

# Logic, Dialectic and Love: Trinitarian Self-Giving Beyond and Within Thinking and Thought

*di Eduard Fiedler*

*Hemmerle's transformation of the question "What remains?" by pointing to love is paradoxical. How is it possible for love to remain when it is that which does not insist on itself, but rather gives itself completely? How are we to think of the remaining of that which does not remain? And yet the recent development of philosophy shows that truth and thought are entangled in just such self-referential "paradoxes of the infinite". This paper will follow Heidegger, Przywara and Hemmerle in studying how Trinitarian self-giving or love is a transformative rhythm of being beyond logic and dialectic. Does it move away from the impasses of modern philosophy and renew the tradition of Trinitarian metaphysics, so that it becomes clear why neither logic nor dialectic but only love completes the emendatory task of thought?*

*Keywords: Logic, Dialectic, Analogy, Love, Trinitarian Ontology*

## Introduction: The Mystery of Love<sup>1</sup>

Václav Havel's famous words, "truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred", resonated through the streets of Prague during the 1989 Velvet revolution<sup>2</sup>. These words echoed not only the eschatological hope that in the end love will remain, but also the depths of ancient conundrums, because it is indeed love which ultimately remains but it remains from within the structures of struggle and conflict. Love is entangled in labyrinths and mysteries when understood as a principle of historical or cosmic dynamics as well as when considered as such. Empedocles expressed the cosmic and historical dynamics of love ("Φιλότης") through its polar opposition to hate ("Νεῖκος"), so that love emerges from the midst of the vortex ("ἐν δὲ μέσῃ στροφάλλιγγι") as that in which all things are unified not by chance but by will<sup>3</sup>. This coming together into union through will happens due to the intrinsic nature of love, yet even in this context we cannot avoid perplexing ambivalence. Following Plato, and later Christian Platonism, the unitive nature of love must be spoken of in the dialectic of self-acquiring eros, or self-giving agape<sup>4</sup>.

That thinking of love as such, as well as a principle of cosmic or historical renewal, is thinking of something ambivalent or paradoxical, also applies to every subsequent Trinitarian metaphysics. In his *General Consultation on the Improvement of Human Affairs*, the early modern Czech and Moravian philosopher and theologian Jan Amos Komenský, or Comenius (1592-1670), observes that the resolution of our scientific, political and religious crises does not take place by a simple (logical) identification of the perfect essences of things, or by a (dialectical) negation of what is negative about things<sup>5</sup>. When a negation is negated from outside, it

1 - This publication was funded by the project "Trinitarian Ontologies: A New Philosophical Investigation into Trinitarian Relationality" (JG\_2024\_002) implemented within the Palacký University Young Researcher Grant.

2 - See the visual documentation "Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred!" Wenceslas Square, December 10, 1989 in M. Žantovský, *Havel: A Life*, Grove Press, New York 2014. Havel did not mean these words merely as a slogan or political motto. The fragility of love in the face of hatred was also very consistently reflected in his V. Havel, *The Anatomy of Hate*, in «Diogenes», 44 (1996), pp. 19-24. Havel's discourse on love and hatred is clearly political, historical, but also metaphysical or even theological.

3 - DK B 35 (H. Diels - W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Weidmannschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin 1960, p. 327).

4 - The strict division between love in the sense of eros and love in the sense of agape was emphasized in the 20th century by A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1953. Nygren's thesis is problematic not only regarding the relationship between Christianity and Platonism, but also in relation to Platonism as such, which may not necessarily be interpreted as resolutely dualistic.

5 - In the preface to the entire monumental *Consultatio Catholica*, Comenius notes the failure of earlier emendational programmes that, while identifying a good idea, failed to consider the whole of ideas in all

leads only to another negation, unless negation is inwardly converted through love to its original positivity, so that negation has been a relational difference of love from all eternity. This is why Comenius needed to develop a Trinitarian metaphysics articulating the meaning of relations on the basis of an analogy with the Trinitarian love, but this analogy is realized through a constant search for the wisdom transcending the divisions of logical affirmations and dialectical negations, activity and passivity, being and nothingness<sup>6</sup>. This means that Trinitarian metaphysics also circles around love in thinking it as an elusive reality expressed in the form of a paradox.

