 - Cf. Id., *Dialogik - Analogie - Trinität. Ausgewählte Beiträge und Aufsätze des Autors zu seinem 80. Geburtstag*, with an Introduction and edited by E. Schadel (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 28), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2009; Id., *Der Akt-Charakter des Seins. Eine spekulative Weiterführung der Seinslehre Thomas von Aquins aus einer Anregung durch das dialektische Prinzip Hegels* (1965), 2nd revised edition (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 19), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2001, in particular pp. 118-132, 166-173 and 321-355.

9 - Among others, cf. H. Beck - I. Quiles (edd.), *Entwicklung zur Menschlichkeit durch Begegnung westlicher und östlicher Kultur. Akten des IV. Interkontinentalen Kolloquiums zur philosophischen In-sistenzanthropologie, Bamberg, 1-6. September 1986* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 1), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1988; H. Beck - G. Schmirber (edd.), *Kreativer Friede durch Begegnung der Weltkulturen* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 9), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1995.

philosophical approach to triadic ontology has received relatively little dedicated attention[10].

Beck's approach to triadic ontology is to be reconstructed on the basis of his discussion of Hegel's dialectical principle (in his main study *Der Akt-Charakter des Seins*[11]). Beck argues that Hegel sees being only in the state of going out of itself, of making itself explicit, whereby it goes ever deeper into itself in a negating act: being as *ideality* or "Idea". Hegel does not see that being's going out of itself is only possible if being is previously in itself and already identical with itself: if being is *reality*. Beck's interpretation of Hegelian idealism can be further explained in the light of the last chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, which represent the completion of the process through which the Idea is supposed to have "realised" itself. The Idea as "Idea of Good" is understood here as a contradictory unity of "knowledge" and "reality": Good is indeed an "absolute postulate", but nothing more than a postulate; it expresses being as a contradiction (as dynamically identical with nothingness), i.e. being in a state of ideality that does not presuppose reality. Inspired by the doctrine of the transcendentals *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, and following Thomas Aquinas' view that "being" *per se* represents something not only absolutely active (as in Hegel), but also absolutely positive, a "pure act" (*actus purus)* as the "actuality of all acts" (*actualitas omnium actuum*)[12], Beck argues that *bonity*[13] can emerge only on the condition that ideality has emerged from reality:

> The flow or life or activity (= the 'Wirklichkeit') of being is, in the first process, as a flow from reality to ideality, the 'generation' of the image of knowledge or 'productivity of knowledge', but as the reflection of the image back to its origin it is pure light (– this is what makes the image at first internal space, interiority of reality –); in the second process, as the bringing of the image back into its own reality, it is a 'pulling' act of love, but as a 'wanting to return' it is a 'striving' act of love, in which reality and ideality step beyond themselves into the pure confluence of their essential content. Just as reality completely enters its ideality and this completely takes reality into itself, the value (the bonity) also remains completely in both and both remain completely in value (through the identical essential content)[14].

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10 - Cf. E. Schadel, *Zum inneren Zusammenhang von Dialogik, Analogie und Trinität. Hinführung zur ganzheitlichen Intention des Beckschen Philosophierens*, in H. Beck, *Dialogik - Analogie - Trinität*, cit., pp. 9-82.

11 - See footnote 8.

12 - Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, qu. 7, a. 2, ad 9.

13 - Germ. *Bonität*, lat. *bonitas*; i.e., value or goodness as ontological fulfilment.

14 - H. Beck, *Der Akt-Charakter des Seins*, p. 192 (my translation from German). On the "pulling"-"striving" dialectic of the act of love in onto-triadic perspective, cf. id., *Das Prinzip Liebe. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*, Berlin 2018.

Such a process is not affected by negation and contradiction: *reality*, *ideality* and *bonity* are to be understood as "subsisting relations"[15].

