



Poetic Reality in *Primer exilio* by Ernestina de Champourcín, an Exiled Female Poet of the Generation of '27

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the poetic reality in *Primer exilio* by Ernestina de Champourcín, an understudied and forgotten female poet of the Generation of '27, also known as the *Silver Period* in 20th Century Spanish Poetry. Most of the 1927 Generation poets were exiled to Europe or Latin America during the Spanish Civil War or in its aftermath, and they were only able to return to Spain after the death of General Franco. Upon their return, they had difficulty in adjusting to their homeland. The female poets shared the journey of their male counterparts in their social struggle and experienced the same tragedies. Although their intellectual and artistic identities were known, these female poets, among whom were important thinkers, artists, writers, and translators, did not receive the due attention they deserved as their works were not included in the poetry anthologies of the period and were disregarded by literary critics, which delayed their rightful recognition and acknowledgement in Spanish literary history. By considering the social and cultural climate of its era, this paper explores the poetic realism in *Primer exilio* by Ernestina de Champourcín, who was born in Vitoria in 1905. After a discussion of the historical, social, and cultural circumstances of the period in which the poet lived, which was a critical moment in Spanish history, her poetic inclinations and the influences on her poetica are evaluated and the poetic realism created in her work *Primer exilio* is exemplified by poems translated from Spanish into Turkish. As a topic that has only very recently received attention, this paper references articles by Spanish poetry scholars and critics as well as the poet's own thoughts and poetry.

Keywords: Women's Literature, Spanish Poetry, Ernestina de Champourcín, *Primer exilio*, Poetic Reality



This paper offers an approach to the poetic reality in *Primer exilio* by Ernestina de Champourcín, one of the understudied female poets of the Generation of '27, also known as the "Silver Age" in 20th Century Spanish Poetry. The majority of the 1927 Generation poets, among whom are world renowned literary names such as Pedro Salinas, Luis Cernuda, Jorge Guillén Rafael Alberti, Manuel Altolaguirre, were exiled either to Europe or America during the Spanish Civil War. While some died before they were able to return to Spain, others were only able to return many years later either towards the end of the Franco regime or after the death of General Franco. Upon their return, they had difficulty in adjusting to their homeland. The female poets, who were either friends, relatives, or spouses of the male poets, shared the same fate as these male members of the 1927 Generation. They accompanied their male counterparts in their social struggle and experienced the same tragedies. Although their intellectual and artistic identities were known, these female poets, among whom were important thinkers, artists, writers, and translators, did not receive the due attention that they deserved as their works were not included in the poetry anthologies of the period and were disregarded by literary critics, which delayed their rightful recognition and acknowledgement in Spanish literary history. This negatively impacted the cultural development of Spanish society along with the lives and inner lives of these female poets. By considering the social and cultural climate of its era, this paper offers an approach to the poetic reality in *Primer exilio* by Ernestina de Champourcín, who was born in Vitoria in 1905. After a discussion of the historical, social, and cultural circumstances of the period in which the poet lived, being a critical moment in Spanish history, her poetic inclinations, and the influences on her poetica are evaluated and the poetic reality created in her work *Primer exilio* is exemplified by poems translated from Spanish into Turkish. As a topic that has only recently received attention, this paper references articles by Spanish poetry scholars and critics as well as the poet's own thoughts and poetry.

Each member of the Generation of '27 influenced the succeeding generations with their poetry as well as with their lives and thoughts. The group takes its name from the 300th Anniversary of Luis de Góngora's death (d. 1627), to revive the neo-romantic spirit. These poets are the most important poets of modern Spanish poetry. Right before the Spanish Civil War that erupted between 1936 and 1939 they succeeded in reconciling the poetry heritage that they had received from the Generation of '98, who were mostly their teachers, with pioneering movements in keeping with a 'pure poetry' understanding of the Generation of '14. In this sense, while a leap in the avant-garde style can be

observed in the poetry of the Generation of '27 until the Civil War period, during and after this war, a more social, yet at the same time a subjective and people-oriented approach, is employed. This generation had very strong relations with European poetry, and with the cultural formations they established among themselves, they revealed the modern face of Spanish society. The group included artists like Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel, who resided in a student dormitory at the time, and female intellectuals, artists, poets, such as Ernestina de Champourcín, Maruja Mallo, Josefina de la Torre, María Zambrano, Marga Gil Rosselt, Ángeles Santos, Concha Méndez, María Teresa León, Rosa Chacel.