In what follows, I will explore how these paradoxes of thinking of love are discussed in Klaus Hemmerle's Trinitarian ontology and what future philosophical possibilities could be opened by integrating it into a broader tradition of Trinitarian metaphysics, such as that of Comenius. For this purpose, I will first recapitulate how thinking itself in the form of either logic or dialectic is problematic, following Martin Heidegger and Erich Przywara. Next, I will show how Hemmerle goes beyond the orders of logic and dialectic through his dialogical analogy culminating in a transformation of the question "What remains?" by paradoxically pointing to the love that only remains. Does Trinitarian ontology, in thinking how love is a transformative reality beyond the orders of logic and dialectic, move away from the impasses of modern philosophy trapped in its "paradoxes of the infinite"? Can we advance the programme proposed by Comenius in early modernity by means of Hemmerle's Trinitarian ontology so that political renewal is possible not by programmatic affirmation or negation, but in relation to the eschatological reality of love? The point is to observe how love initiates the task of thinking even where the

---

their relational contexts and aspects. This reductive partiality led to the fact that the programmes of emendation could not be fully realized. Instead, they contributed to further controversy because their partialness caused them to be opposed to another partial truth, so that they were programmes of confrontation and conflict, the negation of a negation, rather than programmes of emendation: «Experience has certainly taught us that it is useless to contradict one another, to quarrel, to reproach one another for errors of opinion [...]. Sects, born, grown and strengthened by strife, must be dissolved and transformed by the gentle heat of love, because otherwise it is impossible. For the darkness cannot be dispelled by darkness, opinion will not give way before opinion, nor sect before sect, nor hatred before hatred. Rather, they harden and strengthen one against the other, for the same things, inasmuch as they are the same, always lead to the same effects, opposite to opposite» (J.A. Komenský, *De Rerum Humanarum Emendatione Consultatio Catholica: Editio Princeps*, Tom. I, Academia, Praha 1966, p. 38). Although Comenius himself does not explicitly use the terms "logic" and "dialectic" in this context, we can summarize his vision by saying that hope is neither the logical identification of an idea nor its dialectical development in the struggle of opposites, but the real transformation by the "the gentle heat of love" ("charitatis blando calore").

**6** - J.A. Komenský, *Janua Rerum* (1681), VIII, Ad censores (J. A. Komenský, *Spisy o první filosofii*, Oikoy-menih, Praha 2017, pp. 307-309). Cf. E. Fiedler - D. Ševčík, *Komenského trinitární metafyzika a Nové trinitární ontologie*, in «Studia comeniana et historica», 103-104 (2020), pp. 133-151.

task of thinking seemed impossible, or how love poetically continues the task of thinking even where the task of thinking in logic and dialectic seemed to end.

### **Critique of Logic and Dialectic in Heidegger and Przywara**

The inadequacy of logic and dialectic as philosophical forms of thinking was famously pointed out in the the 20th century by two influential German philosophers, Martin Heidegger and Erich Przywara<sup>7</sup>. A comparison of their approaches to this problem is essential in order to understand the way in which Klaus Hemmerle's Trinitarian ontology of love transforms logical and dialectical forms of philosophical thought, because it is much more a response to the problematic nature of the modern philosophy of German idealism, phenomenology, or structural ontology than simply a direct continuation of the earlier premodern Trinitarian metaphysics of Comenius, Cusa, Bonaventure, Augustine, or Gregory of Nyssa, although the inadequacy of mere logic and dialectic in the face of the Trinitarian mystery or Christological dogmatic formulations was already evident to them all.

Without a direct link to this explicitly theological context and its tradition, Martin Heidegger's critique of logic and dialectic was perhaps most explicitly developed in his Freiburg Lectures on *Grundsätze des Denkens*, delivered in 1957<sup>8</sup>. Although the self-understanding of existence or Dasein was already carefully addressed in *Sein und Zeit*<sup>9</sup>, the concept of thinking ("Denken") still played a rather subordinate role there. It was only after the so called "Kehre" that the topic of

---

7 - At first glance, their lives and work are in many ways different, but on closer inspection, according to John Betz, Przywara might even be spoken of as «Heidegger's Jesuit alter ego» (J. Betz, *After Heidegger and Marion: The task of Christian metaphysics today*, in «Modern Theology», 34, 4 [2018], pp. 565-597, here p. 592). The comparative analysis of the thought of Martin Heidegger and Erich Przywara was the subject of K. Metzl, *Phenomenological hermeneutics and analogia entis: Martin Heidegger - with Erich Przywara further thought - modern case of an understanding theology*, Edition Tre Fiume, Passau 2007. Metzl focuses mainly on the mere reproduction of Heidegger's and Przywara's central ideas and does not provide a critical comparison. Recently, John Betz also dealt with this topic in J. Betz, *The Analogia Entis as a Standard of Catholic Engagement: Erich Przywara's Critique of Phenomenology and Dialectical Theology*, in «Modern Theology», 35, 1 (2019), pp. 81-102, here pp. 99-102. Przywara's reception of Heidegger's philosophy is discussed by J. Wolfe, *Heidegger and Theology*, Bloomsbury, London 2014, pp. 174-176.

