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The Call of the Origin: On Christology, Conversion, and Peregrine Identity in Reiner Schürmann's Early Work on Meister Eckhart

Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore

Abstract: In 1969, Reiner Schürmann submitted a thesis to the Dominican school of theology Le Saulchoir. It was titled *Peregrine Identity: The Concept of Detachment in Meister Eckhart's German Sermons* (portions of which are published for the first time in this issue of MMT). Three years later, Schürmann published *Wandering Joy*, his celebrated book on Eckhart. In this article, we examine four aspects of the earlier study that cannot, as such, be found in the later one: (1) the specifically Christological dimension of Eckhart's teaching of detachment; (2) a logic of conversion at work in Eckhart and St. Francis; (3) Schürmann's hermeneutics of the symbol; and (4) the practical outcomes of Heidegger's ontological difference as it is inflected by what Schürmann calls wandering or "peregrine" difference. We aim to show how the questions and issues raised in Schürmann's thesis remain vital for all those readers of Eckhart who seek to restore their own existence to its essential freedom.

At Eastertime in 1969, the German-American philosopher Reiner Schürmann (1941–1993) submitted his *thèse du lectorat* to the French Dominican school Le Saulchoir, thus completing his years as a student of philosophy and theology with a thesis on Meister Eckhart. It was entitled *Identité pérégrinale: Le concept de détachement dans les sermons allemands de Maître Eckhart (Peregrine Identity: The Concept of Detachment in Meister Eckhart's German Sermons)*.¹ Two years later, Schürmann would defend a markedly different, much longer version of his text as a dissertation at the Sorbonne, which he then published in 1972 with minor revisions under the title *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante (Meister Eckhart; or, Wandering Joy)* and again in English in

¹ Bound copies of Schürmann's typescript can be found in the Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, call number 326 B 312, and Dominikanerkonvent St. Josef Düsseldorf, call number N-006-00219. The latter copy is available online: <https://digital.dombibliothek-koeln.de/ddbkhd/content/titleinfo/523718>. Henceforth "IP," followed by page number. "PI" will refer to the translation of the introduction and conclusion of Schürmann's thesis as published in this issue of *Medieval Mystical Theology*. All translations for which an English edition is not given are our own. For archival material that is not in English and not digitally accessible, we will provide the original in footnotes. We thank Nicolas Schneider for his comments on an earlier draft.

1978 as *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher*.² When Lindisfarne Books re-released the English version in 2001, this time under the title *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy*, Bernard McGinn saw fit to describe it as “[o]ne of the most penetrating and original studies of the great fourteenth-century Dominican. It is,” he continued, “a boon for all students of Eckhart to have this ground-breaking book available.”³ The late Richard Woods, for his part, found Schürmann’s text to be “deep and insightful” and noted that it had “established the philosophical and theological relevance of Eckhart’s thought for a generation of students.”⁴ And more recently, Alex Dubilet has emphasized how *Wandering Joy* “bring[s] to the front the theoretical freshness, inventiveness, and excitement that can be recovered in Eckhart’s thought—a speculative engagement that exceeds the boundaries of the interest of the historian.”⁵

What scholars have not been able to appreciate, however, is the significant changes Schürmann’s path-breaking study underwent in the years between its submission to Le Saulchoir in 1969 and its publication in 1972. Four topics are particularly noteworthy in this regard, on which we will be focusing in the present article: (§1) the specifically Christological dimension of Eckhart’s doctrine of the begetting of the Son in the ground of the soul and in the selfsame ground of God; (§2) Schürmann’s description of a logic of conversion in Eckhart and St. Francis; (§3) Schürmann’s attempt at a hermeneutics of the symbol; and (§4) the practical outcomes of the ontological difference between being, beingness, and beings as it is inflected by what Schürmann calls wandering or “peregrine” difference. These crucial points, which, to greater and lesser extents, will later find their way into shorter essays but are not addressed extensively, if at all, in *Wandering Joy*, reveal not only the philosophical and theological preoccupations behind Schürmann’s “surge of interest” (IP: 9/PI: ***) in reading the Thuringian Master, but also the existential stakes of an authentically detached and released exegesis of Eckhart’s preaching of

² “Identité pérégrinale: Sermons allemands de Maître Eckhart,” Thèse pour le Doctorat du Troisième Cycle présentée à l’Université de Paris IV–La Sorbonne, June 1971, Bibliothèque du Saulchoir, call number 439 C 194. *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante: Sermons allemands traduits et commentés* (Paris: Planète, Denoël, 1972). *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher. Translations with Commentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

³ Bernard McGinn, blurb for Reiner Schürmann, *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy. Translation and Commentary* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne, 2001). McGinn discusses Schürmann’s book in *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man from Whom God Hid Nothing* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 30. In a forthcoming article on *Wandering Joy*, he contends that it “maintains its value fifty years after its original publication.” Bernard McGinn, “Reiner Schürmann on Meister Eckhart,” *Philosophy Today* 68, no. 4 (2024).

⁴ Richard J. Woods, O.P., *Meister Eckhart: Master of Mystics* (London: Continuum, 2011), xii, and blurb for *Wandering Joy*.

⁵ Alex Dubilet, “[Review of] Flasch, Kurt. Meister Eckhart,” *The Medieval Review* (2016), <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/22473/29445>.

Abgeschiedenheit and *Gelassenheit*. For the young Schürmann, the four points are intertwined. We untangle them here so as to shed light on the most considerable shifts between Schürmann's initial interpretation of Eckhart's message, as developed in the introduction and conclusion to the 1969 version of *Peregrine Identity* (published for the first time in this issue of *Medieval Mystical Theology*), and his later work on the Meister.⁶ Far from just providing a scholarly reconstruction of the genesis of a great book, our contribution aims to show how the questions and issues raised in Schürmann's thesis remain vital for all those readers of Eckhart who seek to restore their own existence to its "essential freedom" (IP: 18/PI: ***).

§1. Overcoming Christology?

