

CHAPTER 4 – ANXIOUS SUBJECT: JOANA DE JESUS AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

4.1. Anxiousness: Appropriating and Poaching

The present study has so far had one aim: to conduct historical, theological, and philosophical research on the mystical notion of ‘anxiousness’ in the context of the Portuguese female author, Joana de Jesus.

Firstly, I presented Joana de Jesus and the context of her life and work. Then I moved further into a closer look at Joana’s texts, her narrative, and showed how she constructs a subjectivity through mystically perceiving the God-Man, reading and imitating Teresa, transforming her narrative into a treatise, and striving for both contemplation (developing mental prayer) and action (writing a new rule or reform for a new Cistercian recollected branch).

In the second chapter I proceeded mainly to a historical contextualization of Joana de Jesus’ mystical tradition of Iberian recollection. I inserted her thought into the context of observant movements in seventeenth-century Portugal and showed how Joana interacted with other characters – her family, her confessors, religious women – building up her social networks of spiritual diffusion.

In the third chapter, I showed how an ‘I’ emerged in her discourse and pointed out how Joana configured ‘situations of anxiousness’. This long analysis of several passages of her manuscript served to argue that Joana’s crucial notion, even when not directly cited, is best rendered as ‘anxiousness’: the anxious, urgent, voracious, eager, uneasy feeling that somatically and mentally makes Joana write down and share her special meeting with the Divinity. While Joana writes, she is reflecting upon the mysteries or dogmas of the Catholic Church she was brought up in: the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Sonship of Christ are the theological questions Joana tries to answer mystically. She acknowledges the God-Man’s presence (and absence) through a loving anxiousness while she slowly discovers herself, an anxious subject, through the encounter, operation, and *notícia* (knowledge, notice) of love.

But what does it mean to develop a subjectivity based upon mystical anxiousness? So far, I have tried to contextualize, describe, and interpret anxiousness in Joana’s time. As Gerda Lerner would state: I have tried to fill a gap in the history of

Portuguese women mystical theologians by doing first a restorative project through a 'compensatory history', followed by a 'contributive history', where I tried to systematize Joana's notion anxiousness and interpret it based on specialist studies. However, Gerda Lerner further advised that women's history might also need a 'transitional history', which demands different skills.¹ This is the project I aim to complete in the present chapter.²

Thus, in this last, transitional, reflective chapter, I proceed to a rereading of my findings on anxiousness within a twenty-first century philosophical context. How can Joana de Jesus, so far an unknown and unedited nun, really participate in the discussion of the subject? What does her anxiousness have to offer to contemporary theories of the embodied agent? How can *ancias* contribute to a philosophy expressed in the Portuguese language, whose apotheosis has been the discussion around the *saudade*?

For these questions I chose three meaningful themes configured in these different philosophical traditions, namely: the concept of transcendence in Simone de Beauvoir; the concept of immanence in Luce Irigaray; and the theories of *saudade*

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- 1 "The next stage may be to explore the possibility that what we call women's history may actually be the study of a separate women's culture. Such a culture would include not only the separate occupations, status, experiences, and rituals of women, but also their consciousness, which internalizes patriarchal assumptions. In some cases, it would include the tensions created in that culture between the prescribed patriarchal assumptions and women's efforts to attain autonomy and emancipation. The questions asked about the past of women may demand interdisciplinary approaches. They also may demand broadly conceived group research projects that end up giving functional answers; answers that deal not with slices of a given time or society or period, but which instead deal with a functioning organism, a functioning whole, the society in which both men and women live." In Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1/2 (Autumn, 1975): 13. See also Gerda Lerner, *The creation of feminist consciousness: from the Middle Ages to eighteen-seventy* (Oxford University Press, 1994).
 - 2 Recent attempts in working the canon of history of Philosophy see Sandrine Berges A *Feminist Perspective on Virtue Ethics*. Palgrave Macmillan, Springer. Her recent project *The Home: A Philosophical project*, forthcoming at OUP. See <http://www.sandrineberges.com/the-home-a-philosophical-project> (Accessed: 2 July 2023)
- Graneß et Elberfeld *Geschichten der Philosophie in globaler Perspektive*, Wien, Wiener Gesellschaft für Interkulturelle Philosophie, 2021; Adamson, *A history of philosophy without any gaps*. Oxford University Press, 2020–22; See also the research made by following centres in the recent years: *Rede Brasileira de Mulheres Filósofas*, *Filósofas Brasil*. Available at: <https://www.filosofas.org> (Accessed: 8 October 2022), *Project Vox*. Project Vox. Available at: <https://projectvox.org> (Accessed: October 8, 2022), *Centre for the History of Women philosophers and Scientists*, University of Paderborn (no date). Available at: <https://historyofwomenphilosophers.org/> (Accessed: 8 October 2022), "Center for New Narratives in Philosophy", Columbia University, <https://newnarratives.philosophy.columbia.edu>. (Accessed: 2 July 2023)

that sparked the Portuguese philosophy of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.³ I chose two alternative philosophical streams: feminist and Portuguese philosophies, because they promote the emergence of a subject that acknowledges sexual and linguistic boundaries.

However, before introducing these themes, important methodological questions arise: How will I read these texts that change culturally, historically, and linguistically? How should I select my sources to conduct this difficult dialogue? Frijhoff and de Certeau provide some clues on how one should conduct such an endeavour: by *appropriating* or *poaching* Joana into the contemporary philosophical discourse.

My goal in this chapter is to conclude my study on seventeenth-century Portuguese mystical anxiousness by reading Joana de Jesus' crucial notion in similar ways to those described above. By entering into the realm and field of philosophy, especially by making use of authors such as Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray, who are already canonized in feminist philosophy and who themselves discuss subjectivity in their respective works, along with mainstream authors such as Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger, I am deliberately displacing myself from the seventeenth-century mystical anxiousness that Joana describes in her narrative.⁴ Likewise, I am consciously reading in the Portuguese theories of *saudade* some wealth that can be poached from Joana's sense of anxiousness.

4.1.2 Co-reading and Negotiating

This tactic, however, is not new. Feminist history and theory has tried, more or less successfully, to develop a canon, a genealogy that could establish a linkage between contemporary theories and older texts, a technique which would surpass mere hermeneutics or (non-existent) reception.

3 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 2011). Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* [L'Oubli de l'air], trans. by Mary Beth Mader, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999). Rocha e Teixeira, *Filosofia da Saudade*. Paulo Borges, *A Saudade como via da Liberação* (Lisbon: Quidnovi, 2008), and Miguel Real, *O Pensamento Português Contemporâneo 1890–2010. O Labirinto da Razão e a Fome de Deus* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2011).

4 Other authors within the feminist spectrum, whose work is less philosophical, could also be of interest. See Hélène Cixous, *Angst* (London: J. Calder; Riverrun Press, 1985); Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: depression and melancholia* [Soleil Noir: Dépression et mélancholie], trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). On Kristeva's mysticism, especially Teresa of Ávila, see Kristeva, *Thérèse, mon amour: sainte Thérèse d'Ávila: récit* (Paris: Fayard, 2008). On Kristeva's relationship with mysticism, see Arthur Bradley, "Mystic Atheism: Julia Kristeva's Negative Theology," in *Theology & Sexuality*, vol. 14, no. 3 (May 2008): 279–292, doi: 10.1177/1355835808091418.

There are several examples of historical studies getting *theorized*. The 1996 book *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages* brought medievalists to rethink 'écriture féminine'.⁵ Studies on *New Trends on Liège Spirituality*, where the contributors engaged with recent scholarship on this female religious movement, were published in 1999.⁶ However, three essays move beyond the medievalist agenda: Irigaray's text "The Way of the Feminine," in which she revisits images of religious women to demonstrate female elusiveness; the poetical "Acta Sanctorum" by Anne Blonstein; and Antonia Lacey's reading of Irigaray, with reference to Catherine of Siena's case. These efforts point out the possibility of an engagement outside of a specialized discourse in re-questioning women's religious tradition.

