

unconscious structures, is equally untenable. (Merleau-Ponty's insistence on a 'lived equivalent' for these structures is feeble.) The Post-Structuralists accuse structuralist ethnologists of 'bizarre attempts to learn the rules of languages which appear to have no native speakers' (p. 166); they exempt Saussure from this criticism. But the unconscious structures which Saussure and Merleau-Ponty claim to have discovered beneath the practices of speakers are themselves, in principle, 'rules' of languages which have no native speakers: such 'rules' have no conceivable role to play in guiding, justifying and correcting the activities of language users.

Had Merleau-Ponty instead moved away from the Cartesian conception of consciousness as private and subjective, to a view of consciousness as internally related to public concepts, he could have overcome the aforementioned duality (and others which worried him) by making the items internally related, without surrendering the 'philosophy of consciousness'.

These remarks, however, are principally targeted at Merleau-Ponty. If Schmidt is insufficiently critical of his philosopher, his is still a decidedly worthwhile book.

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**ORIGEN**, by Joseph Trigg. *SCM Press*. 1985. Pp. xvi + 300. £9.50.

This is an excellent general introduction to the life and writings of Origen, which will be welcomed by English-speaking students. The author writes sensibly, with sympathy and enthusiasm, and manages in a relatively concise book to convey both the interest and the importance of Origen as a scholar, exegete and speculative theologian. His insistence on O.'s literary competence as a *grammaticus*, whose comments on scripture are therefore not totally alien to the interests of modern biblical scholarship, is a useful reminder that there is more to Alexandrian commentaries, whether pagan or Christian, than the allegorising which is at first sight so off-putting for modern readers.

It is, of course, possible to cavil at some of the author's remarks. In my view, he oversimplifies O.'s christology; it is, no doubt, true that O. can be taken as supporting a subordinationist view (and the same is true of Justin, for instance). But some texts can be cited which tend in an anti-subordinationist direction (e.g. *Cels.* VI 69; *Heract.* 4). The truth of the matter is surely that O. does not have a single, systematic christology; depending on what point he is arguing, he will say different things in different contexts. Against the tendency of some naive Christians, he wants to stress the transcendence of God beyond the Logos (and especially beyond the incarnate Logos). But, to underpin the doctrine of prayer, for instance, he needs to stress the adequacy of the Son to the Father. Similarly he needs to stress the adequacy of the Son as the revelation of the Father.

Similarly the author sometimes gives the impression that O. was inventing doctrines which he may very well have received as part of a theological tradition. If he takes *theos* to refer primarily to the Father, he is simply being true to scriptural usage (as Karl Rahner reminded us). His exegetical concern to interpret the bible in a manner worthy of God and of the patriarchs derives from Judaism (as Strecker taught us, among others). Even the belief in the pre-existence of souls could probably have come from contemporary Judaism.

Trigg is certainly right to say that the scholastics made less use of Origen than some earlier western theologians; but to say that they had 'little use' for him is perhaps exaggerated. St. Thomas, for instance, makes considerable use of his exegetical works in his own scriptural commentaries.

Scholars will surely continue to debate many facts of O.'s life and thought; but Trigg has at last provided a clear introduction to him which will make him accessible to a much wider public, and this is no mean achievement.

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