At that time, these women pioneers would gather at the *Lyceum Club Femenino*, which had been established in 1926. In a conservative Spanish society, where the women's sole place was considered to be the home, Lyceum was transformed into a center for pioneering women members who fought for getting women out of the home, demanding their rightful place in cultural and social life and helping each other grow. The members of this center, who aimed to promote a spirit of female solidarity, worked in a variety of fields such as literature, arts, sciences, social sciences, and they organized courses, conferences, and artistic programs with an aim to develop their own intellectual capacities and talents. These members included the invisible poets of the Generation of '27 such as Ernestina de Champourcín, Rosa Chacel, Josefina de la Torre, Concha Méndez and Maruja Mallo. The women members of the center, who mostly came from aristocratic families, were powerful, cultivated personalities, who had social sensibilities and a strong stance on life. Ernestina de Champourcín was the daughter of an aristocratic family, and like many others, spoke English and French.

While talking about herself, the only factual information she gave in her biography was that she was born in Vitoria on July 10, 1905, and that the rest of her life consisted of literature. She emphasized that her childhood and adolescence were literally her intellectual heaven, that her understanding of poetry was not conceptual, that life erased the concepts that she had previously formed, and that she neither had the time nor the desire to design new ones (Checa, 1998).

This little statement was made by Ernestina de Champourcín when she was asked to summarize her background and her understanding of poetry after being accepted, along with another female poet Josefina de la Torre, to the *Anthology of Contemporary Spanish Poetry* prepared by Gerardo Diego in 1932, one of the leading representatives

of the Generation of '27. It is a statement which, in fact, summarises her whole life and poetry. Such a statement, however unassertive and sincere, was made at a time when only two women including herself were accepted for the first time in an anthology. It was in fact an ambitious statement. On the one hand, she elevated poetry with her statement that there was only literature in her life from the moment she was born, and on the other, she elevated life by pointing out that life cannot be reduced to mere concepts. Indeed, this statement brings the temporality of poetry in the understanding of the Generation of '98 in line with the conceptuality of poetry as defended by the Generation of '14. Bringing together the temporal with the conceptual, in other words removing the conceptual from the temporary, is one of the major features of her and the other poets of the Generation of '27, especially in their second and final periods.

As Spain was on the threshold of a cultural transformation that had been accelerating since the beginning of the 20th century, the poets of the Generation of '27 were pioneers not only in regard to their writing but also in their thought and lifestyle. Intellectuals, poets, and authors of the period also supported the Club, which made a great impact on society with a rapid and significant increase in the number of its members. Regular speakers included García Morente and poets of the Generation of '27 such as García Lorca and Rafael Alberti (Walliser, p. 424). However, those who were against the Club, particularly because of the modern image of women that it represented, were more in number than its supporters, and they did not hesitate to express their reactions which at times reached insult level. The 'hatless' protest that took place during that time further reinforced these reactions.

The painters Maruja Mallo and Margarita Manso, who were the members of the Lyceum, initiated the social movement known as the 'hatless' in Spanish cultural history. The literary identities of these women were ignored for many years; hence they did not become known by a wide audience. However, with her book *Sin Sombrero*, published in 1977, Tània Balló Colell exposed the social struggle of that period in a much more powerful manner by discussing the female intellectuals of the Generation of '27 who later became famous in the fields of poetry, art, and philosophy (Balló, 2016).

This movement of walking without wearing a hat, which was a symbol of obedience and belonging to high class, took place in the Sol Square in Madrid, and was perceived by the conservative circles of the period to be an example of unacceptable behavior. These women came to be known as 'hatless' in Spanish cultural history. In that regard, the

'hatless' movement should be perceived as Spain's concern to reach European standards as it had felt itself lagging behind culturally since the beginning of the 20th century. It could also be perceived as an extension of the effort to create a new Spain that had started with members of the Generation of '98 spreading to the entire Iberian Peninsula. In addition, 'hatless' became a metaphor for the social change experienced in the twenties.