The first change we want to highlight between *Peregrine Identity* (1969) and *Wandering Joy* (1972) concerns the status of Christianity in Eckhart's writings. Eckhart was no doubt a man of faith. But do not his teachings, for example of the oneness of the Godhead and the spark of the soul at the source of the Trinity, testify to experiences shared by other traditions? And if so, can they not be translated, without loss or betrayal, into non-Christian discourses, such as that of Zen Buddhism or even that of Martin Heidegger's philosophy? Based on Schürmann's published French text, one might well conclude in the affirmative. In that text, there is only one relevant passage on the specifically Christian dimension of Eckhart's work, a passage that Schürmann nevertheless subtly, but tellingly, amended for the English edition. Here, to begin, is a literal translation of the French original from 1972:

There is a great temptation to confuse the overcoming of the Son with the overcoming of Christianity altogether. Hegelians, Marxists, and Buddhists have succumbed to this. Judged by the yardstick of a dogmatic account of the history of salvation, the thought of Eckhart can indeed hardly appear Christian. But the logic of detachment [*détachement*] reflects the logic of the way of the cross.⁷

⁶ As these four issues—Christology, conversion, the symbol, and wandering—are most prominently on display in the introduction and conclusion of the 1969 thesis, we decided to include these portions of the 1969 thesis, translated into English by Michael Portal, in the present issue. The translation will be republished later this year alongside many other texts from Schürmann's student days until his final years in *Ways of Release: Writings on God, Eckhart, and Zen*, ed. Francesco Guercio and Ian Alexander Moore (Zurich: Diaphanes).

⁷ "La tentation est grande de confondre le dépassement du Fils, avec le dépassement du christianisme tout court. Hégéliens, marxistes, bouddhistes y ont succombé. Jugée à l'aune d'une dogmatique de l'histoire du salut, la pensée

In the final sentence of the quotation as it is found in the 1978 English version, a qualifier is introduced, the grammatical mood shifts, and the assertion becomes tentative:

But *it may well be* that the logic of detachment *somehow* reflects the logic of the way of the cross.⁸

Indeed, in the interim, Schürmann expressed himself more directly (albeit not in print). In a paper on ‘Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition,’ written in the years leading up to his decision to leave the priesthood in 1976⁹ but never published during his lifetime, Schürmann relegates Eckhart’s Christian terminology to mere “cultural conditions”:

Meister Eckhart’s vocabulary is Christian. The attitude of Releasement reflects itself in a movement between man and God. I consider, though, that this is due to cultural conditions: the experience itself is not religious.¹⁰

Or as he said in a 1977 lecture when discussing union with the Godhead:

The unity that is naturally given remains at the same time a task to be achieved: one must become “One with the One, One from One, One in One; and in One, One—eternally” (DW V, p. 119, 6f.). Here the difference between the originative and the originated has vanished. [...] Eckhart

d’Eckhart peut effectivement paraître peu chrétienne. Mais la logique du détachement répand un reflet du chemin de la croix.” Schürmann, *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante*, 257. Here and below, we give the pagination for the 2005 paperback.

⁸ Schürmann, *Wandering Joy*, 162; emphases added.

⁹ It goes beyond the scope of this study to track the convergences and divergences between Schürmann’s life and his lifelong engagement with Eckhart. To start, it would be necessary to read Schürmann’s autobiographical novel *Les Origines: Récit* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2003; first published in 1976) / *Origins*, trans. Elizabeth Preston (in collaboration with Schürmann) (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016); the more theologically oriented précis of the novel “Trouver enfin l’origine,” *La Vie spirituelle* 127, no. 596 (May–June 1973); and Claude Geffré’s homiletic eulogy for Schürmann, wherein one reads that Schürmann “departed faithful to his Dominican master Meister Eckart [*sic*]—i.e., to detachment even from God [*détachement même de Dieu*]. [...] Detachment and divinity = *Gelassenheit*. Letting go [*Lâcher prise*]. He knew this peace in the final hour of his life, ‘humbly’ . . . countenance illuminated with peace.” Quoted in the original French with discussion in Ian Alexander Moore, “On the Manifold Meaning of Letting-Be in Reiner Schürmann,” *Journal of Continental Philosophy* 2, no. 1 (2021): 127.

¹⁰ Reiner Schürmann, “Heidegger and the Mystical Tradition,” ed. Francesco Guercio, *Journal of Continental Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2020): 288. This paper was written while Schürmann was teaching at Duquesne University (1972–1975). Cf. Reiner Schürmann, “Heidegger and Meister Eckhart on Releasement,” *Research in Phenomenology* 3 (1973): 95–96.

ceases to be theocentric at all. And here I think we leave the schemes of thought of the inherited Christian metaphysics of the West.¹¹

It would seem, then, that there is nothing specifically Christian at the core of Eckhart's thinking—or at least nothing specifically Christian that should be taken for granted.

In the 1969 version of his study, which authorized him to teach theology in the Dominican order, Schürmann by no means takes the Christian character of Eckhart's key teaching for granted. According to this teaching, we must release ourselves from all attachments so as to be able to own up to and live out our oneness with the detachment or releasement of the Godhead, whose "spirit of letting-be" is diametrically opposed to the domineering, "Promethean attitude" of our age (IP: 16/PI: ***). Schürmann does, however, take the question seriously as to whether Christianity is an inextricable element of the Meister's teaching and preaching. There are two things in Eckhart that, when properly understood, make Schürmann lean toward saying yes. The first pertains to Christ's *kenōsis* or 'self-emptying' on the Cross as recounted in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (2:7–8). Although, as Schürmann acknowledges, Eckhart was little interested in the historical Christ, Eckhart's "destruction of theology as a science of God" was not aimed at overcoming Christology altogether but rather at distilling, through detachment and letting be, its essentially *practical* meaning: *imitatio Christi* (IP: 142/PI: ***). Schürmann ventures to state that "for Eckhart, theology, the *logos* on God, is nothing other than precisely the preaching of detachment or of conversion," and even that, for the Meister, "theology does not