Hegel's "repression" of reality led to the "existentialist" conception that man is essentially nothing. The resulting nihilism can be overcome by drawing on the reflections of the Argentine philosopher of religion Ismael Quiles (1906–1993). In his study *Antropología filosófica in-sistencial*[16], Quiles argues that existentialism, which wanted to "save" the concrete human being, nevertheless came to the conclusion that man represents something "lost in the world" who, in a precarious encounter with himself, discovers above all his instability and his nothingness. But this is precisely what shows, according to Quiles, that *"ek-sistence"* (which literally means "being outside") is not the most original aspect of man. Man can only realise himself in a "being outside" or *Da-Sein* under the condition that he is first "in-himself", which Quiles indicates with the term *"insistence"* (*in-sistere*). Beck's reception of Quiles' *"insistentialism"*[17] led to his characterisation of the inner structure of man and of the act of being in general as *"in-ek-rein-sistence"* (*In-ek-reïn-sistenz*): from (1.) an original being-in-oneself (*in*) to (2.) a being-out-and-confronted (*ek*), to (3.) a being-returned-in-oneself or being-in-oneself-again (*rein*)[18]. From this also derives the term *"in-ek-con-sistence"* (coined by Erwin Schadel), which meaningfully emphasises the finality within the act of being using a word (*consistence* or *consistency*) that also in common language expresses fullness of being[19]. The identified structure of the act of being as *in-one-another* of *in-sistent reality*, *ek-sistent ideality* and *rein-* or *con-sistent bonity* establishes a conception of being that represents neither monism nor pluralism, but rather describes a graded similarity in interrelationship and dialogue. In this context, creative global peace means an order that is not imposed from "outside" or

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15 - The concept of *relatio ut subsistens* is used by Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I, qu. 29, a. 4, resp.) to describe divine personhood. In his critique of Hegelian idealism (in his *Teosofia*), Antonio Rosmini, similarly to Beck, understands the triadic divine ground of being as the "insession" (*insessione* or *insidenza*) of the "real form" (*forma reale*), the "ideal form" (*forma ideale*) and the "moral form" (*forma morale*).

16 - Cf. I. Quiles, *Antropología filosófica in-sistencial*, Ediciones Depalma, Buenos Aires 19832.

17 - Cf. H. Beck, *Quiles: Die Antithese einer In-sistenzphilosophie*, in Id., *Ek-in-sistenz. Positionen und Transformationen der Existenzphilosophie. Einführung in die Dynamik existentiellen Denkens* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 2), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1989, pp. 121-140; M. Raffaelli, *Un'amicizia filosofica intercontinentale: Heinrich Beck e Ismael Quiles*, in AA.VV., *Persona y acción del R.P. Ismael Quiles S.J.*, with a preface of J.M. Bergoglio, Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires 2010, pp. 135-155.

18 - Cf. H. Beck, *Das ek-insistentielle Verhältnis von Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften in der abendländischen Kultur*, in H. Beck - I. Quiles (edd.), *Entwicklung zur Menschlichkeit durch Begegnung westlicher und östlicher Kultur*, cit., pp. 171-186.

19 - Cf. E. Schadel, *In-sistenzphilosophie. Eine systematische Einführung in den Denkansatz des Ismael Quiles*, Junghans, Cuxhaven-Dartford 1996.

"above", but rather is implemented from "within" by corresponding to the triadic basic disposition of human being.

3. Erwin Schadel's Comprehensive Account of a Triadic Ontology within a Systematically Intended Perspective on the History of Ideas and Mentalities

Erwin Schadel (1946–2016) was a professor of philosophy in Bamberg until 2011. The key to his thinking is the reconstruction of a *triadic ontology* within a systematically intended perspective on the history of ideas and mentalities (cf., among others, his *Bibliotheca Trinitariorum*[20] and his *Musik als Trinitätssymbol*[21]). This reconstruction is based on an enormous wealth of material and a great number of authors, including the Neoplatonists, Augustine, Bonaventure and Nicholas of Cusa, as well as Kepler, Comenius and Leibniz, and a critical debate is carried out primarily with Kant (cf. his study *Kants „Tantalischer Schmertz"*[22])[23]. There have been very few articles published on Schadel's approach to triadic ontology[24].