This acknowledgement also comes from philosophy and gender studies. Bibi Straatman's works on Teresa's agency attest to this need.⁷ Derived from a post-structuralist framework, Straatman uses postcolonial theories such as those of Walter Mignolo to engage in what she calls a 'conversation' with 'subaltern knowledge'.⁸ Instead of a historical or theological object of scholarship, early modern Teresa becomes a meaningful partner in a philosophical debate on such an urgent theme as agency. Published in 2013, *Becoming God* by Ben Morgan, the German literary scholar, continues a fruitful dialogue between several continental notions of the 'self' (from Freud to Butler) while engaging with the thirteenth-century mystical sermons of Meister Eckhart and other late medieval mystics.⁹

In the study where Jorunn Økland reads Paul, the thirteenth Apostle in the light of Simone de Beauvoir, an article which will be discussed later in this present reading of de Beauvoir with Joana de Jesus, the Norwegian theologian and gender studies specialist defends this methodology by stating that

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- 5 Jane Chance, introduction to *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Jane Chance (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 1–22.
 - 6 Antonia Lacey, "Gendered Language and the mystic voice. Reading from Irigaray to Catherine of Siena," in *Trends in feminine spirituality; The Holy women of Liege and their impact*, Medieval Women, ed. Juliette Dor Lesley Johnson and Jocely Wogan-Browne, New Texts and Contexts 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 329–340.
 - 7 Bibi Straatman, "In herhaling onstaat iets nieuws. Agency in het discours van Teresa van Ávila," in *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, vol. 12, no. 21, (2009), 7–18. See also her PhD dissertation, "Palimpsest. Palimpsest. Palimpsest. Langzaam denken, over actorschap en revolutie," (PhD diss., Proefschrift Universiteit Utrecht, 2011), and "Dit is geen tekst over Teresa: psychoanalytische methoden voor feministische epistemologie," in *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2010): 64–76.
 - 8 Walter Mignolo, *Local histories/global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).
 - 9 Ben Morgan, *On Becoming God. Late Medieval Mysticism and the Modern Western Self*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (Fordham University Press, 2013). See also the Pattison and Kirkpatrick; *The Mystical Sources of Existentialism*, Abindon, Routledge, 2019.

[t]here has been a further, implicit point in this exercise, of trying to get beyond a hermeneutic-ex-egetical model of using a method to force out the true meaning of a text in today's world, and also beyond a literary-theoretical model of 'application' of a theory upon a text, more in direction of a 'co-reading', a conversation between an ancient and modern text. The modern text should not be reduced to speak 'theory' only, and the old text should also be allowed to criticize the modern text back, not only be the victim of its inherent 'theory'-content.¹⁰

The question of anachronism or over-theorization has been an obvious and serious obstacle in all historiographic tasks, but more explicitly in conducting women's intellectual history. In this passage, Økland suggests a co-reading of both texts, without forcing the theory into the content of another or, on the other hand, reading the older text uncritically, oblivious to the contributions that in this case feminist theory has made to the meaning of the text.

Amy Hollywood pays much attention to this problem in her work *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*, where she engages in a critical discussion of the reading of twentieth-century French philosophers with medieval and early modern mystical and feminist philosophers such as George Bataille, Jacques Lacan, Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Julie Kristeva, and female mystics such as Hadewijch, Beatrijs of Nazareth, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Margerite Poerete, Meister Eckhart, Angela Foligno, Teresa of Ávila, and Madame Guyon, or male writers who can be close to écriture feminine. Hollywood reveals the extent to which the philosophers are indebted to the mystical writers but often misread them for their own purposes. There she incites contemporary theory when she states:

Feminist philosophy can learn from the doubleness of the mystical discourse and practice, which reflects and speaks to the deep ambiguities within bodily existence. Poised between the desire of transcending the body's limitations and the recognition that transcendence occurs only through the body, women like Beatrice of Nazareth, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch and Angela of Foligno hold out the possibility that endless, ceaseless, illimitable desire might be thought and lived outside of a phallic law of impotence. For this, neither politics nor religion will suffice. Read critically, then, these exorbitant mystical writings and others like them may help us devise new ways to negotiate the often fraught relationship between the political, the religious, and the mystical.

10 Jorunn Økland, "Textual Reproduction as Surplus Value: Paul on Pleasing Christ and Spouses, in Light of Simone de Beauvoir," in *Marxist Feminist Criticism of the Bible, Marxist Feminist Criticism of the Bible*, ed. Roland Boer and Jorunn Økland, Bible in the Modern World 14, (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 62.

At very least, feminist philosophy should follow these women in opening itself to the messiness, multiplicity, and pain – as well as to the pleasure, beauty, and joy – of embodied subjectivity.¹¹

From this passage, Hollywood suggests a negotiation between the political, the religious, and the mystical in the ambiguous configurations of the writing of subjectivity. The American scholar also points out the conflicts between transcendence and immanence, joy and pain that coexist in the mystical writings and challenge feminist conceptions of gender and sexual difference.

Anxiousness, as a mystical phenomenon, is the searching and aching for a presence: a presence of God and a presence of the subject. How can one write down his/her own subjectivity? In what terms? In this chapter I will argue that the same notions of transcendence, immanence, and time as *saudade* (yearning) are present in Joana de Jesus' anxiousness, and that they can contribute to the same notions already developed by de Beauvoir, Irigaray, and Portuguese contemporary philosophers when they dealt with the presence and absence of a subjectivity.

4.2. Her Presence: Negotiating Anxiousness in de Beauvoir's Search for Transcendence

As we have seen throughout this work, and mainly in chapter 3.2, the verb of anxiousness is 'padecer' or the obsolete English verb 'to patiate'. When Joana becomes the accountant, bookkeeper, narrator, and teller by being anxious and experiencing God-(made-)man, she acquires both an awareness and a consciousness that empower the nature of her receptivity: more than an agent, she is a patient, she 'patiates'. Could this notion endanger the emancipating values that underlie the constitution of a feminist subject? How can 'mystical suffering' contribute to the emergence of female value, labor, and authorship?

To dialogue with Joana's discourse of anxiousness, implicating it in a feminist philosophy of action, it is necessary to return to the ground zero of writings of second wave feminism: Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*. The most interesting aspect to me here is the notion of nature and culture through labor ('travail') and opus ('oeuvre'). These concepts will be illustrated through the dichotomy expressed in Teresa of Ávila and Madame de Guyon, two early modern mystics who, according to de Beauvoir, have different approaches to prayer and action.

Historically and typologically, Joana de Jesus is situated between them: as described in the second chapter, the Cistercian nun reads Teresa while anticipating the quietist discourse, which was exacerbated by Madame de Guyon. Can mystical

11 Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy*, 278.

prayer be useful to the eruption of a (feminist) subjectivity that would break through the contingency within nature and culture?

4.2.1 De Beauvoir, Surplus Value, and Women

In the *Second Sex*, de Beauvoir considers the subjectivity of women but is dependent on existentialism for the notion of the subject.¹² This means that the subject is always seen as an individuum rather than a system or a collective, and freedom, choice, and responsibility are the most important constituents of subjectivity.

That being said, for de Beauvoir, the concept of ‘women’ is not researched as a pre-defined and circumscriptive essence (the ‘feminine character’, the ‘female nature’, or the ‘eternal feminine’), but rather as a *situation*, which assumes different forms in accordance with its political, economic, and social interests. The philosophical reflection on the subject has always emanated from the neutral perspective, but it has been perpetrated by male philosophers serving their gender’s interests as the ruling group. For de Beauvoir, to study subjectivity is to rethink it in the possible light of human emancipation. Using Hegelian vocabulary, de Beauvoir considers female subjectivity as belonging to the realm of *immanence*, as opposed to (male) humanity, which rules and achieves inner *transcendence* through its actions. To emancipate female subjectivity is to get rid of its historical inferiority and ‘minor age’ by means of an active and fulfilling collective project. Emancipation, or freedom, comes from a project that enables true self-transcendence, a project that is ultimately an *oeuvre*, an opus, a work. The existentialist philosopher sees the failure of this self-transcendence due to the commodification of the female body as a reproductive force of labor, which is therefore assigned a different value.¹³

The feminist conception of labor derives from Marx, who began to analyze human subjectivity from the worker’s perspective.¹⁴ Marx sees in labor or (human) force of labor the subject’s identifying factor: one is either buying it or selling it.¹⁵

12 On existentialism see, for instance, Steven Earnshaw, *Existentialism: a guide to the perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2007). This book, one of many that are still being produced on this theme, has the distinction of extending the concept of existentialist authors to others such as Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, and Camus.

