**A - Meister Eckhart or Eckhart von Hochheim** [**O.P.**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_order) **(c. 1260 – c. 1327 Wikipedia March 2013**

=========================================================================

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#mw-navigation), [search](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#p-search)

|  |
| --- |
| Eckhart von Hochheim |
| **Other names** | "Meister Eckhart" |
| **Born** | Around 1260Near [Gotha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotha_%28town%29), [Holy Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) |
| **Died** | 1327 or 1328[Avignon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon)? |
| **Era** | [Medieval philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_philosophy) |
| **Region** | Western philosophy |
| Influenced by[[show]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart) |
| Influenced[[show]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart) |

**Eckhart von Hochheim** [O.P.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_order) (c. 1260 – c. 1327), commonly known as **Meister Eckhart** [ˈmaɪ̯stɐ ˈɛkʰaʀt], was a German [theologian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology), [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher) and [mystic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_mysticism), born near [Gotha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotha_%28town%29), in the [Landgraviate of Thuringia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thuringia) in the [Holy Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire). *Meister* is German for "Master", referring to the academic title *Magister in theologia* he obtained in Paris. Coming into prominence during the [Avignon Papacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon_Papacy) at a time of increased tensions between the [Franciscans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscans) and Eckhart's [Dominican Order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Order) of Friars Preachers, he was brought up on charges later in life before the local Franciscan-led [Inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition).

Tried as a [heretic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heresy) by [Pope John XXII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XXII), his "Defence" is famous for his reasoned arguments to all challenged articles of his writing and his refutation of heretical intent. He purportedly died before his verdict was received, although no record of his death or burial site has ever been discovered. He was well known for his work with pious lay groups such as the [Friends of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friends_of_God) and succeeded by his more circumspect disciples of [John Tauler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Tauler) and [Henry Suso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Suso).[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] In his study of [medieval humanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance_of_the_12th_century), [Richard Southern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Southern) includes him along with [Saint Bede the Venerable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Bede_the_Venerable) and [Saint Anselm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anselm_of_Canterbury) as emblematic of the intellectual spirit of the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-1)

|  |
| --- |
| **Contents*** [1 Overview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Overview)
* [2 Life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Life)
* [3 Works and doctrines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Works_and_doctrines)
* [4 Posterity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Posterity)
* [5 Eckhart today](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Eckhart_today)
* [6 In popular culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#In_popular_culture)
* [7 See also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#See_also)
* [8 Bibliography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Bibliography)
	+ [8.1 Notes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Notes)
	+ [8.2 Sources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Sources)
	+ [8.3 Translations and commentaries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Translations_and_commentaries)
	+ [8.4 Supplementary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#Supplementary)
* [9 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#External_links)
 |

**Overview**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question book-new.svg | This section **does not** [**cite**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACiting_sources) **any** [**references or sources**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AVerifiability). Please help improve this section by [adding citations to reliable sources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIntroduction_to_referencing/1). Unsourced material may be challenged and [removed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AVerifiability#Burden_of_evidence). *(March 2013)*  |

Eckhart was one of the most influential 13th-century Christian [Neoplatonists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoplatonism), although technically a faithful [Thomist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomist) (as a prominent member of the [Dominican Order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Order)). Eckhart wrote on [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics) and spiritual [psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology), drawing extensively on mythic imagery, and was notable for his sermons communicating the metaphorical content of the gospels to laymen and clergy alike. His work has influenced major German philosophers.





