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Recolhimento, Recogimiento, Recollection: Medieval and Baroque Trends in the Recollection Mysticism of Joana de Jesus (1617-1681)

Recolhimento, Recogimiento, Recollection: Tendências Medievais e Barrocas na Mística de Recolhimento de Joana de Jesus (1617-1681)

Abstract

For the tradition of Iberian mysticism, the inner movement of the soul, commonly known as withdrawal or recollection, presupposed the capacity of acquiring new practical knowledge that would facilitate the path of union between human beings and God. In 17th century Portugal, a Cistercian woman wrote about several notions of recollection. This article uncovers her predecessors, but also how the psychological, epistemological, devotional, and theological dimensions are intertwined in the mystical experience.

Key words: Recolhimento; Recogimiento; Recollection; Christian Mysticism; Body-soul relationship.

Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Authors: Joana de Jesus; Teresa of Ávila; Luis de Granada; Francisco Osuna; Bernabé de Palma; Bernardino Laredo; Bernard of Clairvaux; William of Saint Thierry; Bridget of Sweden; Joan of Arc; Hadewijch of Brabante; Mechthild of Magdeburg; Margarete Porete; Jean Gerson; Thomas a Kempis; Plato; John Chrysostom.

Resumo

Para a tradição da mística ibérica o movimento interior da alma comumente conhecido por recolhimento, teria como pressuposto a capacidade de uma obtenção de conhecimento prático que facilitasse o caminho de união entre o ser humano e Deus. No século XVII, aparece uma autora cisterciense

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portuguesa que teoriza sobre várias noções de recolhimento. Este artigo descreve os seus predecessores, mas também como as dimensões psicológicas, epistemológicas, devocionais e teológicas estão interligadas na experiência mística.

Palavras chave: Recolhimento; Recogimiento; Recollection; Mística Cristã; relação corpo-alma.

Autores antigos, medievais e de inícios da Idade Moderna: Platão; João Crisóstomo; Joana de Jesus; Teresa de Ávila; Luis de Granada; Francisco Osuna; Bernabé de Palma; Bernardino Laredo; Bernardo de Claraval; Guilherme de Santo Teodorico; Brígida da Suécia; Joana d'Arc; Hadewijch de Brabante; Matilde de Magdeburgo; Margarida Porete; João Gerson; Thomas de Kempis.

1. Introduction

A Scholastic tradition of commentary on Aristotle has usually dominated discussions regarding the subject of *anima rationalis*. In this way, unfortunately, a crucial segment of intellectual audience has been neglected – namely of women who wrote, in vernacular, on the soul and rationality. This paper addresses the work of Joana de Jesus, a 17th century Cistercian who wrote a theological treatise in the form of autobiographical writings, following the conventions for an early modern religious female authorship¹. Joana de Jesus was profoundly knowledgeable in Latin and in the Spanish mystical tradition – Teresa of Ávila and Luis of Granada, as well as Cistercian writings – Bernard of Clairvaux and other Cistercians authors². In the description of her visionary illocutionary communications with the incarnated God, Joana reveals a mystical trajectory to theological insight³. Along that path, body and soul are both aiming towards total communion with the divine will. Therein a crucial concept emerges: the Portuguese notion of *Recolhimento*. *Recolhimento*, as I will later explain, is a withdrawal or retreat which is simultaneously physical, mental and social. On the one hand, it is the labour of the memory in the rational soul, but also the possibility of God's will acting upon one's body, one's community, the world. For this and other reasons

¹ A. Weber, «The Three Lives of the Vida: The Uses of Convent Autobiography», in M. Vicente – L. Corteguera (ed.), *Women, Texts and Authority in Early Modern Spain*, Ashgate, Burlington 2004, pp. 107-125.

² Cfr. J. Serrado, *Joana de Fátima. 'Ancias/Anxiousness of Joana de Jesus (1620–1681): Philosophical and Historical Approaches'*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, Groningen 2014.

³ On the uses of speech-acts in theological language see the work of M. de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, trans. by M.B. Smith, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1992; M. de Certeau, *The practices of everyday life*, trans. by S. Randall, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 1988.

I shall further examine, I translate this term as *Recollection*. *Recogimiento*, *Recolhimento*, Recollection (as memory), and Recollection mysticism are not synonymous but belong in a cluster of meanings that form an intricate conceptual history, where ideas have been uttered, experienced and embodied in gendered processes of trafficking and negotiation. This paper introduces the contribution that the Portuguese mystic Joana de Jesus has given to this concept.

First, I explain the usage of this concept in the Spanish tradition of *recogimiento*. Second, I point out the ancient and medieval roots of this concept. Finally, I return to Joana de Jesus's life and work and address the several meanings of *recollection* in her text, emphasising her usage of the concept to represent a way of life marked by devotion and observance, constituting a philosophical and social commitment to the experience of recollection.

2. Spanish influences

Joana de Jesus was born in 1617, in Sátão, with the given name Joana Freire de Albuquerque, daughter of low-nobility, with strong connections with Benedictines and Cistercians convents. She became a Cistercian at Lorvão and later a Discalced Bernard in Lisbon. There, she begins to write a book where she reports her visionary encounters with Christ, her daily life in her community, and her tumultuous relationship with her confessor. Alongside her spiritual life, Joana develops a philosophical and theological interpretation of mystical vocabulary, mainly thanks to her reading of Cistercian and Spanish spiritual texts. One major concept is that of *recogimiento*, epitome of Golden Spanish mysticism.