8 - M. Heidegger, *Grundsätze des Denkens: Freiburger Vorträge 1957*, in M. Heidegger, *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, edited by P. Jaeger, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1994 (Gesamtausgabe, Band 79), pp. 79-167.

9 - «Dasein ist Seiendes, das sich in seinem Sein verstehend zu diesem Sein verhält» (M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen 2006, §12, pp. 52-53).

fundamental thinking emerged in Heidegger<sup>10</sup>. In the Freiburg Lectures on *Grundsätze des Denkens*, Heidegger speaks of fundamental thinking within the context of an eventful necessity of the leap into the abyssal togetherness of thinking and being. But why and from what should one leap ("Ab-Sprung")? According to Heidegger, merely logical and calculating thinking regulated by the laws of thought (the law of identity, the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle) obscures the path to the place of their origin, and thus prepares the way for the so called "Ge-Stell"<sup>11</sup>, the technological fall away from the original saying of "λογος": «Today's huge march of calculation in technology, industry, economics and politics testifies to the power of thinking possessed by the λογος of logic in a form almost bordering on madness»<sup>12</sup>. But even dialectical thinking (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) does not help. Although dialectic exposes the illusion of universal all-embracing logical thinking<sup>13</sup>, at the same time it remains trapped in its reflexive activity within the process of looking for reasons. «Both calculative and dialectical thinking are essentially the same thing»<sup>14</sup>. They look for reasons or grounds. And by looking for reasons or grounds as if everything has a reason or ground ("principium rationis sufficientis"), they overlook the difference that grounds the ground without being just another ground. In Heidegger's view, neither merely calculating logic (proceeding linear from the ground) nor reflective dialectics (proceeding reflexive back to the ground) represent the fundamental thinking of being. The only thing that remains is the radical departure from the Western metaphysical tradition: only such

10 - F.J. Wetz, "Was heißt Denken?", "Grundsätze des Denkens" und kleinere Schriften aus dem Umkreis: Denken zwischen Forschen und Hören, in *Heidegger Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, edited by D. Thomä, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart - Weimar 2013, pp. 240-247, here p. 240.

11 - «Das Ereignis vereignet Mensch und Sein in ihr wesenhaftes Zusammen. Ein erstes, uns heute bedrängendes Scheinen des Ereignisses erblicken wir im Ge-Stell. Das Ge-Stell aber macht das Wesen der modernen technischen Welt aus. Das Ge-Stell geht uns überall unmittelbar an. Das Ge-Stell ist, falls wir jetzt noch so sprechen dürfen, seiender als alle Atomenergien und alles Maschinenwesen, seiender als jede Form der Organisation, Information und Automatisierung. Im Ge-Stell erblicken wir ein Zusammengehören von Mensch und Sein, worin das Gehörenlassen erst die Art des Zusammen und dessen Einheit bestimmt. Das Ge-Stell fordert den Menschen zur Berechnung des Sein heraus, das selber in die Berechenbarkeit eingefordert ist. Das Ge-Stell stellt beide, Mensch und Sein, darauf hin, einander herauszufordern in das Bestellen des Seienden als eines bestellbaren Bestandes» (M. Heidegger, *Grundsätze des Denkens*, cit., pp. 126-127). The concept of "Ge-Stell" implies the entire breadth of Heidegger's critique of technology. Cf. above all M. Heidegger, *Die Frage nach der Technik*, in: M. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze (1936-1953)*, edited by F.-W. v. Herrmann, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2000 (Gesamtausgabe, Band 7), pp. 5-36.

12 - M. Heidegger, *Grundsätze des Denkens*, cit., p. 156.

13 - *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

14 - *Ibid.*, p. 133.

a departure could make possible the kind of thinking that emerges from the abyss of its original relation ("Zusammengehörigkeit") to being<sup>15</sup>.