3.1 Neoplatonic and Augustinian Origins

Schadel's approach to triadic ontology is to be reconstructed in light of his interpretation of Augustine's trinitarian speculation, and the term *in-ek-con-sistence* is to be understood with reference to the Augustinian formulation (developed in a modified reception of the Neoplatonic three-stage hypostasis

20 - The "Bibliotheca Trinitariorum" project, led by Schadel and established at Beck's Chair for Philosophy at the University of Bamberg, aimed to examine the triadic and trinitarian literature as comprehensively as possible and to prepare it for further scientific processing. Cf. E. Schadel (edd.), *Bibliotheca Trinitariorum. Internationale Bibliographie trinitarischer Literatur*, 2 vols., K. G. Saur, München 1984/88. Cf. also id., *La Trinidad como problema filosófico*, separata de «Estudios Trinitarios», XL (2006), nn. 1-2, pp. 305-421 (this work, written at the invitation of N. Silanes, director of the Secretariado Trinitario in Salamanca, was conceived by the author as an update and continuation of his *Bibliotheca Trinitariorum*).

21 - Id., *Musik als Trinitätssymbol. Einführung in die harmonikale Metaphysik* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 8), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1995. In this study, the overall basic musical structures are explained as an "archetypal" network of ontic triadicity.

22 - Id., *Kants „Tantalischer Schmertz". Versuch einer konstruktiven Kritizismus-Kritik in ontotriadischer Perspektive* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 13), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1998.

23 - For a detailed overview of Schadel's scientific and academic production, see https://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/philosophie/Homepage/Forschung/Schadel/Literaturliste_Lebenslauf_Schadel.pdf.

24 - Cf. Chr. Schäfer - U. Voigt (edd.), *Memoria – Intellectus – Voluntas. Festschrift für Erwin Schadel zum 65. Geburtstag* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 29), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2011.

model)[25], which reads: "Every being is one by which it holds together, another one by which it is distinguished, and another one by which it corresponds" (*Omne quod est, aliud est quo constat, aliud quo discernitur, aliud quo congruit*)[26]. On the basis of the circle and sphere symbolism used in Neoplatonism[27] (and previously by Parmenides[28]), the internally differentiated wholeness of being can be understood as the correlational and processual unity of an *in-sistent* "centre", an *ek-sistent* "radius" and a *con-sistent* "circumference"[29].

In his debate with the late antique skeptics, Augustine argues by means of his well-known *si fallor sum* that every possibility of deceit necessarily implies the being of the one who deceives. This very connection to being is recognised or known and, for the sake of self-fulfilment, also desired or affirmed (loved)[30]. As Schadel emphasises, the indwelling of *being*, *knowing* and *willing* or *loving* (*esse*, *nosse*, *velle* or *amare*)[31] determined in this way implies that the integral self-knowledge of man is always to be understood as knowledge of being. The inner constitution of being (generally explained: of *being*, *knowing* and *willing*, or,

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25 - Cf. O. du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin. Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1966, pp. 537-540 ("Table des triades"). The Neoplatonic triad reached Augustine mainly through Porphyry; see A. Dahl, *Augustin und Plotin. Philosophische Untersuchungen zum Trinitätsproblem und zur Nuslehre*, Lindstedts Univ.-Bokhandel, Lund 1945; P. Aubin, *Plotin et le Christianisme. Triade plotinienne et Trinité chrétienne*, Beauchesne, Paris 1992; M.J. Edwards, *Porphyry and the intelligible triad*, in «Journal of Hellenic Studies», 110 (1990), pp. 14-25.

26 - Augustinus, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q. 18 ("De Trinitate").

27 - Cf. W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Klostermann, Frankfurt/M. 1979², in particular pp. 165-239.

28 - Parmenides, *Fragment* 8, ll. 42-44.

29 - Cf. also Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia* I, 21, 64. A similar circular process in unity has been expressed in the term περιχώρησις ("walking around"), which was introduced by John of Damascus to characterise the living pulsation of the Trinitarian structured divine ground of being. In the 12th century this term was first translated into Latin as *circum-in-cessio* and, a century later, as *circum-in-sessio*. These two translations express two inseparable aspects of the correlational and processual unity of the three Persons: the word *cessio* ("walking") characterises the dynamic aspect, which accentuates the relational difference of the three Persons; the word *sessio* ("sitting") the static aspect, in which their subsisting identity is emphasised. For an interpretation of Plotinus's three hypostases One–Intellect–Soul (ἕν–νοῦς–ψυχή) as not subordinated but integrated, i.e. as a "perichoretic" indwelling, cf. K.H. Cho, *Zeit als Abbild der Ewigkeit. Historische und systematische Erläuterungen zu Plotins Enneade III 7* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 16), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1999. For an interpretation of Proclus's triad of Remaining–Procession–Return (μονή–πρόοδος–ἐπιστροφή) as an *in-ek-con-sistent* rhythm of enactment, cf. E. Schadel, *Zur ontotriadischen Begründung ganzheitlichen Denkens*, in Id. (edd.), *Ganzheitliches Denken* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 10), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1996, pp. 13-48. See also W. Beierwaltes, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, cit., in particular pp. 111-164.