Recogimiento is present in Teresa de Jesus' main works, *Moradas* (The Interior Castle), *Camino de Perfección* (Way of Perfection), and *Vida* (Life). For Teresa, *recogimiento* is a form of prayer. It figures as a moment of solitude in the path towards God, with a simultaneous sense of peace, concentration, elevation, or consolation. *Recogimiento* occurs when the powers of the soul (understanding, will, and imagination/memory) are directed towards God, in spite of imagination tending to linger in a state of dispersion. *Recogimiento* is, thus, not a total union, but occurs in time and space, extending the soul itself⁴. If *recogimiento* is supernatural or infused by God, then it is rapture; however, Teresa says that

⁴ Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*, trans. by K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, Paulist Press, New York 1979, chap. 4.3.

this can also be perfected by human habit. Teresa mentions recollection when she describes having received the sacraments of the Eucharist/communion and confession/penance. Also, *recogimiento* means the possibility of an intimate conversation between God and the woman, as she emphasizes, by referring directly to her female audience. In the *Way of Perfection*, Teresa is clear:

[p]ay no mind, daughters, to these humilities but rather speak with Him as with a Father, a Brother, a Lord and a Spouse – and, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, He will teach you what you must do to please Him. Do not be foolish; ask Him to let you speak to Him, and, as He is your Spouse, to treat you as His brides. Remember how important it is for you to have understood this truth – that the Lord is within us and that we should be there with Him. [...] If one prays in this way, the prayer may be only vocal, but the mind will be recollected much sooner; and this is a prayer which brings with it many blessings. It is called recollection because the soul collects together all the faculties and enters itself to be with its God. Its Divine Master comes more speedily to teach it, and to grant it the Prayer of Quiet, than in any other way. For there, hidden in itself, it can think about the Passion and picture the Son, and offer Him to the Father, without wearying the mind by seeking Him on Mount Calvary, or in the Garden, or at the Column⁵.

Recogimiento is here described in relation with the conversation between a human being and God. This also reveals a God who is himself relational, through the Father, Son, and the Soul of the mystic through the Holy Spirit, establishing a strong Trinitarian presence of God in the mystical experience⁶. The collection of the soul is ultimately a ‘re-’collection, a return to the primordial state of union or quietness, when the soul is not yet split⁷. Teresa insists on the mediation of images of Christ’s life, as prescribed in the monastic ‘lectio divina’⁸.

⁵ «No os curéis, hijas, de estas humildades, sino tratad con Él como padre y como con hermano y como con señor y como con esposo; a veces de una manera, a veces de otra, que Él os enseñará lo que habéis de hacer para contentarle. Dejaos de ser; pedidle la palabra, que vuestro Esposo es, que os trate como a tal. [...] Este modo de rezar, aunque sea vocalmente, con mucha más brevedad se recoge el entendimiento, y es oración que trae consigo muchos bienes. Llámase recogimiento, porque recoge el alma todas las potencias y se entra dentro de sí con su Dios, y viene con más brevedad a enseñarla su divino Maestro y a darla oración de quietud, que de ninguna otra manera. Porque allí metida consigo misma, puede pensar en la Pasión y representar allí al Hijo y ofrecerle al Padre y no cansar el entendimiento andándole buscando en el monte Calvario y al huerto y a la columna», Teresa de Jesus, *Way of Perfection*, trans. By E. Allison Peers, chap. 28, 3-4.

⁶ A. Hunt, *Trinity: Insights of the Mystics*, Liturgical Press, Minnesota 2010, pp. 122-143.

⁷ M.M. Anderson, «Word in Me: On the Prayer of Union in St. Teresa of Ávila’s Interior Castle», *Harvard Theological Review* 99 (2006) 329-354.

⁸ S.A. Morello, «Lectio Divina and the Practice of Teresian Prayer», *Spiritual Life* 37 (1991) 84-100, http://discalcedcarmelites.net/docs/Lectio_Divina_and_Praxis_of_Teresian_Prayer.pdf (accessed August 8, 2011). See also E.A. Matter, «Lectio Divina», in A. Hollywood – P.Z. Beckman

Besides Teresa of Ávila, there was another major writer who contributed towards an idea of Iberian Spirituality: Luis of Granada. As his name suggests, this Dominican was born in Granada, in 1505, and died in Portugal, in 1588. He spent most of his life in Portugal, where he was confessor to the court and devout women, even before Spain had annexed the Portuguese crown. Having been considered more as an ascetic in his writing, he produced over 45 works in Latin, Castilian and Portuguese⁹.

In his *Libro de la Oracion y Meditacion* (Book of Meditation and Prayer), Luis de Granada mentions the word *recogimiento* a few times. His main concern, however, is with the differences between mental and vocal prayer. For this Dominican, prayer has six moments: preparation, reading, meditation, thanksgiving, offering, and petition¹⁰. In the *Memorial*, a book widely read in the Iberian Peninsula, *recogimiento* appears together with the sacraments – a feeling after penance, sorrow and contrition, allowing the spirit to avoid sin¹¹.

For Luis de Granada, *recogimiento* is a mental and spiritual exercise: not only does it surpass the images and senses, it is both a requirement and consequence of a perfect Communion¹². A perfect soul is modest, introspective, and therefore, recollected; always ready for the practice of mental prayer¹³.

The most important theoretician of *recogimiento* was Francisco de Osuna (1492–1540) with his numerous *Spiritual Alphabets*¹⁴. Teresa of Avila

(ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 147-156.

⁹ J.A.F. de Carvalho, «Traditions, Life Experiences and Orientations in Portuguese Mysticism», in H. Kallendorf (ed.), *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2010, pp. 54-68. Ver también: M.I. Resina, *Fray Luis De Granada y la Literatura de Espiritualidad en Portugal (1554-1632)*, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca: Fundación Universitaria Española, Madrid 1988. A.C. Gomes, «Frei Luís de Granada e os Círculos de Poder em Portugal: Novos Documentos», in *Revista Portuguesa de História do Livro. Actas do Colóquio Internacional Frei Luís de Granada e o seu tempo* (organização do Instituto São Tomás de Aquino e do Centro de estudos de História do Livro e da Edição), Ano IX (2005), 18, Edições Távola Redonda, Lisboa 2006, pp. 41-83.