However, the acknowledgement of women's existence in the cultural sphere took a long time even by the very men who were building the new society, and this belated acknowledgement delayed the female poets' taking their deserved place in the history of literature, as in the case of Ernestina de Champourcín. As Tània Balló Colell states, Ernestina de Champourcín expressed her concern very clearly in 1928 in a letter written to her friend, author Carmen Conde, one of the most modern representatives of group: "Why can't we just be ourselves, just as we simply are without anything more? Without a name, without a land, not belonging to anything and anyone, be ourselves, like the whites in poems or the blues in lilies." (Balló, p. 17) Champourcín would remain faithful to those sentences written at a young age in that letter to her friend, and she would devote her whole life to writing freely, despite the prejudiced attitudes against female poets.

In her study entitled *La recuperación de la memoria histórica. Las mujeres olvidadas de la Generación del 27*, Sara Saz points to school textbooks as the simplest indicator of this prejudice. She points out that the existence of a poetry anthology with only two female poets cannot compensate for the absence of female poets in poetry anthologies that were edited after the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. On the other hand, any Spanish student can count at least half a dozen male names such as Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Jorge Guillén, Vicente Aleixandre, Pedro Salinas, Luis Cernuda, Manuel Altolaguirre, Dámaso Alonso, who are always listed under the heading of the "Generation of '27" in school textbooks (Saz, pp. 301-302).

As Sara Saz explains, this one action would not ensure the female poets' taking their rightful place in the history of literature. Similarly, Inmaculada de la Fuente, in her work entitled *Mujeres de la Postguerra*, states that the names of Ernestina de Champourcín and Concha Méndez were not put in a place of priority alongside the names of male poets, but they are only seen in photographs together with the great figures of the 1927 Generation and thus pushed to the margins somewhere between being forgotten and erased. In this way she underlines the same prejudiced point of view (Fuente, p. 463).

Along the same lines, Felipe Díaz Pardo in his book *Breve historia de la Generación del 27* points out different issues of *La Gaceta Literaria* magazine to demonstrate the existence of women authors in the twenties and states that in the 3rd issue of the same magazine dated February 1, 1927, the name of Ernestina de Champourcín is included under the heading of "Map of Poets". He points out that the ideas of Ernestina de Champourcín regarding the genderlessness of poetry are featured again in the 38th issue of July 15, 1928, under the heading "The Secret of the Poets". Champourcín here states that authentic poetry does not make a distinction between a male or female poet, but only refers to the concept of 'poet'. While maintaining that exaggerated female sensitivity does not actually serve poetry and that men can be as sensitive as women, she also opposes the attempt to associate the poetic spirit with the feminine (Díaz Pardo, p. 208).

Meanwhile the repositioning of women as active agents in the public sphere became fully visible in the twenties and was legitimized in Spain to the extent that, in the Constitution of 1931, women got the right to vote and the right to get divorced. Undoubtedly, this situation was the result of a historical struggle and developed in parallel to the emergence of a new model of European woman.

As Tania Balló Colell states, the emergence of a new model of womanhood in Europe coincided with feminist movements originating in Europe. However, as far back as the industrial revolution in the second half of the 19th century women had been in the business world, especially in England and in the United States of America. This movement gained momentum with the start of World War I, as women took the initiative in the family, in society and in business life in place of men who went to the front. At the end of this period, the new model of woman, which was shaped at the end of the war in 1918, was autonomous, stronger than ever, aware of her own intellectual capacity and determined not to return to her previous role as an obedient woman (Balló, p. 14).

The Spanish Second Republic encouraged the creation of a new woman's conception, whose role in society was more active and autonomous. This struggle is also seen on the same scale in the cultural sphere of the period. As Felipe Díaz Pardo emphasises, while the male members of the Generation of '27 displayed their avant-garde stance in art and life, the female members demonstrated an effort to be visible (Díaz Pardo, pp. 191-192).

In other words, while the visibility of female poets alongside their male counterparts was a great innovation in the cultural sphere of the period, female poets still had difficulty in bringing their intellectual identity to the forefront, and they were merely left to be satisfied with their companion status. In this respect, the ideas which Champourcín developed on the genderlessness of the poet are right, and they still remain valid arguments that aim to prevent attempts to cluster women under the 'female poet' heading hinting at a gender-based, second-class poet, a view that doesn't totally ignore but still doesn't take women seriously.

However, the battle women won in the social and cultural spheres entered a dark period in the mid-thirties. The civil war was started by conservative forces who staged a coup against the Republic. When the coup failed across the country, war broke out which caused the country to be ruled by a dictatorship from 1939 to 1975, and a new era began in which immigration, death and exile prevailed. Like many members of the Generation of '27, Ernestina de Champourcín lived in exile, away from her country, feeling lonely and in economic difficulty.