Predigerkirche

Novel concepts Eckhart introduced into Christian metaphysics clearly deviate from the common [scholastic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholasticism) canon: in Eckhart's vision, [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God) is primarily [fecund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fecund). Out of overabundance of love the fertile God gives birth to the [Son](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son), the [Word](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos) in all of us. Clearly (aside from a rather striking metaphor of "fertility"), this is rooted in the Neoplatonic notion of "ebullience; boiling over" of the One that cannot hold back its abundance of Being. Eckhart had imagined the creation not as a "compulsory" overflowing (a metaphor based on a common [hydrodynamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hydrodynamics) picture), but as the free act of will of the [triune](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity) nature of Deity (refer [Trinitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinitarianism)). Another bold assertion is Eckhart's distinction between God and [Godhead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godhead_%28Christianity%29) (*Gottheit* in German). These notions had been present in [Pseudo-Dionysius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudo-Dionysius)'s writings and [John the Scot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Scotus_Eriugena)'s *De divisione naturae*, but Eckhart, with characteristic vigor and audacity, reshaped the germinal metaphors into profound images of polarity between the Unmanifest and Manifest Absolute. One of his most intriguing sermons on the "highest virtue of disinterest", unique in Christian theology both then and now, conforms to the Buddhist concept of detachment and to [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kant)'s "disinterestedness". Meister Eckhart's *Abgeschiedenheit* was also admired by [Alexei Losev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexei_Losev) in that contemplative ascent (reunion with meaning) is bound with resignation/detachment from the world. The difference is that truth/meaning in the phenomenological sense was not the only result, as expressed in Eckhart's practical guide "for those who have ears to hear", but creation itself. He both understood and sought to communicate the practicalities of spiritual perfection and the consequences in real terms.

Eckhart expressed himself both in learned Latin for the clergy in his tractates, and more famously in a contemporary [Middle High German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_High_German) vernacular in his sermons. As he said in his trial defence, his sermons were meant to inspire in listeners the desire above all to do some good. In this, he frequently used unusual language or seemed to stray from the path of orthodoxy, which made him suspect to the [Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) during the tension-filled years of the Avignon Papacy, and he was tried for heresy in the final years of his life. We do know that he disappeared from the public arena before the papal verdict, and is suspected by some of continuing his ministry in anonymity, but there is no single medieval source that supports this suspicion.

He is also considered by some to have been the inspirational ["layman"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Friend_of_God_from_the_Oberland) referred to in [Johannes Tauler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Tauler)'s and [Rulman Merswin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rulman_Merswin)'s later writings in Strasbourg where he is known to have spent time (although it is doubtful that he authored the simplistic "Book of the Nine Rocks" published by Merswin and attributed to the layman knight from the north). On the other hand most scholars consider the "layman" to be a pure fiction invented by Rulman Merswin to hide his authorship because of the intimidating tactics of the [Inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition) at the time.

It has also been suspected that his practical communication of the mystical path is behind the influential 14th c. "anonymous" [*Theologia Germanica*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theologia_Germanica) which was disseminated after his disappearance. According to the medieval introduction of the document, its author was an unnamed member of the [Teutonic Order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teutonic_Knights) of Knights living in Frankfurt.

**Life**





The Meister Eckhart portal of the [Erfurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erfurt) Church





The Meister Eckhart portal of the [Erfurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erfurt) Church

Eckhart was probably born in the village of [Tambach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tambach-Dietharz) in the [Landgraviate of Thuringia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thuringia), approximately 1260.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-2) He was born to a noble family of landowners, but little is known about his family and early life except that he attended the University of Paris. There is no authority for giving him the Christian name of Johannes which sometimes appears in biographical sketches,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-3) his Christian name was Eckhart; his surname was von Hochheim.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-4)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-5)

Eckhart joined the Dominicans at Erfurt, and it is assumed he studied at [Cologne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cologne).[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-6) Later he was [Prior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prior) at Erfurt and [Provincial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincial_superior) of Thuringia. In 1300, he was sent to Paris to lecture and take the academic degrees, and remained there till 1303. At this point he returned to Erfurt, and was made Provincial for [Saxony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxony), a province which reached at that time from the Netherlands to [Livonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livonia). Complaints made against him and the provincial of [Teutonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teutonia)[[*disambiguation needed*](http://toolserver.org/~dispenser/cgi-bin/dab_solver.py?page=Meister_Eckhart&editintro=Template:Disambiguation_needed/editintro&client=Template:Dn)] at the general chapter held in Paris in 1306, concerning irregularities among the ternaries, must have been trivial, because the general, [Aymeric of Piacenza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aymeric_of_Piacenza), appointed him in the following year his vicar-general for [Bohemia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohemia) with full power to set the demoralized monasteries there in order.