¹⁰ Luis de Granada, *Libro de la Oracion y Meditacion*, Imprenta y librería de D. Antonio Serra, Barcelona 1846.

¹¹ Luis de Granada, *Memorial of Christian Life: Containing all that a Soul Newly Converted to God Ought to do, that it may Attain the Perfection to which it Ought to Aspire*, ed. F.J. L'Estrange, The Catholic Publication Society, New York [187-?], p. 167.

¹² Granada, *Memorial*, cit., p. 215.

¹³ Granada, *Memorial*, cit., p. 357.

¹⁴ M. Andrés, *Los recogidos Nueva visión de la mística española 1500–1700*, Biblioteca de autores

acknowledges having read him and drawn from him her own practices of recogimiento¹⁵. Francisco Osuna's work belongs to a tradition of Franciscan texts, of which Bernabé de Palma's *Via Spiritus* and Bernardino Laredo's *Subida del Monte Sión* were also vital elements¹⁶. These books have been widely divulged throughout Portugal and Spain¹⁷. As the *observant Franciscans* they were, they wrote spiritual guides describing a progressive path towards union with God. In this path there was first the state of self-knowledge or introspection, followed by the moment of meditation on the several steps of Christ's Passion. In the last moment, through the movement of «re-collecting» of the exterior senses at the centre of the soul, one could achieve union with God. Historians of prayer have emphasized the Franciscan intellectual tradition, especially the manner of quieting the soul's intellectual activity and the imagination, which stems from St Bonaventure, in *The Soul's Journey into God*¹⁸.

The most important volume of *Spiritual Alphabet* was the third, which appears in 1527. According to the preface, the book had a pastoral purpose – to instruct, in Castilian, men and women, lay and religious, so they could make progress towards spiritual union with God. Simultaneously, this book served Francisco Osuna as a means to distinguish his practice of prayer and others from those condemned by the Franciscans in 1524, and the Inquisition in 1525, and commonly attributed to the Alumbrados¹⁹.

cristianos, Madrid 1976, p. 89. See also J.A. Boon, «The Mystical Language of Recollection: Bernardino de Laredo and the *Subida del Monte Sión*», PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania 2004, pp. 13-20.

¹⁵ Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Life*, Trans. by K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodríguez, Hackett, Indianapolis 2008, chap. 4, 7.

¹⁶ For English translation of these works, see Bernardino de Laredo, *The Ascent of Mount Sion: Being the Third Book of the Treatise of that Name*, trans. by E.A. Peers, Faber and Faber, London 1952.

¹⁷ J.A.F. de Carvalho, *Bibliografía Cronológica da Literatura de Espiritualidade em Portugal 1501-1700*, vol. 1-2, Instituto de Cultura Portuguesa, Porto 1988.

¹⁸ W.J. Short, «From Contemplation to Inquisition: The Franciscan Practice of Recollection in Sixteenth-Century Spain», in T.J. Johnson (ed.), *Franciscans at Prayer*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2007, pp. 449-474.

¹⁹ The classical works on alumbrados are of A. Hueriga, *Historia de los Alumbrados (1570- 1630)*, vol. 3, Fundación Universitaria Española, Madrid 1978, A. Márquez, *Los Alumbrados; Orígenes y Filosofía, 1525-1559*, (La Otra Historia de España, 4) Taurus, Madrid 1980, A. Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth Century Spain: The Alumbrados*, J. Clarke, Cambridge 1992, P. Santanoja, *La Herejía de los Alumbrados y la Espiritualidad en la España del Siglo XVI: Inquisición y Sociedad*, Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia 2001.

Recogimiento is the method of a theology of hiddenness, the mystical theology, which is characterized by pious love, moral virtues and purification of the soul. Speculative theology, on the other hand, resorts to reason, argument, discourse and probability, requiring a master, books, and attention. Drawing on Jean Gerson's distinction Osuna holds that mystical theology, being the most perfect, can be found more often in children than in their parents, more often in novices than in learned men. Naturally, there are implications for women: impeded from engaging with Scholastic theology, they are in fact prone to a higher form of knowledge, and recollection plays an important role in this process.

According to Osuna, there are several ways of leading an accomplished religious life. Saints, including some Biblical characters, become very important here as models of *recogimiento*: doing penance, like Paul; meditating, like Solomon; giving assistance, like Martha; going on pilgrimage, like Elisha; fasting, like John²⁰.

The issue was not charity or external works but rather spiritual progression, which would translate into a direct imitation of Christ. The method of *recogimiento* would then become the supreme spiritual movement of retiring / retreating to the desert and praying «secretly and spiritually» with the Father. While it is in the nature of the human mind to wander, which is an obstacle to full communion, *recogimiento* is a form of restraining and control through the exercise of prayer. Osuna recognizes this is not new and that *recogimiento* appears throughout the history of Christianity under different names, e.g., abstinence, drawing near, enkindling, welcoming, consenting, the burning of 'marrow and fat' as an offering to God, attraction, adoption, the Lord's arrival in the Soul, a 'height that rises to the soul', spiritual ascension, captivity, and rapture. While enumerating the reasons as to why this prayer should be called recollection, Osuna describes the different modes of this particular exercise:

[...] the devotion is called recollection because it gathers together those who practice it and, by erasing all dissension and discord, makes them of one heart and love. Not content with just this, recollection, more than any other devotion, has the known, discernible property by which someone observing it can be greatly moved to devotion when he sees another person also recollected. [...] The second reason why this devotion should be called recollection is that it gathers together the exterior person within herself; [...] Third, this devotion recollects sensuality [...] and places it under the jurisdiction of reason [...]. The fourth way this exercise recollects us is by inviting the one who enjoys it to go off to secret places. [...] The fifth reason this exercise

²⁰ Francisco de Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, trans. M. Giles, Paulist Press, New York 1981, pp. 158-177.

should be called recollection is that it calms the senses. [...]; The sixth way this holy exercise recollects us in the members of our body [...] Seventh, this exercise recollects virtues in the person who gives herself over the devotion [...] The eighth function of this devotion is to gather together man's senses in his heart's interior where the glory of the king's daughter, meaning the Catholic soul, is found [...]. The ninth thing is to recollect in the powers of the soul's highest part where the image of God is imprinted [...]; it gathers God and the soul that has been greatly drawn into itself, into one²¹.