13 The idea of women as a commodity is also continued by Irigaray in “Women and the Market” and “Commodities among themselves,” in *The Sex which is not one*, trans. Catherine Porter (with Carolyn Burke) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170–194..

14 See also Andrea Veltman “Simone de Beauvoir and Hannah Arendt on Labor,” *Hypatia* 25 (2010): 55–78, doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2009.01084.x.

15 Karl Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital, the original 1891 pamphlet*, trans. Friedrich Engels, accessed October 1, 2012, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm>. For Marxist concepts, see *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore (London: Blackwell 1988), or more recently *Historisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, ed. Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Argument-Verlag, Hamburg, 1994– 2008).

The (capitalist) society is established upon this work's value and the profit that the one buying it obtains from the one selling it. The worker loses out in this exchange, because his force of labor is less valued than the product and its surplus, and it goes to the one who buys the force of labor. The worker is not only objectified (giving up her labor as a product) but is also alienated in the process of trading, being self-estranged in the course of this process' recognition, which also creates a meaningless and repetitive life. This annihilation occurs within the extreme valorization of the commodity: the value is not (for) the subject but is instead attributed to what he 'makes', leading to a fetishization of society. Although the capitalist is also annihilated within society, this alienation empowers him at the worker's expense.

Like Marx, within female emancipation de Beauvoir sees the need to regain this *surplus* that has been a profit for male-oriented society. The women's case is extreme, for not only do they lose their *surplus* as workers but, by belonging to their sex, they suffer a double taxation due to their nature: their reproductive labor power and its implicit cultural repercussions (their role as nurturers and those associated with the former). Women relinquish their value.

However, de Beauvoir acknowledges that, throughout history, some women have been distinguished by their work and personality, having achieved a placement in memory. Yet their success was provided by the (ruling) social justification. Women could only achieve a fake transcendence through narcissism, love, or mysticism. These three ways had been challenging women's subjectivity and agency: they made her known and active in man's society. However, as de Beauvoir explains, following Sartre's terminology on *Being and Nothingness* (*L'être et le néant*), in these three justifications the (female) self was still unable to attain supremacy, even if either 'en-soi' or 'pour-soi', meaning that women could not be independent of the remaining objects, nor could they be determined by conscience or project themselves into the future and into freedom.¹⁶ The narcissist strives for the 'I' as an immanent and rigid image projected by male transcendence, and the 'amoureuse' and the mystic try to reach a supreme spousal and an idealized union with a man or with God. Both of these approaches are unsuccessful in filling the gap between non-existence and total-existence, between being *nothing* and being *all*, the French philosopher concludes.

However, subjectivity achieves its maximum incredulity as an empowering agent in mystical discourse, due to the need for *annihilation* as one of the most im-

16 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: an essay on phenomenological ontology ontology*, [*L'Être et le néant : Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*] trans. Hazel E. Barnes, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2003). On the influence each had had on the other, see Andrea Veltman "The Concept of Transcendence in Beauvoir and Sartre," in *Beauvoir & Sartre: the riddle of influence*, ed. Christine Daigle and Jacob Golomb (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2009), 222–240.

portant parts of mystical knowledge. The religious rhetoric of unity and integration raises de Beauvoir's suspicions: unity vanquishes subject/human activity, resulting in godly governance. Thus, she points out two diverging types of mysticism: the positive-active and the negative-passive kind.

4.2.2 Teresa, Guyon, and the Minor Sisters

The first mystical discourse is represented by Teresa of Ávila. The Spanish mystic acts through her most intimate contact with God, building foundations and projecting herself into a future and historical project. De Beauvoir's Teresa is not a slave to her nerves, her hormones, or her body; she is disembodied from her femininity, longing for freedom rather than longing for love. Teresa can never be seen as a simple 'hysteric'.

Both adversaries and admirers of mystics think that giving a sexual content to Saint Teresa's ecstasies is to reduce her to the rank of a hysteric. But what diminishes the hysterical subject is not the fact that his body actively expresses his obsessions: it is that he is obsessed, that his freedom is subjugated and annulled; the mastery a fakir acquires over his body does not make him slave; bodily gestures can be part [enveloppée] of expression [elan] of a freedom.¹⁷

This freedom is also a dimension of self-transcendence; for de Beauvoir, Teresa also intellectualizes the dramatic relation between the neutral individual and the Supreme Being. The Spanish saint is the 'éclatante exception' (striking exception) to the affective female mysticism because she theorized metaphysically about the problem of attaining transcendence, just as any male mystic, such as, for instance, John of the Cross. Thus, Teresa deserves a place in the chapter "The Independent Woman," which concludes the feminist manifesto *The Second Sex*.

A woman could never have become Kafka: in her doubts and anxieties, she would never have recognized the anguish of Man driven from paradise. Saint Teresa is one of the only women to have lived the human condition for herself, in total abandonment: we have seen why. Placing herself beyond earthly hierarchies, she, like Saint John of the Cross, felt no reassuring sky over her head. For both in them it was the same night, the same flashes, the same nothingness, in God the same plenitude.¹⁸

The second opposing mystical discourse de Beauvoir presents is of a seventeenth-century female mystic, Madame de Guyon. She claimed authority through her liter-

17 Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 712.

18 Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 750.

ary and foundational works in order to perpetuate the *self-idolatry*, that is, the self melted into a spousal union with God. This *apostolic state*, in which affectivity is a synonym for inactivity and quietism as the most significant moment of the so-called nuptial mysticism, is to de Beauvoir a sort of *annihilating* process of subjectivity, a destructive project oriented toward emotions, toward the instantaneous, breaking through continuity and into the future.¹⁹ Consequently, its political dimension annihilates its goal, that is, the fight for (full) feminine emancipation.

For de Beauvoir, Madame de Guyon and all of Teresa's 'minor sisters' have only perpetuated the inferior and negative *definition* of women, embracing mystical discourse as an instigator of the confessor's dominance and the patriarchal imagery of God, serving as a kind of feminine tentacle or female guerrilla in the religious discourse that blocks its authentic existence. True self-transcendence becomes impossible.

4.2.3 The Surplus of Prayer and Patency in Mystical Discourse

The relation between de Beauvoir's feminism and religious/mystical experience has been reflected by third-wave feminist scholars of various disciplines, and the issues of value and transcendence are also present in their works. In the article cited above, Jorunn Økland, for instance, even sees in de Beauvoir's search for total transcendence and repudiation of nature a certain asceticism akin to Paul's demand for celibacy within the unity of the human with God, the true freedom (1 Cor 7:22). Teresa acquires this *surplus* value because she is the possible 'new woman', the author.

For Beauvoir, to exit the re-production line and enter instead into textual production is the only way for a woman to be fully human. Beauvoir seems on the one hand to lament this limited choice but on the other hand to celebrate it. The 'new woman' Beauvoir describes towards the end of her book is the intellectual writing woman, the artist, the scholar. The 'free woman' is described in a language and tone imitating the biblical creation stories and apocalypses: "Rimbaud's prophecy will be fulfilled: 'There shall be poets!' When woman's unmeasured bondage shall be broken, when she shall live for and through herself... She, too, will be poet!" ... It is not sure that her 'ideational worlds' will be different from those of men, since it will be through attaining the same situation as theirs that she will find emancipation.²⁰

Amy Hollywood demonstrates and criticizes de Beauvoir's ambiguity towards mysticism. The American philosopher argues that de Beauvoir's admiration of Teresa

19 Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 714–5.

20 Jorunn Økland, "Textual Reproduction" 160.

rests on the desire the Spanish nun derived from her mystical experiences, and that that empowered her to “achieve a degree of free subjectivity unprecedented among women.” Hollywood contests the notions of ‘absolute freedom’, ‘transcendence’ of subjectivity, and ‘bodiliness and immanence’ ascribed to the female sex.²¹ Nevertheless, as unveiled in *The Second Sex*, the importance of subjectivity’s recognition resides in the intersubjectivity that enables Teresa (as well as de Beauvoir) to constitute a *self-consciousness*. Beyond desire, the issues of death, loss, and suffering are present in the existentialist reading of Teresa. In those reflections (we could call them ‘labors’), the role of sexual difference would not be decisive. Teresa’s authenticity would then reside less in the erotic encounter with God than in the urge for total potentiality and creativity. Hollywood also adds the further possibility of a (positive) mysticism in de Beauvoir.

