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Angelus Silesius: Some Lesefrüchte on the Background to Lacan's Seminar

Summary:

This paper gives the wider background to the references in Lacan's work to the life of Angelus Silesius, the pseudonym of Johann Scheffler [1624-1677], and his principle mystical text, the *Cherubinische Wandersmann*. A text almost certainly written between 1651 and 1653, a period of deeply personal transition and transformation which culminated in his reception into the Catholic Church and his decision to become a Jesuit. It includes a summary of the development of Christian mysticism in the West and the immediate context in which Lacan's interest in the mystical emerged. This latter included a study of Silesius by Jean Baruzi. While Derrida and others have considered Silesius' work not truly mystical, this paper argues that this is to over subscribe to a view in which the mystical is reduced to subjective, individual experience. A reading that only became common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The seminar of Jacques Lacan contains some material on the Christian mystics which despite being fragmentary is nevertheless of considerable interest[1].. Indeed, Lacan touches on the subject of mysticism at fairly regular points throughout the seminar[2].. However, although Lacan's concern for mysticism has not gone unnoticed[3], the passages in the seminar relating to individual mystics have, with one notable exception, received little scholarly attention[4].. This failure to pay heed to the context in which the mystical has been manifested results in the imprecise and divergent nature of the mystical being overlooked.. It is, in consequence, treated naively as if it were entirely homogeneous. That is to say, in general studies which refer to mysticism in Lacan's work ignore the historical development of Christian mysticism in the West; the chronology and diversity and genre of the texts on which this development depends – whether biblical, exegetical, hagiographical or more strictly theological; the shifting lexicography of the mystical; and its use of allegory[5]. Most limit themselves to Lacan's remarks in S20 about Bernini's depiction of Teresa of Avila in ecstasy[6].. The tendency here is to conflate the mystical with ecstasy.. The latter, however, has its own history and manifold meanings which range from a simple change of mood to awe and astonishment, hysteria and insanity as well as possession, both divine and diabolical (Pfister 1939).. Such a reading often unwittingly takes for granted a view that only became common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.. That is, the idea that mysticism is fundamentally an individual 'experience'[7] characterised by psycho-physical phenomena[8].. A pitfall of which Lacan himself may have been aware[9].

In this introductory paper I have limited myself to furnishing something of the wider background to the references in Lacan's work to the life and the principle mystical text of Angelus Silesius, the pseudonym of Johann Scheffler [1624-1677][10].. I have also included a summary of the development of Christian mysticism in the West and the immediate context in which Lacan's interest in the mystical emerged.. While by no means exhaustive, I hope this paper will be of some interest to those approaching the passages in

Lacan's work where he refers to Silesius and to the mystics and to mysticism in general.

Introduction

Drawing to a close his lecture in St Anne's Hospital at Paris on 9th June 1954, Lacan commented before his auditors:

> I cannot recommend anyone who is in analysis too highly to go out and acquire the works of Angelus Silesius.. They are not that long, and they are translated in French, published by Aubier.. You will find in them lots of other things to meditate on, for example the pun on *Wort*, speech, and *Ort*, place, and aphorisms which are spot on concerning temporality.. Perhaps I will have an occasion next time to touch on some of these admirable formulae, which are extremely closed and yet open up, and lend themselves to meditation. Lacan S1: 233

Although indicating that he knew that Silesius' work had been published in French translation, Lacan cited a paper by Michael Balint as his immediate source[11].. Published in English two years earlier, it had originally been delivered in German at the twelfth International Conference of Psychoanalysis held in Wiesbaden in 1932 and had appeared in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*.. Balint's reference to Silesius in that text is, in itself, somewhat intriguing.

As a colleague of ours, Johann Scheffler, or by his self-chosen name, Angelus Silesius, described this so pregnantly some hundred years ago in his *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*:

Mensch werde wesentlich, den wann [sic] *die welt verghet,*

So fällt der Zufall weg, das Wesen, das besteht.

Now, the task of character analysis is just this: to teach our patient to distinguish in himself the essential from the accidental[12]. Balint 1986: 171

Lacan repeated the same passage from *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann* II: 30 but added its title *Zufall und Wesen*.. It is clear that Lacan took the German text, except for the title, directly from Balint because of the repetition of *wann*, rather than *wenn*, in the first line.. This is not found in Balint's original paper and only appears in the English translation made in 1952[13].. In his comment Lacan mentions the strange fact that Balint had referred to Angelus Silesius as 'a colleague of ours' (*un de nos confrères*) adding rhetorically, 'and why not?' By way of explanation, he comments that Silesius had 'undertaken very advanced medical studies at the beginning of the sixteenth century' (Lacan S1: 231).. Although he got the dates wrong, as had Balint, Lacan avoided falling into the trap of imagining that Balint saw in Silesius some kind of psychoanalyst, or thought of psychoanalysis as a form of mysticism.. As Moreau-Ricaud puts it '*la confraternité revendiquée avec A.Silesius peut plus modestement être mise au compte d'une commune appartenance à la tradition hyppocratique*' (Moreau-Ricaud 2012: 76).

The passage in S1 referred to above is just one of a number of references Lacan made to Silesius.. The others are found in S2 (16th February 1955); S13 (1st December 1965) published in the *Écrits* (1966); S14 (18th January 1967); S16 (22 January 1969); S16 (7th May 1969) and in S20 (20th February 1973).

Christian mysticism

The prehistory of the notion of the mystical, as it is found in Christianity, is bound up with the mysteries of the Graeco-Roman world.. The word *must?rion* (plural *must?ria*) means a secret and in its religious usage

signified the sacred rites (*ta mustika*) (von Balthasar 1936-37).. The mystics were those initiated into the ceremonies.. *Must?rion*, which corresponds to the Hebrew *sôd* (Aramaic *r?z*), is hardly found in the Septuagint.. It occurs twenty-seven times in the New Testament but only once in the synoptics in Mk 4.11 (Mt 13.11; Lk 8.10) and it is not found in the fourth gospel.. Eight of these are rendered in the Vulgate with the apparently alien '*sacramentum*' rather than the more obvious '*mysterium*' which had existed in Latin long before Christianity (Mohrmann 1961a).. A number of scholars suggest the Semitic background may have a considerable bearing on New Testament usage, particularly in the Pauline corpus (Coppens 1968).. As well as texts from the Old Testament this includes, importantly, texts from Qumrân (Vogt 1956).. Here the usage signifies something hidden which will only be revealed in the eschaton.. Or more precisely, the unforeseen fulfilment of a prophecy that has already begun to be fulfilled.. This eschatological perspective includes the arrival of a messianic figure and is tied to a particular insight, that the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness believed they possessed, into the hidden meaning of prophetic texts from the Old Testament.. New Testament usage is fundamentally christological and includes the idea that the Old Testament prophecies are already being fulfilled in an unexpected way. That is to say, that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth the kingdom has already entered into the world in a form hidden from the Jews and from pagans but revealed to believers (Brown 1968).