Osuna's usage of enumeration here is not a mere rhetorical device: it draws on the tradition set on the alphabet style (*abecedario*), all the while emphasising spiritual advancement as a faculty of memory, indebted to the medieval tradition²². The capacity of accumulation within the faculty of the soul becomes, through the succession of images, both *recogimiento*, imagination, and recollection.

3. The origins of recollection

Recollection as a phenomenon antedates the Spanish concept of *recogimiento*. According to Herman Josef Sieben and Saturnino López Santidrian, *recollection* would be the path for interiorization, as seen in Augustine and in the Gregorian tradition, but also the path of purification and the ultimate union of a previous dispersion²³. I shall point out three authors that are crucial for the development of Iberian mystical culture.

In Plato's *Phaedon*, the word translated as 'recollection' is 'syllgesthai', the concentration and gathering of the dispersed elements. In 83a-b, Plato introduces the term when speaking of the care of the soul, which must be freed from its ties with the body. Such practice was the crucial path for philosophy.

The lovers of knowledge, then, I say, perceive that philosophy, taking possession of the soul when it is in this state, encourages it gently and tries to set it free, pointing out that the eyes and the ears and the other senses are full of deceit, and urging it to withdraw from these, except in so far as their use is unavoidable, and exhorting it to collect and concentrate itself within itself, and to trust nothing

²¹ Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, cit., 170-173.

²² M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in the Medieval Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2008.

²³ H.J. Sieben – S. López Santidrian, «Recueillement», in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique*, tome 13, Beauchesne, Paris 1988, 247-267.

except itself and its own abstract thought of abstract existence; and to believe that there is no truth in what it sees by other means and which varies with the various objects in which it appears, since everything of that kind is visible and apprehended by the senses, whereas the soul itself sees that which is invisible and apprehended by the mind (83a-b)²⁴.

For Plato, recollection is a movement, a gathering of dispersed parts, and, more precisely, an exercise and a state of mind. Such idea of exercise can be seen later, in the 12th century, among the Cistercian schools, during the so called ‘affective turn’. There, love and knowledge are seen as product of the soul’s union with God. The relationship between love and memory, or the powers of the soul, is rooted in the Cistercian tradition²⁵. Bernard of Clairvaux discusses recollection in the context of what he calls *consideration* (*consideratio*): a practical consideration, connected to the senses; a scientific one, related to reason; and a speculative one, which is ‘colligens in se’ (collected in itself)²⁶. This latter consideration approximates closely to recollection.

The Latin root of *recollection*, or ‘to record’, comes from the same Latin root, meaning simultaneously the act of perceiving, acknowledging, and remembering it. *Recollection* is another way of speaking of *memory*, an intellectual process of the soul²⁷. But recollection is more than just memory: even if mnemonic, recollection is also the witnessing act of love.

To analyse philosophical love, one has to go beyond Nygren’s accepted stance on the dualism of Greek *Eros* and Christian *Agape*, for it is insufficient as a formulation of this *recollective* love²⁸. Love and knowledge are indeed products of the medieval encounter of monastic and scholastic theology, but through different

²⁴ Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 1, trans. by W.R.M. Lamb, Harvard University Press – William Heinemann Ltd, Cambridge – London 1966. *Recollection* in PlatoStable. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0059.tlg004.perseus-eng1:83a>.

On Plato’s memory recollection, see L. Schumacher, «Rethinking Recollection and Plato’s Theory of Forms», *Lyceum* 11.2 (2010) 1-19.

²⁵ J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by C. Misrahi, Fordham University Press, New York 1982, pp. 77-74.

²⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, «On Consideration» [De consideratione], in *Selected Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. by G.R. Evans, (The classics of Western spirituality) Paulist Press, New York 1987, p. 150. See Sieben – Santidrian, «Recueillement», cit., p. 251.

²⁷ A. Solignac, «Mémoire» in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique*, tome 10, Beauchesne, Paris 991-1002.

²⁸ A. Nygren, *Erôs et agape: la notion chrétienne de l’amour et ses transformation* [Eros och Agape], trans. by P. Jundt, Aubier, Paris 1944.

paths²⁹. One possibility is the vernacular mysticism that emerged amongst the Beguines. This mainly 13th century urban movement, of women living in agglomerates throughout Northern Europe, developed a theological discourse in vernacular that combined monastic and scholastic notions – the debates concerning which stem from love and reason, respectively. German literary historian Kurt Ruh considered the Flemish Beatrice of Nazareth (c. 1200-1268) and Hadewijch of Brabante (c.1250) or the German Mechthild of Magdeburg (c.1207- c.1282) or even Margarite Porete (c 1248- 1310) in France, to have sown the earliest seeds of their national literatures and the corpus of languages, because they wrote in their native tongue (which led to the creation of Dutch, German, and French). In doing so, they were not avoiding Latin, with which they were familiar, but this enable them to engage directly with female and less literate audiences³⁰. Despite the diversity of vernacular European languages, their mysticism and philosophy bear the common theme of *minne*, a love that is mainly recollection as memory³¹. This new paradigm for love and memory will have important consequences for Iberian mysticism.

