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Ancias/Anxiousness in Joana de Jesus (1617-1681)

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THESES

Joana Serrado, *Ancias/Anxiousness in Joana de Jesus (1617-1681): Historical and Philosophical Approaches*

1. Joana de Jesus (born Joana Freire de Albuquerque, 1617-1681), a Cistercian nun from Portugal whose life and work has so far never been the object of academic study, should today be seen as a part of the Western intellectual canon due to the philosophical, theological, and mystical dimensions of her emerging subjectivity.
2. The study of the writings of Joana de Jesus, usually classified as spiritual autobiographies or autohagiographies, should lead to a redefinition of such works as belonging to a confessional, mystical, theological, and ultimately philosophical project, in the tradition of Jeanne Guyon's *Life*, Teresa of Avila's *Life*, and Augustine's *Confessions*.

Contra: Kate Greenspan, "Autohagiography," in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Margaret Schaus, *Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages*, vol. 14 (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 52-56; Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 6; Sonja Herpoel, *A La Zaga de Santa Teresa: Autobiografías por Mandato* (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999), 220-221; Asunción Lavrín and Rosalva Loreto López, *Monjas y Beatas: La Escritura Femenina en la Espiritualidad Barroca Novohispana Siglos XVII y XVIII* (Mexico City: Universidad de las Américas, Puebla/Archivo General de la Nación, 2002), 6.

Compare: Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," [La Loi du Genre] trans. Avital Ronell, in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 1, *On Narrative* (Autumn, 1980), 55-81.

3. Though indebted to a Spanish spiritual tradition of Recollection ('recogimiento') acquired mainly through the reading of Teresa of Ávila and Luis de Granada, Joana de Jesus reformulates the recollection as a substantive to a Portuguese verb ('recolher-se') and extends the tradition into an Iberian project.
4. Joana's major contribution to the spectrum of philosophical theology is her notion of *ancias* (anxiousness), which has no parallel in other philosophical or mystical Christian concepts, because it contains sensorial, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions.
5. Through the description of several situations of 'anxiousness' connected to visionary mystical experiences, Joana de Jesus develops an exegesis of sacred texts in which she takes the biblical text into the context of her own lived experiences and communities, thus legitimizing her authorship, leadership, and construction of subjectivity.

6. Joana's vernacular mysticism contains a theological dimension, insofar as there is a dogmatic reflection on themes such as the Incarnation, Christ's Sonship, the Trinity, and Mariology.
7. Premodern mystical texts authored by women, usually exclusively viewed by the scholarly canon as sources of inspiration for piety and devotion, can now be seen as valuable sources for theological and philosophical reflection and the extension of these reflections into political realms.
8. Joana's notion of anxiousness contributes to recent debates on agency, embodiment, and time, as discussed in feminist theories of subjectivity (De Beauvoir and Irigaray) or in the Portuguese philosophy of *Saudade*, by adding a psychosomatic and spiritual dimension to it.
9. When reading religious texts, a *kairological* approach enables conceptions of time that differ from synchronous or diachronological conceptions: different temporal models create different hermeneutical strategies.
10. Philosophers do not only need to transform the world but also to interpret that same transformation to the extent of becoming transformed by it, and therefore, to be able to acquire a mystical state wherein theology can contain an epistemological dimension.
11. In aiming for a community (either political or religious) based upon 'freedom of opinion and union in action', Trotskyist parties and Protestant churches can learn from each other.