Mysticism is thus a site of absolute freedom from, and transcendence of, the limitations of situatedness. In its ideal form, it is the place where one faces death (and implicitly rejects it) and so becomes capable of encountering the world as a project.²²

Based on other writings, especially Beauvorian memoirs and fiction, Hollywood also sees in the French philosopher a certain mystical temptation of ‘being everything’, an absolute which is very close to a religious belief or an ‘unfulfilled metaphysical desire’ that was not recognized by the others. This could be interpreted as the project of an *unquiet* autonomy, an emancipation from the age of minority or, as happened with Guyon, a failure, to a certain demand of a subject’s history.²³

The *labor* and *opus* of women mystics, especially the contemplatives and Cistercians, were primarily held in the activity of prayer. We have seen in chapter two how Teresa, Joana, and Guyon sought a method, a new guide that could ease the contact and the relationship with the God-Man. Prayers such as the Rosary, the singing of hymns and antiphons, all those scheduled ‘works’ of the Divine Office, can be seen as a practice and also as a product with a *use value* (to the person who uses and practices it). However, it can also be an *exchange value*. In chapter three, Joana’s recollections lead to prayer as a petition, on different occasions, celebrations, and events: praying *for* and praying *to*. The sacraments and rituals are evolved with a plethora of speech acts, of performing stances in which affiliation and fellowship are reiterated. It is prayer as *Credo*, a creed, a confession and profession of one’s collective salvation and redemption—the ultimate freedom, achieved through death. It is here that prayer begins to have an exchange value.

21 Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy*, 371.

22 Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy*, 143.

23 Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy*, 145.

The tradition of prayer as value-in-use is ascertainable in the monastic principle of *lectio divina*.²⁴ This was a four-step self-development training that consisted of 'lectio' (a repetitive recitation of a scriptural passage), meditation (to absorb the meaning of that experience as it connected to one's self, in *imitatio Christi*), prayer itself (the moment of response and begging for grace), and finally the union with God (the communion) and contemplation; beyond the cognitive (interpretive and responsive) moment, there was experience itself, with the text as reality, beyond the mystery it held.

Yet the prayer was never a monastery's monopoly, nor was it exclusively done behind closed doors. The calling of religious life and the imitation of Christ has appeared and been renewed throughout history. Movements such as that of the thirteenth-century mendicants and Beguines or the Modern Devout attracted many women.²⁵ Teresa of Ávila lived during an age of renewal and is indebted to Cisneros' policy of divulgation of the *Devotio Moderna* texts and to the printing of many treatises and manuals of good, effective, and quick prayer. Teresa's titles reflect that trend and are themselves programmatic: *Way, Life, A Foundation, Dwellings, Relations*. She became, as did many others, a consumer and a producer of more efficient methodologies of prayer.²⁶

Madame de Guyon's method was not completely different. De Beauvoir's 'error' was to diminish the French mystic in comparison to Teresa of Ávila: both were mystics, but Guyon also had her own project as founder, religious leader, and writer or author.²⁷ Teresa acquired self-transcendence because she became a *Doctor* (of the Church), and Guyon remained merely a *Madame*: a widow whose entrance into a cloister was replaced by imprisonment in her own house. Teresa had a religious *status*, while Guyon had an *estate*. Prayer, especially outside the convent walls, had no intrinsic worth; it would be a total non-labor, for there was no surplus through which women could enhance their value. The state of non-action and total receptivity to God's works allowed society to despise their activity and 'work' (even if it referred to the soul's potencies). Nevertheless, this was the way they subverted the economy of

24 Duncan Robertson, *Lectio divina: the medieval experience of reading* (Trappist, Ky.: Cistercian Publications; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2011).

25 See chap. 2 and Gertrud Jaron Lewis, *By women, for women, about women: The Sister-books of fourteenth-century Germany* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996). See also Annette Maria Bollmann, *Frauenleben und Frauenliteratur in der Devotio moderna: volkssprachige Schwesternbücher in literarhistorischer Perspektive* (PhD diss. University of Groningen, 2004).

26 Certeau, *The Mystical Fable*, 128.

27 Jeanne Guyon, *Jeanne Guyon: Selected Writings and Prison Writings*.

exchange, ownership, and reference and proposed a new model, the economy of the gift.²⁸

4.2.4 Anxious Givenness and the Embrace of Patiating

In chapter 3.2, we saw how Joana's concept of the gift was intimately related to a Cistercian tradition dating back to Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx. We have also seen that this notion was a *situation* that Joana experienced when she moved from Lorrão to Lisbon without a dowry of her own. Conversations with the God-Man, visions, and prayers were the only dowry that she could take with her to the Recollect of Discalced Bernardin women. Joana's givenness – what she actually gives by receiving – are the God-man's attributes. Joana can only accept them. To accept the gift is not to receive or to consume it, nor is it merely the gift's counterpart. As a female (mystic), Joana is not the one who gives; the femaleness is not the place of generosity, as certain theories of the gifts advocate.²⁹ Joana participates in the givenness through her talks with the God-Man, through her prayers to him, for herself and for the others. Joana reiterates throughout the text that 'the Lord was represented to me and gave me to understand', in an almost continuous Anselmian sort of prayer. This givenness is also seen in God's and woman's own positions. Both the female mystic and the God-Man share those positions: the Son, standing vertical on the cross, giving himself to all; and the daughter, who lies horizontally on her bed, expanding into community and society.³⁰ Both of them are *patiating* (enduring) their pains.

The insistence of mystical and ascetic discourse on suffering as purification toward a union with Christ is deeply present in Joana's texts. Yet this does not make Joana's own cross an ecstatic and unbearable weight that shatters human agency.

28 On the different reformations in early modernity and the success of Teresa in comparison to Joana, see Edward Howells, "Early modern reformations," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 114–134.

29 Morny Joy, introduction to *Women and the Gift. Beyond the Given and the All-Give*, ed. Morna Joy (Bloomington, IN: Indiana U Press, 2013), 1–52.

30 We could even speak of a horizontal trans-ascendence that is both vertical and horizontal. In his foreword to the poems of the Flemish mystic Hadewich, Schillebeeckx says: "the trans-ascendence; the going-beyond-oneself-and-upward as it were cannot be dissociated from transcendence from the other in 'horizontal sense', that is to say, towards nature, towards our society, our fellow human-beings, and the community. This transcending is not a thing to happen automatically, it is not a cognitive process purely and simply. It is a particular way of life, a sort of traction towards wholeness, authentic well-being and liberation by way of very actively undergoing the divine. In reciprocal action and reaction." Eduard Schillebeeckx, foreword to *Poetry of Hadewijch*, trans. Marieke van Baest (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1998), 1.

Again, through the God-Man's example, i.e., *imitatio Christi*, Joana can transform the path of crosses into a true *filiatio*. In chapter 69, while describing a vision she had on the day of 'Holy Cross', Joana is *given* to understand the Psalm's words: "At[t]endite popule meus legem meam" (Give ear, O my people, to my law) (Ps 78:1). Then the nun states that, through an intellectual vision, she sees the Lord, already resurrected, at an altar, where a stairway from which angels ascended and descended was placed. Among those angels, Joana was able to recognize the biblical character Jacob. The stairway transformed itself into a tree, and Joana explains how this image impels her companions to action by carrying the holy cross on her back, while she is embracing it [ANTT 111]. However, Joana continues, in an excerpt deleted from the *Copy*, by stating that her confessor is seen with the same cross, but in his hand [ANTT 111v], thus showing less involvement with the same God.

Joana mentions the impossible badge ('*devisa*'), which is also a currency of God's gift, the prayer, and their intersubjectivity. The cross is something that only she can embrace and not carry as a burden, like her fellow religious women. Nor does she need the angels' help. Joana fully embraces this task, thus allowing herself to be directly sustained by the Lord. And here lies the fullness of anxious *patiating*: she receives the pain and suffering and becomes one with the Divine — agent and patient.