Minne, as a new term for love, can provide an epistemological and ontological foundation for philosophical readings³². *Minne* is the extreme activity of the soul which has no subject, nor object, nor even its own verb: it is a *character* that acts towards her, Lady *Minne*. We should, however, mind the pitfalls of courtly love. George Duby warns us that in the latter, the woman becomes the lady, but

²⁹ For recent divergent views on the debate over love and knowledge in the mystical experience, see A. Louth, «Apophatic and Cataphatic Mysticism», in A. Hollywood – P. Z. Beckman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 137-146, and, in the same volume, B. McGinn, «Unio Mystica», pp. 200-210, respectively. See also B. McGinn, «The Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism», *Church History* 65/2 (1996) 197-219.

³⁰ K. Ruh, «Beginnsmystik», in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Literatur der Altermum* CV (1977) 265-77. See also his major work *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik. Band II Frauenmystik und Franziskanischen Mystik der Frühzeit*, Beck, München 1993.

³¹ Etymologically, the word ‘minne’, like the Latin word ‘amor’, refers to memini, ‘remember’. See E. Verwijs – A.A. Beekman – G.I. Lieftinck – W. Vreese – J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Gravenhage 1885-1952 (Published in CD-Rom: *CD-Rom Middelnederlands*, SdU – Standaard Uitgeverij, The Hague – Antwerp 1998). See also the work of N. Paepe, *Grondige Studie van een middelnederlandse Auteur: Hadewijch, Strophische Gedichten*, Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij en Boekhandel, Gent – Leuven 1968.

³² Cfr. J. Serrado, *Minnen: Varen: Verwandelen. Amar: Experienciar: Transformar. Três Verbos Místicos em Hadewijch de Antuérpia*, master’s thesis, University of Porto, Porto 2004, <http://repositorio-aberto.up.pt/handle/10216/53695>.

does not master her own body; rather, it is just a promised land the Crusader must conquer³³. Lady *Minne* is a female being, who invites the lover; she is a (female-male) knight herself to win by being conquered in her³⁴. Likewise, Lady *Minne* is not merely the *Beloved* of the exegetical monastic tradition of the Song of Songs³⁵.

Minne is distinct from *Eros*, *Agape*, *Charity* or even a ‘*Delectatio*’, where images and imagination remain³⁶. Rather, *minne*’s main goal is a pure annihilation of the will, and that is identical to the true God and Lady *Minne*³⁷.

My hypothesis is that there may be an element of this mnemonic *Minne* in the Iberian notion of recollection, insofar as *recogimiento* is both a withdrawal and seclusion from the physical world and an inner, mental movement, within the faculties of the soul. *Minne* mysticism and early modern Iberia are united by several links. A strong historiographical scholarship ascertains the presence of Northern mysticism in Iberia, particularly in the recollection mystics³⁸. The works of Northern authors such as Tauler, Suso, Ruusbroec and Herpius – within the

³³ P. Dinzelsbacher (ed.), *Minne ist ein swaerez spil: neue Untersuchungen zum Minnesang und zur Geschichte der Liebe im Mittelalter*, Kümmerle, Göttingen 1986.

³⁴ See A. Hollywood, «Sexual Desire, Divine Desire; Or, Queering the Beguines», in *Theology and Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline*, V. Burrus – C. Keller (ed.), Fordham University Press, New York 2006, pp. 119-133, 404-12; B. Newman, «La mystique courtoise: Thirteenth-Century Beguines and the Art of Love», in *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature*, (Middle Ages Series) University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1995, pp 137-167.

³⁵ D. Turner, *Eros and Allegory. Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*, (Cistercians Studies Series, 156) Cistercians Press, Kalamazoo 1995.

³⁶ Ch. Baladier, *Eros au Moyen Age – Amour, désir et «delectatio morosa»*, Cerf, Paris 1999, chap. 5.

³⁷ See A. Hollywood, «Reading as Self-Annihilation», in J. Gallop (ed.), *Polemic: Critical or Uncritical*, Routledge, New York 2004, pp. 39-64, based on her earlier study *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart*, (Studies in Spirituality and Theology, 1) University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame 1995.

³⁸ M.N. Ubarri – L. Behiels, *Fuentes Neerlandesas de la Mística Española*, vol. 37, Editorial Trotta, Madrid 2005; M.N. Ubarri, *Jan van Ruusbroec y Juan de la Cruz, la mística en diálogo*, EDE, Madrid 2007; J.A.F. de Carvalho, *Gertrudes de Helfta e Espanha: contribuição para o estudo da história da espiritualidade peninsular nos séculos XVI e XVII*, Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, Porto 1981. There is also the classic scholarship: P. Groult, *Les Mystiques des Pays-Bas et la Littérature Espagnole du Seizième Siècle*, Uystpruyst, Louvain 1927; J. Orcibal, *La Rencontre du Carmel Thérésien avec les Mystiques du Nord*, vol. 70, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1959; H. Hatzfeld, *Estudios literarios sobre mística Española*, Editorial Gredos, Madrid [c. 1955] and H. Hatzfeld, *Estudios sobre el Barroco*, Editorial Gredos, Madrid 1966.

wider movement of *Devotio Moderna* – circulated in Latin or Castilian translations and abridged commentated versions. These books might have indirectly brought the notion of *minne* into recollection.

4. Recollection as/and ‘Mystical Theology’

Contemporary scholars like Denys Turner see the use of ‘mystical’ as an adjective within the Neoplatonic tradition, which, strategically, uses the dialectic of negativity in God’s talk³⁹. Can this negativity or apophasis be also present in the Iberian thought on recollection? Osuna, Teresa and Joana de Jesus mention *recogimiento* as a technical term. Teresa and Osuna, however, stated that this belongs to the wider discussion of ‘mystical theology’, as mentioned before⁴⁰. The Franciscan author takes this notion from Jean Gerson, who had previously configured mystical theology as the knowledge of what is hidden, the love that must be the prayer of union⁴¹.