The cultic sense that characterised the use of *must?ria* in pagan antiquity continued in the early Church in relation to the sacraments and particularly the eucharist. Later, it was extended to refer to an allegorical understanding of sacred scripture and this links it, particularly in Origen, to *the?ria* (Crouzel 1959). In fact, it is in the context of the exegesis of scripture that we find the word *mustikos* (a secret; something not easily accessible; a hidden meaning) used for the first time to refer to a direct knowledge of God (Lampe 894). But it is striking that in Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius Ponticus and pseudo Macarius this refers to the contemplative character of ordinary Christian life. In Gregory's *De Vita Moysis* and *In Canticum Canticorum* this is tied up with the idea of spiritual progress (*epektasis*[14]) or continual conversion and many of the familiar images we associate with mysticism are found in these works including those of the night, the cloud and the dark[15]. Here, far from describing an extraordinary individual experience[16], the mystical signified a progressive intensifying knowledge that comes from the eucharist and from a meditative reading of the sacred text in which a deeper meaning is grasped. This deeper or mystical sense signified the divine reality that Christ had brought, as it was thought to have been revealed in the Gospel (Bouyer 1949). This came very close to the Pauline notion of the mystery of salvation. That is to say, the secret plan that God has for the world, which is Christ. It was Evagrius in his *De Oratione*, taking elements from his predecessors, particularly Origen and Gregory of Nyssa[17], who did more than any other to establish the Greek vocabulary of mysticism. Yet the word *ekstasis* is entirely absent from his writings except in the sense of madness (e.g. De Mal. Cog. 23.4; cf. Hausherr 1935). In fact, Dodds (1965) argues that in the Old Testament, in Philo, even in Origen, *ekstasis* has nothing to do with mystical union[18]. Thus the mystical, first of all, referred to a community – to its liturgical rituals and its sacred literature – and in a derivative sense to the experience of continual growth in understanding and insight that came from participating in those rites and meditating on those texts.

With medieval Latin and shortly after that in German the technical language of mysticism developed further. While taking as its starting point certain paleo-Christian terms it constitutes, nevertheless, a new genre that, according to Christine Mohrmann (1961b), is typically medieval. Within this dialect there are some differences of tone between the way the mystical is treated prior to the reception of the works of pseudo Denys and afterwards. However, this distinction, which amounted to an elevation of the transcendent and a greater emphasis on apophaticism[19] and which only took place very gradually[20], ought not to be exaggerated (Leclercq 1987). Indeed, David Knowles points out that neither Lanfranc not Anselm mention pseudo Denys (Knowles 1975). And although the monasteries possessed manuscripts of his works, he made little impact on monastic spirituality whether Benedictine, Cistercian or Carthusian. Bernard of Clairvaux (Boissard 1958) and William of St Thierry (Bell 1979) owe very little to him. Hugh of St Victor, Albert the Great and Bonaventure were aware of the Dionysian corpus and commented on it but it did not impact on their mystical theology. Thomas wrote explanations on several Dionysian texts yet despite this it

hardly seems to have touched on his treatment of the mystical[21]. Certainly, the tone adopted by Meister Eckhart, John Tauler, John van Ruysbroeck and others is rather different from that of Augustine, Gregory the Great or even Bernard but increasingly scholars see the mysticism of the thirteenth and fourteenth century Rhineland as one rooted in scholasticism.

Distinctively modern forms of mysticism swept across Europe between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. This was a period that encompassed a number of significant cultural and religious shifts, including the Reformation, and in which medieval society with all its certainties, fragmented. De Certeau (1982) understands the mystical movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a response to these societal uncertainties by groups that were marginalised from the dominant culture. And that the language these mystics developed was key to that response. Characterised by a malleable syntax and imaginative terminology, its lexicography was marked by a peculiar literary style and a special way of using words (de Certeau 1964). While not irrational, it went beyond rationality in odd figures of speech and unusual turns of phrase. In so doing, it aimed to transcend the limits of language by speaking about what is beyond speech. Similarly, Mujica (2001) describes Teresa of Avila's prose as impressionistic, full of disparate metaphors that transcend word and image. However, although the influence of pseudo Denys can be detected in the works of the Spanish Carmelites and particularly in John of the Cross, the influence of Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bernard, Ruysbroeck, Suso, Thomas à Kempis, Denis the Carthusian and others is also evident[22].

A context for Lacan's interest in mysticism

An interest in mysticism was not uncommon in France at the time Lacan began his seminar (Nelstrop and Onishi 2015). In fact, in the ten years prior to 1953 at least five studies of mysticism had appeared by people close to Lacan, with a sixth being prepared. That is, those of Bataille (1943), Bonaparte (1948), de Beauvoir (1949), Baruzi (1951), Beirnaert (1952); and Heidegger (1955) [23].

Just two years before Lacan began his seminar Jean Baruzi had completed a study of Silesius as the second part of a work entitled *Création religieuse et pensée contemplative* (Baruzi 1951). The study received a generally favourable review from the distinguished Syriac scholar Antoine Guillaumont in the *Revue de l'histoire des religion* where he described it as an important contribution to the biography of Silesius ' *psychologique plus de littéraire*' (Guillaumont 1951: 243). Baruzi had taught Lacan philosophy at the Lycée[24] and later they formed a friendship. In his doctoral thesis, published in 1924, he had attempted to analyse the mystical writings of John of the Cross (Baruzi 1931)[25]. As a work of scholarship, Baruz's study of John of the Cross belongs to a tradition that could be called philological, and consists of a rigorous and historical analysis of his vocabulary and the thought, the documents being placed in their time, in order to reveal the philosophical implications of the mystical language of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But although an exceptionally influential book, it was widely criticised. Baruzi's approach ran counter to that of the neo-scholastic old guard typified by Garrigou-Lagrange, whose book on John of the Cross had been published the previous year. But more importantly, it received critical reviews by Ferdinand Cavallera (1925), and Philippe Chevalllier (1925). Even Maritain, who considered himself a friend of Baruzi, was critical of fundamental aspects of the work. In the second edition in 1931, Baruzi made a number of corrections in response to his critics whom he addressed in a new preface. Given that Baruzi died just over a year before Lacan's lecture of 9th June 1954 it seems not unreasonable to assume that Lacan would have had his former school master in mind when he referred, in the same breath, to texts by Silesius and John of the Cross:

> But the books of the *Cherubinic Wanderer* strike a transparent, crystalline note. It is one of the most significant moments in human meditation on being, a moment richer in resonances for me than the *Dark Night* of St John of the Cross, which everyone reads and no one understands. Lacan S1: 232-3

Baruzi also exercised a considerable influence on Simone de Beauvoir while she was at the Sorbonne[26]. Lacan met de Beauvoir in 1944, through common friends, of which Georges Bataille was one. Almost certainly Lacan read *The Second Sex* on its publication in 1949, and he seems, later, to have drawn heavily on it for his remarks about Bernini's statue of Teresa of Avila in ecstasy[2]. Bataille's somewhat elliptical study of mysticism, *L'expérience intérieure*, had been published in 1943 and was received critically by scholars and a second edition was published in the same year Lacan started his seminar. Lacan had been close to Bataille while he worked on the book and although he made very few direct references to Bataille, he referred to it in 1956 in relation to the Schreber case (Ec 583 n.36[28]). Indeed, Lacan was one of the first not to have referred to it with scorn[29].