Joana can indeed be an agent, thanks to her patience and the patency expressed in the obsolete (but so necessary) English verb *to patiate*. To patiate God's suffering through her own illness is for her the supreme *action* of anxiousness. In this sense, anxiousness surpasses the basic state of passivity, or the annihilation of God's will. Becoming *patient* is, in the philosophy of action, another possibility of intersubjectivity. The ethicist Soran Reader admits:

To be patient is not to cease from being human subject — a knower a thinker, a moral being. A patient is not reduced to the status of an object: I am a patient all the time, and that is not, as such, a reduced or unpleasant condition. I am a patient not just when I am treated in hospital, but when I use the world's resistances to speak, and when I take my turn to be quiet and listen; not just when I "lie back and think of England" but also when I experience my own lovemaking; not just when I am caught in a downpour, but also when I dive into a lake, or surf to shore on a wave. I am fully alive, fully human while I am a patient, and I may indeed be more myself: Hannah Arendt has expressed the evocative idea of conscience as the subjective presence of self to self, away from the distractions of action.³¹

31 Soran Reader, "Agency, Patency, and Personhood," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of action*, Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis, Blackwell Companion to Philosophy (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 202. See also Reader's other works, "The Other Side of Agency,"

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In this way, Joana's anxiousness brings a sense of patience that goes beyond the dualism of activeness-passiveness in the religious contemplative tradition which has been highlighted, and which de Beauvoir cannot fully deal with, bestowing an ambiguous answer by preferring some mystics to others. By 'padecedendo' (suffering and awaiting), Joana is striving for transcendence in a fully embodied relationship with Christ, pointing to this dimension of anxiousness.

4.3. His Absence: Reading Anxiousness in Irigaray's search for Immanence

There are, however, other dimensions of anxiousness – anxiousness as voraciousness, impetus, and longing – that are expressed somatically. For those dimensions, a striving for immanence and the consciousness of a body are present. Luce Irigaray's works are a fruitful source of inspiration for rethinking these issues. The Belgian philosopher has written very enthusiastically about mystical experience and the positive effect of women acquiring their own voice through it. In this regard, significant scholarly progress has been made.³² Here in my present research I would like to take a closer look at Irigaray's book *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, where Irigaray reflects upon the element of air. In this book, Irigaray states that the philosophical tradition invigorated by Heidegger has chosen the steady path of earth, instead of the dizziness of vertigo, of the abyss – almost an ultimate state (and symbol) of freedom. Before demonstrating Irigaray's critique of this tradition, I will provide a brief sketch on the existentialist philosophers and theologians who support this negative idea of vertigo and anxiousness.

in *Philosophy* 82 (4): 579–604, and *The Philosophy of Need*, ed. Soran Reader (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

- 32 Besides the work of Amy Hollywood on Luce Irigaray, see Alison Martin, *Luce Irigaray and the question of the divine* (Leeds: Maney Pub. for the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2000); Luce Irigaray, introduction to *Religion in French feminist thought: critical perspectives*, ed. Morny Joy, Kathleen O'Grady, and Judith L. Poxon (London; New York: Routledge, 2003); Morny Joy, *Divine love: Luce Irigaray, women, gender and religion* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Anne Claire Mulder, *Divine flesh, embodied word: incarnation as a hermeneutical key to a feminist theologian's reading of Luce Irigaray's work* (PhD diss., University of Amsterdam, 2006); and Luce Irigaray, "Toward a Divine in the Feminine", in *Women and the divine: touching transcendence*, ed. by Gillian Howie and J'annine Jobling (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13–26.

4.3.1 The Existentialist Vertigo

The ascent of existentialism in both philosophical and theological forms has dealt extensively with the question of anxiousness through analogous concepts such as anxiety, angst, and anguish.

Kierkegaard (1813–1855) saw anxiety ('Angst') as a fear, but also as an impulse towards the abyss, which means God, finitude, and possibility's own possibility. This feeling develops the sense of vertigo and dizziness in the constitution of one's own subjectivity.³³ Heidegger (1889–1976) continues the description of this anxiety regarding existence ('Dasein'). Based on the linguistic difference of fear and angst in the Germanic languages – with the first claiming the determinability of the feared object and the second the non-definability of a (feared) reality – Heidegger says that anxiety appears within the realm of nothingness, revealing 'a primordial being-in-the-world' cognate to an innocent state.³⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) continues the discussion on nothingness regarding freedom. For the French author, freedom is the consequence of living in this nothingness, as it is individual and subject to contingency. The possibility of its determination is ever-present, thus making our own responsibility possible.³⁵ Hence the bittersweet sense of openness, void, and de-familiarization before reality and even before one's own self.

Two books that investigated anxiety in the theological spectrum were published in 1952.³⁶ Paul Tillich's *Courage To Be* mentions three types of anxiety that occur at the end of an age: anxiety before death, anxiety before meaninglessness, and anxiety before condemnation. Both narrowness and openness provide the same sense of terror that constitutes the non-being. To overcome this fearful state, a virtue is necessary: the courage to intervene and to act. Hans Urs von Balthasar authored another essay, *The Christian and the Anxiety*.³⁷ Within his biblical hermeneutics, this Swiss Catholic names two types of anxiety: the anxiety of the wicked man, which is mentioned mainly in the Old Testament, and the anxiety of the just man, which is present in both testaments. However, in the New Testament, anxiety is not only a

33 Søren Kierkegaard, *The concept of anxiety: a simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin*, [Begrebet angst]. Edited. and trans. Reidar Thomte, in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson, *Kierkegaard's Writings*, vol. 8 (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 41.

34 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962).

35 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 29–36.

36 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952).

37 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian and the Anxiety* [Der Christen und die Angst], translated by Michael J. Miller. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000). See also John Cihak, *Balthasar and Anxiety* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009).

negative feeling (a sin) of humankind before God; it is rather an inescapable constituting element of the Gospel. God was made man, and thus, he also shares in the same emotions as humanity, including even humanity's abandonment of God. Just like the other existentialist author, von Balthasar speaks of the sense of vertigo that one has when confronted with fear and hope.

It cannot be denied that something like vertigo can come over a man, even a believer, in this transitional state between fear and hope; after all, it is a routine fact. But Christianity cannot be blamed for this loss of footing: it has to be laid at the door of the man who does not want to take Christianity seriously. Christianity offers man not a bottomless pit, but solid ground – grounding in God, of course, and not in itself. To place oneself on this solid involves relinquishment of one's own ground. The sinner wants to stand on his own, not on God. And whoever tries to stand both on God and on his own is sure to fall into the bottomless in between.³⁸

In all of these so-called existentialist authors, whether more or less conservative, abyss and dizziness are embroidered into a negative image, which is quite different from the mystical tradition of *abyssality* that makes human enjoyment of the divine possible, beyond the fall into nihilism, as argued by Grace M. Jantzen and feminist theology. The British scholar argues that thirteenth-century Hadewijch brings out an erotic, gendered, and divine dimension: the abyss as the womb.³⁹

However, it is Luce Irigaray who invites us to rethink the abyss in a direct relationship with an existentialist tradition, namely that of Heidegger, when she addresses the question of forgetting the air. For Irigaray, a subject cannot be perceived without a body, and the female body constitutes a symbiotic relationship with nature and matter, which enables a closer commitment to knowledge and common living.

4.3.2 A Feminist Mourning of the Tradition

In *The Forgetting of Air*, Irigaray is mourning Heidegger. She is not only remembering his final breath (his death) as she is striving for the remembrance of air (acknowledging her own life).⁴⁰ She says: "The danger [of thinking the Being without air] is

38 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian and the Anxiety*, 99–100.

39 Grace Jantzen, "Eros and the Abyss. Reading Medieval Mystics in the Post/Modernity," in *Religious Experience and contemporary theological epistemology*, ed. Lieve Boeve, et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 111–132.

40 "I began writing *The Forgetting of Air* a few days after Martin Heidegger's death, in May 1976. The task of continuing the philosopher's work imposed itself upon me without any consideration. His thought enlightened me at a certain level more than any other and it has done so in a way that awakened my vigilance, political as well as philosophical, rather than constraining me to submit to any program." Luce Irigaray, "From the Forgetting of

not deadly, it is death. Aletheia – the death that thought is.”⁴¹ The image of Heidegger walking into the clearing in the woods is also for Irigaray the need for a *clearing of air, a clearing for appearing and disappearing, for presence and absence* to lose track in the wood, to lose footing, taking place into nature. Heidegger searches for being, while Irigaray proposes searching for beings, the plurality. And Irigaray undertakes this search consciously, as even in the English translation she ‘forces’ the use of female/male pronouns to refer to Nature, matter, woman [she], and man [he]. Is she using the pronoun explicitly to show this presence/absence of being? Can the he of the text also be the Heidegger and the male philosophical traditions whose absence she mourns?