Francisco de Osuna mentions Jean Gerson more than forty times while discussing the nature of *recogimiento*. At that time, Gerson was believed to be the author of *Imitatio Christi*, a best-seller book throughout Iberia. Gerson is crucial to Iberian recollection for several reasons⁴². Firstly, his treatise, *De Mystica Theologia Speculativa*, written for an academic Parisian audience, distinguished two different kinds of mysticism. Speculative mysticism ought to be established by trained theologians (like himself); and that differs from an affective mysticism, which was commonly preferred by the laity (including women and poor people), driven by confusion, emotions, ecstasy, and visionary outbursts. This latter kind diverted the spirit towards sensual experiences, which, according to Gerson, would hinder the appropriate understanding of God.

This distinction prevailed in the history of mystical thought and had a huge

³⁹ D. Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 1995, pp. 252-273.

⁴⁰ Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Life*, cit., 10,1.

⁴¹ Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, cit., p. 161.

⁴² Jean Gerson, *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, trans. by B.P. McGuire, Paulist Press, New York 1998; Jean Gerson, *Selections from A Deo exivit, Contra Curiositatem Studentium and De Mystica Theologia Speculativa*, trans. by S. Ozment, Brill, Leiden 1969. For a more recent overview of scholarship on Gerson, see B.P. McGuire, «Jean Gerson on Lay Devotion», in B.P. McGuire (ed.), *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2006, pp. 41-78.

impact in the acceptance of women as bearers of visionary knowledge and the vernacular texts appearing since the 13th century. Dyan Elliot shows Gerson as a perplexed man in between two worlds. On the one hand, he defends the study of mysticism, promoting it in the University of Paris, and writing treatises on this subject. On the other hand, he attacks the unlearned experimental mystics (mostly subscribed by women), leading him to be hostile towards Ruusbroec, Bridget of Sweden, though he defended Joan of Arc.

What was at stake in his positions was the role of reason – or a lack of it thereof. Women, due to their supposed weaker nature, were thought to be unable to achieve a proper knowledge of God. They would require special guidance, the *discernment* (proving the spirits) which only a man, a trained theologian, could provide⁴³. Besides a confessor, women and lay people would require true inquisitors, who would guide them through the dogmatic sources of Christian faith in their validation of truth.

Truth, discernment and, especially, the capacity for self-discernment are also present in the diverse recollections. In *La Montagne de contemplation* (The Mountain of Contemplation), which is a pastoral treatise written mainly for women, Gerson describes the path to contemplation, according to the tradition he ascribes to the teachings of John Chrysostom, where the latter advocates a mental retreat from the world⁴⁴. Through the faculty of *recollection* a person can have and can *control* his or her emotions or passions. Later in the same text, Gerson shows recollection as a movement into Divinity and sainthood, fighting grief, ailments and the distress of the world⁴⁵. The faculty of reason provides the only path to discernment. In another work, now intended for the clerics – *Brief Manière de confession pour jones gens* (The Art of Hearing Confessions) – Gerson holds that the confessor, despite being the main ‘discerner’, must «recollect [the] fortress or watchtower of his reason»⁴⁶ to better perform his pastoral work.

Joana de Jesus and other Iberian mystics do not mention either Gerson’s work or the debate on speculative and affective mysticism, the element of reason as

⁴³ D. Elliot, «Seeing Double: John Gerson, the Discernment of Spirits, and Joan of Arc», *The American Historical Review*, 107, 1 (2002) 26-54. See also her study, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2004.

⁴⁴ Jean Gerson, «The Mountain of Contemplation», in *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, cit., p. 97.

⁴⁵ Gerson, «The Mountain of Contemplation», cit., p. 118.

⁴⁶ Gerson, «The Art of Hearing Confessions», in *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, cit., p. 365.

(self)discernment can be present in their description of recollection. My working hypothesis is that all these elements – memory, love, will, reason – are present in the movement of the soul we term ‘recollection’, translating the notion of *recolhimento*. However, it is in its extreme *experientialism* that recollection is present and not in the dichotomy, of Neoplatonic origin, between apophatic and cataphatic. In the following section, I return to Joana de Jesus, to test this hypothesis.

5. Joana de Jesus: recollection and living experience

It is not easy to translate *recogimiento* or ‘recolhimento’. The Latin prefix ‘re’ (backwards) and the verb ‘colligo’ (to collect, to move) together invoke a series of meanings⁴⁷. Its polysemic character makes its translation into English a difficult task, as Nancy van Deusen attests⁴⁸. *Withdrawal* and *recollection* have been the preferred English choices, as both terms are interchangeably used in the jargon of the Christian mystical tradition. However, when referring to the Spanish (or Iberian) authors, many scholars (Jessica Boon, William Short) and translators (E. Alison Peers) prefer the Latin equivalent *recollection*, as it preserves the etymological roots and retains its popular usage in 17th century English.

In Joana de Jesus’ *Livro de Apontamentos*, the word ‘recolhimento’ appears more than two-hundred times, but in several lexical forms. Here are some configurations:

1. As an abstract noun, ‘recolhimento’ (it was given me a recollection);

⁴⁷ A. Ernout – A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Latine*, Klincksieck, Paris 2001, p. 622: s.v. «lego, -is, legi, lectum».

⁴⁸ «Recoger. v.1. to separate oneself or abstract the spirit from all that is earthly or from that which might impede meditation or contemplation. 2. To separate oneself from excessive communication and contact with people. 3. To retire to a specific location. 4. To bring together, to congregate things or people who are dispersed. 5. To provide asylum. 6. To place oneself in retreat. 7. To withdraw from the world.

Recogerse. v.1. to still the senses or the self. 2. To gather within the self in an act of mental prayer. Recogimiento. n. 1. House of spiritual retreat. 2. A House of women called recogidas. 3. A covered shelter extending from a wall, a house or barn for beggars or mendicants. 4. A house for women founded for a specific purpose, and to house them in either a voluntary or involuntary basis. 5. A school. 6. Quiescent conduct. 7. Practice of contemplation. Recogida/o. adj. 1. Virtuous. 2. Self-contained. 3. Enclosed. 4. Moral», N.E. Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2001.