In 1311, Eckhart was appointed by the general chapter of [Naples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naples) as teacher at Paris. Then follows a long period of which it is known only that he spent part of the time at [Strasbourg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasbourg).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-7) A passage in a chronicle of the year 1320, extant in manuscript (cf. [Wilhelm Preger](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wilhelm_Preger&action=edit&redlink=1), i. 352–399), speaks of a prior Eckhart at [Frankfurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt) who was suspected of heresy, and some have referred this to Meister Eckhart. It is unusual that a man under suspicion of heresy would have been appointed teacher in one of the most famous schools of the order, but Eckhart's distinctive expository style could well have already been under scrutiny by his Franciscan detractors.

Eckhart next appears as teacher at Cologne, where the archbishop, [Hermann von Virneburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hermann_von_Virneburg&action=edit&redlink=1), eventually accuses him of heresy before the Pope. But [Nicholas of Strasburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_of_Strasburg), to whom the pope had given the temporary charge of the Dominican monasteries in Germany, promptly exonerated him. The archbishop, however, further pressed his charges against Eckhart and against Nicholas before his own court, forcing them to deny the competency of the archepiscopal [inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition) and demanded *litterce dimissorix (apostoli)* for an appeal to the Pope.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-8)

On 13 February 1327, he stated in his protest, which was read publicly, that he had always detested everything wrong, and should anything of the kind be found in his writings, he now retracts. Of the further progress of the case there is no information, except that [Pope John XXII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_XXII) issued a bull (*In agro dominico*), 27 March 1329, in which a series of statements from Eckhart is characterized as heretical; another as suspected of heresy (the bull is given complete in *ALKG*, ii. 636–640). At the close, it is stated that Eckhart recanted before his death everything which he had falsely taught, by subjecting himself and his writing to the decision of the [Apostolic See](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_See). By this is no doubt meant the statement of 13 February 1327, and it may be inferred that Eckhart's death, concerning which no information or burial site exists, took place shortly after that event.

In 1328, the general chapter of the order at [Toulouse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toulouse) decided to proceed against preachers who "endeavor to preach subtle things which not only do (not) advance morals, but easily lead the people into error". Eckhart's disciples were admonished to be more cautious, but nevertheless they cherished the memory of their master. The lay group, [Friends of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friends_of_God), followers of Eckhart, existed in communities across the region and carried on his ideas under the leadership of such priests as John Tauler and Henry Suso.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-9)

Pfeiffer puts it like this: Nikolaus of Strassburg was appointed Meister Eckhart's special Inquisitor and his case came before the Inquisition in Venice. He delivered his protest in person before that body on 24 Jan 1327 and on 13 Feb following made his public Declaration of orthodoxy in the Domincan church at Cologne. This was the last date on which he was known to have been alive. The Inquisition refused to accept his appellation, their refusal is dated 22 Feb 1327. Eckhart was excommunicated by the Bull of John XXII, 27 March 1329. After his excommunication his writings were kept alive in monasteries and groups both orally and by transcriptions with the names of other authors on them.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-10)

**Works and doctrines**

Main article: [Doctrines of Meister Eckhart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctrines_of_Meister_Eckhart)





Manuscript Soest, Stadtarchiv und Wissenschaftliche Stadtbibliothek, Codex Nr. 33, folium 57 verso, a–b

Although he was an accomplished academic theologian, Eckhart's best-remembered works are his highly unusual sermons in the vernacular during a time of disarray among the clergy and monastic orders, rapid growth of numerous pious lay groups, and the [Inquisition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inquisition)'s continuing concerns over "heretical" movements throughout Europe. With the move of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon and the tension between the second Avignon Pope John XXII and [Holy Roman Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor) Louis IV who battled for power, Eckhart as a preaching friar attempted to guide his flock, as well as monks and nuns under his jurisdiction with practical sermons on spiritual/psychological transformation and New Testament metaphorical content related to the creative power inherent in disinterest (dispassion or detachment).