In 1948 Marie Bonaparte had published a paper in the *Revue française de psychanalyse* entitled 'De l'essentielle ambivalence d'Eros', a brief section of which was devoted to mysticism (191-99). Drawing on studies by Evelyn Underhill and William James, she referred to Antony of Egypt, Augustine's *Confessions*, Madame Guyon and Quietism, the dark night of the soul in John of the Cross, as well as Teresa of Avila's ecstasy which she considered equivalent to orgasm[30] (Bonaparte 1948). An interpretation Bataille, citing a paper by Louis Beirnaert (1952), one of the Jesuits most closely associated with Lacan, emphatically rejected: '*Entendons-nous. Rien n'est plus éloigné de ma pensée que l'interpretation sexuelle de la vie mystique, telle que l'ont soutenue Marie Bonaparte…*' (Bataille 1957: 246). Père Beirnaert's short but erudite paper is of interesting. His argument, which is directed against Bonaparte whose view he considers identical to that of Leuba (1925), is precisely that we need to understand the context of mystic discourse, specifically in relation to the tradition of the allegorical interpretation of the Canticle. He shows that in the Old Testament, nuptial symbolism is not used to describe the relationship between God and individuals but the covenant Yahweh has with Israel. In other words, it describes something collective and communal. It is into this already existing tradition that the Canticle is inserted (Buzy 1943). New Testament authors use the same image and apply it to the union between Christ and the Church which is described as the new Israel. This is the same sense we find in the Pauline literature. The patristic tradition echoes this by speaking of the union of the divine Logos with human nature in the incarnation. While it is true that Origen speaks of the union of the soul with the Word, he considers it simultaneously a union with the Church through the sacrament of baptism. In other words, personal union comes about through faith in the Church as the bride of Christ (Daniélou 1948). This ecclesial dimension appears again in Bernard's sermons on the Canticle. According to Etchegoyen's (1923) close textual analysis of Teresa's works there is nothing to suggest anything individual in her use of erotic symbolism in the Canticle. Beirnaert concludes that the mystics do not apply the conjugal symbol to an individual experience. It is a literary symbol rather than a psychological one (cf. Robert 1944). Nor is it sexual. In fact, Bonaventure, Teresa and John of the Cross all say explicitly that the sexual is extrinsic to the mystical. This is, to echo Heidegger, because the mystical strives towards a more fundamental depth, a knowledge that is beyond language and thus marked by uncertainty. A form of thinking that breaks through the resolution of ambiguity that characterises all forms of discourse.

As part of his habitation in 1915 Heidegger had lectured on a passage from Eckhart, and his thought may have been closer to that of Eckhart than the few references in his work suggest (Schürmann 1973). Lacan began to be interested in Heidegger at least from 1951 when Jean Beaufret began an analysis with him and at Easter 1955 visited Heidegger in Freiberg[31]. At this time Heidegger was already preparing a series of lectures in which he built on a theme first elaborated twenty years earlier in the summer semester of 1935 and which had just been published in German when Lacan began his seminar in 1953[32]. The lectures which were delivered during the academic year 1955-56 would eventually be published as *Der Satz vom Grund* (1957) and Beaufret was to write the preface and various notes in the French edition (1962). Starting from Leibniz, who had himself referred to *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, Heidegger quoted Silesius in relation to the notion of the foundational, primal ground (*Ur-grund*) or underlying ground (*zu-grunde liegend*) of being (Heidegger 1957)[33]. Discussing Silesius' poem '*Ohne Warum*'[34], he says that the poet had shown that ground and being belong together and developed the view that the 'most extreme sharpness and depth of thought belong to genuine and great mystics' (Heidegger 1957:71)[35].

This is because the poet ‘is inviting us to enter this other region outside representational thinking’ (Caputo 1986: 65).

The life of Angelus Silesius

The life Johann Scheffler is divided into two parts. The first, before his conversion to Catholicism at the age of twenty-nine, when he adopted the name Angelus Silesius, the second after it. This division is so marked that some commentators have been unsure whether Johann Scheffler and Angelus Silesius were the same person.

His father, Stanislaus Scheffler was a Pole of German descent, born in Krakov in 1562. Stanislaus distinguished himself in both civil and military service and had been ennobled with the title Lord of Borwicze, given a coat-of-arms and amassed a considerable fortune. At the age of sixty-two, in February 1624, he married Maria Hennemann, a woman forty years younger than himself, the daughter of a physician to the Imperial Court. Johann was born in Breslau (Wroc?aw), the capital of Silesia, in 1624 and baptised on Christmas Day 1625 in the Lutheran church of St. Elizabeth. Twelve years later his father died and just two years after that his mother also died. A month before her death she had enrolled him and his brother Christian at the Elisabet-Gymnasium in Breslau. Here his interest in poetry was to develop. The Rector, Elias Major, was himself a poet and one of his other masters, Christian Köler, had written a biography of Martin Opitz[36]. In his earliest treatise, *Aristarchus sive de contemptu linguae Teutonicae* (1617), Opitz argued that German literature could rival that of any other European language and over the following two decades he laid the foundations for a vernacular literature that drew on established Latin forms whilst seeking to move beyond them.

> The awakening of interest in German poetry which had been brought about in Silesia by the recently published works of Martin Opitz was reflected in the importance given to poetical composition, not merely in the classical languages but in the German tongue, in the school curriculum. The Gymnasium, moreover, possessed a theatre devoted to the representation of plays and masques by the scholars, in one of which, a Masque of May, it is recorded in a programme still extant that Johann Scheffler played the part of a nightingale. One of his masters, Christoph Köler, with whom he appears to have been on specially friendly terms, was himself a poet of some note and encouraged Johann in the practice of verse-making. The few specimens of his youthful compositions which have survived reveal an early acquired mastery of poetic technique without displaying any considerable originality of thought or expression. Crawford Flitch 1932:19-20.