¹¹ This lecture was published as "The Loss of the Origin in Soto Zen and Meister Eckhart," *The Thomist* 42, no. 2 (April 1978): 281–312. The first two sentences can be found on page 299. Schürmann cites Eckhart's *Book of Divine Consolation*. The final two sentences of the block quotation cannot be found in the published text but were delivered orally in 1977. See "Lecture delivered by Reiner Schürmann at Lindisfarne Association," audiotape archived at the Boyce Centennial Library of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. Later, when Schürmann returned to the relation between Eckhart and Zen, he retracted this claim, contending instead that Eckhart's theocentrism is unyielding and marks a narrow yet unbridgeable difference from Zen. See Reiner Schürmann, "Naturgesetz und blosse Natur: Über eine Denkerfahrung bei dem Meister Eckhart," *Zen Buddhism Today* 2 (1984): 127–49; in Schürmann's own English translation as "The Law of Nature and Pure Nature: A Thought-Experience in Meister Eckhart," *Krisis* 5–6 (1986–1987): 148–69. In his final reading of the Meister as developed in the second part of his posthumous magnum opus *Broken Hegemonies*, Schürmann will not view this difference from Zen in a pejorative light (as though Eckhart had not been radical enough) but rather positively as an indispensable component of what makes Eckhart a paradigmatic thinker of the 'double bind,' i.e., of an irresolvable contradiction between natality and mortality, between universalization and singularization, between legislation and transgression at the heart of life and being. In Eckhart's case this contradiction plays out in terms of the principle of natural law as guaranteed by God the Father and the abyssal pure nature of the Godhead, which is 'without why.' See Reiner Schürmann, *Des hégémonies brisées*, 2nd ed. (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2017) / *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

exist independently of the preaching of conversion” (IP: 142/PI: ***). The ‘imitation of Christ’ is the only way to experience God without the reified ‘God’; it is the only way to experience the divinity or Godhead without yielding to the temptation of begging for entitative moorage. For, as Schürmann declares, only the person who sets out on the way of detachment and thus undergoes the ordeal or “test of fire” that is the abandonment of “all supports to faith”—even the support of God himself—shall “follow Jesus Christ on the way of the Cross” (IP: 13, 142/PI: ***).

Christ’s self-emptying cannot, however, be dissociated from his love for humankind. Imitating him thus means being “united in [...] love [*agapēn*],” as Paul writes in the second chapter of his epistle just before presenting the *kenōsis* hymn (v. 2).¹² This is the second aspect of Eckhart’s Christianity that Schürmann stresses in the 1969 thesis, invoking the superiority of Martha over Mary in Pr. 86 (“Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum etc.”). Conceding that Eckhart’s daring mystical speculation and fervent imperative preaching might have led him to trespass the limits of Christian doctrine, Schürmann nevertheless argues in his favor by affirming that “if there is *hybris* in the work of Meister Eckhart, it is at least good to the extent that it leads to a mercy that acts among men” (IP: 145/PI: ***).

These two aspects bring Schürmann to conclude that “Eckhart’s thinking, in spite of the reservations that we have articulated and that should not be minimized, is profoundly Christian in inspiration [*d’inspiration profondément chrétienne*]” (IP: 145/PI: ***). Yet it is unclear how literally we are meant to take the word ‘inspiration’ here. Does Schürmann mean that Eckhart was motivated by (but may well have moved on from) Christianity, as ‘inspiration’ is often casually spoken of today? Or does he mean that Eckhart’s preaching of the love of detachment was pneumatically animated by the very breath of the Holy Spirit? Whatever Schürmann may have answered later in life,¹³ it would be peripheral, if not inappropriate, for him to give a definitive answer here, if indeed his aim for turning to Eckhart was a matter less of biographical curiosity or theoretical fascination than of exhibiting detachment and letting-be—or what

¹² *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966). This is the English translation of the French Bible that Schürmann used.

¹³ Not only, as mentioned, does Schürmann ‘de-theologize’ Eckhart just a few years later; he also de-theologizes the term *kenōsis*, using it for the emptying out of the *archē*—the ultimate normative authority—and of epochal history—the history of Being—as governed by it. Schürmann, *Des Hégémonies brisées*, 10, 592, 691, 700 / *Broken Hegemonies*, 4, 514, 601, 609. Furthermore, just two years after the 1969 thesis, Schürmann concludes a popular précis of his Eckhart-study *not* with the Martha-Mary sermon but with a Zen tale, thereby suggesting, if not their equivalence, then at least a shared underlying experience. Reiner Schürmann, “Maître Eckhart, expert en itinérance,” *La Vie spirituelle* 124, no. 578 (January 1971): 31–32. See also the conclusion of Reiner Schürmann, “[Review of] Masumi Shibata, *Les maîtres du zen au Japon*,” *La Vie spirituelle* 124, no. 578 (January 1971): 123–24.

Schürmann also simply calls “conversion”—as “the condition for the origin to manifest itself as a call [*appel*]” (IP: 136/PI: ***).

§2. The Logic of Conversion

This brings us to the second difference between Schürmann’s interpretation of Eckhart in 1969 and his interpretation in 1972. It concerns the logic of conversion, which is crucial in Schürmann’s thesis on Eckhart but almost entirely drops out of *Wandering Joy*. Similarly to what we saw with Eckhart’s Christology, there is only one important reference to conversion in the French version of *Wandering Joy*, which Schürmann modifies for the 1978 English publication. Here, again, is a literal translation of the French, followed by Schürmann’s English:

To learn the conversion that is ordained [*ordonnée*] and to comprehend the perfect identity with God that is already given [*donnée*]—these are the two faces, legislative and manifestative, of detachment.¹⁴

For Eckhart, learning how to give up everything and understanding perfect identity with God, which is already given, are the two aspects, legislative and manifestative, of releasement.¹⁵

In *Wandering Joy*, the practical side of detachment—i.e., what Schürmann calls in the thesis “the apprenticeship of the craft [*métier*] of living” (IP: 18/PI: ***)—and the hermeneutical one—i.e., understanding one’s existence by means of interpreting the word that addresses one as a call—are both maintained as its essential aspects. However, in *Wandering Joy*, ‘conversion,’ a term whose religious connotation suits a thesis in theology, makes way instead for a more secular paraphrase of detachment: “give up everything.” In the thesis, on the contrary, conversion plays a key role, denoting as it does a double, joint and thorough (*con-*) movement of turning (*vertere*): not only that of the human toward the origin, but also and above all of the origin to the human. It is the origin that, in the first place, converts to “the detached man” in order for existence to take up a path that will lead it “to renew itself entirely” (IP: 136/PI: ***). Nevertheless, for the origin

¹⁴ “Apprendre la conversion qui est ordonnée et comprendre l’identité parfaite avec Dieu qui est déjà donnée: voilà les deux faces, législative et manifestatrice, du détachement.” Schürmann, *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante*, 13.