Her first poems were published before she left her country through the influence of Juan Ramón Jiménez during the period when the Lyceum Club was active. During the same period, she wrote poetry criticism in various newspapers. By 1936, she had published four poetry books titled *En silencio* (1926), *Ahora* (1928), *La voz en el viento* (1931), *Cántico inútil* (1936) and had become a well-known poet in her close circle.

García Mendoza draws attention to the modernist and romantic features in Ernestina Champourcín's first book, *En silencio* (p. 189). However, Mendoza points out that in Champourcín's book titled *Ahora*, the literary tendencies that influenced the poet had changed. The renovation realized in the language of poetry at that time also affected Champourcín as she moved away from the modernist and romantic lines in her first book and discovered the nuances of pure poetry under the influence of Juan Ramón. Thus she began to be influenced by avant-garde movements. During this period, together with Juan Ramón Jiménez, Ramón Gómez de la Serra also became the master of Ernestina Champourcín, thanks to the technique of "la greguería" which was a literary genre he invented. Ernestina Champourcín recreates external reality in her poetry: she does not sing to the rose, but creates it in poetry, following Vicente Huidobro's advice in his poem "Poetic Art". She creates a new reality from the observation and decomposition of the experienced into forms and sounds, which are reassembled like a letter puzzle

to present literary reality (p. 190). Lázaro and Tusón summarized the “greguería” as a genre that contains an unusual metaphor and is almost always expressed in just one sentence. They pointed out that greguería’s counterpart in painting is Cubism which is a movement that aims to deform and distort reality (Lázaro and Tusón, 1981, p. 57). In this direction, the metaphor, which was used to create a new poetic reality, unlike external reality, became indispensable not only in Ernestina Champourcín’s poems but also for all the poets of the Generation of '27. While poetic reality moved away from objective reality, the language of poetry was separated from that of daily language, so poetry began to be written not for the public but for the minority. Undoubtedly, Ortega y Gasset’s article *La deshumanización del arte*, published in 1925, was very influential in this approach. However, with her third book, a new vision of feelings and sensations accompanied Champourcín’s poems, and the internal reality overlaps with the external reality. Accordingly, we can say that her understanding of poetry, as seen in many other members of the 1927 Generation, is moving towards a much more subjective direction, in which the ‘poetic self’ manifests itself more. Undoubtedly, the historical process had a great impact on this transformation. Since the early thirties, the tendency towards rehumanization of poetry began, and this trend accelerated in the following years thanks to the social realism movement. Along these lines, during an interview with Edith Checa in 1998, by defending that poetry is “the most subjective art that exists”, Champourcín emphasized that the love she deals with in her poems, especially from her last period, is beyond human love, it is a more universal mystical love (Checa, 1998).

In 1936, Champourcín married the poet Juan José Domenchina, who was also a member of the Generation of '27. Once in exile, they first went to France and then to Mexico in 1939. Champourcín worked as a translator in Mexico, and the economic difficulties she faced to make a living slowed down her poetic production. Her first book in exile was published in 1952, under the title of *Presencia a oscuras*. As García Mendoza has pointed out, there was a noticeable change in Ernestina Champourcín’s poetry in this book. Love was the protagonist of her poetry in this new period, as it was in her previous periods, but this time it was divine love. (García Mendoza, 2006, p. 193). Martínez Calvo stated that Ascunce Arrieta evaluated the book titled *Presencia a oscuras* under the period of “Poetry of Divine Love”. This distinction reflects Arrieta’s classification in the preface to Ernestina Champourcín’s poetry anthology, published in 1991 under the title *Poesía a través del tiempo*. Arrieta divided Ernestina Champourcín’s poems into four periods: “The first poetic exercises” till 1928; “The poetry of human love” from 1928 to 1940; “The Poetry of Divine Love” from 1940 to 1972; and “The Poetry of Love in

Desire and Association" between 1972 and 1991. (Martínez, Calvo, 2015, p. 4) According to Martínez Calvo, this book is the poet's first attempt at religious poetry; it means a first look into mysticism (Martínez, Calvo, 2015:5).