Is language remaining a tongue, a device for sound-making, food-tasting, texture, and love-making? Is language the only *solid crust* that, contrary to metaphysics, cannot give rise to any construction? We thus need a place to dwell, where we could have an Eks-sistance, in standing with our feet firmly on the ground, says the male philosopher. Or could we dwell on air? Could air be the true habitation? asks the female philosopher. Air, says Irigaray, escapes boundaries: the boundary of thinking or the bounding of the world by thinking. We do not need a bridge as Heidegger proposed, because a bridge does not unite anything; it is just a connection to the void that brings the vertigo, the abyss, the dizziness.

[T]o have a ground, for the finite Being that is a man, she who bears this foundation is exiled from her dwelling that is infinitely space.⁴²

Irigaray continues to compare man’s (Heidegger’s?) erection as a sort of Anaesthesia, a “trait that passes from the matter-potency to the act, from flesh to the form, from the sensible to the intelligible.”⁴³ Erection is also in tune with ejaculation (because it throws out, casts aside, emits) and again reduces to nothingness. Possessing, clearing, cultivating the earth (the nature, the soil, the feminine) makes this same nature recollect, ‘ingather’, which is always a mediating ‘gathering’ to become fecund and fertile, and ultimately to blossom.⁴⁴ But this blossom, suggests Irigaray, must be a “blossom without a why.” And this *without a why* is already the answer that Angelus Silesius (1624–1677), the German mystic, has given to both Heidegger and Irigaray. The famous passage, “The rose is without ‘why’; it flowers because it flowers,” is the

Air to To be Two,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huttington (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press), 315.

41 Irigaray, *The Forgetting*, 7.

42 Irigaray, *The Forgetting*, 10.

43 Irigaray, *The Forgetting*, 97.

44 Irigaray, *The Forgetting*, 132, 151.

epigraph of Irigaray's book, and it is expounded in chapter nine, when the Belgian philosopher writes about the rose:

The rose, for example. And its flowering without a 'why'. Its gift beyond all reason, unless to give itself a reason. Its unpretentious blooming/unconcealment, its adorned beauty. Its becoming that is foreign to Being's destiny, except in its appropriation by thinking. A fundamental mimesis, through the fundamentally impossible of its *phuein*. Whence the abyss? For if the flower's blooming/unconcealment find its soil in earth, where is the soil for one who wants to flower without staying planted in earth? Is it in the air? From whence he expects to receive himself as a rose? A future that has not finished keeping others waiting for it. Unless, perhaps, a god.⁴⁵

Irigaray does invite us to take a leap, a leap that goes beyond thinking itself. Is this leap beyond thinking a step into a mystical experience? Could a non-canonical, hidden Portuguese mystic be helpful for such a leap?

4.3.3 Joana's Lack of Air

Three centuries before, Joana de Jesus had also not forgotten the physicality of the subject that cannot be seen outside anxiousness and abyssality.

Throughout chapter 3.3, we saw how Joana describes anxiousness. This is associated with the Spanish word '*sequedad*', the notion of dryness that prevails in the mystical (and ascetic) traditions of perceiving God. As we have already seen, anxiousness, or rather '*ansias*', was the word used by John of the Cross to describe his "Dark Night of the Soul," and the Italian Jesuit Scaramelli interprets it. Unlike John of the Cross and his Italian interpreter, for Joana anxiousness is not merely the negative moment of abandonment by God, the night or darkness, or a catharsis. Rather, anxiousness essentially derives from the acknowledgment of this lack and the possibilities it brings forth. Anxiousness is the effect of the *lack* of air, the desire and longing for it. Hence the recognition of the elemental presence of God is crucially felt in his absence. Joana's anxiousness is closely related to the perception of air. Air can be the medium of transportation, of angels and ascension to heaven, where Joana is 'enraptured' and 'robbed from' her body. This experience of transience, which is so peculiar to mystical experience, provides Joana with a new sense of her body. The rarefaction of atmosphere makes her enter a new level of consciousness, in which she can easily perceive God and God can be revealed to her. For her, anxiousness is this experience of space and presence, where the proportions of the world begin to

45 Irigaray, *The Forgetting*, 148–9.

have “neither limit nor end” [ANTT 11-v]. Anxiousness surpasses the sense of tightness or narrowness that is etymologically contained by the notion of anguish that Derrida has alerted us to.⁴⁶

The deadly anxiousness Joana talks about is closely related to a physical state that impeded her sight and speech, oppressed her breast (lungs, heart), and caused a general sensation of choking and suffocation that obstructed her. A cloud of darkness takes her breath away [ANTT 41v].

Air, however, cannot be thought of without spirit. Joana uses the word spirit (*‘Espírito’*) when alluding to the Holy Spirit as well as to ‘vital spirits’, or her ‘courage’ or strength. Through anxiousness Joana perceives her limitations, her strength, and her resistance.

Concomitantly, anxiousness develops itself into a pneumatology that is both doctrinal and experiential, almost a parallel domain of mysticism proper, generally termed spirituality.⁴⁷ The Holy Spirit, Trinity’s third term, is the genderless moment of the union between form and matter. These unite but are dissociated in their characteristics. The spirit is the air, the element and the force that corroborates Incarnation’s combustion.

The idea of the Spirit is often genderless, ethereal, and feminine. It is present in a feminist endeavor of spirituality because it confronts the duality between form and matter in traditional (phallogocentric) religious narratives. Nicola Slee points out the feminist reconstruction of the feminine naming of God, and “naming the Spirit in feminine imagery,” that accompanies both (male) theologians (such as Boff, Congar, and Gelpi) and (female) religious scholars (such as Bynum).⁴⁸ Nonetheless, this naming must be accompanied by a reformulation of the Trinity theory, as proposed by theologians such as Elisabeth Johnson, Sally McFague, and Sarah Coakley. The feminine must go beyond essentialism and its often negative and subordinated counterpart, the ontologization of sexual difference in God.⁴⁹

Joana’s text can be seen through the lens of a feminist spirituality in the making, due to the inherent re-appropriations of the Trinity and the *filiatio* that the nun conducts. As a seventeenth-century woman, intellectually begotten by both a Cistercian tradition and a recollection mysticism, Joana feels the need to rethink the mysteries of godly paternity and the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. Two important conclusions are thus reached.

46 Jacques Derrida, “Force and signification” in *Writing and Difference* [L’écriture et la différence], trans. Alan Bass, Routledge classics series (London: Routledge, 2001), 7.

47 Anne Hunt, “Christology, Trinity and pneumatology,” in *Companion to the Trinity*, 365–380.

48 Nicola Slee, “The Holy Spirit and spirituality,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 182.

49 Slee, “The Holy Spirit and spirituality,” 183.

The first one is that *filiatio* occurs both with God, the Father-Son, but also between God the Father and Magdalene the Daughter [ANTT 131v]. John's quote, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20: 17), is mainly directed at the parenthood of Magdalene, and by extension at Joana's, and is not exclusively directed at Christ or an abstract humankind. On one hand, *filiatio* becomes more inclusive, because it also fully embodies concrete human beings (like Joana herself). On the other hand, there is a sense of exclusion, insofar as Joana separates herself from the rest of humanity.

The second conclusion is reached after Joana's interpretation of John 13:23: "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" [ANTT 17v-18]. This abode or dwelling is the interrelated project of communion and partnership in the Trinity, in which a new dynamic can be understood: an 'in-between' that is 'not without', so familiar to Irigaray's project of intersubjectivity.⁵⁰

The emphasis given by Joana to the conditionality and relatedness of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit undergoes the peril noted by Coakley, disguised as the Spirit's subordination to the Father.⁵¹ When this British scholar rereads Gregory of Nyssa, particularly his commentaries on the Song of Songs, what is relational is accentuated when speaking about subjects, and the feminine as well as the masculine both obtain a place of their own within the perception of God. In itself, the Trinity must be a pneumatology, as theology must not separate itself from spirituality, and this task is understood and undertaken by feminist theology.⁵²

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Is Joana deliberately losing ground and breathing the air she cannot breathe? Are the nausea and dizziness the Cistercian feels the possibility of an embodied abyss, a mourning and contact with the Divinity, a 'without why' which Irigaray also describes by beginning and ending her reflection upon the female subject whilst rethinking Heidegger's last breath?