The central theme of Eckhart's German sermons is the presence of God in the individual soul, and the dignity of the soul of the just man. Although he elaborated on this theme, he rarely departed from it. In one sermon, Eckhart gives the following summary of his message:

When I preach, I usually speak of detachment and say that a man should be empty of self and all things; and secondly, that he should be reconstructed in the simple good that God is; and thirdly, that he should consider the great aristocracy which God has set up in the soul, such that by means of it man may wonderfully attain to God; and fourthly, of the purity of the divine nature.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

**Posterity**

The lack of [imprimatur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imprimatur) from the Church and anonymity of the author of the "Theologia germanica" did not lessen its influence for the next two centuries — including [Martin Luther](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther) at the peak of public and clerical resistance to Catholic [indulgences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indulgences) — and was viewed by some historians of the early twentieth century as pivotal in provoking Luther's actions and the subsequent [Protestant Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation).

"The two eyes of the soul of man", says the *Theologia Germanica*, "cannot both perform their work at once: but if the soul shall see with the right eye into eternity, then the left eye must close itself and refrain from working, and be as though it were dead. For if the left eye be fulfilling its office toward outward things, that is holding converse with time and the creatures; then must the right eye be hindered in its working; that is, in its contemplation. Therefore, whosoever will have the one must let the other go; for ‘no man can serve two masters.’"[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-11)

**Eckhart today**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/f/f2/Edit-clear.svg/40px-Edit-clear.svg.png | This section **has an unclear citation style**. The references used may be made clearer with a different or consistent style of [citation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACiting_sources), [footnoting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AFootnotes), or [external linking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AExternal_links). *(August 2010)*  |

Eckhart's status in the contemporary Catholic Church has been uncertain. The Dominican Order pressed in the last decade of the 20th century for his full rehabilitation and confirmation of his theological orthodoxy; [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II) voiced favorable opinion on this initiative, even going as far as quoting from Eckhart's writings, but the affair is still confined to the corridors of the [Vatican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City). In the spring of 2010, it was revealed that there was finally a response from the Vatican in a letter dated 1992. Timothy Radcliffe, then Master of the Dominicans and recipient of the letter, summarized the contents as follows:

'We tried to have the censure lifted on Eckhart', writes Timothy Radcliffe, 'and were told that there was really no need since he had never been condemned by name, just some propositions which he was supposed to have held, and so we are perfectly free to say that he is a good and orthodox theologian.'[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-rehab-12)

Professor Winfried Trusen of Würzburg, a correspondent of Radcliffe, wrote in part of a defence of Eckhart to [Cardinal Ratzinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XVI), stating "Only 28 propositions were censured, but they were taken out of their context and impossible to verify, since there were no manuscripts in Avignon."[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-rehab-12)

The 19th century philosopher [Schopenhauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schopenhauer) compared Eckhart's views to the teachings of Indian, Christian and Islamic [mystics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism) and [ascetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascetic):

If we turn from the forms, produced by external circumstances, and go to the root of things, we shall find that [Sakyamuni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakyamuni) and Meister Eckhart teach the same thing; only that the former dared to express his ideas plainly and positively, whereas Eckhart is obliged to clothe them in the garment of the Christian myth, and to adapt his expressions thereto.

— [*Schopenhauer*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schopenhauer)*,* [*The World as Will and Representation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_as_Will_and_Representation)*, Vol. II, Ch. XLVIII*

In 1891, [Karl Eugen Neumann](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Eugen_Neumann), who translated large parts of the [Tripitaka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripitaka), found parallels between Eckhart and [Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism). [Shizuteru Ueda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shizuteru_Ueda), a third generation [Kyoto School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_School) philosopher and scholar in medieval philosophy showed similarities between Eckhart's [soteriology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soteriology) and [Zen Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen_Buddhism) in an article ("Eckhardt um zen am problem", 1989). In the 20th century, Eckhart's thoughts were compared to Eastern mystics by both [Rudolf Otto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Otto) and [D.T. Suzuki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D.T._Suzuki), among other scholars. However, Reiner Schurmann, a Professor of Philosophy, while agreeing with Daisetz T. Suzuki that there exist certain similarities between [Zen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen) Buddhism and Meister Eckhart's teaching, also disputed Suzuki's contention that the ideas expounded in Eckhart's sermons closely approach Buddhist thought, "so closely indeed, that one could stamp them almost definitely as coming out of Buddhist speculations".[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-13)