30 - Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XI, 26.

31 - Id., *Confessiones* XIII, 11, 12.

intramentally specified: of *memory*, *intellect* and *will* [*memoria*, *intellectus*, *voluntas*][32]) can therefore be characterised as an "inseparable difference" (*inseparabilis distinctio*)[33] of three dimensions: an *ontic* one, in which the spontaneity of the basic ground of being *in-sists*; a *logical* one, in which being comes to its *ek-sistent* form and is clarified in its essential structure; and an *ethical* one, in which that essential structure attains its *con-sistent*, fulfilling self-correspondence in spontaneous being and is thereby able to release creative forces[34]. Human spiritual interiority as such has overcome all spatial determinants, but it is still affected by the identity-reducing temporality which it experiences as a "no longer" and/or a "not yet". An inseparable difference, however, cannot be affected by time, because in time nothing exists as inseparable from the other, but always as "before" or "after" the other. It thus constitutes the reality of being in its pure, absolute positivity. In order to "find" itself, it is therefore necessary for human spiritual interiority to detemporalise itself in an introscending ascent towards God. For, ontologically speaking, God *per se is* the intrinsically unlimited actuality (or, with Bonaventure, the *"summa communicatio"*[35]) of that three-dimensionality (as *"universalis omnium causa efficiens, exemplans et terminans"*[36]) in which everything that exists in space and time participates in a specifically limited way.

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32 - Id., *De Trinitate* X, 11. See also *ibid.*, X, 10, 14: "If someone doubts, he remembers why he is doubting; if he doubts, he understands he is doubting; if he doubts, he has a will to be certain" (*Si [quis] dubitat, unde dubitat meminit; si dubitat, dubitare se intelligit; si dubitat, certus esse vult*).

33 - Id., *Confessiones* XIII, 11, 12.

34 - Cf. E. Schadel, *Sein, Erkennen, Lieben. Grundzüge einer ganzheitlichen Kommunikationstheorie im Ausgang von augustinischer Trinitätsspekulation*, in id., *Trinität als Archetyp? Erläuterungen zu C. G. Jung, Hegel und Augustinus* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 26), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2008, pp. 117-170. Augustine takes up the fundamental processual triad of the Neoplatonic hypostases model, but modifies it at the decisive point: "He criticises Neoplatonic emanationism by making the clearest possible distinction between the internal *generatio verbi* (which can be 'verified' within human spiritual interiority) and the external *creatio mundi* (which makes possible the tracing of the *vestigia Trinitatis* in what is given in space and time). From this perspective, one can even assert that the doctrine of the Trinity – contrary to the usual view – represents a genuinely philosophical rather than a merely biblical-theological theorem. Or, to put it more pointedly: Christianity (like many Judeo-Christian sub-groups) would, in the course of history, have 'fallen by the wayside' if it had been retained unchanged in a biblicistic mode of speech and had not – by means of onto-theo-logical reflections – discovered within it a universal format!" (*ibid.*, p. 124; my translation from German). Schadel's point is that Augustine detaches Trinitarian speculation from a purely biblicistic framework and gives it a philosophical universality. In this sense, the doctrine of the Trinity is not reduced to revelation but attains the status of a rational principle concerning the inner structure of being.

35 - Bonaventura, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* VI, 3.

36 - *Ibid.*, V, 7. Similarly, by adopting the Aristotelian theory of the three causes of *eidos* – "origin, form, finality" (ἀρχή–μορφή–τέλος) – with an integrative and systematic intent, Thomas Aquinas describes the

3.2 A Triadic Critique of Modernity

The concept of an *analogia entis* or *trinitatis* was replaced in modernity by a subject-centred way of thinking. In this regard, the genealogy of modernity developed by Schadel from an onto-triadic perspective is illuminating. Schadel shows how René Descartes replaced – without any consideration of merit – the Augustinian concept that man represents an "image de la Trinité" in *being*, *knowing* and *loving* with his subject-centred "moy, qui pense"[37]. According to Schadel's analysis, this epoch-making change in the philosophical paradigm is based on the fact that *modus mentis* and *modus entis* are immediately fused in a sort of "short circuit". The resulting "repression" of the ground of being, which can be described with Heidegger as "forgetfulness of being", is to be understood according to Schadel as forgetfulness of the Trinity or of the triadic coherence of being.