2. As a verbal form, in the first person ‘recolhi-me’ (‘I recollected myself’);
3. As a participial adjective ‘recolhida’ (‘she is recollected’) – referring to herself, to the soul, or to the ‘powers of the soul’. As this verb is reflexive, it indicates the movement of the subject preparing herself for a divine meeting.

Another significant aspect is the place wherein Joana *recollects* herself.

4. A physical place – at the Oratory house, in the chapel altar.
5. A spiritual body: in the interior (of the soul).
6. In some ‘Religion’ [e.g., Religious Order].
7. In the Lord (or in His presence).
8. In prayer, in solitude [‘soledade’].

Those spaces are related

1. To the movement of soul (into)
2. And a mode or way (with/ in).
 - a. tenderness,
 - b. peacefulness,
 - c. greatness,
 - d. desire.

All these forms of *recolhimento* usually occur before the taking of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Before her description of the soul’s *recolhimento*, she describes how her sisters prepare for this ritual and the acute yearning for such moment. In some occasion she refers:

Concerning the communions, I have always understood it from the Lord that it was very useful that there were many and when, on some occasions, the religious women stopped taking Communion twice per week, as they used to, I understood it from the Lord that he was offended thereby. I also took it that this Lord wanted every woman to be prepared with true confession and contrition, and that they were to be recollected with Him before and after taking Communion. Anything outside this was a great mistake and a demonstration of little love.

On the twenty-fifth of May of the year of 1664, a great anxiousness, a desire of giving my soul to the Lord and to be one with Him, came upon me. And as this fire was growing, my [soul’s] powers were recollected, with great peace and suavity. It seemed to me that I was making a spiritual communion and as the love was growing with this, so many things became understandable to me. Among these it seemed to me that I was seeing a great number of people separated in a field and I understood that these people were adorning and preparing themselves for great things in the service of the Lord, by whose order I understood that they were there.

Among those people, I only recognized my confessor, who seemed to me the greatest among all⁴⁹.

This excerpt offers us insight into how Joana de Jesus understood the act of *recolhimento* in her daily life and its role in the economy of mystical knowledge. *Recolhimento* can be similar to the state of preparation, confession, and contrition for one's sins before taking the Communion. Later, in the text, on the recorded day of 1664, while she is in Lisbon, this sacramental moment appears separated from the collective experience of the Eucharist. It becomes a personal, private spiritual and mystical communion that only she, Joana, has access to. The privacy of this *recolhimento* leads to a prophetic knowledge: that other people (among whom was her confessor and, at that time, still her protector) were preparing themselves for great things in the service of Lord. The choice of words «great things» («coisas grandes») is not random. Most likely, it is the direct translation of another biblical passage she had used before, when she hears directly from Christ the commandment in the words of the Vulgate in Gen 22:16: 'quia facisti hanc rem' [ANTT 91r-v]. Through *recolhimento*, Joana achieves the words of service and her own personal covenant.

6. Recollection as observance

So far I have been focusing on the mental dynamics of recollection (whether these were baroque or medieval, Castilian or Portuguese). This concept, however, also has a social and ritual component.

⁴⁹ «No que toca has cumunhois sempre entendia do Senhor que se servia muito que fosse muitas vezes e quando por alguma ocasião, as religiosas deixavam de cumunguar duas vezes cada semana, como tinham de costume entendia que o Senhor se ofendia disto e também entendia que queria este Senhor, que todas se aparelhassem com verdadeira confissão e contrição e que estivessem recolhidas com ele antes e depois de comunguarem que tudo fora disto era grande e[r]ro e mostras de pouco amor.

A vinte e cinco de Maio da era de 1664, me deu huma ância e desejo grande de dar a alma ao Senhor e ser com ele a mesma cousa e como este fogo fosse crescendo, se me recolherão as potências com grande paz e suavidade e parecia-me que comunguava ispiritualmente e crescendo com isto mais o amor, se me derão a entender muitas cousas entre as quais me parecia que via hum grande numero de gente separada em hum campo e entendia que esta gente se estava adereçando e preparando para cousas grandes do serviço do Senhor, por cujo mandado entendia que estavam ali entre as quais conheci só ao meu confessor e parecia-me que era entre todos o maior» ANTT 98r.

Recolhimento ou *Recoleta* ('The recollection' or 'the Recollect') is also a proper noun when used to name a religious community. Normally, it is used in less formal contexts, in descriptions of where people lived a devotional life and often showed a stricter observance than was the case in the monastic orders⁵⁰. The majority of the dwellers in such places were women. In the Portuguese context, the word recollect is mainly used when referring to the Augustinian Recollects⁵¹.

Recolher-se is the act of *enclosing oneself* in a convent, through a stricter and more ascetic urge to follow and imitate the life of Christ. The tendency to retreat from the world was seen throughout Christianity in the *apostolic movements* of the Mothers and Fathers of the Desert, in the Gregorian reformations within the Church, and in the preaching and mendicant orders⁵². While some of these movements were considered legitimate developments of the Christian Spirit, others were disregarded and even considered heretical⁵³. The 15th century ascetic and mystical movement of 'Devotio Moderna' was itself greatly influenced by such mystical schools as that of Ruusbroec, which marked European thought from the late medieval period into modernity and was also crucial in the shaping of Portuguese spirituality⁵⁴.

The desire to go into retreat, to renew or 'reform', was widespread among the monastic and preaching orders, and noticeable in houses attempting follow a stricter and more observant practice. Theoretically, this is also seen, for instance, in the early modern return, into the public sphere, of the medieval discussion of poverty, along with urbanization and the mendicant orders⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. «recollect, adj. and n.», <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/159681> (accessed July 1, 2013).