Schurmann's several clarifications included, to name of few: (1) on the question of "Time" and Eckhart's view (claimed as parallel to Buddhism in reducing awakening to instantaneity) that the birth of the Word in the ground of the mind must accomplish itself in an instant, in "the eternal now", that in fact Eckhart in this respect is rooted directly in the catechisis of the Fathers of the Church rather than merely derived from Buddhism;[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-14) (2) on the question of "Isness" and Suzuki's contention that the "Christian experiences are not after all different from those of the Buddhist; terminology is all that divides us", that in Eckhart "the Godhead's *istigkeit* [translated as "isness" by Suzuki] is a negation of all quiddities; it says that God, rather than non-being, is at the heart of all things" thereby demonstrating with Eckhart's theocentrism that "the istigkeit of the Godhead and the isness of a thing then refer to two opposite experiences in Meister Eckhart and Suzuki: in the former, to God, and in the latter, to `our ordinary state of the mind'" and Buddhism's attempts to think "pure nothingness";[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-15) and (3) on the question of "Emptiness" and Eckhart's view (claimed as parallel to Buddhist emphasis "on the emptiness of all 'composite things'") that only a perfectly released person, devoid of all, comprehends, "seizes", God, that the Buddhist "emptiness" seems to concern man's relation to things while Eckhart's concern is with what is "at the end of the road opened by detachment [which is] the mind espouses the very movement of the divine *dehiscence*; it does what the Godhead does: it lets all things be; not only must God also abandon all of his own—names and attributes if he is to reach into the ground of the mind (this is already a step beyond the recognition of the emptiness of all composite things), but God's essential being - releasement - becomes the being of a released man."[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-16)

More recently, although most scholars accept that Eckhart's work is divided into philosophical and theological, [Kurt Flasch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Flasch) and other interpreters see Eckhart strictly as a philosopher. Flasch argues that the opposition between "mystic" and "scholastic" is not relevant because this mysticism (in Eckhart's context) is penetrated by the spirit of the [University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scholasticism), in which it occurred. Eckhart has also influenced contemporary theologians, such as [Matthew Fox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Fox_%28priest%29), who draws heavily on Eckhart for his own theology and whose "Breakthrough" presents an alternative and substantially different view of the nature and significance of Eckhart's thinking from that taken in earlier sections of this article. The notable humanistic psychoanalyst and philosopher [Erich Fromm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Fromm) was another scholar who brought renewed attention in the west to Eckhart's writings, drawing upon many of the latters themes in his large corpus of work. Eckhart was a significant influence in developing [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) Secretary General [Dag Hammarskjöld](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dag_Hammarskj%C3%B6ld)'s conception of spiritual growth through selfless service to humanity, as detailed in his book of contemplations called [Vägmärken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%A4gm%C3%A4rken) ('Markings').[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-17)

The postmodern French theorist and philosopher [Jacques Derrida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Derrida) uses Eckhart's Negative Theology to describe his own concept of différance.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-18)

Renewed academic attention to Eckhart has attracted favorable attention to his work from contemporary non-Christian mystics. Eckhart's most famous single quote, "The Eye with which I see God is the same Eye with which God sees me", is commonly cited by thinkers within [neopaganism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neopaganism) and ultimatist [Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) as a point of contact between these traditions and Christian mysticism.

The popular writer [Eckhart Tolle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eckhart_Tolle) changed his name in acknowledgement of Eckhart's influence on his philosophy.

 This article incorporates text from a publication now in the [public domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain): Jackson, Samuel Macauley, ed. (1914). "Eckhart". [*New Schaff–Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Schaff%E2%80%93Herzog_Encyclopedia_of_Religious_Knowledge) (third ed.). London and New York: Funk and Wagnalls.