¹⁵ Schürmann, *Wandering Joy*, xix–xx.

to be able to convert to him, and to be heard as a call to him to undertake “identical conversion to himself and to it” (IP: 134/PI: ***), he has to abandon himself and even God. He must be—as Schürmann says after Eckhart—totally detached. Using, with Schürmann, a transcendental vocabulary, we could say that if the condition of possibility for human conversion is *listening to a call*—i.e., to the call of the origin that converts to the human—the condition of possibility for the human’s listening to the call, and for the origin’s call to be able to resound, is *detachment*.

Exhibiting his debt to Augustinian thinking, Schürmann first shows that conversion is always, at the same time, aversion. In the fashion of a boustrophedon, one who undergoes conversion turns toward that from which one had, from time immemorial, turned away and turns away from that toward which one has long since turned. Conversion, writes Schürmann, “is an about-face that brings about the rehabilitation of *something forgotten*, so that the rehabilitated thing is now invested with predilection” (IP: 132/PI: ***; emphasis added). What is it that has been forgotten? Hinging on Eckhart’s notion of identity between the ground of the soul and the ground of God—i.e., the human being’s origin—Schürmann declares that what has been forgotten, and therefore must be rehabilitated via conversion, is one’s “perfect identity with God.”¹⁶

Interestingly, in *Peregrine Identity* but in none of the later versions of *Wandering Joy*, Schürmann turns to Francis of Assisi to exemplify the Eckhartian conversion to “serenity” (*sérénité*—one of the various ways in which Schürmann translates *Gelassenheit*). A century before Meister Eckhart preached detachment, Francis had lived it. Drawing on the earlier *Vitae* of St. Francis, Schürmann recounts the latter’s conversion “to liv[ing] according to the form of the Holy Gospel” (quoted in IP: 137/PI: ***), finding in it a paradigm of ‘peregrine identity,’ i.e., of the wandering self-sameness, by way of conversion, of the human with the origin.

Let us linger, a moment, on Schürmann’s reading of Francis’ *exemplum*, as it will help us to understand the stakes in the conversion of a detached human being. First, we note that the episode of Francis’ conversion perfectly exhibits the ‘kairological’ time structure and hermeneutics of listening to the call and setting out on a path to the origin. Conversion only knows the now of a turning in which one’s former existence is totally abandoned and existence is entirely renewed. The decisive now of conversion splits Francis’ life into two radically heterogenous existences: “[u]ntil now ... and from now on” (IP: 138/PI: ***). Schürmann

¹⁶ Schürmann, *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante*, 13 / *Wandering Joy*, xix.

carefully underlines that once conversion happens, a revelation of a call to leave oneself to turn toward the origin has already been comprehended. When conversion comes to language and appears “as suddenly evident” (IP: 138/PI: ***), one has already taken the path of detachment. All previous relations, to oneself and to others, are, in the decisive now of conversion, destituted of their former meaning, and existence, Schürmann writes, “becomes significant for itself” (IP: 133/PI: ***). Francis, by divesting himself not only of his clothes but of his former existence as a whole, simultaneously goes the way of the Cross and lives with perfect detachment.¹⁷

Recall that Schürmann had reservations about the essentially Christian character of Eckhart’s Christology and of his teaching of the “the *kenōsis* of the Christian” through detachment and letting-be (IP: 144/PI: ***). Now, if one can legitimately wonder whether these aspects of Eckhart’s thought are to be considered “profoundly Christian” or whether they can instead be derived “from the universal experience that men have of the mystery of being in general” (IP: 144/PI: ***), the same can be asked about ‘conversion.’ This question arises with respect to Schürmann’s efforts to retrieve a logic of conversion at work in its different ‘epochal’ modes.

That the phenomenon of conversion shows, for Schürmann, a constant kairological and hermeneutical logic can also be inferred from an earlier draft of his thesis work titled *Dieu et l’homme, son symbol* (*God and Man, His Symbol*) (whose background we will explain in further detail in the next section). In the draft, however, Schürmann’s understanding of the universal logic of conversion is pushed even further. In this draft—wherein conversion is now called “philosophical conversion” (not a “conversion *to* philosophy” but “a conversion of existence to its authenticity of which philosophy only attempts to give an account”¹⁸)—Schürmann reiterates that the modes of such logic are given according to time period and vary according to the cultural conditions under which conversion happens. As in *Peregrine Identity*, Francis’ conversion functions as paradigmatic, but in *God and Man, His Symbol* such exemplarity seems to be assumed not because of its religious character but, significantly, *in spite of it*:

¹⁷ Inversely, Schürmann will sometimes translate the Eckhartian language of detachment with terms reminiscent of Francis, such as despoilment (*spoliatio*) and divestment (*denudatio*). Early on in *Wandering Joy*, for example, Schürmann translates one of his French phrases for detachment, namely, (*se*) *dépouiller*, as ‘detach’ (xx), ‘be devoid of’ (7), ‘rid (oneself) of’ (16), ‘let (oneself) be’ (27), ‘be deprived of’ (19), and ‘be despoiled of’ (35).

¹⁸ “‘Conversion philosophique’ ne signifie pas [...] ‘conversion à la philosophie’; il s’agit de la conversion de l’existence à son authenticité dont la philosophie essaie de rendre compte.” Reiner Schürmann, “Dieu et l’homme, son symbole: Une interprétation de Maître Eckhart,” Reiner Schürmann papers, NA.0006.01, The New School Archives and Special Collections, The New School, New York City, USA, Box 2, Folder 23, p. 125, note **; emphasis added.

According to the destiny of the history of being, it is clear that such a conversion [namely, of St. Francis] at the epoch in which it is attested to us, i.e., at the beginning of the High Middle Ages, could not but be religious; yet this changes nothing about the phenomenon.¹⁹

Although religiously inflected, Francis' detachment simply *instantiates* the cross-cultural, trans-epochal, and hence not specifically Christian logic of conversion.