As Schadel elucidates from a history of ideas perspective, this repression of the triadic act nature of being produced a one-sidedly dominant rationalism, which placed every being-in-itself (the "thing in itself") beyond the knowable. It is particularly promising for an understanding of the (implicit) significance of the Kantian system to take into account the *onto-logo-ethical* wholeness, which Augustine was able to ascertain by means of a Trinitarian synopsis from the three "principal sciences" (*physics*, *logic* and *ethics*) handed down in Hellenistic philosophy[38]. *Feeling*, *thinking* and *willing* (the three "higher mental faculties" which Kant deals with one after the other in his three *Critiques*) can be understood in an onto-triadic horizon as a balanced structure of performance: *feeling* relates receptively to the "being" of the respective problematised thing; *thinking* is responsible for structuring the received content in accordance with its nature; *willing* is about gaining the impulse to act that makes it possible to translate the theoretically clarified problem into practice. If Kant had realised the onto-triadic coherence of the mental faculties, he would have been able to discover the *in-sistent* or *implicative basis* in the faculty of feeling (*Critique of Judgment*), its *ek-sistent* or *explicative expression* in the faculty of cognition (*Critique of Pure Reason*), and its *con-sistent* or *complicative fulfilment* in the faculty of desire (*Critique of Practical Reason*). The priority of a "critical" consideration of the "mental faculties" as a necessary condition for human thinking, acting and feeling implies the absolute prioritisation of the logical over the ontic and the ethical (i.e.

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divine Persons as "*causa efficiens, exemplaris et finalis omnium rerum*" (*Summa theologiae* I, q. 44, a. 4, ad 4).

37 - Cf. E. Schadel, *Geistinnerlichkeit als Trinitätsanalogie. Eine konstruktive Kritik neuzeitlicher Subjektozentrik im Lichte der Augustinischen Selbstvergewisserung*, in «θεολογία» (Athens), 70 (1999), pp. 141-152.

38 - Cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* XI, 25.

the abstract separation of the logical and the ethical from their ground of being: the logical moment, which should proceed from reality, finds its reality only in its pure abstraction, and the ethical moment, which should consist in the return to reality, remains "suspended" also in its pure abstraction, as is evident in the "categorical imperative"). It follows from this very prioritisation of the logical over the ontic and the ethical that the "thing in itself" (a being-in-itself in general) can no longer be an object of human thinking, acting and feeling.

In methodological terms, Schadel points out that this paradigm shift implies a transition from "content-related" (*inhaltsbezogen*) to "total" abstraction. It is assumed that nothing can be assumed in the act of knowing. This results in a constructivism that, because it attempts to "found" itself in the groundlessness of nothing, can never overcome the arbitrariness of its positing acts. Hegel's dialectic is an example of this[39]. In conceptual difference to Platonic-Socratic dialogics[40], it attempts to deduce everything from a concept. It thus trivialises the question of sufficient reason and posits the one and the other as negatively identical; it does not show how the other emerges from the one. This lack of integrative wholeness is prolonged in modern epistemology (e.g. in Wittgenstein) and in modern ethics (e.g. in the existentialists), which are characterised by the fundamental experience of the absurd. According to Schadel, this experience of the absurd and the related nihilism have their philosophical coordinates in a negative triad: *dialecticism-positivism-existentialism*[41].

3.3 An "Other" Modernity: Campanella, Comenius and Leibniz – Towards a Consistent Ontology of Freedom

For Schadel, the way out of nihilism is offered by Comenius and Leibniz. It is worth noting here that Comenius and Leibniz received crucial inspiration from Thomas Campanella (1568-1639)[42]. Campanella's doctrine of primalities, developed in his *Metaphysics*, aimed to reconstruct the internally differentiated ground of being as a mutual indwelling of effective *power*, formative *wisdom* and fulfilling *love* (*potentia*, *sapientia*, *amor*). According to Campanella, human beings have a

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39 - Cf. E. Schadel, *Hegel – ein "protestantischer" Trinitätsphilosoph?*, in Id., *Trinität als Archetyp?*, cit., pp. 69-115.