It could be argued that Erich Przywara explores nothing else in his *Analogia entis* than this original relation of thought and being in the "λογος". Przywara does it by distinguishing three "ordering" orders of thought: logic, dialectic and analogy<sup>16</sup>. Pure logic ("λογίζεσθαι") grasps the fullness of reality directly from its perfect idea. However, this unfolding of "λογος" is opposed by the problems inherent in λογος itself, namely the relation between idea and thing<sup>17</sup>. Dialectic ("δια-λογίζεσθαι") builds on this, and thinks the very contrast of different possibilities, it represents «standing in-between of possibilities»<sup>18</sup>. This means that dialectic is a realism, but in the delirium of irresolution between an aporetic night of opposites and a desire to merge into one. With this, the contradiction of opposites ends again as the collapsed identity, and points beyond itself to the order of analogy ("ἀνα-λογίζεσθαι"). Analogy unfolds the λογος as the principle of the inner balance between identity (which is otherwise unsuccessful in logic) and contradiction (which is otherwise equally unsuccessful in dialectic)<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the analogy for Przywara is already a form of thinking that thinks Trinitarian love<sup>20</sup>.

Despite the great similarity of their critique of logic and dialectic, Heidegger does not know this "analogical" solution, although he was of course aware of the doctrine of "analogia entis". His early reception of Brentano<sup>21</sup>, his habilitation essay on Duns Scotus<sup>22</sup> or even *Sein und Zeit*<sup>23</sup> itself testify to how seriously he thought about it. However, in contrast to the orders of logic and dialectic, the anal-

**15** - *Ibid.*, pp. 97-114; 118-129. The deep flaw in this Heideggerian solution is that, while it does indeed give an admirable voice to the poetic origin of speech and thought in the eschatological context of future expectation, it does not allow the stammering everyday speech of natural language to be heard in the ordinary gestures (merely ontic gifts and signs) of mutual solidarity and love. Cf. E. Fiedler, *Revelations from the Underground: Trinitarian Metaphysics and the Underground Church*, in «Religions», 14, 7 (2023).

**16** - E. Przywara, *Analogia entis: Metaphysik*, Kösel und Pustet, München 1932, \$5, pp. 65-66.

**17** - *Ibid.*, p. 66-67.

**18** - *Ibid.*, p. 67-68.

**19** - *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

**20** - *Ibid.*, p. 55. Therefore, according to Przywara, theological metaphysics must strive to bring metaphysical themes to ever greater depths of God, i.e., to the inner-personal life of God in the Holy Trinity. For more primary and secondary sources on analogy as a form of Trinitarian thinking, cf. E. Schadel (ed.), *Bibliotheca Trinitariorum*, Bd. 2, K. G. Saur, München - New York - London - Paris 1988, pp. 35-47.

**21** - L.B. Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit*, Bd. 1., Herder, Freiburg - Basel - Wien 1969, p. 456.

**22** - *Ibid.*, p. 458.

**23** - «Sein ist nach der Bezeichnung der mittelalterlichen Ontologie ein transcendens. Die Einheit dieses transzendental Allgemeinen gegenüber der Mannigfaltigkeit der sachhaltigen obersten Gattungsbegriffe hat schon Aristoteles als die Einheit der Analogie erkannt. Mit dieser Entdeckung hat Aristoteles bei aller

ogy is no longer addressed in his Freiburg Lectures on *Grundsätze des Denkens* at all. Here, only fundamental thinking as a leap from predicative thinking towards listening to the unspeakable events of self-revelatory being mediates the meaning of being. But the unity-in-difference structuring the meaning of being presents the actual problematic of the “*analogia entis*”, so that in Heidegger’s neglect of analogy it is his prejudices against theological metaphysics rather than his otherwise great theoretical sensibility that are decisive.

## Hemmerle’s Dialogical Analogy and Thinking of Love

Now, just like Heidegger or Przywara, Klaus Hemmerle also sought a new form of thinking beyond mere logic and dialectic in conversation with the philosophies of German idealism and phenomenology. I will not explore the direct connections between Hemmerle and Heidegger or Przywara at this point, but it could be pointed out that the influence of the late Heidegger reaches Hemmerle through his teacher Bernhard Welte<sup>24</sup> and the influence of Przywara’s *Analogia entis* through the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar<sup>25</sup>. However, Hemmerle also thinks of this problem quite originally, as he had demonstrated already in his dissertation on Franz von Baader

---

Abhängigkeit von der ontologischen Fragestellung Platons das Problem des Seins auf eine grundsätzlich neue Basis gestellt» (M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, cit., §1, p. 3).