§3 Hermeneutics of the Symbol

Why, however, is the turning through detachment so essential in Schürmann's early reading of Eckhart, and how are we to grasp the distance in which the movement from aversion to conversion can happen? In order to think of an existence that, by learning the path of conversion, is able to understand its "perfect identity with God," Schürmann has to think of something that, by exhibiting both identity and difference, would recollect in itself what is dispersed in the distance, namely, the 'peregrine identity' of the human and the origin. What serves this purpose, for Schürmann, is the 'symbol.' The symbol has a twofold sense, referring both to itself and to something greater that is concealed in it. In contrast to the image, the symbol brings about what it signifies; it makes one engage on the path of conversion. Beside 'peregrine identity,' the symbol offers Schürmann another way to name and conceptualize—to *figure*, as both forming and understanding—Eckhart's notion of an identity between the human and God:

Meister Eckhart violently defends himself against this [Platonic and Neoplatonic] theology of the image; one could say that his whole project is an attempt to think not the similarity but the identity between man and God—it was this project, which has been misunderstood, that earned him the charge of pantheism.

The advantage of the image is, to be sure, that it establishes a certain continuity between the signifier and the signified. Yet, on the one hand, the tradition has recourse to images in a context of 'knowledge': the Creator is known through the creature because in it his properties,

¹⁹ "Il est clair, selon le destin de l'histoire de l'être, qu'une telle conversion à l'époque où nous est attestée, c'est-à-dire au début du Haut Moyen Âge, ne pouvait être que religieuse; mais cela n'altère en rien le phénomène." Ibid., 130.

which are essentially unknowable, are reflected. Thus, for St. Augustine, the soul, thanks to its faculties of memory, intelligence, and will (De Trin. X and XI), or the cosmos, thanks to its beauty and order (e.g. Conf. XIII), are ‘images’ of God, but when he turns to these images, he admits: “nec illic inveni te” [“I did not find you there either”] (Conf. X.25.36). Knowledge through images remains imperfect. On the other hand, the reflection is not what it reflects. Man, the image of God, is not God, but he must take ‘paths’ that lead to him. *If it were possible to say that man is the symbol of God, it would say more than ‘image of God’: such a proposition would signify that man is identical to God in some way.* The symbol has the task of determining this way. The image reflects, it does not realize what it means.²⁰

It is not incidental, then, that in his thesis work as Schürmann had originally conceived it, Eckhart was only meant to play a secondary part in a much more ambitious project of hermeneutic semiology, the aforementioned *God and Man, His Symbol*, whose subtitle reads *Une interprétation de Maître Eckhart (An Interpretation of Meister Eckhart)*. The first part of this project, which Schürmann drafted but never published as such, totals to nearly two hundred typescript pages.²¹ Although the bibliography of the extant draft is dated “January 1968,” Schürmann was still working on the project as late as December of that year, at which point he had at least drafted the second part on Eckhart (although this is not to be found in the typescript). One can get a sense for the scope of the project by perusing its table of contents:

Introduction

²⁰ “Maître Eckhart se défend violemment contre cette théologie de l’image; tout son projet, pourrait-on dire, est une tentative de penser non pas la similitude entre l’homme et Dieu, mais l’identité: c’est ce projet, mal compris, qui lui a valu l’incrimination du panthéisme. / L’avantage de l’image est certes d’établir une certaine continuité entre le signifiant et le signifié; mais d’une part, la tradition a recours aux images dans un contexte de ‘connaissance’: on connaît le Créateur à travers la créature parce qu’en elle ses propriétés, essentiellement inconnaissables, se reflètent. Ainsi, pour Saint Augustine, l’âme, grâce à ses facultés de mémoire, intelligence, volonté (De Trin. X et XI), ou le cosmos, grâce à sa beauté et son ordre (p. ex. Conf. XIII), sont des ‘images’ de Dieu; mais lorsqu’il se tourne vers ces images, il avoue: “nec illic inveni te” (Conf. X,25,36). La connaissance par les images reste imparfaite. D’autre part: le reflet n’est pas ce qu’il reflète. L’homme, image de Dieu, n’est pas Dieu, mais il doit emprunter de ‘voies’ qui conduisent vers lui. S’ils s’avérait possible de dire que l’homme est le symbole de Dieu, cela dirait davantage que ‘image de Dieu’: une telle proposition signifierait que l’homme est identique à Dieu d’une certaine façon. C’est cette façon que le symbole a pour mission de déterminer. L’image reflète, elle ne réalise pas ce qu’elle signifie.” Ibid., 50–51; emphasis added.

²¹ Portions of it would later appear as “La différence symbolique,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme* 21 (1972): 51–77 / “Symbolic Difference,” trans. Charles T. Wolfe, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19/20, nos. 2/1 (1997): 9–38; as well as “La praxis symbolique,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme* 29/30 (1976): 145–70 / “Symbolic Praxis,” trans. Charles T. Wolfe, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19/20, nos. 2/1 (1997): 39–72. These and other texts on the symbol are also forthcoming in Reiner Schürmann, *The Place of the Symbolic*, ed. Kieran Aarons and Nicolas Schneider (Zurich: Diaphanes).

FIRST PART: *Approaches to the Symbol*

Chapter I: *The Symbol, a Given*

A) A Complex Given

- 1) The Symbolism of Water
- 2) The Symbolism of Wandering
 - a) The Wandering of Parsifal
 - b) Romantic Wandering

B) A Structured Given

- 1) An Option: The Reception of Meaning
- 2) The Mystery, the Sacred
- 3) Myth, Allegory, Metaphor, Analogy, Image, Cipher, Ideogram, Sign, and Symbol

Chapter II: *Symbol and Interpretation*

A) The Ontological Place of the Symbol

- 1) Meaning and Language
- 2) Language and Being

B) Hermeneutics and Existence

- 1) From Interpretation to Conversion
- 2) From Ontological Difference to Symbolic Difference

Chapter III: *The Achievement of the Symbol*

A) The Achievement of the Symbol in a Poetics

- 1) Festival
- 2) Song
- 3) The Work of Art
- 4) Labor

B) The Achievement of the Symbol in the Sacrament

- 1) Philosophy and Theology
- 2) A Theological Option: The Ratification of Time
- 3) The Celebration of the New Birth

SECOND PART: *The Symbolic Theology of Meister Eckart [sic]*

Introduction: What Does It Mean to Interpret an Ancient Author?