40 - Cf. Id., *Platon als Interpret des Sokratischen Denkimpulses*, in P. Bruns (edd.), *Große Gestalten der Alten Welt*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2005, pp. 101-121; Id., *Vergesst Sokrates! Plädoyer für ein ganzheitlich-integrales Philosophieren*, in «Comenius-Jahrbuch», 22-24 (2014-2016), pp. 96-112.

41 - See in particular Schadel's Introduction to his *Bibliotheca Trinitariorum*, cit.

42 - Cf. M. Raffaelli, *Macht, Weisheit, Liebe. Campanella und Comenius als Vordenker einer friedvoll globalisierten Weltgemeinschaft* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 27), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2009.

limited participation in the essentially unlimited (divine) ground of being. In order to express the pure positive unity of the divine ground of being, Campanella introduced the neologism *toticipatio* (formed analogously to *participatio*): the primalities *power*, *wisdom* and *love* "mutually communicate through toticipation and are encircled by the circle of unity" (*[Primalitates] communicantur invicem per toticipationem et circumdantur unitatis circulo*)[43]. This expresses the "world-transcendent" basis of communication, which, as a criterion of reality, underlies the "world-immanent" communication of individual persons, nations, cultures and religions. Campanella does not overlook the deficit that is characteristic of every participant by virtue of the fact that it cannot be identical with the origin. He describes the totality of the deficit that is "mixed" with every contingent being as *powerlessness*, *unwisdom* and *unlove* or *hatred* (*impotentia*, *insipientia*, *disamor*). The negative is clearly "located" in the dimension of space and time, thus preventing the pantheising conclusion of a permanent self-relativisation of the Absolute, which can be observed in Hegel and other theorists of German Idealism. From a "short-circuited" identification of human participation and divine toticipation, Hegel concludes that the Absolute is immanently antithetical, thus revealing nothing other than the conditioning of finite subjectivity, in which being and "nothingness" are "mixed" with one another.

John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), who engaged in a systematic critical discussion of antitrinitarian Socinianism[44], explicitly adopted Campanella's ternary *power*, *wisdom* and *love* or *goodness* and characterised the concept of "toticipation" as a *communicatio totius naturae*[45]. In Comenius (in particular in his *Consultatio*

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43 - T. Campanella, *Metaphysica*, Parisiis 1638 [repr. Bottega d'Erasmo, Torino 1961], pars II, lib. X, art. 2, p. 252.

44 - Cf. J.A. Comenius, *Antisozinianische Schriften*, with an Introduction and ed. by E. Schadel [2 subvols. in: Comenius, *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. by D. Tschižewskij and K. Schaller, IV], Olms, Hildesheim 1983; E. Schadel, *Die Sozinianismuskritik des J.A. Comenius und die Genese des neuzeitlichen Selbst- und Wissenschaftsverständnisses. Versuch einer kritischen Würdigung der pansophischen Triadik*, in K. Schaller (ed.), *Comenius, Erkennen - Glauben - Handeln. Internationales Comenius-Colloquium (Herborn 1984)*, Academia-Verlag Richarz, Sankt Augustin 1985, pp. 164-188; J.A. Comenius, *Wiederholte Ansprache an Baron Wolzogen/Iteratus ad Baronem Wolzogenium sermo*, with an "Einführung in die antisozinianischen Kontroverse des späten Comenius" and ed. by E. Schadel (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 22), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2002; Id., *Antisozinianische Schriften* (German translation), 3 vols., ed. by E. Schadel (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 25), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2008.