**24** - Hemmerle describes Welte’s reception of Heidegger’s thought as follows: «W. begegnete Heidegger nicht in rascher christlicher Vereinnahmung, sondern im Eingehen auf die äußere Fremdheit und Ferne zwischen seinem Gedanken und den Inhalten und Formen christlicher Überlieferung» (K. Hemmerle, *Art. Welte, Bernhard, Religionsphilosoph und Theologe*, in *Baden-Württembergische Biographien*, edited by B. Ottnad, Bd. I, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 378-380, here p. 379). Cf. V. Gaudio, *Einleitung*, in K. Hemmerle, *Verdankendes Denken: Schriften zum Verhältnis von Philosophie und Theologie*, edited by V. Gaudio, Alber Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau 2023, pp. 15-60, here pp. 24-29.

**25** - John Betz suggests that «Hemmerle builds (implicitly) on what Przywara showed us and passed on to Balthasar, showing how the *analogia entis* is perfected as an *analogia Trinitatis*» (J. Betz, *What’s New in the New Trinitarian Ontology? A Commentary on Klaus Hemmerle’s Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology*, in «Modern Theology», 39, 1 [2023], pp. 131-158, here p. 157). The relationship between Hemmerle’s Trinitarian ontology and Przywara’s “*analogia entis*”, however, remains unclear. While Betz does not find much new in Hemmerle’s conception of analogy compared to Przywara’s (apart from a more radical emphasis on the origin at the descent of analogy from above Trinitarian relations), I try to show in this paper that Hemmerle’s dialogical conception of analogy culminates in his conception of thinking as love, so that the analogy between creation and Creator is not conceivable in terms of the individual relationship between creation and Creator, but only through the analogy between created relationality and Trinitarian relationality, which corresponds to the “*analogia proportionalitatis*”, but unlike in Przywara, it plays here not only the apophatic role of greater dissimilarity, but also of ever greater similarity, though not with the individual subject, but with interpersonal love in Christ, and thus beyond the very opposition of the dissimilarity and similarity.



and his habilitation on Schelling. Hemmerle observes that Franz von Baader integrates an idealistic system of absolute thought with an emphasis on the dialogical interactions between Creator and creation<sup>26</sup>. Creation is a free act of the Triune Love, and as such constitutes the original trust that makes possible human thought as that which finds itself in quiet movement towards the other, and the other is not reduced to my thinking through affirmation or negation, but my thinking becomes more itself in relation to the other, and the other becomes more himself in relation to my thinking. Triune Love creates a spiritual dialogue of love, «for what is love other than the embraced identity of self-confinement with openness beyond oneself?»<sup>27</sup>.

Franz von Baader's dialogical idealism of Triune Love led Hemmerle to Schelling's late philosophy which attempts to think the absolute where the common language of revealed religion ("allgemeiner Sprachgebrauch") points to, that is where "God is God" because people let themselves be addressed by God through invocation, confession, or celebration<sup>28</sup>. Schelling may still not fully analogically derive logical and dialectical forms of thought from the reality of these dialogical, spiritual and liturgical relations or interactions associated with revealed religion, but Hemmerle, inspired by this emphasis, develops a new conception of analogy. He calls it a «dialogical analogy» ("dia-logische Ana-logie")<sup>29</sup>. «You [the other] are like me – yet God is not like me, but like you [the other]»<sup>30</sup>. Whereas Schelling finds the divine God through the reflexive return to the original positivity that thinking does not give itself but receives, Hemmerle suggests that the way to the divine God is through dialogical thinking ("δια"), which, by participating in the consubstantiality of God, analogizes and elevates ("ἀνα") itself to the Triune God<sup>31</sup>. As with Heidegger, thinking here is not simply a logical deduction of reality from an idea or a dialectical negation, but unlike in Heidegger, the futural and eschatological gesture involved in thankful receptivity of thinking is made real through the relations of reciprocal sign and gift-exchange within particular forms of religious life including any obstacles and failures. This is also something that distinguishes Hemmerle's "dialogical analogy" from Przywara's "analogia entis", which is an ascending "analogia attributionis" crossed by a cloud of shining darkness of "analogia proportion-

26 - K. Hemmerle, *Franz von Baaders philosophischer Gedanke der Schöpfung*, Alber Verlag, Freiburg im Breisgau 1963, p. 10.

27 - *Ibid.*, p. 144.

28 - *Id.*, *Gott und das Denken nach Schellings Spätphilosophie*, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 1968, p. 322.

29 - *Ibid.*, pp. 323-331.