Chapter I: The Symbolic Path: *Abgeschiedenheit*

- 1) From Negative Theology to Abnegative Theology
- 2) The Stages of the Path of Detachment

Chapter II: Symbolic Identity

- 1) Man, the Place of the Difference:
 - a) The Difference between Nothing and Being
 - b) The Difference between *Ens* and *Esse*
 - c) The *Symballein* of the Ground of the Soul and the Ground of God
- 2) Meister Eckart's Understanding of Being

Etc.!²²

The surviving draft only goes up through Chapter III, A), of the First Part (i.e., through “Labor” in “The Achievement of the Symbol in a Poetics”). Later portions, such as the section on “abnegative theology,” can be found in the Easter 1969 thesis, which also reproduces some of the material from the First Part. The 1969 thesis can accordingly be considered the only *complete* document approximating what Schürmann had initially envisioned for the entirety of his first major work.

It is unclear why Schürmann ultimately decided, for his 1971 dissertation at the Sorbonne (which, recall, would become *Wandering Joy*), to separate his work on Eckhart from the larger hermeneutic context of conversion via symbols in which it was supposed to appear. We know that Pierre Hadot, who served on Schürmann's dissertation committee and who would later become famous for his work on philosophy as a way of life, supported the larger project, indeed, according to Schürmann, exactly as he had conceived it.²³ Bernhard Welte, professor of Christian philosophy of religion and advisor to Schürmann during the latter's sojourns in Freiburg,

²² “Introduction / PREMIERE PARTIE: *Approches du symbole* / CHAP I *Le symbole, un donné* / A) Un donné complexe / 1) Le symbolisme de l'eau / 2) Le symbolisme de l'errance / a) L'errance de Parsifal / b) L'errance romantique / B) Un donné structuré / 1) Une option: la réception du sens / 2) Le mystère, le sacré / 3) Mythe, allégorie, métaphore, analogie, image[,] chiffre, idéogramme, signe, et symbole / CHAP II *Symbole et Interprétation* / A) Le lieu ontologique du symbole / 1) Sens et langage / 2) Langage et être / B) Herméneutique et existence / 1) De l'interprétation à la conversion / 2) De la différence ontologique à la différence symbolique / CHAP III *L'achèvement du symbole* / A) L'achèvement du symbole dans une poétique / 1) La fête / 2) Le chant / 3) L'oeuvre d'art / 4) Le travail / B) L'achèvement du symbole dans le sacrement / 1) La philosophie et la théologie / 2) Une option théologique: la ratification du temps / 3) La célébration de la naissance nouvelle / SECOND PARTIE: *La théologie symbolique de Maître Eckart* [sic] / Introduction: Que signifie interpréter un auteur ancien? / CHAP I La voie symbolique: L'Abgeschiedenheit / 1) De la théologie négative à la théologie abnégative / 2) Les étapes de la voie du détachement / CHAP II L'identité symbolique / 1) L'homme, le lieu de la différence: / a) la différence du néant et de l'être / b) la différence de l'ens et de l'Esse / c) Le 'symballein' du fond de l'âme et du fond de Dieu / 2) La compréhension de l'être de Maître Eckart / *etc.*” Schürmann, “Dieu et l'homme, son symbole,” unpaginated. Above “B) Herméneutique et existence,” Schürmann wrote in hand: “l'herméneutique symbolique” (“symbolic hermeneutics”).

²³ Information found in a letter, dated November 16, 1968, from Schürmann to Claude Geffré (Diaphanes Verlag, unprocessed private files, Zurich, Switzerland, and Berlin, Germany).

Germany in 1965–1966 and 1968, seems instead to have been the one to have convinced him to proceed otherwise. In a letter to Schürmann from December 1968, Welte gives a couple of reasons for splitting up the project. Since, in the process, he also provides a helpful summary of it, we will cite Welte at length. He initially recapitulates Schürmann’s argument in the First Part:

What made a particular impression on me is your interpretation of the symbol as the identity of the non-identical, and this in clear contrast to metaphor, analogy, and image. And then the ontological extension of your thoughts on the symbol in the second chapter, in which language in its symbolic character and then the existence of the human in its symbolic structure are first shown, so that everything converges finally into a comprehensive symbol-ontology.

This is in any case an original thought; it is, in my estimation, very worthy of being voiced and put up for public discussion. It is also a thought that, it seems to me, is thoroughly coherent in itself and step by step comes together into a cohesive whole.²⁴

Later in the letter, Welte turns to the Second Part of Schürmann’s project:

As regards your interpretation of Meister Eckhard’s [*sic*] thought [...] I will repeat my reservations about this plan. Essentially, these are based on two considerations. First, your thought of a symbolic ontology is, as I said, so self-contained, so impressive, and in many respects also so surprising that it does not need to be supplemented [*ergänzt*], as it were, with reference to Meister Eckhard. I fear that this would not be an organic appendix for the reader. And that would be a shame.

My other reservation concerns Meister Eckhard. I see several essential difficulties in the application of your very impressive thoughts on the symbol to Meister Eckhard’s formulations of identity. The symbol, as you interpret it, is a being [*ein Seiendes*], insofar as we observe it as such and, so to speak, as an external formation [*Gebilde*]. Language and existence also become symbols by being observed and interpreted by thinking. What is at issue in Meister Eckhard,

²⁴ “Was auf mich besonderen Eindruck gemacht hat, ist Ihre Deutung des Symbols als der Identität des Nicht-Identischen, und dies in deutlichem Unterschied gegen Metapher, Analogie und Bild. Und dann die ontologische Ausweitung Ihres Symbolgedankens im 2. Kapitel, in welchem zuerst die Sprache in ihrem Symbolcharakter und dann die Existenz des Menschen in ihrer Symbolstruktur gezeigt werden, so, daß alles schließlich konvergiert zu einer umfassenden Symbolontologie. / Dies ist auf jeden Fall ein origineller Gedanke, er ist es m.E. sehr wert, ausgesprochen und öffentlich zur Diskussion gestellt zu werden. Es ist auch ein Gedanke, der wie mir scheint in sich selbst durchaus kohärent ist und sich Schritt für Schritt zu einem geschlossenen Ganzen zusammenfügt.” Letter dated December 19, 1968, in Bernhard Welte, Letters to Reiner Schürmann, in Reiner Schürmann papers, NA.0006.01, Box 1, Folder 4; Box 3, Folder 41–42.

