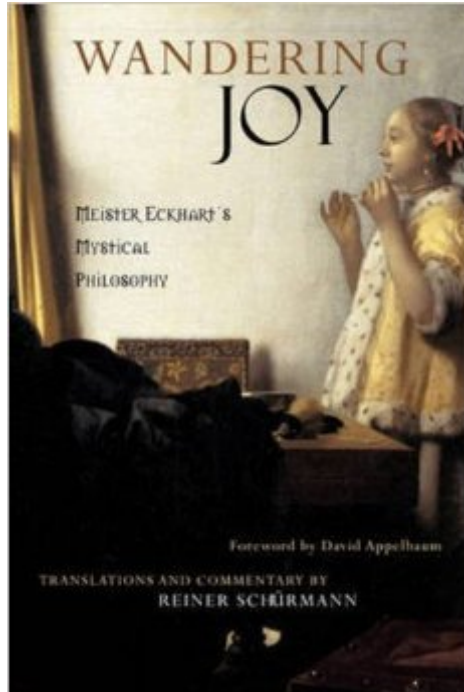


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Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy



Synopsis

In this remarkable work, Reiner Schürmann shows Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth-century Christian mystic, as the great teacher of the birth of God in the soul, which shatters the dualism between God and the world, the self and God. This is an exposition of Eckhart's mysticism—perhaps the best in English—and, because Eckhart is a profound philosopher for whom knowing precedes being, it is also an exemplary work of contemporary philosophy. Schürmann shows us that Eckhart is our contemporary. He describes the threefold movement of detachment, release, and "dehiscence" (splitting open), which leads to the experience of "living without a why," in which all things are in God and sheer joy. Going beyond that, he describes the transformational force of approaching the Godhead, the God beyond God: "A man who has experienced the same no longer has a place to establish himself. He has settled on the road, and for those who have learned how to listen, his existence becomes a call. This errant one dwells in joy. Through his wanderings the origin beckons."

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Customer Reviews

First published over 20 years ago, this book has lost none of its power. As a phenomenological treatment of the mystical philosophy of Eckhart, it is a classic. Schürmann takes the position that Eckhart's Latin works are like signposts, while his German works invite one to a way—the way of detachment. According to Schürmann, Eckhart's mode of thought is not indicative, but imperative: herein lay the difficulty Eckhart ran into with the Scholastic language of his accusers. The

translated sermons are well done, and the use of the epigrammic poems of Angelus Silesius in the footnotes are an added joy. Schurmann also abstains from making facile comparisons of Eckhart with Zen or Heidegger, as the last chapter indicates. One flaw in this edition: some paragraphs of the sermons, which should have wider margins to set them off from the surrounding analysis, were not formatted that way, making it tricky sometimes to see where Eckhart ends and Schurmann begins. This is a minor problem which the publisher ought to correct in subsequent printings. But this also indicates how thoroughly Schurmann is steeped in Eckhart's mode of thought. This work is not an easy read, and Mathew Foxian New Agers may find themselves in over their heads. So be it: this book is a the fruit of a trained, keen philosophical mind, not a guru.

Well, I had very high expectations for this volume, and for a scholarly dissertation, it is exceptional. I have rarely seen such precision in literary dissection, explanation, and detailed analysis. However, I had been hoping for a more uplifting and moving interpretation, not a scholarly treatise. And I have yet to see how the dissections of the sermons build upon each other. They appear to be treated somewhat in isolation. I must say that I do appreciate the sermons by Meister Eckhart - this is my first encounter with his writings and I must say that I am not disappointed. However, a plain old translation would have been more direct and to-the-point. No knock on the author and interpreter - he's a phenomenal talent. I would, however, look more for a spiritual / inspirational commentary.

A wonderful, intelligent comment on mystic medieval Meister Eckhart. A lesson about detachment. A different interpretation about the sisters Marth and Mary than that of the catholic church.

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