45 - Id., *De rerum humanarum emendatione Consultatio Catholica*, I, Academia Scientiarum Bohemoslovaca, Pragae 1966, col. 379. Among others, cf. E. Schadel, *Beobachtungen zur Comenianischen Rezeption und Modifikation trinitätsmetaphysischer Terminologie*, in J.A. Comenius, *Pforte der Dinge / Janua rerum*, ed. by E. Schadel, Meiner, Hamburg 1989, pp. 208-219; Id., *Das triertiale Konzept des Comenius*, *ibid.*, pp. 219-230; Id., *Zu Comenius' triadisch-enneadischer Kategorienauffassung*, *ibid.*, pp. 230-241; Id., *Die ter-*

Catholica) a further development of Campanella's doctrine of primalities can be observed, insofar as he endeavoured to translate the integral theory expressed there (which he took up under the term of "pansophy") into concrete integral practice. Despite the terrible spiritual situation of his time – which, with Campanella, can be described as *tyranny* (powerlessness in politics), *sophism* (unwisdom in science and philosophy) and *hypocrisy* (hatred in religion) – he did not resign, but sought out the positive fundamentals of *politics*, *philosophy* and *religion* and, above all, strove to bring their distinct and composite connection into view. It is clear to him, the theologian, that a purely religious reformation would be ineffective unless politics and philosophy are reformed at the same time. He therefore "emancipates" politics and philosophy as "equal sisters" of religion and invites representatives of these three areas to a universal "consultation"[46], which should lead to an integral reform through the establishment of three inter-corresponding world organisations (*Court of Peace*, *College of Light* and *Consistory of Holiness*). These are called to ensure the mutually challenging and promoting coexistence of politics (as *in-sistent* "centre" of *communion*), philosophy (as *ek-sistent* "radius" of *communication*), and religion(s) (as *con-sistent* "circumference" of *goodness* or *love*).

As Schadel shows, G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716) received crucial inspiration from both Campanella and Comenius, and referred to a fully triadic or trinitarian onto-theology, as can be found in Richard of Saint Victor[47]. In systematic terms, Leibniz's "monad" represents a whole whose self-fulfilment consists in the internal mutual indwelling of the three "primordialités" or "primautés" *power*, *knowledge* and *will* (*puissance*, *connoissance*, *volonté*)[48]. This very immanence of action comes to light in the here and now in different intensities and "brightness": in the sensitive, the

nare Pansophie des Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) als Korrektiv für neuzeitlichen Indifferentismus, in «Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie», 48 (2003), pp. 69-98.

46 - Cf. Id., (edd.), *Johann Amos Comenius - Vordenker eines kreativen Friedens. Deutsch-tschechisches Kolloquium anlässlich des 75. Geburtstages von Heinrich Beck (Universität Bamberg, 13-16. April 2004)* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 24), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 2005.

47 - Cf. Id., *Zu Leibniz' 'Defensio Trinitatis'. Historische und systematische Perspektiven, insbesondere zur Theodizee-Problematik*, in E. Schadel (edd.), *Actualitas omnium actuum* (*Schriften zur Triadik und Ontodynamik*, 3), Peter Lang, Frankfurt/M. 1989, pp. 235-305; Id., *Comenius' Pansophie - ein Initialmoment des Leibnizschen Philosophierens?*, in H. Breger - J. Herbst - S. Erdner (edd.), *VIII. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress "Einheit in der Vielheit" (Hannover, 24-29. Juli 2006)*, Teil 2, Gottfried-Wilhelm-Leibniz-Gesellschaft (Druck: Hartmann), Hannover 2006, pp. 898-908; Id., *Do we live in the best of all possible worlds? Some commentaries on Leibniz' "Monadology" and "Theodicy"*, in «Studia comeniana et historica», 40 (2010) n. 83, pp. 110-128.

48 - Cf. G.W. Leibniz, *Monadologie*, § 48; E. Schadel, *Monade als Triade. Leibniz' Beitrag zu post-nihilistischer Erneuerung*, in E. Schadel (edd.), *Ganzheitliches Denken*, cit., pp. 113-134.

vegetative, the intellectual-personal, the national and the international. This means that Leibniz's monadology conceives of a pluralism of wholes, all of which participate in the divine central monad, in its *"toticipative"* unity of *unlimited power*, *unlimited knowledge* and *unlimited will*, and are therefore designed for harmonious unification (i.e. for a unity in which their specific characteristics are preserved). Leibniz describes human spiritual souls in particular as "living mirrors of the universe" (*miroirs vivants de l'univers*) and each one of them as a "little divinity" (*petite divinité*)[49]. He concisely summarises his holistic-analogical understanding of reality in the preface to his *Theodicy*:

> The perfections of God are those of our souls, but he possesses them without limits: he is an Ocean, of which we have received only drops; there is in us some *power*, some *knowledge* and some *goodness*, but in God they are all in their entirety. Order, proportions, harmony delight us; painting and music are samples of these: God is all order; he always keeps truth of proportions, he makes universal harmony; all beauty is an effusion of his rays[50].