however, is something entirely different. Not observation and interpretation, but rather a path of experience. His formulations of identity, at least the most decisive of them, describe entirely precise and concrete experiences, toward which the Meister again and again offers the path of detachment [*Abgeschiedenheit*]. [...] This seems to me to be a fundamental difference, even if it must be admitted that there is an interplay here. But, on account of this difference, I would always have reservations about characterizing the Meister's formulations of identity as formulations of a symbolic identity. I fear that this would not be able to lead the reader down the path that the Meister recommends, but rather distance the reader from that path.²⁵

Although, within the scope of his dissertation, Schürmann seems to have taken his professor's suggestion regarding his hermeneutics of symbols quite seriously, he did not forsake a 'symbolic hermeneutics' and went on developing a hermeneutics of *the* symbol, namely the gathering of the human, God, and the world or of what he simply calls "the Three" (IP: 135/PI: ***). Nor did he abandon his interpretation of Eckhart's identity as a "symbolic identity," not even in the published version of his dissertation, where it is defined instead as "operative" or "energetic" identity to highlight its event-like character. Indeed, Welte's judgment about the independent status of what he calls Schürmann's "symbol-ontology" and his apprehension about its applicability to Eckhart's "formulations of identity" certainly exhibit a genuine professorial concern to set his young student on the right exegetical path; however, it is questionable whether the teacher's suggestion to separate the initial plan into two research projects of a hermeneutics of symbols and of an interpretation of the Meister is entirely justified.

²⁵ "Was Ihre Deutung des Gedankens des Meisters Eckhard [*sic*] angeht, [...] wiederhole ich meine Bedenken diesem Vorhaben gegenüber. Diese beruhen im wesentlichen [*sic*] auf zwei Überlegungen. Einmal ist Ihr Gedanke einer symbolischen [*sic*] Ontologie wie gesagt in sich so geschlossen, so eindrucksvoll und in mancher Hinsicht auch so überraschend, daß er es nicht nötig hat, durch eine Bezugnahme auf Meister Eckhard gleichsam ergänzt zu werden. Ich würde fürchten, dies wäre für den Leser ein nicht organischer Anhang. Und dies wäre dann schade. / Mein anderes Bedenken betrifft den Meister Eckhard. Ich sehe doch einige wesentliche Schwierigkeiten darin, Ihren so eindrucksvollen Gedanken des Symbols auf die Identitätsformeln des Meisters Eckhard anzuwenden. Das Symbol, so wie Sie es deuten, ist ein Seiendes, sofern es als solches und gleichsam als äußeres Gebilde von uns betrachtet wird. Auch Sprache und Existenz werden zu symbolen [*sic*], indem sie vom Denken betrachtet und gedeutet werden. Bei Meister Eckhard aber geht es um etwas ganz anderes. Nicht um Betrachtung und Deutung, vielmehr um einen Weg der Erfahrung. Seine Identitätsformeln, jedenfalls die entscheidenden unter ihnen, beschreiben ganz genaue und konkrete Erfahrungen, zu denen hin der Meister immer wieder den Weg der Abgeschiedenheit angibt. [...] Dies scheint mir ein grundsätzlicher Unterschied zu sein, wenn auch freilich zugegeben werden muß, daß die Dinge ineinanderspielen. Aber wegen dieses Unterschiedes würde ich immer Bedenken haben, die Identitätsformeln des Meisters als Formeln einer symbolischen Identität zu bezeichnen. Ich fürchte, dieses würde den Leser gerade nicht auf den Weg führen können, den der Meister vorschlägt, sondern eher ihn von jenem Wege entfernen." Ibid. Welte's own work on Eckhart has been collected in Bernhard Welte, *Denken in Begegnung mit den Denkern I: Meister Eckhart–Thomas von Aquin–Bonaventura*, ed. Markus Enders (Freiburg: Herder, 2007).

If one reads Schürmann's description of the symbol in Eckhart one may lean towards granting the legitimacy of applying the former's conception of symbolic hermeneutics to the Meister's teaching and preaching. The following passage from *Wandering Joy* (which also appears in a slightly different form in the body of the 1969 thesis) should suffice to clarify what is at stake for Schürmann in interpreting Eckhart's "formulations of identity" as signifying "symbolic identity":

The Greek verb *symbollein*, origin of the word "symbol," literally means "to throw together." The anonymity of what imparts itself to you and me unites us in the same operation, that is, it "throws together." The operative or energetic identity is thus "symbolic identity."

Symbolic identity is opposed to the identity of substances. This latter identity is the one that metaphysics and its offspring, pantheism, deal with. It is quite clear that Eckhart had overcome representation of substances. Because he preached out of another form of thought, he was condemned as a heretic. Metaphysical representation admits of no other identity than that of substances with themselves: the ontic identity of a thing that remains itself. In objection to our interpretation of symbolic identity as the rise of the "we" in the event of a dialogue or of the harmony between the soloist and his hearer, representational thought would reply: substances are "*simpliciter diversa*," otherness remains the first and inescapable fact in any relation. To Eckhart's teaching of the simultaneous begetting of the Word it has been objecting for six centuries that God and man are ontologically distinct beings.

From the foregoing it results that there are two conflicting ways or orders of understanding identity: that of being as a process and that of being as substance. We have already hit upon this conflict. In a "verbal" understanding of being, one will emphasize symbolic identity, while in a "nominal" understanding of being, one will speak of substantial or ontic identity. Meister Eckhart's understanding of being is "verbal" and that of identity, "symbolic."²⁶

Peregrine or symbolic identity hence denotes, for Schürmann, the energetic or event-like character of the human's "perfect identity with God." However, this identity, to be comprehended as such, must be experienced through a peregrine or symbolic 'difference,' which leads us to our fourth point.

²⁶ Schürmann, *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante*, 171–72 / *Wandering Joy*, 102–103. Cf. IP: 108–109.