The literary and poetic climate of the school was, no doubt, also enriched by the presence of Andreas Scultetus, one of Johann Scheffler’s contemporaries and close friends. Scultetus later became an accomplished poet and after his conversion to Catholicism, a Jesuit (Nisbet 2013)[37]. According to Schmidt (1986) it was Scultetus who first introduced Scheffler to poetry.

Johann Scheffler read medicine and the law at the University of Strasburg having matriculated at the age of nineteen. After a year’s residence he went to Leyden University and from there to the University of Padua where, in 1648, he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Medicine. The following year he was appointed court physician to Duke Sylvius Nimrod of Würtemberg-Oels and began running a private practice within the Duchy. Around the same time he met Abraham von Franckenberg [1593-1652]. It is difficult to situate Franckenberg’s work as he was influenced by many different streams of thought (Schmidt-Biggemann 2011). However, his library evidences a familiarity with the works of the medieval mystics, particularly Tauler[38], the Dominican disciple of Meister Eckhart, and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica* from whose writings he compiled an anthology (Bruckner 1988). He also knew the work of the Lutheran Jakob Boehme [1575-1624][39], an obscure and difficult writer, whose opera was published posthumously (Schmitz 1974[2]). Another stimulus on Scheffler probably came from a

compendium compiled by the Jesuit Maximilian Van der Sandt (Sandaeus) (Gies 1929)[40]. But above all else, it was von Franckenberg who was responsible for the development of a mystical orientation in Sheffler's poetry. Crawford Flitch describes Franckenberg as the man who, in the brief but critical years of Scheffler's psychological development, 'was to guide him in his spiritual wayfaring' (Crawford Flitch 1932: 24). Franckenberg gave Scheffler two volumes which are still extant. One of them, the *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechtildinae* was bound together with Tauler's sermons[41]. That it was highly prized by Scheffler is manifest from the Latin inscription, dated March 1652, in which he recorded that he had received it from his faithful friend Abraham von Franckenberg and had had it elegantly rebound. Another volume includes the *Revelations of St Bridget* and is peppered with annotations in Scheffler's own hand. The Catholic mystics having exercised a strong influence on his thought and character and having returned to Breslau, Johann Scheffler was received into the Church a year after Frankenberg's death on 12th June 1653.

> Scheffler cannot but have felt a strong attraction to the church which had produced such men as Eckhart, Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck, who had revealed to him the 'hidden way of communion with God'; and that the same church was still capable or giving birth to kindred spirits he had the witness of the post-Reformation saints, Teresa and St John of the Cross. It seems scarcely possible to doubt that it was to Rome as the nursing-mother of the mystics that he surrendered his allegiance. Crawford Flitch 1932: 36.

At confirmation Scheffler took the name Angelus. According to one authority the choice of the name Angelus was due to Scheffler's reverence for Juan de los Angeles [1536–1609], a Spanish mystical writer. However, in his funeral oration his Jesuit confrère, Daniel Schwartz, explained that the allusion was to the name Angel by which he was known in his childhood. He almost certainly added Silesius to distinguish himself from Johannes Angelus of Darmstadt, a contemporary Lutheran theologian[42].

In 1661 Angelus Silesius was ordained a priest and retired to the monastery of the Knights of the Cross in Breslau. Two years later in 1663 he began the publication of fifty-five tracts against various Protestant sects. Afterwards he made a selection of thirty-nine which he published in two folio volumes under the title of *Ecclesiologia*. He was to spend the latter part of his life as an advocate of the Counter Reformation. Schmidt describes him as having become a 'garrulous confessional polemicist', his writing characterised by 'tirades' and 'outbursts of hate' (Schmidt 1986: 3; 5). Furcha mirrors this viewing Silesius' later work as 'vitriolic' (Furcha 1986: xviii). Crawford Fitch adopts a more measured tone describing him during this period as a 'strenuous soldier of the Church Militant', relating how he gave donations so that cake could be distributed to the poor and wine and biscuits to some nuns and noting that he was often the godfather to poor children and probably gave them financial support (Crawford Fitch 1932: 44). Silesius died at Breslau on 9th July 1677, leaving a considerable fortune to charity.

Silesius' mystical works

The work on which Silesius' fame principally rests is *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*. It was published with the title *Geist-reiche Sinn- und Schluss-reime zur göttlichen Beschaulichkeit anleitend[43]* and only renamed in the second edition of 1675. Although the imprimatur for the book had been given by Sebastian von Rostock at Breslau on 6th July 1656, the work did not appear until the spring of the following year and then not at Breslau but at Vienna. It is possible that there was a doubt about the orthodoxy of the text which led Rostock to prefer that it not be published within the diocese. Divided into five books, it is a collection of one thousand four hundred and thirteen short epigrammatic poems, mostly alexandrine couplets[44], together with ten supplementary sonnets. In the second edition a sixth book was added[45].

Silesius' work was largely forgotten until the publication of an article by Friedrich Schlegel in 1819. Following that both Hegel and Schopenhauer mention him. In the succeeding years monographs followed

debating his orthodoxy[46]. There have been a number of editions of his corpus. Georg Ellinger did the pioneering work publishing two volumes in 1895 and 1901. In 1952 Hans Ludwig Held published in three volumes a complete edition of Silesius based on Ellinger's edition. The first volume of Held's edition includes an account of his life (13-60), a description of his two major works, *Die heilige Seelenlust* (61-72) and *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann* (73-98), the text of the former work being published in the second volume (31-370), and the latter in volume three (5-218).

Prior to the publication by Baruzi, the most important study of Silesius' work was August Kahlert's *Angelus Silesius. Eine Literar-historische Untersuchung* which was published in 1853 in Breslau. A lengthy article, largely based on Kahlert's work, by Paterson, appeared in Volume XIX of *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for October 1870. So far as we have been able to establish, this is the first account of the life and thought of Silesius to have appeared in English. In March 1937 the historian Jean Orcibal completed a doctoral thesis at the École normal supérieur, under the direction of Alexandre Koyre, entitled *La formation spirituelle d'Angelus Silesius (Johann Scheffler)*. Jean Baruzi was one of Orcibal's referees.