50 See Luce Irigaray's, *I Love to You. Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, trans. A. Martin (London: Routledge, 1996), 162. See also Anne Claire Mulder, "Towards a Practice of Respecting the In-between: Condition Sine Qua Non of Living Together Peacefully," in *Feminist Theology*, vol. 17, no. 2 (January 2009): 250, doi: 10.1177/0966735008098726.

51 Sarah Coakley, "Living into the Mystery of Holy Trinity: Trinity, Prayer and Sexuality," *Anglican Theological Review*, 80: 2, and "'Persons' and 'Social Doctrine' of Trinity," in *Powers and Submissions: spirituality, philosophy and gender* (London, Blackwell, 2002), 109–129. See also Janet Martin Soskice, "Trinity and Feminism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 135–152.

52 Patricia A. Fox, "16 Feminist Theologies and the Trinity," in *Companion to Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 274–292.

4.4. The Presence and Absence of [Portuguese] Time: Ancias and Saudade

Throughout Joana's writing, we encountered her explicit need to be humble and her quest for humility and self-knowledge, which is characteristic of the Cistercian vocabulary, as noted in the several quotes in the second chapter of this work. However, humility, which is a virtue in itself, requires a certain fear of God. And fearfulness disables action; a fearful person is not courageous, not virile (and thus manly) enough to fight the world's adversities. Being passive can be a synonym for inactivity and thus of patience, as one is a *subject* of what is exterior. Taken to its extreme, this can easily lead to attacks by demons and evil.⁵³ This fear is akin to loss, mourning, and nostalgia.⁵⁴ It is this sense of loss that makes Joana yearn for her reunion with God.

However, one cannot address the theme of loss, particularly in the context of Portuguese culture, without mentioning *saudade*. In chapter 3.2, we saw that Joana also mentions *saudade*, and we explored how that concept was crucial to early modern Portuguese literary culture, especially early modern authors such as King Dom Duarte and Francisco Manuel de Melo. Now we shall see how these authors were appropriated by the contemporary Portuguese intellectual debate and how *saudade* could be seen together with a discourse of anxiousness. *Saudade* can be seen as a hermeneutical model or as a *place* in which to understand Portuguese culture and identity. Many authors developed this thematic, creating a 'philosophy of *saudade*'. Here I will focus more on how *saudade* can be seen as a category for understanding the emergence of a subject in time.

4.4.1 Saudade: Loss, Hope, and Memory of Time

Several authors have engaged in this philosophical debate.⁵⁵ The Portuguese philosopher Afonso Botelho (1919–1996) speaks of several cycles of *saudade*, en-

53 Andrew Crislip, "The sin of sloth or the illness of the demons? The demon of acedia in early Christian monasticism," in *Harvard Theological Review*, no. 2 (April 2005): 143–169, h <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4125242>.

54 Amy M. Hollywood, *Acute Melancholia: Christian Mysticism and Contemporary Historiography* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

55 Botelho and Teixeira, *Filosofia da Saudade*. See also António Braz Teixeira's new and updated book on this theme, *Filosofia da Saudade* (Lisboa: Quidnovi, 2006) and its developed review by Rui Lopo, "Pensar a Saudade. Um incompleto ponto da situação da bibliografia mais recente sobre o tema e uma recensão de duas obras," in *Revista Nova Águia* 4 (2009): 190–198. See also Miguel Real, *O pensamento português Contemporâneo 1890–2010: O Labirinto da Razão e a Fome de Deus* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2011).

visioned as always relating to death, love, and God.⁵⁶ The first cycle of *saudade* in Portuguese intellectual history deals with desire, human loneliness, and feelings of sexual love in the courtly medieval literature written in Galician-Portuguese. The second is reflected in the work of Portuguese King Dom Duarte, in which *saudade* is described as a feeling of absence, and not merely as a minor passion of the soul. *Saudade* would bring joy to those who could actualize it in the absence of what/who they were missing, and this is seen especially throughout the whole project of the Portuguese “Discoveries” or Colonial Expansion in the Early Medieval period. The sexual love felt in human sexualized loneliness was replaced by the fraternal and collective love felt in the remembrance of and loyalty to D. Sebastião and the movement of Sebastianism that longed for the return of this king. *Saudade* would bring joy, expectation before death, and progress. Dom Francisco Manuel de Melo defines *saudade* as the desire for unity among similar things. Here, *saudade* would be greater than love, which would recall a true existence. The third cycle is that of Teixeira de Pascoaes (and Leonardo Coimbra), whose works turned *saudade* into a philosophical current, *saudosismo*.⁵⁷

I will here pay a little closer attention to Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877–1950), due to his contribution to the ‘philosophy of *saudade*’. He read Portuguese culture in the light of this feeling. Teixeira de Pascoaes was a Portuguese poet, writer, and philosopher close to the European symbolist tendency that enlivened literature towards the end of the nineteenth century. As a philosopher, he saw in *saudade* the true calling of the Portuguese soul, ignited by both Semitic and Arian origins.⁵⁸ *Saudade* was the primordial feeling, appearing even before creation, which yearned for, missed, and remembered the union that humanity had experienced with God. *Saudade* was constitutive of the ‘human man’, the ‘beyond man’, that the Portuguese soul would purportedly impersonate.⁵⁹ He would transform *saudade* into a philosophical stream, the so-called ‘saudosismo’.

Saudade and *saudosismo* have been seen as Portugal’s temporal project, both in the past and in the future. The former would lead to nostalgia and the latter to Messianism. However, we must add the distinction Svetlana Boym has made between

56 Afonso Botelho, *Da saudade ao saudosismo*, Coleção Biblioteca Breve, (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1990). I am particularly indebted to Real’s reading of Botelho. Miguel Real, *O Pensamento Português Contemporâneo 1890–2010: O Labirinto da Razão e a Fome de Deus*, 845–851.

57 António Braz Teixeira, “Em torno da metafísica de Teixeira de Pascoaes,” in *Revista da Faculdade de Letras do Porto, Teixeira de Pascoaes*, 3rd serie, 21 (2004): 13–26. See also his main work, *Filosofia da Saudade*.

58 Teixeira de Pascoaes, *A Saudade e o Saudosismo (diversos e opúsculos)*, ed. Jesué Pinharanda Gomes, Obras Teixeira de Pascoaes 7 (Lisbon: Assírio e Alvim, 1988).

59 Teixeira de Pascoaes, “O génio Português na sua expressão filosófica, poética e religiosa,” in *A Saudade e o Saudosismo (diversos e opúsculos)*, 95–96.

'restorative nostalgia' and 'reflective nostalgia'.⁶⁰ The first would just stress the return aspect, while the latter would enjoy the longing for the irrecoverability of remembrance.

Dalila da Costa Pereira's (1918–2012) contribution to *saudade* was quite important because she played a role in thinking *saudade* as a mystical experience. She saw in the mystical experience a moment of *saudade*, because *saudade* had to become universalized and no longer served a territorial notion of Portugal.⁶¹ *Saudade* would conduct knowledge and operate the connection between transcendence and immanence within Portuguese history.⁶²

In recent years, the philosophical discourse on *saudade* has tried to go beyond the positioning of Portuguese culture. This would build a metaphysics of presence rather than an absence-based one.⁶³ And if this is so, how could we look for presence in *saudade*, in subjectivity, when *saudade* itself escapes the distinction between subject and object?

In his book *Da Saudade como via de Libertação*, Paulo Borges invites the reader to read *saudade* as beyond presence. *Saudade* is the "memory-desire of perfection and absolute, of a good beyond being, thus without concept, contrast or opposition."⁶⁴ He does acknowledge the Galician-Portuguese origin of the word that contains health, desire, solitude, and salvation. But the *saudade* that is grounded in the past but thrown into the future is merely that of "having lived, momentarily, the plenitude of the now [...] without before or after." This feeling would bring a "dissatisfaction and unquiet state" that would bring an "even wider dimension

60 "Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* [return] and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. The first categories of nostalgic do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth... Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time." Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic, 2001), 41. See also Amy Hollywood, "Joan of Arc and the Politics of Nostalgia –Review of 'For Fear of the Fire: Joan of Arc and the Limits of Subjectivity' by Françoise Meltzer," in *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 83, no. 1 (January 2003): 94–99, accessed March 8, 2010, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1205438>.