30 - *Ibid.*, pp. 325; 331.

31 - *Ibidem*.



alitäts", through which space is given to the "wholly other and dissimilar" that descends in finite forms in the inverted "analogia attributionis", especially the humanity of Christ<sup>32</sup>. Thus, whereas in Przywara analogy is theoretically possible as an individual relation of the thinking soul and the Trinity mediated by Christ, in Hemmerle there is nothing like an individual relation, but only a shared relationality, which can be thought dialogically by "thinking together" ("mit-denken"), so that the ascending and descending "analogia attributionis" is not only crossed by the cloud of the "analogia proportionalitatis" in the peak of its ascent, but also in the descent through the historical embodiment of concrete forms of being, thought and speech among us ("die Gewähr des Empor im Zwischen")<sup>33</sup>. Other people are not hell, but the shining darkness or mystery of God's revelation in history. The other is like me, but that does not mean that God is radically unlike us because of our common fallen likeness, and the only likeness to God would come as if in spite of our shared likeness. For Hemmerle, rather surprisingly, the other is like me, but God is like the other, not like me, so that any similarity of the descending "analogia entis" is also a shared and relational similarity in-between us, and thus thinkable only in a dialogical and relational way of thinking together ("mit-denken")<sup>34</sup>.

Not only are logic and dialectic improper forms of thinking, thinking would not be thinking at all if it were only "thinking" and not also always already "not-thinking" in relation to oneself and thinking itself. But such a unity of "thinking" and "not-thinking", of being and non-being, is only possible in the analogy that is mediated by dialogical thinking together, so that non-being implied in the inward non-persistence on the enduring self-subsistence or in the inner negation of self-orient-

---

**32** - Hans Urs von Balthasar, following Przywara, speaks of Jesus Christ as a "concrete analogia entis". Cf. N.J. Healy, *The Eschatology of Hans Urs von Balthasar: Being as Communion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, pp. 93-118. This Christocentric conception of analogy is not unfamiliar to Hemmerle either, since his entire Trinitarian ontology is related to his Trinitarian Christology, which speaks of Trinitarian self-giving in relation to the Creator and the creation or divine and human natures of Jesus Christ. But even here Hemmerle is unique in how he explicitly explores the Trinitarian meaning of Christ's humanity without conflating his humanity (including all created relationality within historical interactions) and divinity. Cf. E. Fiedler, *Sebedarování Kristovo: Christologický základ trinitární ontologie Klause Hemmerleho*, Mervart, Červený Kostelec 2022. Significantly, it is perhaps this Christocentrism that can best serve to conceptually link the various historical forms of orthodox Trinitarian metaphysics, for Cusan and Comenius' pansophical Trinitarian metaphysics is also distinctly Christocentric, so that where the pure logic of identity or dialectic of irreconcilable contradiction fail, all is united in the centre that is love, or the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Cf. J.A. Komenský, *Consultatio Catholica*, cit., Pansophiae pars ultima, X., p. 775.

**33** - K. Hemmerle, *Gott und das Denken nach Schellings Spätphilosophie*, cit., p. 331.

**34** - This is why Valentina Gaudiano notes that Hemmerle's analogy differs from the Thomistic "analogia entis" precisely in its dialogical nature. «Die Analogie, die Hemmerle entwickelt, ist eine analogia relationis» (V. Gaudiano, *Einleitung*, cit., p. 40).

ed intentionality is surprisingly linked to being by the relationality that is involved in dialogical thinking together. We can discover in ourselves a pre-reflexive relational trust that is a gift from the other and therefore allows us not to insist on ourselves and to think in such a way that we are not thinking of ourselves and thinking itself, but of the other, and thus we are both more ourselves and more attentive to all spiritual realities. Here, the embraced identity of self-confinement with openness beyond oneself paradoxically coincides in thinking together in love beyond the opposites of being and non-being, "thinking" and "not-thinking", logic and dialectic. This way, the paradox of Hemmerle's dialogical analogy immediately brings us to the central §18 of Hemmerle's *Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology* where Hemmerle proposes a radical transformation of the metaphysical question "What remains?" by pointing to the love that alone remains:

For an ontology which starts from what is distinctively Christian, the basic question cannot any longer be what endures, and what changes. As little as this question can be permitted to drop away, it can just as little be the unquestioned starting-point. For whoever thinks starting out only from what remains, begins his thinking from a lonely starting-point, from enduring to the last [Sich-Durchhalten], from self-intentionality [Selbstintentionalität]. The revolutionizing force of the unadorned expression that love alone remains can hardly be overestimated<sup>35</sup>.