**In popular culture**

* In [*Jacob's Ladder*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob%27s_Ladder_%28film%29), Louis, the main character's friend, quotes Eckhart: "You know what he [Eckhart] said? The only thing that burns in Hell is the part of you that won't let go of your life; your memories, your attachments. They burn 'em all away. But they're not punishing you, he said. They're freeing your soul. ... If you're frightened of dying and holding on, you'll see devils tearing your life away. But if you've made your peace then the devils are really angels, freeing you from the Earth".[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-19)[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

In the book [*The Gargoyle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gargoyle_%28novel%29) by [Andrew Davidson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Davidson_%28author%29), Eckhart is mentioned in a story Marianne Engel recounts to the (unnamed) protagonist about her days in the Engelthal Monastery:

'...Meister Eckhart would not even admit that God was good....Eckhart's position was that anything that was good can become better, and whatever may become better may become best. God cannot be referred to as "good", "better", or best because He is above all things. If a man says that God is wise, the man is lying because anything that is wise can become wiser. Anything that a man might say about God is incorrect, even calling Him by the name of God. God is "superessential nothingness" and "transcendent Being"..."beyond all words and beyond all understanding. The best a man can do is remain silent, because anytime he prates on about God, he is committing the sin of lying. The true master knows that if he had a God he could understand, He would never hold Him to be God.' (pp.140-41)

Eckhart is also referenced in [J. D. Salinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._D._Salinger)'s [*Franny and Zooey*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franny_and_Zooey). In a letter to Zooey, Buddy says, "I can't help thinking you'd make a damn site better-adjusted actor if Seymour and I hadn't thrown in the [Upanishads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads) and the [Diamond Sutra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamond_Sutra) and Eckhart and all our other old loves with the rest of your recommended reading when you were small."[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-20)

The third movement of [John Adams'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams_%28composer%29) [Harmonielehre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harmonielehre) symphony (1985) is titled 'Meister Eckhardt and Quackie', which imagines the mystic floating through space with his baby daughter on his back whispering secrets of grace in his ear.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_note-21)

**See also**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Portal icon | [***Philosophy portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3APhilosophy) |

* [Brethren of the Free Spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brethren_of_the_Free_Spirit)
* [Heresy of the Free Spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heresy_of_the_Free_Spirit)
* [Sister Catherine Treatise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sister_Catherine_Treatise)
* [Theologia Germanica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theologia_Germanica)

**Bibliography**

**Notes**

* 1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-1) R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism*. Harper & Row, 1970. pp. 19-26.
	2. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-2) [Bernard McGinn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_McGinn_%28theologian%29), in *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*, New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001, corrects previous scholarship which had placed Eckhart's birth in Hochheim.
	3. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-3) Cairns, Earl (1996), *Christianity through the Centuries*, Zondervan
	4. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-4) Clark, James (1957), *Meister Eckhart*, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., p. 11
	5. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-5) McGinn also states that "von Hochheim" is a family name and does not indicate place of birth, see McGinn, 3.
	6. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-6) Davies, Oliver (1991), *Meister Eckhart: Mystical Theologian*, London: SPCK, p. 23, [ISBN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [0-281-04520-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-281-04520-8)
	7. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-7) cf. *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Strassburg*, iii. 236.
	8. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-8) cf. the document in Preger, i. 471; more accurately in *ALKG*, ii. 627 sqq.
	9. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-9) *Christianity through the Centuries*, Earle E. Cairns, [Zondervan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zondervan), 1996
	10. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-10) Pfeiffer, Franz (1924). *Meister Eckhart*. London: John M. Watkins. pp. xii–xiii.
	11. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-11) [*Theologia Germanica*](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/theologia.html), public domain
	12. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-rehab_12-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-rehab_12-1) [Meister Eckhart rehabilitated by the Pope](http://www.academici.com/blog/7263/meister_eckhart_rehabilitated_by_the_pope.html)
	13. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-13) *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy," at p. 217 - C The Estate of Reiner Schurmann 2001, Lindisfarne Books, Great Barrington, Massachusetts.*
	14. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-14) (Id.)
	15. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-15) (Id. At p. 218)
	16. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-16) (Id. at 219)
	17. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-17) "[t]he counterpoint to this enormously exposed and public life is Eckhart and Jan van Ruysbroek. They really give me balance and-a more necessary sense of humor." Henry P van Dusen. Dag Hammarskjöld. A Biographical Interpretation of Markings. Faber and Faber. London 1967 pp49-50
	18. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-18) Derrida, J: "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" pages 3-70, in "Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory" Stanley Budick and Wolfgang Iser, eds. 1989
	19. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-19) Rubin 1990, p. 82
	20. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-20) Salinger, J.D (1955). *Franny and Zooey*. Boston: Little Brown and Company. pp. 59–60. [ISBN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [0-316-76949-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-316-76949-5).
	21. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister_Eckhart#cite_ref-21) Simon Rattle & City of Birmingham SO (1994) CD booklet