§4. Ontological Difference, Peregrine Difference

The fourth and last issue we want to highlight in Schürmann's reading of Eckhart in the late 1960s/early 1970s is his outlining, in *Peregrine Identity*, of what can be described as a practical radicalization of the ontological difference between being, beingness, and beings, which is less explicit in *Wandering Joy*. This practical radicalization Schürmann calls a "peregrine difference" (IP: 132ff./PI: ***). or, in *God and Man, His Symbol*, a "symbolic difference."²⁷ Taking recourse to Heidegger's famous philosopheme of the *ontologische Differenz* and to the cleft between God and Godhead in Eckhart, Schürmann sets sail to interrogate the existential implications of this difference.

Schürmann first stresses how both Eckhart and Heidegger conceive of a *triadic* ontological difference. The ontological difference is not to be apprehended as a difference between two beings or entities given to representation and susceptible to comparison by degree. But neither should it be reduced to the metaphysical difference between beings (*das Seiende, l'étant*) and *their* being (*Sein, être*) or what Heidegger sometimes calls *their beingness* (*Seiendheit; étantité* in French). Stepping back from this latter difference, Schürmann maintains that the ontological difference is instead to be grasped as an opening between the being of beings (their beingness) and being itself (*das Sein selbst, l'être lui-même*) as the 'clearing' that allows the former to be.²⁸

Schürmann detects a similar ontological difference in Eckhart. For the Meister, there is an ontological chasm not only between creatures and their origin but also between their status *as* entities (*ih̄t*) (which is nothing in itself) and the essential unfolding of the origin itself (*wesen*). We can also find in Eckhart a related threefold difference at the level of the divine, which can be conceived as a relatable God (*ho theos*), as being (*on*), and an abyssal Godhead (*to theion*).²⁹

What Schürmann underlines, however, is that, in order not just to rationally apprehend but to existentially comprehend the ontological difference as such, one has to set out on a path

²⁷ Schürmann, "Dieu et l'homme, son symbole," 120ff.

²⁸ For this 'double step backward' that Schürmann takes following Heidegger, see Reiner Schürmann, *Le Principe d'anarchie: Heidegger et la question de l'agir*, new edition (Bienne: Diaphanes, 2013), 36 et passim / *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, trans. Christine-Marie Gros in collaboration with the author (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 20 et passim.

²⁹ Eckhart's thinking is thus not solely "ontotheological," as Heidegger (despite his sweeping critique of Western metaphysics) himself once admitted in a letter to Welte. That is, it does not simply understand being as a being or in terms of beings or as the being of those beings. See Bernhard Welte and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe und Begegnungen*, ed. Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2003), 29–30.

whereby “being lets itself be experienced and tested anew [*l’être se laisse à nouveau éprouver*]” (IP: 13/PI: ***). Faithful to the insight that “whoever wants to understand his [Eckhart’s] teaching on ‘detachment’ must himself already be highly ‘detached’” (IP: 12/PI: ***, referencing Pr. 30, “*Praedica verbum*”), Schürmann thus feels the need to supplement a noetic apprehension of the ‘difference’ (be it spelled out in Heideggerian terms as ‘ontological’—between being “as foundation for beings” and being as “truth or clearing”³⁰—or in Eckhartian terms as ‘the(i)ological’—between God and Godhead or “being-with-God [*l’être-auprès de Dieu*]” and “being-in-God [*l’être-en Dieu*]” [IP: 134/PI: ***]) with a practical comprehension of it.

What happens when one takes upon oneself, in *praxis*, to comprehend such an ontological difference, thus engaging on the path of detachment? It happens that one finds oneself wandering in what Schürmann calls a “peregrine difference”:

We call peregrine difference the itinerancy [*itinérance*] under which the existence experiences Being [*l’Être*] as that which converts itself to it in order to send it on the way of its own conversion. The peregrine difference is the distance that joins man to his origin, in a detached existence. (IP: 134/PI: ***)

Peregrine difference is, then, for Schürmann, nothing other than ontological difference but experienced by the human as wandering. It is how Schürmann understands Eckhart’s famous appeal to life ‘without why.’ A couple of years later, Schürmann will call it a *wandering joy*:

A detached man, Eckhart says, experiences such a joy that no one would be able to tear it away from him. But such a man remains unsettled. He who has let himself be, and who has let God be, lives in wandering joy, or joy without a cause.³¹

Conclusion

In this article we have attempted to show a few remarkable shifts that Reiner Schürmann’s original reading of Eckhart underwent from its first renditions to publication in his famous book

³⁰ “l’être comme fondement de l’étant et l’être comme vérité ou comme clairière.” Schürmann, “Dieu et l’homme, son symbole,” 127.

³¹ Schürmann, *Maître Eckhart ou la joie errante*, 13 / *Wandering Joy*, xx.

THIS IS AN EARLY VERSION, PLEASE CITE FROM THE FORTHCOMING PUBLISHED VERSION IN *MEDIEVAL MYSTICAL THEOLOGY*, VOL. 32

Wandering Joy. We focused on four key issues in Schürmann's early work on the Dominican Master: the status of Eckhart's Christianity, the logic of conversion, the hermeneutics of the symbol as facilitating realization of peregrine identity, and the peregrine difference beyond the ontological difference. Our intention has been to highlight how, even at an initial stage, Schürmann's exegesis illuminated certain aspects of Eckhart's thinking which still demand interpretive attention and existential engagement. By casting Eckhart's crucial questions over our time of "organized reduction of the earth to a corpse," Schürmann still provokes his readers to follow him down the "path without a path" (IP: 17, 143/PI: ***). For he, too, as a young Dominican, found himself listening to a call resounding in the 'peregrine difference,' and turned to Eckhart's preaching, thus 'converting' to the latter's teaching of detachment and letting-be. Perhaps, in the company of such a great "master in itinerancy,"³² he experienced that:

The word that is the most intimate to us is at the same time the word in which we recognize ourselves as similar. Only two existences that each realize, according to their own word, the origin that they signify are capable of communication.³³

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³² Cf. Schürmann, "Maître Eckhart, expert en itinérance."

³³ Schürmann, "Dieu et l'homme, son symbole," 133: "La parole qui nous est la plus intime est en même temps ce en quoi nous nous reconnaissons comme semblables. Seuls sont capables de communication deux existences qui réalisent chacune, selon leur propre parole, l'origine qu'elles signifient."

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