Neither the logic of the metaphysics of substance nor the dialectic of the metaphysics of the subject corresponds to thinking that comes from what is distinctively Christian<sup>36</sup>. Substance does indeed remain to the last, but because it insists on itself and wants to endure ("Sich-Durchhalten"), it does not welcome and integrate the last eschatological meaning of the accidental categories of being articulating suffering and non-being in history, and so it remains but in the splendid motionless solitude of pure logic. Subjective self-intentionality ("Selbstintentionalität"), though it never ceases to relate dialectically to itself, never finds a gift of pre-reflexive grace and trust in which it can also relate to the other, so that it remains but in the restless solitude of pure dialectics of self-reference. Both the remaining substance and the self-relating subject fade into nothingness. What seemed to last

---

<sup>35</sup> - K. Hemmerle, *Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology*, trans. S. Churchyard, Angelico Press, New York 2020, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> - Cf. K. Hemmerle, *Theses*, cit., p. 33. Unfortunately, a key sentence is missing from this new English translation: «Ein Seinsverständnis, dem das Letzte die Substanz, das Stehen-in-Sich, die Widerständigkeit und Selbständigkeit ist, aber auch eines, dem die *reditio in se completa*, der Kreislauf von Selbstentäußerung und Selbstrückkehr, das Selbstbewußtsein also, führendes Modell ist, sind zu schmal dimensioniert, um die trinitarische Vorgabe christlichen Seinsverständnisses voll einzulösen» (K. Hemmerle, *Thesen zu einer trinitarischen Ontologie*, Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1976, pp. 36-37).

and remain does not remain. Love alone remains. But how can love remain, as Hemmerle suggests, if it is precisely that which does not insist on itself but gives itself completely? How are we to think of the ultimate remaining of that which does not seem to remain at all?

Love remains a mystery. As we have seen, this is true of love in its cosmic or historical relation to hate, and also of the intrinsic nature of love in tension between desire or eros and agape. But it is also true when we overcome this last contradiction within love in Christ through the Trinitarian love that is complete self-giving beyond the contrast of self-acquiring eros and self-giving agape. Love understood as Trinitarian self-giving is still a mystery. Hemmerle recognized that this last mystery of love corresponds to the last mystery of thinking. The paradox of dialogical analogy and the paradox of self-giving love have the same structure, as they mediate the paradoxical reality beyond the opposites of being and non-being, identity and difference, unity and plurality, activity and passivity, rest and motion, affirmation and negation, or receiving and giving. When the Father gives Himself, He gives Himself in relational difference, not self-affirming identity or self-denying negation. When He thus gives the substantial maximum of Himself, He simultaneously withdraws from his gift to the maximum, so that He becomes in His gift both the substantial minimum and the maximum of Himself for the Other. Only in this way can the Son be the Son and not a second Father or Non- or Anti-Father. At the same time, only in this Spirit of self-giving Love is the Father also the Father of His Son, who is truly the Son. So the relational difference of self-giving love is the origin in the Father as the Father of His Son, it is the origin in the Son as the Son of His Father, and it is also the origin in itself as in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. The trinitarian process of self-giving is spiritual self-relationality and self-reference, but paradoxical self-reference-from-the-other and self-reference-to-the-other. In Hemmerle's *Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology*, this is the very reason why

thinking learns how to think anew in this "phenomenology"; it is transformed by becoming a going-along with the way of self-giving, the way of love. Thinking discovers, in this, that just this originality and immediacy of thinking is its own<sup>37</sup>.

## Conclusion: Remaining of What Does Not Remain

As we have seen, Hemmerle's dialogical conception of the analogical order of thinking complements the critique of the orders of logic and dialectic in Heidegger

---

37 - K. Hemmerle, *Theses*, cit., p. 50.

and Przywara, and, in contrast to Przywara, he additionally rethinks all the relations involved in analogical ascent and descent, so that there are no individual relations, but only shared relations of love, just as thinking must be thinking together in the self-giving way of Trinitarian love which does not insist on itself and gives itself completely.