**Sources**

* *Meister Eckhart: Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Stuttgart and Berlin: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 11 Vols., 1936.
* Herman Büttner, ed., [*Schriften und Predigten*](http://www.archive.org/details/schriftenundpred01eckhuoft), vol. 1. Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1903.
* Herman Büttner, ed., [*Schriften und Predigten*](http://www.archive.org/details/schriftenundpred02eckhuoft), vol. 2. Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1909.
* Augustine Daniels, O.S.B., ed., "Eine lateinische Rechtfertigungsschrift des Meister Eckharts", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 23, 5 (Münster, 1923): 1 - 4, 12 - 13, 34 - 35, 65 - 66.
* Franz Jostes, ed., [*Meister Eckhart und seine Jünger: Ungedruckte Texte zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*](http://www.archive.org/details/meistereckhartu00eckhgoog). Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972 (Series: Deutsche Neudrucke Texte des Mittelalters).
* Thomas Kaepelli, O.P., "Kurze Mitteilungen über mittelalterliche Dominikanerschriftsteller", *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 10, (1940), pp. 293 – 94.
* Thomas Kaepelli, O.P., *Scriptores ordinis Praedicatorum medii aevi*. Vol. I (A-F). Rome, 1970.
* Gustav Landauer, ed. and trans. [*Meister Echkarts mystische Schriften*](http://www.archive.org/details/mystischeschrift00eckhuoft). Berlin: Karl Schnabel, 1903.
* M.H. Laurent, "Autour du procés de Maître Eckhart. Les documents des Archives Vaticanes", *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 39 (1936), pp. 331 – 48, 430 - 47.
* Franz Pelster, S.J., ed., Articuli contra Fratrem Aychardum Alamannum, Vat. lat. 3899, f. 123r - 130v, in "Ein Gutachten aus dem Eckehart-Prozess in Avignon", *Aus der Geistewelt des Mittelalters, Festgabe Martin Grabmann, Beiträge Supplement* 3, Munster, 1935, pp. 1099–1124.
* Franz Pfeiffer, ed. [*Deutsche Mystiker des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*](http://www.archive.org/details/deutschemystiker02pfei), vol. II: Meister Eckhart. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1906.
* Josef Quint, ed. and trans. *Meister Eckehart: Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, Munich: Carl Hanser, 1955.
* Josef Quint, ed., *Textbuch zur Mystik des deutschen Mittelalters: Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler, Heinrich Seuse*, Halle/Saale: M. Niemeyer, 1952.
* Rubin, Bruce Joel, Jacob's Ladder. Mark Mixson, general editor, The Applause Screenplay Series, Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1990. [ISBN 1-55783-086-X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/155783086X).
* Gabriel Théry, O.P., "Édition critique des piéces relatives au procés d'Eckhart continues dans le manuscrit 33b de la Bibliothèque de Soest", *Archives d'histoire littéraire et doctrinal du moyen âge*, 1 (1926), pp. 129 – 268.

