

An Analysis of Mystical Experience from the Perspectives of Rumi and Meister Eckhart: Attraction, Effort, and Trust

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Introduction

In the monotheistic mystical traditions, mystical experience is not merely an unseen or visionary state; rather, it is a dynamic and structured process in which attraction, effort, and trust interact. Attraction is an unseen and involuntary pull that draws the seeker toward absolute Truth; effort is the human being's conscious and active response to this pull; and trust, or relinquishment, is the point at which the human being, together with all personal striving, entrusts the self to a will beyond individual will. Comparative studies of Rumi and Meister Eckhart have mainly focused on concepts such as annihilation, the unity of being, negative theology, and mystical anthropology, while the structural relationship among attraction, effort, and trust has received less attention as an integrated semantic system. The main question of this study is how the relationship among these three components shapes the structure of mystical experience in the thought of Rumi and Eckhart. To answer this question, the primary works of the two mystics were analyzed through an interpretive-structural approach.

Research Findings

The findings show that attraction is the initial point of contact with absolute Truth in both perspectives, but its existential consequence differs. In Rumi's thought, attraction is a divine gift and the "fire of love" that calls the seeker toward inner movement and active spiritual practice; in Eckhart's thought, attraction approaches union with the divine essence and the disappearance of the existential distance between the human being and the Divine. The difference becomes clearer in the component of effort. Rumi understands effort as conscious and continuous striving for purification of the self and movement toward divine proximity; therefore, effort

functions as a mediating link between attraction and trust and transforms mystical experience from a passing state into a sustained process. Eckhart, by contrast, interprets effort primarily as emptying the self and negating self-will; thus, effort becomes part of a process of self-negation. With regard to trust, both perspectives emphasize release from anxiety and reliance upon divine Truth, but Rumi regards trust as a hopeful reliance that strengthens the seeker's loving activity, whereas Eckhart understands it as complete relinquishment of the self and annihilation in the absolute "nothing." The fundamental similarity is therefore the presence of attraction as the beginning of experience and trust as its culmination; the principal difference appears in the position of effort and the nature of trust. In Rumi's view, the spiritual path is dynamic, love-centered, and agent-oriented; in Eckhart's view, it is negation-centered and essence-oriented.

Conclusion

Overall, the comparative analysis shows that the mystical experience of Rumi and Eckhart, despite their theological and linguistic differences, contains three common components: attraction, effort, and trust. Yet the way these components are connected produces different structures. Rumi understands attraction as the beginning of love, effort as active striving, and trust as hopeful reliance on the path toward divine proximity; Eckhart interprets attraction as a moment of union, effort as self-negation, and trust as relinquishment and annihilation in the absolute "nothing." The principal contribution of the study is therefore to demonstrate the determining role of effort as the mediating link between attraction and trust and, consequently, to clarify the different positions assigned to the human being within the two mystical systems. Within this framework, the difference between Rumi's and Eckhart's mysticism is not merely a difference in style of expression; it concerns the existential structure of spiritual practice and the nature of human agency in relation to the Divine.

Keywords: Mystical experience; Divine attraction; Effort; Trust; Rumi and Meister Eckhart.