

MAÎTRE ECKHART: METAPHYSIQUE DU VERBE ET THÉOLOGIE NÉGATIVE, by Émilie zum Brunn and Alain de Libera. Beauchesne, Paris, 1984. pp. 249. 150 FF.

Interpretations of Eckhart are as many and as various as interpretations of Heraclitus; but the present authors are unusually well qualified to comment on Eckhart's philosophical beliefs. Both are well versed in patristic and medieval thought and both are currently engaged in the Cerf edition of Eckhart's Latin works. A. de Libera is, in addition, editing Ulrich of Strasbourg for the *Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi* and, also in 1984, he published a very useful introduction to the German Dominican school beginning with St Albert. The underlying conviction of the authors, and it is surely correct, is that it is meaningless to try to divide Eckhart into a 'philosopher' (especially in the Latin works) and a 'mystic' (especially in the German works). He is a philosopher in the classical sense: seeking to find and teach the way to the *beata vita* (p. 28). And, as is typical of the 'Cologne school', he draws on a wide range of philosophical and theological traditions, taking it for granted that there is a radical harmony between physics, metaphysics, logic, theology and spirituality. The authors claim that, for Eckhart, the Incarnation and, to a lesser extent, the doctrine of the Trinity, provide an essential key to metaphysics. There is a great deal that is fascinating and illuminating in their book, and they certainly show that Eckhart's 'spirituality' is scarcely intelligible without reference to his philosophy; for instance, his doctrine of birth in the Word rests on the Aristotelian-Thomist theory of substantial change. However some parts of the exposition are not entirely convincing: for instance, the proposed link between Trinitarian theology and transcendentals (p. 135). And it is not entirely clear what the relationship is between the 'metaphysics of the Logos' and negative theology (which both receive extended, but largely unrelated treatment). This lack of clarity is partly due to a rather surprising failure to relate the interpretation of Eckhart to the appropriation of Proclus which is, as Libera himself has pointed out elsewhere, so characteristic of the German Dominicans. The authors also never make it quite clear what they mean by 'mystical'; in spite of a passing comment on p. 185 which suggests a classic, Dionysian, interpretation, elsewhere they seem to presuppose much more modern usage, with its focus on 'experience', and they do not, to my mind, succeed in substantiating the claim that 'experience' is important in Eckhart. But then they never make it clear what they mean by 'experience' either. And, though their few references to earlier 'mystics' like Hadewijk and Mechthild are useful, the authors are clearly much more at home with Eckhart's philosophical context than with his ascetical context. The authors are occasionally somewhat careless in their discussion of particular texts: for instance, they try to make Eckhart more palatable to feminists by juxtaposing his noble 'man in the soul' with the even higher nobility ascribed to 'la femme' (p. 208); but in the passage referred to *wip* is not being contrasted with 'man', but with 'virgin': Eckhart is, rather mischievously, making 'wife' a more distinguished title than 'virgin'. But, in spite of a few irritants of this kind, this is a book to be commended; it is not definitive, obviously, and the authors themselves are engaged in work which will no doubt facilitate a more authoritative exposition later. But, as a provisional interpretation, it is interesting and will have to be taken seriously.

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THE COGNITIVITY OF RELIGION: THREE PERSPECTIVES by J. Kellenberger. Macmillan, 1982. Basingstoke and London. pp x + 214, £25.00.

This work, which is often colloquial in expression, could have benefited from more revision so as to allay the impression of composition by dictation. It could also have benefited from more thorough proof-reading.

Kellenberger first depicts two Perspectives concerning the roles of rationality and cognitivism in religion. The First Perspective is prone to deny that religion can have external