**Translations and commentaries**

* *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, trans. Raymond B. Blakney, New York: Harper and Row, 1941, [ISBN 0-06-130008-X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/006130008X), about one-half the works including treatises, 28 sermons, Defense against heresy
* *Meister Eckhart, The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises and Defense*, trans. and ed. by [Bernard McGinn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_McGinn_%28theologian%29) and [Edmund Colledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Colledge), New York: Paulist Press, 1981.
* *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, trans. and ed. by [Bernard McGinn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_McGinn_%28theologian%29) and Frank Tobin, New York and London: Paulist Press / SPCK, 1987.
* *Meister Eckhart, Sermons and Treatises*, trans. by M. O'C. Walshe, 3 vols., Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1987.
* J ames Midgely Clark, *Meister Eckhart: An Introduction to the Study of His Works with an Anthology of His Sermons*, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1957.
* James M. Clark and John V. Skinner, eds. and trans., *Treatises and Sermons of Meister Eckhart*, New York: Octagon Books, 1983. (Reprint of Harper and Row ed., 1958.)
* *Meister Eckhart: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. by Oliver Davies, London: Penguin, 1994.
* C. de B. Evans, *Meister Eckhart by Franz Pfeiffer*, 2 vols., London: Watkins, 1924 and 1931.
* Ursula Fleming, *Meister Eckhart: The Man from whom God Hid Nothing*, Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1995.
* Matthew Fox, O.P., ed., *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality in New Translation*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980.
* Armand Maurer, ed., *Master Eckhart: Parisian Questions and Prologues*, Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974.
* Reiner Schürmann, *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
* Otto Karrer *Meister Eckhart Speaks* The Philosophical Library, Inc. New York, 1957.
* Shizuteru Ueda, *Die Gottesgeburt in der Seele und der Durchbruch zur Gottheit. Die mystische Anthropologie Meister Eckharts und ihre Konfrontation mit der Mystik des Zen-Buddhismus*, Gütersloh: Mohn, 1965.

**Supplementary**

* Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Master Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystics*, New York and London: Harper and Row/ Longmans, 1957.
* Leonardo Vittorio Arena, *The Shadows of the Masters*, ebook, 2013.
* James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1970 (reprint of Basil Blackwell edition, Oxford: 1949.)
* James M. Clark, trans., *Henry Suso: Little Book of Eternal Wisdom and Little Book of Truth*, London: Faber, 1953.
* Cesare Catà, *Il Cardinale e l'Eretico. Nicola Cusano e il problema della eredità "eterodossa" di Meister Eckhart nel suo pensiero*, in "Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies", UCLA University, Volume 41, No.2 (2010), pp. 269–291.
* Oliver Davies, *God Within: The Mystical Tradition of Northern Europe*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1988.
* Oliver Davies, *Meister Eckhart: Mystical Theologian*, London: SPCK, 1991.
* *Eckardus Theutonicus, homo doctus et sanctus*, Fribourg: [University of Fribourg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Fribourg), 1993.
* Robert K. Forman, *Meister Eckhart: Mystic as Theologian*, Rockport, Massachusetts / Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1991.
* Gundolf Gieraths, O.P., '"Life in Abundance: Meister Eckhart and the German Dominican Mystics of the 14th Century", *Spirituality Today Supplement*, Autumn, 1986.
* Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy: An Interpretation of the Great Mystics, East and West*, New York: HarperCollins, 1945.
* Amy Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*, Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.
* Rufus Jones, *The Flowering of Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*, New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1971 (facsimile of 1939 ed.).
* [Bernard McGinn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_McGinn_%28theologian%29), "Eckhart's Condemnation Reconsidered" in *The Thomist*, vol. 44, 1980.
* [Bernard McGinn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_McGinn_%28theologian%29), ed., *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete*, New York: Continuum, 1994.
* [Arthur Schopenhauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer), [*The World as Will and Representation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_as_Will_and_Representation), Vol. II, [ISBN 0-486-21762-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0486217620)
* Cyprian Smith, *The Way of Paradox: Spiritual Life as Taught by Meister Eckhart*, New York: Paulist Press, 1988.
* Frank Tobin, *Meister Eckhart: Thought and Language*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.
* Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
* Winfried Trusen, *Der Prozess gegen Meister Eckhart*, Fribourg: University of Fribourg, 1988.
* Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
* Richard Woods, O.P., *Eckhart's Way*, Wilmington, Delaware: Glazier, 1986 (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1991).
* Richard Woods, O.P., *Meister Eckhart: The Gospel of Peace and Justice*, Tape Cassette Program, Chicago: Center for Religion & Society, 1993.
* Richard Woods, O.P., *Meister Eckhart: Master of Mystics* (London, Continuum, 2010).

============================================================================================================================