61 Dalila Pereira da Costa, "Saudade, unidade perdida, unidade reencontrada," in *Introdução à Saudade (Antologia Teórica e Aproximação Crítica)*, with Jesué Pinharanda Gomes (Oporto: Lello & Irmão, 1976), 81.

62 Miguel Real, *O Pensamento Português Contemporâneo*, 776–777.

63 For *saudade* as a metaphysics of presence, see Bruno Béu de Carvalho, "Fernando Pessoa e a saudade do presente," in *Revista Cultura Entre Culturas*, Pessoa: caderno especial, no. 3 (spring-summer 2011): 21–31.

64 Paulo Borges, *A Saudade como via da Liberação* (Lisboa: Quidnovi: 2008), 88.

of a world to be discovered, an ideal to be fulfilled or a subject and a world to be transformed.”⁶⁵

Saudade would be degraded if still seen in time, as renovation or attachment to what is lost. It had to be configured beyond configurations, beyond feeling or thought. *Saudade* would come from the ‘abyssal indetermination’ felt in the ‘union-schism’, the ‘groundless ground’, where every potency *non exists* (‘in-existe’).⁶⁶ In his analysis of the Portuguese *saudade*, Borges borrows the language of the mystics, and in particular that of the Renanian mysticism to which he is indebted.⁶⁷

4.4.2 Expecting the Divine: Ancias and the Discourse of Presentness of the God-Man

It is here, in this ground of mystical experience and the striving between memory and loss, where Joana’s anxiousness lies, and where a notion such as *saudade* could both participate in and contribute to the same philosophies of *saudade* and anxiousness.

Joana’s anxiousness goes beyond the fear of attachment and losing, engulfing the true loss in the paradoxical ‘loving anxiousness’: the urgency, the desire, and the overwhelming feeling that this motivates are a consequence of the abyssal experience of God-(made-)Man. The discourse of anxiousness redirects the subject to the God-Man in expectation, beyond absence (seen in the apophatic) or presence (cataphatic discourse): Joana rediscovers in chapter 3.3 the *notícia* (notice), the knowledge, news, and News that, once seen, she must reveal. This theme is reiterated throughout her self-writing in the descriptions of her visions.

As it was mentioned in chapter two, *saudade* in Joana is related to her family, to her convent in Lorrvão, and to the ‘blessed fatherland’ [ANTT 128r], which means her true identity: being the daughter of God, partaking in a Christian Kingdom. Nonetheless, Christ himself suffers from the same feeling: he is ‘saudozo’ of the choir at the Convent of Lorrvão, which was being renovated [ANTT 24r].

In 3.3, I showed how Joana’s construction of *saudade* is also related to rapture (‘arrombamento’) and the tenderness and tearful experience of the encounter with the God-Man. This experience is of both mourning and desire, joy and sickness, body and lack. The waiting for redemption is always *in* and *for* time. *Saudade* becomes

65 Borges, *A Saudade como via da Liberação*, 88.

66 Borges, *A Saudade como via da Liberação*, 102–103.

67 Paulo Borges, “Do Bem de Nada ser. Supra-existência, aniquilamento e deificação em Margarida Porete,” accessed October 31, 2012, <http://pauloborgesnet.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/do-bem-de-nada-ser.pdf>. See also Borges, “Ser ateu graças a Deus ou de como ser pobre é não haver menos que o Infinito. A-teísmo, a-teologia e an-arquia mística no sermão ‘Beati pauperes spiritu...’ de Mestre Eckhart,” in *Philosophica* 21 (2003): 61–77, accessed October 31, 2012 <http://pauloborgesnet.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/do-bem-de-nada-ser.pdf>.

a deadly loving anxiousness because Joana acknowledges her subjectivity and the God-Man's humanity.

Joana's usage of *saudade* does not contribute to a deeper reflection on the *time* of the subject: for her it is just a longing, a memory, a mourning for something that is lacking. However, *saudade* in connection with anxiousness brings out another dynamic of time. Joana, simultaneously, misses a *place* and expects a *time* of union. Her subjectivity is constructed around this suspense: tracking down something lost, remembering it, expecting, and almost giving birth (by revelation) to future actions (being the hopeful founder of a new reformed House, which was never realized.). Again, here lies the future contingent of action: the possibility of being *something* or even being *all*.

The anxiousness, urgency, and voraciousness felt regarding her contact with God conducted Joana to the greatest of all feelings, even beyond *saudade*: instead of joy, desire, longing, memory, future, progress, health, or salvation (all constituents of *saudade*), Joana accounts for a *tremendous* abandonment.

entrou a Quaresma e loguo em a <segunda> somana me deu hum acidente dos que me costumão a dar das cinco oras e juntamente com aquele grande trabalho extirior se me ajuntou huma teribilidade interior tão grande, que me paricia estava deixada de Deos e esta deilação causa<va>-me humas raivas e desesperação que toda me fasia pedaços. [ANTT 105r]

In the second week of Lent, I was given an accident which usually lasted for five hours, and together with that great exterior hardship gathered such interior terribleness it seemed I was left by God and this leavingness caused me such wrath and despair that it tore me apart. [ANTT 105r]

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Here we see that *saudade* continued to be crucial in Portuguese philosophical debate right up until the present day. Could Joana's ancias (anxiousness) contribute to this debate? Moreover, if the Portuguese vocabulary of *saudade* contributes to a specificity (and openness) of Portuguese philosophy, as we have seen, could this be also seen in ancias? Could Joana indeed be 'the Portuguese Nun', beyond the character, myth, and fiction that marked an autonomous subject, as in *Letters of Mariana* or the *New Portuguese Letters* of the feminist writers?

4.5. Final Remarks on the Anxious Subject

In this reflective chapter, I questioned both contemporary philosophers and Joana de Jesus. How far could Joana's anxiousness aid in recognizing the presence and inscription of a subjectivity? My objective here was not to provide a positive answer or an anachronistic or genealogical dialogue; I rather aimed to invite readers of contemporary philosophy to read and dialogue with Joana de Jesus.

In the first place, I questioned de Beauvoir's conception of transcendence in relation to the dichotomy she established between Teresa and Guyon. If we position Joana de Jesus between the two female mystics and take into account her notion of *patiating* that underlies anxiousness, we may contribute to a rethinking of the surplus value de Beauvoir is so eager to obtain for female emancipation.

Secondly, I juxtapose Luce Irigaray's remembering of air in Heidegger's thought by seeing this as an act of mourning for a lost philosophical tradition. In her reading, the Belgian philosopher searches for the immanence for which air is both the main symbol and literal constituent. By criticizing the male philosophical tradition of ignoring the abyss and vertigo, Irigaray takes refuge in the ingathering and mystical experience of the blossom 'without a why'. Joana de Jesus, on the other hand, perceives (the lack of) air in the somatic experience of anxiousness. For the Cistercian nun, air becomes the possibility of the encounter with the Divine matter that, not being erected, is resurrected, and shares with her the possibility of female redemption through a participative daughtership.

Thirdly, I turn to the Portuguese philosophical debate around *saudade*. This feeling of mourning, greeting, loss, love, and sadness has been directed either to the past or to the future. It has always been a discourse of time, wherein the identity of Portugal itself plays a role. With Joana's anxiousness, the time of *saudade* becomes a moment of bodily expectation, urgency, and even voraciousness. It is a time that conducts an expectant (pregnant) salvation that is felt at every moment. Anxiousness, together with *saudade*, becomes almost a project of *desassossego* (disquietness), and could be inscribed in Portuguese philosophical tradition as it has been in the feminist tradition.

Senti-me inquieto já. De repente, o silêncio deixara de respirar.
I felt already unquiet. Suddenly, the silence had ceased to breathe.

Bernardo Soares/Fernando Pessoa,
O Livro do Desassossego (The Book of Disquiet)