⁵¹ C. Alonso, «Recoletos», in C.M. Azevedo (ed.), *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal*, vol. 1, Círculo de Leitores, Lisboa 2000, pp. 27-32.

⁵² B. McGinn's article on «Withdrawal and Return: Reflections on Monastic Retreat from the World», *Spiritus* 6 (2006) 149–172; J. Leclercq – J. Gribomont, «Monasticism and Asceticism», in B. McGinn (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Routledge, London 1986, pp. 86-131.

⁵³ R.E. Lerner, *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages*, University of California Press Berkeley 1972; S. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1973.

⁵⁴ On «Devotio Moderna», see J. Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common life: the Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2008, pp. 11-44.

⁵⁵ B. Geremek, *La potence ou la piété: L'Europe et les pauvres du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, Gallimard Paris 1987, pp. 51-71.

The idea of being reformed also included the urge to be recollected, in the service of God. Teresa de Ávila's foundation of a new convent and her writing of the respective rule was a major incentive to both women and men in their pursuit of a good life, which meant being devoted to God and leading a truly exemplary Christian life.⁵⁶ And this can be seen in Joana de Jesus, when she was asked to write a Rule for a new convent (Recolection). In the following passage, Joana describes how she sees herself in the Recolecta (Recolection) of the Discalced Bernards in Lisbon.

Some months after the foundation of Lisbon's Recolection of Our Lady of Nazareth, of the order of our Patriarch and Holy Father Bernard, the Lord saw fit to grant me some burning desires to serve Him in such an anxious way, with such a delicate feeling that it left me no rest, because it was such a penetrating arrow that cut through my heart, with a pain so soft, that even though it gave me sorrow, I always desire it would grow and I would suffer for the many gains with it that I felt in my soul. I spent some time in this anxiousness of which I could not doubt that it came from God. One day, while praying, he saw fit to grant me a huge recolection for a long time. As the powers were all united, with all this inner world obeying the command of that mighty God, in whose presence I could not doubt I was; and as if astonished and overwhelmed by the Majesty and power of a Lord, in whose acceptance all created things are nothing, I saw myself outside myself, undone in that nothingness of my misery, poor and disengaged from all earthly things, with a clear notice of their small worth, and seeing as if with the sight from my eyes, how wrong are those who strive to acquire the earthly dignities. I saw myself dressed in a humble and quite poor Capuchin's habit. It was given to my understanding that I would take this habit in Lisbon's Recollect of Nazareth, of the Order of our Patriarch Saint Bernard. My soul also understood that from this reformation a great number of houses were being created to Our Lord's honour and glory⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ I. Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume: autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans l'Espagne Moderne.*, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid 1995.

⁵⁷ «Alguns meses dipois de se fundar em Lisboa a Recoleta de Nosa Senhora de Nazaré, da Ordem de Nosso patriarca e pai São Bernardo, foi o Senhor servido <de> me dar huns acesos desejos de o servir, por hum modo tão ansioso e com hum sentimento tão dilicado que me não deixava sossegar, porque era huma seta tão penetrante que me rasguava o coração, com huma dor suave que suposto me dava pena, sempre desejava de a aumentar e padecer* pelos muitos proveitos que com ella sentia n'alma, pasando assim algum tempo com estas âncias, em que não podia admitir dúvida serem de Deos. Estando hum dia em Oração foi elle servido de me dar hum recullimento

From this passage, it is possible to see how the social and communal experience of *recolhimento* (of living together in prayer) also relates to the interior experience of withdrawal of powers of the soul, or even to the reformation movements that have been occurring throughout the history of Christianity. The way she dresses, her habit, the humbleness, the poverty, the strictness all come together into a wider communal experience of recollection that affects the soul of the (female) community rather than the soul of the individual.

7. Conclusions: on the Several Recollections

In this article I showed the several layers of *recolhimento* in the writings of the Portuguese baroque mystic Joana de Jesus. I situated the usage of this concept in the tradition of the Spanish *recogimiento* mysticism and combined it with the several trends of recollection and memory throughout medieval thought. My aim in this was to reveal the diverse forms of recollection in the mystical tradition, whether psychological, epistemological, social or devotional.

Recolhimento in its different lexical forms shows a living thought of a visionary mystic author in the Portuguese Baroque, who struggles to establish a thought inspired by the intellectual aftermath of Teresa of Avila and the daily devotional practices of reformed religious houses, in the spirit of the Tridentine Council. Before these two impetuses, and given the possibility to read spiritual texts, write mystical colloquia with God-Man, and perform tasks in her spiritual and social community, Joana de Jesus is prepared to lead the life of imitation of Christ. Recollection (Recolhimento) is the privileged moment that prepares, transforms and enacts her soul and her body onto such relationship.

The devotional observance embedded in the mystical narrative of recollection becomes, thus, an exposure of another kind of rationality of the soul, one that

grandisimo por larguo tempo e como as potências estão todas unidas, obedecendo todo este mundo intirior ao mando daquelle poderoso Deos, em cuja presença não podia duvidar que estava e como atónita e pasmada da Magestade e poder de hum Senhor, em cujo acatamento todas as cousas criadas não são nada, me vi fora de [mim mesma, desfeita naquelle nada de minha miséria, pobre e desazida de todas as cousas da Terra, com huma clara noticia do pouco que ellas valem e vendo como por vista de olhos o quanto vão erados aqueles que fazem por adquirir as dignidades da Terra, me vi vestida em hum abito umilde e mui pobre de capucha e dava-se-me a entender, tomaria este abito em a Recoleta da Nazaré, em Lisboa, da Ordem de nosso patriarca e pai Sao Bernardo e tão bem entendeu a minha alma, que desta nova reformation se fazia hum dilatado número da casa, para onra e glória de Nosso Deos» ANTT 47r.

enabled this Portuguese Cistercian woman to express a philosophical dimension of interconnection with Divinity and the world, otherwise, due to political and social constrains, would not be possible.