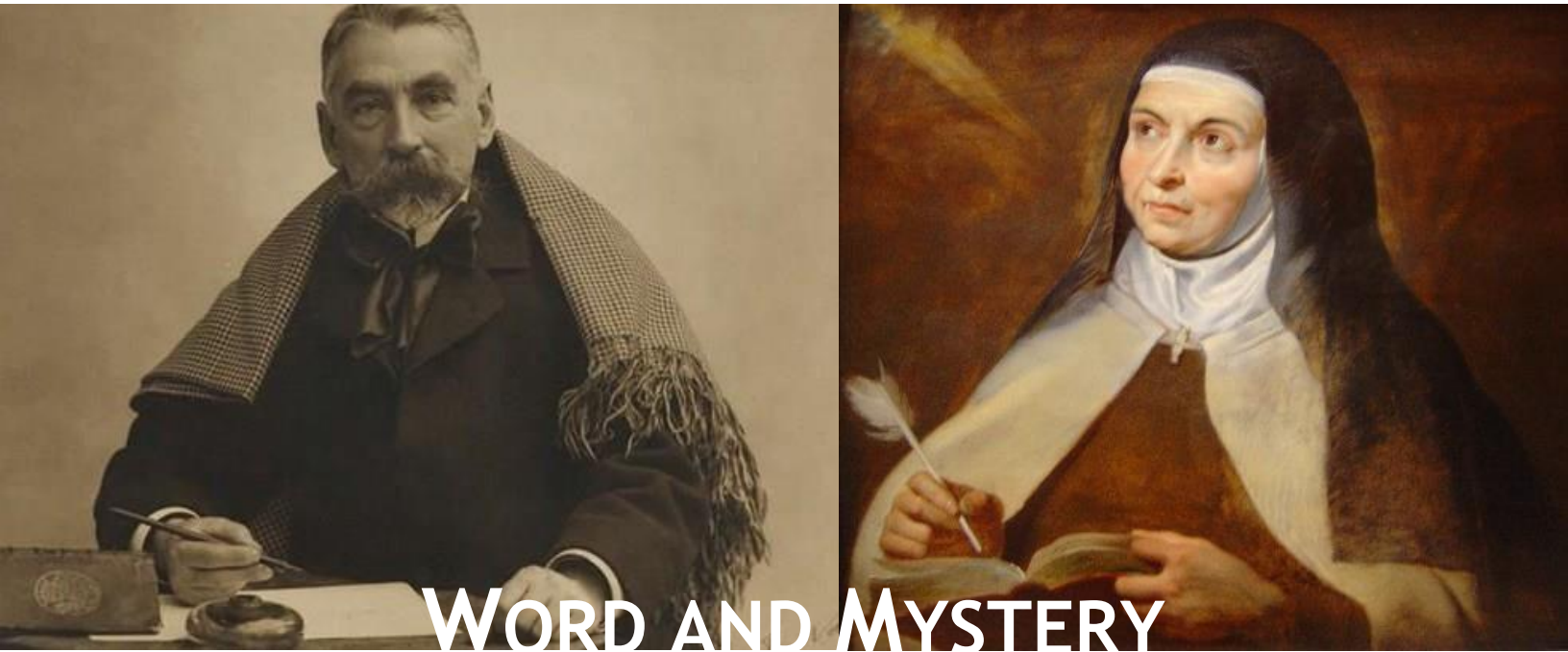




Universidad de
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Elements of Christian Mysticism in Contemporary Poetry: From Baudelaire to the Present