In 1972, a few years before General Franco's death, Ernestina de Champourcín decided to return to her birth country. The Franco Regime had decided to open its arms to those intellectuals who had proved their love to Spain, despite their political opposition. Champourcín had been left alone in Mexico after the death of her husband and she was not young anymore. Since her family was close to the Franco regime, she had broken away from them as well. But after years of exile, her family asked her to return, and she accepted this offer. Iker González-Allende underlined that after the death of her husband, the poet lived in an existential exile: the support she had for many years no longer existed, and stamp of loneliness was placed on her future. But later, when she returned to Madrid, the existential exile did not disappear, and Ernestina's sense of loneliness deepened again (González Allende, 2004, p. 167). However, like many intellectuals who spent the majority of their lives in exile, she had difficulty in adapting to her homeland, and this time she experienced another aspect of exile, internal exile. During this period, she projected the whole painful period that she had experienced during her long stay in Mexico into her books. When she returned to Spain, she re-lived her exile through the writing of her work titled *Primer exilio*, reconstructing it and moving it to the artistic sphere. In this book published in 1978, as she projected the majority of her life into her poetry, she transformed the external reality into a poetic reality. While the cities, situations, sensations, moments that she experienced for all those years are gathered in the book in fragments, life experiences are transformed into poetic reality, and a bitter taste of exile remains in her poetry as well as in her life.

The first poem in the book is about Madrid, the city that she had to leave in 1936 and to which she returned to live until her death. The title of the poem, like the other titles that consist of place names throughout the book, is written in capital letters and placed in parentheses: (MADRID). While capital letters strengthen the associations of the city, they also revive the individual and collective history. Madrid after the Civil War is a lost city, it is a city whose name hurts. But that city and that pain are still there (in brackets). Thus, the parentheses also give readers clues to awaken the collective memory while the cities mentioned in the titles of the poems almost constitute the diary of an exile showing the departure of Ernestina de Champourcín from her country. By bringing together the past of the city with the present, historical reality is made to overlap with

poetic reality. The parenthesis sign may reflect a turn into a metaphor (like other poems of this book) of a multi-layered, very painful process. The city where the poet first experienced youth, followed by war, struggle, and defeat, is also the home that she was forced to leave. Exile begins the moment she leaves Madrid. However, it does not end the moment she returns to Madrid: it is diluted by writing because thinking about what has happened only begins after everything happens.

Accordingly, the first poem takes us to the hidden pain of Madrid in that parenthesis. The poem projects the sound of the rebel troops who pass through the streets hitting the ground with their guns and spreading terror in the middle of the night, and the terror of the people who watch them secretly behind their windows, transforming into shadows because of fear.

Fear is so intense that any action that can create the slightest suspicion is enough for them to be visible, recognized and taken away:

(...)

*Kimse kapıları açmasın
Kapamasın da.*

*Bir jest ölümcül
ve geri dönüşsüz olabilir.*

*Hiç kimse bir şey yapmasın! (14)
Kimse bir şey yapmasın! (15)
(Arizmendi, 2004, p. 151)¹*

Madrid fell in 1939, and along with General Franco's troops, fear also took over the city. The desperation of the people is like the messenger of exile. However, the lyrical subject has not yet appeared in this poem. The feelings of the terrified people in that moment are deeply conveyed to the reader. In this sense, we realize that the possibility of exile is not just the exile of the poet but the exile of us all, as mentioned in the 14th and 15th verse "a gesture can be fatal / and irreversible", and this can happen to any of us at any moment. Again, the individual history that we catch the clue of in the title, is

¹ *Que nadie abra las puertas/ni las cierre tampoco.//Un gesto puede ser/fatal e irrevocable.//Que nadie haga nada//Que nada haga nadie!*

transferred to the collective history, hence a new reality is created that is now more apparent and takes us in as readers from its very first page.

The 5th poem titled (MEMORY OF ANTONIO MACHADO) is a salute to Antonio Machado, the great master of the Generation of '98, who was the teacher of many of the poets of the Generation of '27: The electric train brings 'a piece of scenery'. This 'piece of scenery' is a reference to the few lines written on a piece of paper found in the pocket of the poet who was forced to leave the country because of the Civil War and who died at the age of 63 in 1939, shortly after crossing the French border: "These blue days / and this sun of childhood". In the poem that ends with the following lines, Ernestina de Champourcín seems to create an internal dialogue between herself and the poet Antonio Machado:

*Sözler ne için?
Onlarla yaşamak
ve bir an unutmak için mi
bizi arayan ölümü.
(Arizmendi, 2004, p.154)²*

Here, in the first poem, exile that can happen to anyone happened to another poet and a prototype of a poet emerged. That is why the first-person plural is used as the lyrical subject: "death that seeks us". When she wrote in her youth the war hadn't yet taken place. But now, like Antonio Machado, she had seen the war and had experienced it. She had not died but feared death, and could no longer ignore it: only when she confronts this fear of death, only when she expresses it, can she do justice to the choices she made in the past and the years she spent in exile, and get rid of their weight. She can only do this through poetry because "words are to live with". Words give the poet stamina, moreover, writing is the destiny of the poet.