Commentators have largely overlooked the fact that it is the trope of the angelic that connects the life of Silesius with *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*[47]. Not only does Silesius re-describe himself as an angel by taking the name Angelus at confirmation, he frames his epigrams around the leitmotif of the cherubim. Angels are represented in scripture as a multitude of beings intermediate between God and man. The Hebrew word for angel is *mal'ak* and is used to denote both a human messenger and a spirit messenger[48]. Except in one case, psalm 78/77.49, messenger spirits are always good (Nordell 1889). New Testament authors show angels present at the major events in the life of Christ. In the early Church interest in angels was comparatively peripheral and limited to commentaries on scriptural passages that mention angels. One such being the *De Seraphim* and *De Cherubim* of Evagrius which amount to a brief exegesis of the visions of Isaias (Is. 6.2-3) and Ezekiel (Ez. 1.18 and 10.12) respectively[49]. However, in Philo and in the pseudepigrapha we find a more developed angelology. But it was in the Middle Ages, in the classification in *The Celestial Hierarchy* of pseudo Denys, that a fully developed hierarchy of nine choirs of angels was established (Dhorme and Vincent 1926). These are divided into three orders which mirror the threefold hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons. Mechtilde of Hackeborn [1240-98] in her *Liber specialis gratiae* (Schmidt 1978), St Gertrude [1256-1302] in the *Legatus Memorialis Abundantiae Divinae Pietatis* and a little later John Tauler in his sermons, all wrote about the angelic hierarchies (Duhr 1937; cf also Walsham 2011). And from the thirteenth century a treatise on angels because an integral part of the commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. In the post Reformation period, protestant theologians had relatively little to say on the subject. But from the beginning of the seventeenth century the number of treatises and pious manuals about the angelic multiplied significantly, particularly under the influence of the Jesuits who actively propagated the devotion. From the publication of the *Traité et pratique de devotion aux anges* of Francis Borgia in 1575 until 1650 over twenty-five works were published on devotion to the angels. The most influential of these being the *De Angelis* of Suarez which was published in 1630.

Transition, according to de Certeau, is one of its key motifs that we find in the mystical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is a trope that speaks of the departure, with its associated loss, from the religious certainties of the pre-Reformation world, through a period of drifting before reaching its end with the Enlightenment (de Certeau 2006). It is this transition, de Certeau considers, that is signified in the second half of the composite title of Silesius' work (*Wandersmann*).

CONCLUSION

A number of scholars have pointed out that mysticism is an extremely imprecise term used to describe many different things[50]. In the Western Christian tradition its meaning has not only gradually changed through

the ages but there have also been key instants when it was dramatically re-conceptualised. One such moment occurred after the reception of the works of pseudo Denys in the Rhineland. Another with the Spanish Carmelites in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet these changes in the way in which the mystical is treated – the 'language game', to use Wittgenstein's phrase – though significant, are not accumulative and do not eradicate key elements of continuity that stretch back to Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. Rather, they emphasise that mystical texts are always of their time. Thus, the works of Angelus Silesius, as those of the other mystics, need to be read with this in mind for we can only understand the meaning of mystical utterances by understanding the historical setting in which they emerge.

Ellinger (1927) suggests that Silesius' work reveals a psychological conflict that resulted from the loneliness he had experienced following the death of his parents. Crawford Flitch concludes that there is little that is original in the works of Silesius which are mostly a recreation of the thoughts of earlier mystics[51].

> He views the promised land but seems to describe it in terms of hope and anticipation. A sympathetic imagination enabled him to decipher the mystical code, but the message itself appears to have been communicated from without rather than to have been received from within. Crawford Flitch 1932: 60-1

Furcha (1986) repeats Crawford Flitch's view. Derrida considered Silesius work not really in the apophatic tradition at all and distinguishes him from John of the Cross. He was simply 'repeating, continuing, importing, transporting…[and in so doing] kept the archive, kept in memory the teaching of Christoph Köler' (Derrida 1995: 52-3). These various assessments of Silesius' work suggest that little or nothing at all came from his own inner experience and thus that he may not, therefore, have been a mystic 'in the true sense'. However, this may be to over subscribe to a view in which the mystical is reduced to subjective, individual experience. Indeed, a central aspect of the continuity we find in Western mysticism is a suspicion of individual experience and an emphasis on a communal, ecclesial context in which a process of conversion takes place through participation in the sacraments. Indeed, many mystics, including Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, John of the Cross and Angela Foligno, were highly critical of the role of experience (Werblowsky 1965; McGinn 2002).

That having been said, an experiential element, though not overabundant, is implicitly present in the context of Silesius' work. For he almost certainly wrote the *Cherubinische Wandersmann* between 1651 and 1653, a period of deeply personal transition and transformation. A progressive conversion which culminated in his reception into the Catholic Church and his decision to become a Jesuit. Indeed, this may, in fact, be the very thing that inscribes the work into the mystical tradition and gives a personal meaning to the theme of journeying designated in the title of his work.

As with all mystical writing, Silesius' epigrams are an attempt to talk about the ineffable – that which is fundamentally incapable of being expressed or to use Wittgenstein's idiom 'not a part of the world' – and consequently unknowable (*Tractatus* 5.641). In this sense, of course, they are necessarily 'forever elliptical, taciturn, cryptic, obstinately withdrawing… inaccessible' (Derrida 1995: 85). Indeed, 'wandering'. Nevertheless, despite their seeming incoherence, they are part of a shared discourse. As such they speak to us, first of all, of the society and particularly of the ecclesial context in which they arose. What Lacan does, by drawing our attention to them, is to suggest that however obscure their meaning, they are nevertheless significant. And that the mystical as a *modus loquendi*, akin to the poetic with its use of images[52], points beyond itself thus opening up a new perspective 'at the limit of the world' (*Tractatus* 5.632; cf. Baruzi 1931-32)[53].

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Notes:

[1] Certainly by the early 1970s Lacan considered mysticism 'something serious' (Lacan S20: 76) and described his own writing as within 'the same order' as the mystical: '…mystical jaculations are neither idle chatter nor empty verbiage; they provide, all in all, some of the best reading one can find – at the bottom of the page, drop a footnote, "Add to that list Jacques Lacan's Écrits, because it's of the same order"' (76). The latter remark raises the question of whether or not the conceptual structure and form of Lacan's work as a whole could be described as mystical. Roudinesco suggests something close to this by referring to mysticism as one of '*les grands mythes sur lesquels il avait forgé sa lecture de la doctrine freudienne*' (Roudinesco 1993: 463). Although she says '*la mystique*' and not *mysticisme*, it is translated as 'mysticism' by Bray (Roudinesco 1997). Roudinesco's use, in this passage, of the term myth ('*les grands mythes*') finds its parallel in de Certeau's use of the word *fable* (fable). Both are extremely slippery terms. Fable, which comes down to us through '*fabula*', as the Latin translation of *muthos* in Aristotle's *Poetics*, is discussed with great clarity in Loveridge (1998). Particularly relevant is the distinction he makes between the English and French use of the term in relation to myth. Following the more precise French use, de Certeau's concept of '*fable*' connotes an oral tradition. He writes that 'To define the position of the other…as a "fable" is not merely to identify it with "what speaks" (*fari*), but with a speech that "does not know" what it says [*à une parole qui "ne sait pas" ce qu'elle dit*] (de Certeau 1988; 1990). It is partly because of his approach to the mystics that some have described Lacan as a medievalist e.g. Labbie (2006) and Frandenburg (1998). On the parallel question of Freud's position in relation to mysticism see the study by Paul-Laurent Assoun (1980).