The problems and contradictions associated with logic and dialectics are thus translated into the paradox of self-giving love. Surprisingly, this is not so far removed from the development of modern philosophy as it may seem. For although it did first attempt, directly or indirectly following Bernardo Bolzano's definition of a "proposition in itself" ("Satz an sich") in his *Wissenschaftslehre*<sup>38</sup>, to construct a pure eidetic order of logic outside of the pre-modern or early modern metaphysics of thinking soul and spirit, this anti-psychologic programme in the continental and analytic traditions<sup>39</sup> was very soon confronted with the "paradoxes of the infinite"<sup>40</sup> associated with self-centred subjectivity, self-relationality or self-referential propositions. The paradoxes involved in infinite self-referential loops penetrate modern set theory, quantum physics, complexity, self-organization or consciousness research<sup>41</sup>. Hemmerle's *Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology* had already been written with the awareness that a mere dialectical resolution of these paradoxes in

---

**38** - In Bolzano's *Wissenschaftslehre*, a "proposition in itself" is defined as «any statement that something is or is not, regardless of whether it is true or false, whether or not somebody has put it into words, and even whether or not it has been thought» (B. Bolzano, *Theory of science*, vol. 1, edited by R. George and P. Rusnock, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, §19, pp. 58-59).

**39** - The aim was to create a third realm of truth beyond the life of soul and things, which would guarantee objective truth independent of whether a mind or soul thinks it or not, or whether a real thing is expressed relationally through it or not. See on this C. Pickstock, *The Aspects of Truth: A New Religious Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2020, p. 92. The independence of "propositions in themselves" both on the soul and on things is essential for this "Bolzanian project". Therefore, in connection with the anti-psychologism of phenomenology and analytic philosophy, one should always speak also of their original anti-metaphysical character. This connection is usually not emphasized enough. It is only when we realize this that the requirement that the new metaphysics in 21st century must have a "psychological" dimension becomes understandable. But if it must be psychological or spiritual, it must also be theological if it is to distinguish legitimate forms of panpsychism from its problematic forms.

**40** - Bolzano believed that his new conception of the foundations of science and mathematics of infinitely small and infinitely large quantities would overcome the paradoxes connected with infinity. «Certainly most of the paradoxical statements encountered in the mathematical domain [...] are propositions which either immediately contain the idea of the infinite, or at least in some way or other depend upon that idea for their attempted proof. Still less is it open to dispute that this category of mathematical paradoxes includes precisely those which merit our closest scrutiny, inasmuch as a satisfactory refutation of their apparent contradictions is requisite for the solution of very important problems in such other sciences as physics and metaphysics» (B. Bolzano, *Paradoxes of the Infinite*, Routledge, New York 2014, §1, p. 75).

**41** - Cf. D.R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, Basic Books, New York 1999.

German idealism or some late modern forms of non-substantial thought that absolutize the self-referential relation as a new beginning from which everything can be deduced does not correspond to the mystery of the Holy Trinity as lived from within the real relations involved in concrete forms of Christian communities<sup>42</sup>.

This spiritual and metaphysical experience of the reality of Trinitarian love articulated in Hemmerle's *Theses* may indeed be the key to continuing the programme of Trinitarian metaphysics proposed as a remedy at the beginning of modernity. Comenius clearly saw that when love prevails over lies and hatred, it is never by a simple positive affirmation of perfect essences or by an external dialectical negation of what is negative. The programme of political renewal will not be realized by a logical deduction from the ideal, nor by a dialectical critique of everything dysfunctional and negative, because when affirmation is externally affirmed, it produces no change but resentment, and when negation is negated from the outside, it begets negation and conflict again. Comenius may have already noticed that when thinking seems impossible or rather ends here, the gentle heat of love ("charitatis blando calore") makes it real anew and continues in it, but perhaps only the Trinitarian ontology of the 20th century at the end of modernity, as in Hemmerle, can show more concretely how the paradox of love or self-giving is an inner spiritual movement of thought in the order of analogy, reaching all areas of being and thinking even where we would least expect it, and where everything is entangled in vicious circles and self-enclosed labyrinths. After all, we are sent out into the world to others to learn from the non-being of their suffering how to love and think being in new, surprising ways.

EDUARD FIEDLER

Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University in Olomouc (Czech Republic)  
[eduard.fiedler@upol.cz](mailto:eduard.fiedler@upol.cz)

---

**42** - This is why it is crucial to note that while Hemmerle emphasizes the centrality of relation in his *Theses*, he also strictly rejects its immanent absolutization (as developed by relational and structural ontologies in continental and analytic philosophy in 20th and 21st century). Cf. K. Hemmerle, *Theses*, cit., §18, p. 35: «But relationship and movement are not instituted as some new Principle from which everything would once again be inferred in a lonely deduction».