Accordingly, the intertextuality Champourcín established in this poem by referring to another poem within the poem, and her dealing with poetry writing within the poem can be considered as meta-poetic elements.

As Isabel Gómez Sobrino points out, the theme of freedom in Ernestina de Champourcín's poems is the pursuit of creative freedom, both personally and aesthetically;

2 *Para qué las palabras? / Para vivir con ellas / y olvidar un momento / la muerte que nos busca.*

she also talks about the meta-poetic elements in her early poems; and indicates that the word 'sound' in her book *La voz en el viento* (*Sound in the Wind*) expresses poetic sound (Gómez Sobrino, 447). Accordingly, this poem is a good example of the period when the poet wrote with an avant-garde understanding of poetry where she brought together the technique she had developed and the experience she had gathered in life. For Antonio Machado, poetry is the essential word in time (Machado, 1989: 1900) Time here is as individual as it is historical: it includes the life of the reader as well as the poet. The poet and the reader meet in the same process and share a common destiny. The autobiographical references that Machado points to in his poems gain a universal dimension thanks to the 'lyric subject' that turns into the prototype of the reader. In this direction, while Machado's poetry brings together individual and historical time, it also brings together the poet and the reader, the subjective and the universal. Accordingly for Machado, poetry is not just a mental effort and cannot be explained only in terms of concepts, because the conceptual is timeless, whereas the poet/human is mortal. In this sense, the effort of writing poetry is the effort to immortalize the moment by carrying it to infinity. Ernestina de Champourcín's poetry also overlaps with Antonio Machado's understanding of poetry in this sense: words are for defeating death. So, is the result successful? This is debatable. Antonio Machado's words remain immortal, but Machado is dead. Being a republican, he had to leave his country and died as soon as he crossed the French border. Like Ernestina Champourcín, he had left Spain via Valencia, and their communication continued during this painful escape. Antonio Machado sent letters to Ernestina Champourcín's husband and some of them were his poems. In this sense, this poem of Ernestina Champourcín can be evaluated as an example of metapoetry that can be read in multiple layers, with a respectful farewell to the exiled Antonio Machado and a reference to his poetic understanding.

In the 7th poem titled (VALENCIA), the use of the plural subject becomes more evident, transformed to "everyone" or "nobody". This is because here everybody has a common destiny. Valencia is the city Champourcín and her husband went to after Madrid before they left Spain. In this poem, via the metaphor of sea, the external reality coincides with the inner reality: against the immense blue, the consciousness of mortality is deepened in the reader, and the human despair is emphasized in the face of the uncertainty of fate and the future. The poet and other poets who went into exile like her, are faced with an uncertain life, and no one could predict where and how it would end. At the same time, the sea, in modern poetry, metaphorically expresses the common space where all lives intersect, all 'I's transcendently meet in a common consciousness:

(...)

*Birkaç kişi biliyordu, diğerleri
bilmiyormuş gibi yapıyordu.*

Ama deniz...

(...)

*Kaybolmak istedi biri
dalgaların içinde sonsuza dek*

Ama deniz..

(...)

Bunu asla kimse bilmedi.