[2] E.g. S6 (3rd June 1959), S7 (27th January and 23rd March 1960), S9 (20th and 27th June 1962), S10 (15th Mat 1963), S13 (27th April 1966), S15 (21st February 1968), S16 (30th April 1969), S18 (20th January 1971), S19 (4th November 1971) and S20 (20th February 1973).

[3] Smith in his introduction to the English translation of *The Mystic Fable* points out that the noun '*la mystique*' is not the same as *mysticisme* (mysticism) but is better translated with the rather ugly neologism 'mystics'. This solution, however, leaves the difficulty of distinguishing it from the plural of 'a mystic' (de Certeau 1992: ix-x). De Certeau makes much of the linguistic shift in the seventeenth century from the older usage of 'contemplation' to 'mysticism' and from 'contemplatives' or 'spirituals' to 'mystics', a change in usage Dom Butler (1960) had also noticed. Yet what is signified remains largely unchanged. Thus, it may not be as significant as he seems to suggest (de Certeau 1982: 127 ff).

[4] Mark Kroll-Fratoni considers 'the particular value of Christian mysticism for psychoanalysis has largely been left unexplored – despite, or perhaps because, Christianity is typically the religion most well represented in the parts of the world where psychoanalysis is also most prevalent' (Kroll-Fratoni 2013: 3).

[5] One exception is that of Webb and Sells (1995) which attempts to link Lacan and Bion to apophaticism. However, the authors fail to appreciate the significant differences between such diverse 'mystics' as Plotinus, Ibn 'Arabi, Marguerite Porete and Eckhart and the comparisons are, consequently, imprecise.

[6] To give just one example of this lacuna, *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan* (ed. J.-M. Rabate), which purports to give 'key dimensions' of Lacan's life and works, while referring in its index to 'Jean Baruzi', 'Mme Guyon', 'John of the Cross', 'mystical discourse' and 'Teresa of Avila', has, in fact, very little to say about mysticism. The references sharing a few sentences on just three passages (xix; 228-9) with the only substantive remarks concerning feminine sexuality in S20. On the role of the onlooker, see the clear summary of the main arguments and bibliography in Nobus (2015).

[7] This reading was further fuelled in the early years of the twentieth century by a growing interest in psychology. Studies of mystical 'experience' include those of William James (1902) – a phenomenological interpretation even further reduced by Leuba (1925); of Evelyn Underhill (1911); and to a lesser extent that of von Hügel (1961, orig. 1908).

[8] It was an approach that almost immediately had its critics. The first to re-assert an earlier, more traditional reading was Auguste Saudreau (1896; 1900; 1903) who was followed by a number of other scholars. With a catena of extracts from patristic authors Saudreau describes the mystical life not in terms of extraordinary psychological phenomena but in relation to the development of the virtues. Later, Troeltsch (1912) – whose position is usefully summarised in Zachhuber (2013) – as well as Catholic thinkers like Maréchal (1937) were to argue persuasively against an individualistic approach to the mystical. More recently, McGinn (2015) has suggested that it was on the basis of this mistaken view of mysticism that the Von Harnack, Barth and other Protestant theologians considered mysticism antithetical to Protestantism.

[9] Mark Murphy (2018) seems to think so, citing a passage from S20 where Lacan says that at the end of the nineteenth century mysticism was reduced to pure ecstatic feeling (*foutre*). But Lacan is, in fact, explicitly referring to 'those around Charcot' and it is not entirely clear that '*foutre*' here refers to ecstatic experience.

[10] Besides Silesius, the principal Western Christian mystics that Lacan mentions are Augustine [354-430], Bernard of Clairvaux [1090-1153], Thomas Aquinas [1225-1274], Hadewijch of Antwerp [c.1200-1248], Angela of Foligno [1248 – 1309], Meister Eckhart [1260 – 1328], Nicholas of Cusa [1401-1464], Teresa of Avila [1515 – 1582], John of the Cross, [1542–1591] and Margaret Mary Alacoque [1647–1690]. Lacan also refers to Fénelon [1651-1715] whose thought was greatly influenced by that of Mme Guyon.

[11] The 'works' of Silesius that Lacan mentions probably refer to *Der Cherublinische Wandersmann* in Henri Plard's edition published in 1946. This edition contains the German text as well as a French

translation.

[12] Although Reich's *Charakteranalyse*, which Freud initially praised, was not publish until 1933, he had been working on it at least since 1925 when his first book, *Der triebhafte Charakter: eine psychoanalytische Studie zur Pathologie des Ich* (Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag), was published. Some of his ideas on character seem to have been derived from Ferenczi, and Balint's interest, which may have stemmed from this, was destined to have a considerable impact on the theories of the ego developed by Anna Freud and which Lacan was to challenge.

[13] Lacan had also discussed Balint's work in the two previous sessions on 26th May and 2nd June 1954. Although he described himself as a friend of Balint's, he criticised some of the latter's views particularly those on ego strengthening, the relationship between patient and analyst, and the end of analysis (Moreau-Ricaud 2012). See the 'Lettre de Jacques Lacan à Michael Balint' La scission de 1953 *Supplément à Ornicar* (1976) 7: 119, in which he addresses Balint as 'Bien cher ami'. Lacan's criticisms were repeated in papers that he delivered in 1953, 1955 and 1958 and that were subsequently published in the *Écrits* in 1966. See Ec. 250 n.6, 262, 304 from 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' (a paper presented at the Rome Congress 1953 and published in *La Psychanalyse* I (1956): 81-161); Ec. 347, 348 from 'Variations on the Standard Treatment' delivered in 1955 and published the same year in the *Encyclopédie medico-chirurgicale* 3; and Ec. 607 and 681 from 'The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power' and 'Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: Psychoanalysis and the Personality Structure' both presented at the Royaumont International Colloquium in 1958 and published in *La Psychanalyse* VI (1961): 111-47 and 149-206.

[14] E.g. v. Mos. I.7. For a survey of this theme and the way it has been variously interpreted see Blowers (1992).