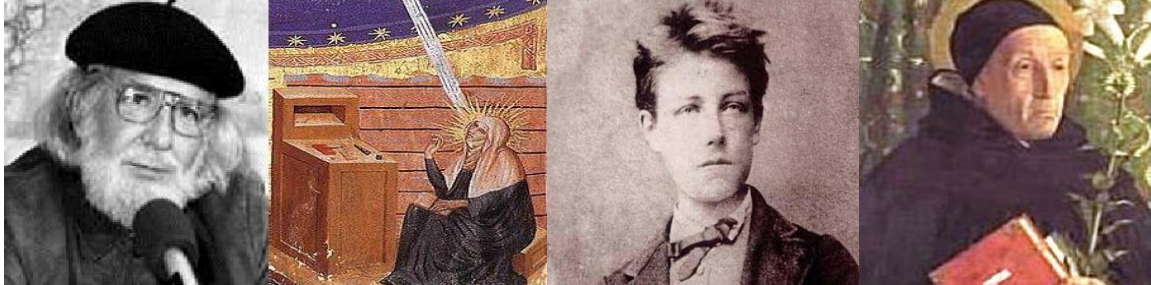
*International Conference organized by the Institute of Literature of the
Universidad de los Andes (Chile), the Faculty of Philology of the Universität
Münster (Germany), and the École Normale Supérieure (France)*

Universidad de los Andes, Santiago de Chile, October 6th-7th, 2016



The Modern Age is frequently described as secular or irreligious. Nevertheless, 19th and 20th century literature is characterized by an authentic longing for transcendence, which discloses itself particularly in lyrical poetry. Starting from a deep skepticism towards rational and positivist thought, the poets look for a sacred dimension of reality, and for the adequate way to express it in words. It is not necessarily the Christian God any more; for some, it becomes pure “unreality”; for others, the “universal soul”, a “nothing” which contains everything, or even the perpetual “muttering” of a creative language, transparency, spirit, light, darkness... In spite of this multitude of concepts and metaphors, the poetry of that period is united in the attempt to create a language that breaks the narrow limits of the empirical Self and the intellect in order to let the unknown in.

And an interesting phenomenon is revealed: the closer these texts come to expressing the mystery longed for, the more they make, explicitly or implicitly, the tradition of Christian mysticism resound. Some of the poems, in fact, can be read as a *cognitio experimentalis* of the radically other. This tendency can already be observed in some of the pioneers of modern lyrical poetry, in Baudelaire, Rimbaud or Mallarmé, for example. It is continued and even increased throughout the 20th century in poets such as Rilke, Ungaretti or Eliot, who make conscious references to mystical concepts and authors in their works. We suppose that the mystic and the poet share the paradoxical endeavor to speak the unspeakable, and the conscience of the difficulties and impossibilities that this operation involves.



The objective of our conference is to detect and analyze the elements of Christian mysticism in the poetry of the Western hemisphere, focusing on the period from Baudelaire to the present. Within this general framework, we propose four subject areas:

- *Theoretical reflections* on the relation between Christian mysticism and 19th and 20th century poetry, from a philosophical, philological or theological standpoint.
- *Reception* of authors and concepts from Christian mysticism on the part of the poets (for example, the influence of St. John of the Cross in the poetry of the *generación del 27*; Julian of Norwich in Eliot's *Four Quartets*; the concept of the *via negationis* in Rilke's *Book of Hours*...).
- *Common patterns* (for example, paradoxical and antithetical figures; the dissolution of logical and rational structures in the texts; metaphorical correspondences; the motive of silence...).
- *Mysticism and poetics* (for example, Mallarmé's poetics in the context of negative theology; the poetological implications of Pseudo-Dionysius's *Divine Names* and *Mystical Theology*; the esthetic dogma of "dehumanization" in relation to the concept of the *mors mystica*; the idea of an angelic language...).

Please send an abstract of 200-250 words for a 20 minute conference in English or Spanish, along with a brief cv, to fschmelzer@uandes.cl by the deadline of 30th of April 2016.



Venue:

Universidad de los Andes
Santiago de Chile
Campus San Carlos de Apoquindo
Av. San Carlos de Apoquindo 2.200, Las Condes, Santiago de Chile.
<http://www.uandes.cl>
<http://www.uandes.cl/unidades-academicas/instituto-de-literatura>
<http://wordandmystery.blogspot.com>

Registration value:

USD 100,00 (including lunch, coffee breaks, vine, and transport from the hotel to the university).

Executive Secretary:

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