Sadece deniz..,

(Arizmendi, 2004, p. 155)³

Thus, the individual voice of the lyrical subject passes from 'I' to another. This approach explores the sphere of common consciousness that Unamuno and Antonio Machado perceive as the "world of other 'I's". In this sphere, the subjective meets the universal and opposites can be observed. According to poetic humanization as in this poem, the subjective with the social, the individual with the historical, the historical and the universal, the human with the divine, and the infinite with the momentary overlap. On the other hand, the semantic gaps left by the poet were still waiting to be perceived, and in the 1930s, especially with the Republic, during the Civil War and after, poetic humanization was again experienced through the poets of the Generation of '27, who moved away from Ortega y Gasset's art dehumanization approach. As Felipe Díaz Pardo explains, in the second half of the 1920's, Antonio Machado was very important to them. (Díaz Pardo, 2018, p. 133). In this direction, parallels are observed in Ernestina Champourcín's poetry, as well as in Machado's understanding of poetry and that of other poets of the Generation of '27, where the avant-garde elements of the poem are completed by the reader. In this sense, the story of the exile weaved throughout the book is based not only on description, but also on the effect of events and situations created in external reality on the mind, senses, and emotions. And to complete the fiction, the text demands the mental, sensory, and emotional participation of the reader. In this regard, while Ernestina de Champourcín's poetry contains avant-garde elements, it does not deny the poetic legacy of Modernism, following Ruben Darío, Emilio Carrere, and other members of this aesthetic cultural movement. Perhaps in her youth, when

3 *Unos sabían, otros / fingían no saber ./ Pero el mar...// Alguien quiso perderse / para siempre en las olas / Pero el mar...// Nadie lo supo nunca / Sólo el mar..*

asked about her understanding of poetry for the poetry anthology that Gerardo Diego had edited, due to her poetry situation being within a clearly defined framework, she succeeded in creating a poetic reality where all the elements that seem to be opposed to each other could breathe without threatening each other. She was not only known as a modernist poet by writing within the aesthetic rules of Modernism, but she was a modern poet who was aware of the evolving aesthetic tastes that changed throughout her life, and she knew how to synthesize it in her poetry. Nobody could deny that the lyrical subject in her poems has an individual voice, but no one can limit her poetry as being autobiographical or anecdotal. What is read is not just the exile, but the poetry of the exile: preserving the external reality and poetic reality in their spheres, she deepens each other and creates different layers of reading.

Accordingly, while the 10th poem (BARCELONA) appears as a bloody and dark arena of conflict, the 12th poem (LA JUNQUERA) metaphorically points to the boundary:

(...)
Orada, sınırda
Karanlık bir çizgi yükseliyor
(Arizmendi, 2004, p. 158)⁴

In the 13th poem (LE BOULU), the theme of boundary continues. At first, we feel the crossing of the border, getting rid of the uncanny of the 'inside', the comfort of going out:

(...)
Ve nihayet bir kahve
Telaşsız, korkusuz
Ama bir fincan yeterli değil
(Arizmendi, 2004, p. 159)⁵

As Iker González-Allende mentions, after the Civil War broke out, Ernestina moved to Valencia, then to Barcelona and on to Toulouse in France where she and her husband lived for three months due to her husband Domenchina's relationship with the Republican Left. Finally, they decided to move to Mexico where they dedicated themselves to

4 *Allá en la frontera / se alza una línea oscura*

5 *Y por fin un café / Sin prisas y sin miedo, pero una taza es poco*

translation (González, 2004:149). The poems in the book also follow the two most common routes for all exiles: some of those who were exiled went first to Valencia or La Junquera in order to cross the French border, taking a boat in order to leave Spanish territory, while others went to a safer place by starting their journeys from Madrid or elsewhere in Spain. As we mentioned, Ernestina Champourcín was one of those who went to Valencia. Despite this, the fact that she mentioned the other exile route, which was not included in the poems, is a clear indication that the book exceeded the autobiographical dimension and exile is handled as a human condition.

One cup is not enough to quench a person's thirst and soothe him/her. Likewise, with the confidence of getting out of the country, while the comfort of survival replaced the fear of death, it was painful to leave everything one possessed behind and to face hardship and the unknown struggles of life as well as economic challenges. The comfort observed in the first lines of this poem is replaced by anxiety at the end of the poem.

(...)

Ve şimdi ne? Ne yöne?

(Arizmendi, 2004, p.159)⁶

After the uneasiness caused by the unknown is dealt with in a few poems, in the 17th poem (ALTA MAR), the mystical voice of the poet becomes more audible in her dialogue with nature and this penetrates our souls as readers: the individual destinies of the poet and her husband turn into a human condition, which coincides with the essence of being human.