At the threshold of the modern process of rationalisation, Comenius and Leibniz endeavoured to use the principle of harmony to demonstrate triadic-analogous references in the most diverse areas of reality. For Schadel, their exemplary relevance lies in the fact that they are able to overcome the separation of *power*, *knowledge* and *will* (or *love*) at its origin. This separation has permeated modernity and consists in the pure abstraction of the three moments: power as *unlimited will to power*, knowledge as (application of) axiomatically formulated *abstract methodology*, and will as *total individual independence*. Comenius and Leibniz are able to offer a model for an "other" integral modernity, where it becomes possible to track down the triadic basic rhythm "in the historically diversely mediated

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49 - Cf. G.W. Leibniz, *Principes de la nature*, § 3.

50 - Id., *Theodicy*, Preface (GP VI, 27). According to Schadel, universal harmony is to be understood as *in-ek-con-sistent* rhythm of enactment, which also explains the overall basic musical structures, as shown in the senarian triad (in the *toticipative* indwelling of *in-sistent octave* [1:2], *ek-sistent fifth* [2:3] and *con-sistent double third* [4:5/5:6]), as well as in the triad derivatives, namely in the *diatonic* (*tonic*, *dominant* and *subdominant*) and in the *chromatic* (which represents the interaction of the *senarian* and *diatonic*). Cf. E. Schadel, *Musik als Trinitätssymbol*, in particular pp. 177-235 (*Der Dur-Dreiklang als binnendifferenzierte Verbindlichkeitsstruktur von Musik*). For an interpretation of Kepler's concept of universal harmony in onto-triadic perspective cf., Id., *Grundlinien einer harmonikalen Wirklichkeitsauffassung. Überlegungen im Ausgang von Johannes Kepler*, in F. Pichler (edd.), *Der Harmoniegedanke Gestern und Heute. Peuerbach-Symposium 2002*, Trauner, Linz 2003, pp. 69-79; Id., *Kepler as a Theorist of Music. His Geometrical Presentation of Basic Intervals - Explained in the Perspective of Onto-Harmonical Integrality*, in Univ. of Zielona Góra / Institute for the History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw (edd.), *Kepler 2008: From Tübingen to Sagan. Internat. Conference,* Zielona Góra - Żagań, *22-26 June 2008*, Zielona Góra Żagań 2008, pp. 129-143.

conditions, in order to make it fruitful as a fundamental and optimal basic form of being – as the basis of being of reasonable freedom [*Seinsbasis vernünftiger Freiheit*] – for the purpose of a consistent design of the future"[51].

4. Conclusion

The reconstruction of triadic ontology undertaken by the Bamberg School reveals a path that is both philosophically rigorous and existentially urgent. Beck's foundational intuition of the act of being as the *in-one-another* of *reality*, *ideality* and *bonity* discloses a structure of thought that overcomes the oppositions of monism and pluralism. Schadel, in turn, broadens this intuition into a comprehensive historical-systematic vision, showing how the triadic rhythm of *in-ek-con-sistence* constitutes not only the inner logic of being but also the critical measure of philosophical reflection and, inseparably, of cultural, political and religious developments.

In this light, the Bamberg School represents more than a local chapter in twentieth-century philosophy. It offers a key for addressing the nihilistic impasses of modernity, which result from the disjunction of *power*, *knowledge* and *love*. The triadic structure of being, as an inseparable difference and dynamic unity, opens the possibility of conceiving *freedom not as arbitrary self-assertion but as consistent correspondence to the ground of being*.

Precisely here lies the actuality of Schadel's perspective: in an age dominated by technological rationality and fragmented epistemologies, triadic ontology provides a framework to retrieve the wholeness of truth. It suggests that philosophy today must recover its most ancient task – the articulation of *reality, truth and goodness in their mutual indwelling* – if it is to respond to the crises of our epoch. In this sense, the Bamberg School not only preserves a tradition but also projects it forward as a resource for rethinking thought and life within a truly integral horizon.

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51 - Id., *Renaissance des Trinitarischen?*, in «Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte», 33 (1990), pp. 278-300, here p. 300 (my translation from German).