[15] Scholars have taken different positions on the question of whether Gregory of Nyssa's mystical theology is one of light or darkness and how it relates to Origen e.g. Puech (1938), Daniélou (1953) and Crouzel (1957). Martin Laird (1999) has usefully reviewed and summarised the arguments and re-evaluated Gregory's mystical schema. Laird's analysis is based on a broader reading of Gregory's works than those considered by Danielou (cf. Lemaitre 1953). The theme of the immersion (*Hineingehaltensein*) of existence into the night was to recur several times in Heidegger's work and became intimately linked to his concept of nothingness. An 'elementally forceful *negative*: putting *nothing* in the way of the depth of existence' (Tonning 2009: 144). The more being is experienced in its truth, he wrote in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Eregnis)*, the deeper is the nothing (Heidegger 1999). With its clear resonance in the *noche oscura* of seventeenth century mystical literature, the image of immersion into the night formed the basis for Heidegger's treatment of being-towards-death as we find it in *Sein und Zeit*.

[16] There are a number of different interpretations of the notion of ecstasy in Gregory, particularly as we find it in his treatise on the Canticle. See the summaries of the main positions in Mateo-Seco (2010); Malherbe and Ferguson (1978: 146 n. 59); and Daniélou (1953). Gilson thought Tertullian the first Latin

writer to use the term which he defines as *amentia*, a flight of the mind, as we experience it in dreams. A definition to which Jerome took exception (Gilson 1940: 215 n. 6).

[17] On the influence of Gregory of Nyssa on Evagrius see Jaeger (1954).

[18] The one example Völker (1931) identified of a mystical use of *ekstasis* in Origen in his *hom. in Num*. 27.12 is doubtful cf. Dodds (1965) 71. n 4.

[19] Cf. Vansteenberghe (1915). Even in pseudo Denys' invocation of the probably fictive Hierotheus it may be possible to discern the earlier link between the eucharistic liturgy and a meditative study of sacred scripture, and the notion of progress or continuing conversion (Bouyer 1949).

[20] On the reception of pseudo Denys in the West see Poirel (2007).

[21] Silence may be a key apophatic element in Thomas' thought (Pieper 1957) and one that brings him close to writers like Eckhart (Burrell 1983). Yet while pseudo Denys' thought necessitated the unknowability of God as the One beyond symbolisation (Burrell 1975) – language, concept – and being, Thomas, in the light of Aristotle, went further in his rejection of equivocity, developing an apophaticism in which the unknowability of God is qualified through the concept of *quidditas*. 'The reason Denys' theology leads to an absolute unknowing is because he denies that God is identical with Being, whereas Aquinas' metaphysics, while denying univocal being, retains true speech about God, including logical discourse by analogy' (Darley 2011).

[22] On the intersections between these mystics and the Spanish Carmelites of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see the studies by Groult (1927) and Orcibal (1959; 1966).

[23] As Lacan is thought to have frequently supressed his sources and has been described as 'an inveterate borrower' it seems likely that Balint was not Lacan's only secondary source for Silesius (Luepnitz 2003: 228).

[24] Baruzi went on from the Collège Stanislaus to teach at the Sorbonne (1926-1928) and at the Collège de France (1933-1953) where Michel de Certeau was among those who attended his last seminars on mystical literature. These proved to be an inspiration for de Certeau, one to which he would feel in debt when

developing his own reading of John of the Cross. For a good summary of Baruzi's academic interests see the paper by Devivaise (1953) written at the time of his death.

[25] On the background to the controversy see Bord (1997). The lives of Baruzi, Gilson and Maritain intersected – Gilson and Maritain both studied at the Sorbonne, and Gilson and Baruzi taught at the Sorbonne, and the Collège de France. All three had come under the influence of Bergson and had a long-standing interest in mysticism and Lacan refered to all three in his seminar. An analysis by Gilson of Bonaventure's conception of mystical experience appeared in 1924, and one on Cistercian mysticism ten years later in 1934 (1940). While Maritain published a study in 1932 the last chapter of which treats of incommunicable knowledge in John of the Cross. Roudinesco notes the influence that Gilson, through his association with Baruzi, had on Lacan (1993: 30). Labbie goes even further – probably too far – suggesting that Lacan was in 'close contact' with Gilson throughout his career, and that their work followed a parallel trajectory as they shared an epistemology (Labbie 2006: 228 n. 42).

[26] She described him as an austere figure, possessing 'an interior life', who nonetheless was able to inspire others with a passion for philosophy (Simons 2001: 33).

[27] Francoise Collin (1999) has shown that Lacan's comments in S20 on the orgasmic posture that Bernini has Teresa of Avila adopt, in his famous statue of the saint in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, were taken from de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* which had been published in 1949. De Beauvoir seems to have read Lacan's early texts and to have consulted him before the publication of *The Second Sex* but she only devoted a short chapter to 'The Psychoanalytic Point of View' and quotes Freud rather than Lacan. According to Collin, what Roudinesco's biography does not reveal is the correspondence between Lacan's reformulation of the feminine and those much earlier ideas of de Beauvoir. She argues that Lacan's ideas could only have been taken from de Beauvoir. On the background see the excellent summary by Ruonakoski (2015); also, more recently, Nobus (2015).

[28] Ryder (2010), however, argues that Lacan misunderstood Bataille's text.

[29] Lacan also contributed some documents to his *L'Éroticisme*, published in 1957, where Bataille duly thanked him for his support. The account of mysticism that Bataille gave in this book was arguably more coherent than that published in 1943.

[30] '*On ne peut donc s'empêcher de voir dans l'extase d'une Thérèse équivalents de l'orgasme*' (Bonaparte 1948: 193). Although, for a number of reasons, Lacan's relationship with Marie Bonaparte was cold, from 1932 to 1954 he published a series of comments and one or two translations in the *Revue française de psychanalyse*.

[31] Lacan recognised that psychoanalysis and Heidegger's philosophy could be closely linked, particularly in relation to the difficulties of recollection. Later, Derrida (1976) was to discuss the link between Freud and Heidegger. As Lukacher puts it: 'Like Freud, Heidegger proposes a notion of recollection that transcends the individual subject, where *Erinnerung* is no longer an internalization, no longer a coming into one's own, or an act of self-possession. Quite to the contrary, it becomes a process of dispossession' (Lukacher 1986: 21). See also Richardson (1983).

[32] Published in English as *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1959).

[33] '*Ben jenen Mystikern gibt e einige Stellen, die außerordentlich kühn sind, voll von schwierigen Metaphern und beinahe zur Gottlosigkeit hinneigend, so wie ich Gleiches bisweilen in den deutschen – im übrigen schönen – Gedichten eines gewissen Mannes bemerkt habe, der sich Johannes Angelus nennt*' (Leibniz 1768: 56 cited by Heidegger 1957: 68).