*Bir an önce varmak istiyorum
çünkü deniz bizi uzaklaştırıyor.
Birlikte çıktığımız bu deniz yolculuğu
ikimizin arasına
inanılmaz bir mesafe koyuyor.*

*Ve böyle yol alıyoruz
Omuz omuza ayrılıyor
çünkü deniz yakın:
deniz her zamankinden daha fazla deniz!*

6 *Y ahora qué hacia dónde?*

*Birbirimize bakamıyoruz
eskiden olduğu gibi
(...)*

*Ve deniz bizi ayırıyor
düşmanca ama çok güzel ...
(Arizmendi, 2004, pp. 161-162)⁷*

In this poem, the sea is the symbol of crossing, physically and spiritually, crossing to the other shore. The sea is the sea she looked at in Valencia, but she still does not know her destiny because “only the sea knows” this. The open sea, while creating an open border between Spain and them, also creates a spiritual boundary between the two exiled poets, Ernestina and her husband, Juan José Domenchina. Their life before the Civil War, their avant-garde stance, their search for a new Spain and a new society, their intellectual concerns, their writing efforts, their ideals were suddenly replaced by an anxiety of survival and by the need to make a living. While the Civil War disrupted Spanish cultural history in every sense and made all the social and cultural achievements accomplished until that day look empty, it also distanced people from themselves and created a sense of deprivation spiritually. Furthermore, her husband, who was a poet like herself, could not adapt to a life in exile, and the burden of the struggle for life was left to Ernestina de Champourcín. Therefore, Sara Isabel García Mendoza, in her work entitled “Los exilios de Ernestina de Champourcín”, interprets that Ernestina’s fear was not on her behalf or because of the things she had left behind on the road and lost, but that her husband could not handle the exile spiritually, that he had left himself back in his country, and that he was not the same person in exile (García Mendoza, 2006: 195). Milagros Arizmendi draws attention to the mystical tone that testifies to everyone’s pain in Ernestina de Champourcín’s poem. According to Arizmendi, “the poet perceives life as an eternal exile in a tireless search, whose only refuge is God.” (Arizmendi, 2004, p. 28).

For this reason, in exile Champourcín exhibits a much more resilient and vital attitude than her husband; and writing functions as a release from pain for the poet, moreover, it becomes an alternative to the lost homeland, building a space independent of time

7 *Quisiera llegar pronto / porque el mar nos aleja. / Este navegar junto / extiende entre los dos / una enorme distancia. //Y así, hombro con hombro / nos vamos separando // porque el mar está cerca: el mar más mar que nunca! // No podemos mirarnos / ya lo mismo que antes (...)// Y nos separa el mar / hostil pero tan bello...*

and space through the word alleviating the absence of the distant land (Arizmendi, 2004, p. 28). In the same vein, Rafael Narbona who evaluates Ernestina de Champourcín as a rebellious spirit, recalls Champourcín's statement in a letter she wrote to her poet friend Carmen Conte, "I only believe in God and beauty, I have no place for more," and interprets her poetry as an endless dialogue with God, drawing attention to the moral and aesthetic quest that coexists with a belief in God in her mystic poetry (Narbona, 2019).

Ernestina de Champourcín, after her book *Primer exilio*, remained committed to writing until her death. She was awarded several prizes, most notably the *Euskadi Prize for Literature Written in Spanish (Poetry modality)* in 1989, and *Progressist Women Prize* also in 1989. On March 27, 1999, she departed this life in Madrid, but her poetry is still alive.

In this study, we saw how Ernestina de Champourcín, one of the Generation of '27 poets, skillfully combined rational reality with poetic reality in her book *Primer exilio*. In doing so, we determined how several poetic tendencies, most of which sprouted in opposition to each other at different periods in Spanish poetry, could coexist harmoniously in the same poem. In Ernestina de Champourcín's poetry, we observed how masterfully the heritage of the Generation of '98, of modernism's temporal poetry, and of avant-garde poetry meet. Thus, we determined the cornerstones of the poetic reality that the poet built based on anecdotal elements in her book *Primer exilio*. At the same time, we witnessed how the poet wrote with the pain of inner exile which she experienced when she returned to the city in which she had been born, and how she transformed the pain of exile of the past into a field of creation by taking refuge in poetry. In this sense, we concluded that the poet is above all exiled to writing. Although this situation, which determined her fate from the very beginning, caused the poet to live a tragic life, we found that the occupation of writing in which she transformed the tragic reality into the poetic reality is the real breathing ground of the poet, therefore her life corresponded exactly to her poetry. Moreover, we saw how negative developments in 20th century Spanish poetry, culture and political history affected women poets negatively. We witnessed the lifelong individual and social trauma of the Civil War. Let us conclude with the hope and belief that Ernestina de Champourcín and women poets in general will take their deserved place in anthologies, literary history books, and world literature.

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