[34] '*Die Ros ist ohn waru; sie blühet, weil sie blühet, Sie acht nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet*.' (The rose is without why; it blooms because it blooms, It cares not for itself; asks not if it's seen), CW 1: 289. Although Silesius does not cite Eckhart as a source for this passage, Versényi (1965) considers the verse a direct setting of an expression found in Eckhart. Caputo concurs showing that Silesius' use of the terms *Gelassenheit* (abandonment) and 'without why' are taken directly from Eckhart Q. 180, 5-13/Bl. 126-7. See also the discussion in de Libera (1995: 34-8).

[35] See Caputo (1986) for a discussion of Heidegger's comments on Silesius' poem (esp. 60-6 and 97-103).

[36] After studying literature and philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, Opitz [1597-1639] became Professor of Philosophy in the Gymnasium at Weissenburg in Transylvania. Later, he versified the Epistles for Sundays and festivals, according to the metres of the French Psalter. In 1625 he presented to Emperor Ferdinand II a poem on the death of the Emperor's brother Grandduke Karl. In gratitude the Emperor made him poet laureate and ennobled him as Opitz von Boberfeld. For a time he was private secretary to Karl Hannibal von Dohna, who oversaw the Counter Reformation in Silesia, and wrote poems in praise of him. Three years later Opitz published a translation of a work by the Flemish Jesuit Martin Becanus. The author of some 90 works, Martin Opitz was a member of the literary society known as the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. In 1624 published his *Buch der Deutschen Poeterey* at Breslau. Here he set out rules for the style, verse, and rhyme of German poetry which remained influential until the 18th century. Cf. de Backer and Sommervogel (1869); and Schröder (2009).

[37] The baroque poems of Andreas Scultetus were entirely forgotten until Lessing discovered them in the early 1770s. Lessing made a selection which was included as an appendix in an anthology published by Zachariä at Easter 1771, and simultaneously published as a separate volume. Lessing had come across them in the libraries at Breslau while researching the poems of Opitz. However, despite Lessing's enthusiasm the poems largely went unnoticed. See the fascinating account in Nisbit (2013).

[38] While a student at the University of Cologne, Tauler became closely acquainted with Eckhart [1260-1328]. At the same time he probably came to know Henry Suso [1295- 1366], the other Dominican associated with the Eckhart. Together, Eckhart, Tauler and Suso form the central characters in Rhineland mysticism.

[39] Scholars remain divided on whether Boehme can be considered a mystic and whether his thought is pantheistic or dualistic. Despite the impenetrable nature of his corpus, he has exercised great influence particularly amongst those associated with German Romanticism including Hegel and Schelling. Alexandre Koyre (1929) reviewed his influence; see also Schmitz (1974[1]) and Weeks (1991).

[40] Schmidt (1986), however, considers this is highly contentious.

[41] Apart from two letters, John Tauler's sermons are the only extant works of which can be regarded as genuine. As with Eckhart, they are firmly rooted in Thomas' theology including his teaching on mysticism and are fundamentally practical.

[42] After studying theology at Marburg University, Johannes Angelus of Darmstadt [1542-1608] worked in the Lutheran parish of Groß Gerau and then in Damstadt where he became the superintendent. He set up a number of schools in neighbouring villages, including one for orphans and other children from poor families. His strongly anti-Semitic views contributed significantly to the Hesse-Damstadt Jewish Order of 1585 which forbade the establishment of synagogues. He was also involved in the persecution and burning of witches cf. Adam and Westphal (2012).

[43] Sapiential rhyming sentences and epigrams conducive to divine contemplation.

[44] The foundation of most alexandrines consists of two half-lines of six syllables each, separated by a caesura. In early 17th-century Georg Rudolf Weckherlin argued in favour of free rhythm, reflecting French practice, while Opitz advocated a strict accentual-syllabic iambic alexandrine in imitation of Dutch practice. On the whole German poets followed Opitz (Gasparove et al. 1996).

[45] Silesius also wrote another volume of poems entitled *Heilige Seelen-Lust oder geistliche Hirten-Lieder der in ihren Jesum verliebten Psyche* (The soul's holy delight or spiritual pastorals of the Jesus-loving psyche). Although also published in 1656, from a certain parallelism of expression, it can be inferred that while some parts were probably written concurrently, the composition as a whole was later than *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*.

[46] The most notable being those of Varnhagen (1834), Wittmann (1842), Kahlert (1853), Schrader (1853), Kern (1866), Lindemann (1876), Treblin (1877), Seltmann (1896), and Brie (1922).

[47] An exception to this rule is Christian Ruby's review article 'Une subjectivité baroque' EspacesTemps.net, Livres, 2004/05/21 where she cites de Certeau. URL : https://www.espacestemps.net/articles/une-subjectivite-baroque/ For de Certeau, central to early modern mystical discourse is the theorisation of speech, in its '*metaphors énonciative*', in its relationship between being and speech, and in its figures of '*dépassement*' (exceedance) and it is this, above all else, that he considers is manifest in angelology (de Certeau 1984, the text re-publish in 2013).

[48] Following Guignebert (1935: 129ff), Christine Mohrmann (1961c: 47) points out that the Latin substantive *angelus*, which seems to be Greek, is merely a transposition of the Hebrew.

[49] The original texts of these commentaries are lost but we have a Syriac version in four mss in the British Museum. Additionally, there is an Armenian version of the *De Seraphim*. The texts with translations and commentary were published by Muyldermans (1946).

[50] E.g. Rist (1967). Indeed, it may be accurate to say that it is only really by analogy that one can speak of mysticism across different religious traditions (Zaehner 1957).

[51] Silesius says as much himself in the Preface where he acknowledges a debt to Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Tauler, and Ruysbroeck. Eckhart, to whom he probably owes most, he does not mention presumably because of his questionable orthodoxy.

[52] For de Certeau, mystical discourse as fable is seen precisely as a form of *poi?sis* – a bringing into being something new.. *'Elle [la fable] correspond plutôt à ce que Jakobson appelait une "function" quand il analysait les fonctionnements "phatique", "métalinguistique" ou "poétique" du langage, et qu'il montrait,*

par example, que le function poétique n'est pas plus réductible au poème qu'elle n'est exclue du roman.. De même, la function "fable" ne peut pas être définie par le genre littéraire de la fable' (de Cereau and Cifali 2002: 161).

[53] For example, Lacan in S3, while tending to reduce mysticism to poetry, vividly contrasted Schreber's psychotic language which he considered closed down shared understanding, with the poetry of John of the Cross which he thought was able to open up another dimension of experience to the reader, of which she or he was previously unaware.. The drift to diminish mysticism by conflating it with poetic expression is found in a far more extreme form in a number of other writers e.g. Desandro (1967).

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