

KAROLINA ENQUIST KÄLLGREN. *María Zambrano's Ontology of Exile: Expressive Subjectivity*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2019. 177 pp.

An unmissable monograph for anyone keen to get a solid understanding of María Zambrano's core contribution to intellectual history, namely, poetic reason and how it relates to many of the pivotal philosophical debates of 20th century Western thought.

María Zambrano's Ontology of Exile: Expressive Subjectivity offers the reader a systematic and detailed philosophical analysis of Zambrano's work, positioning the evolution of her ideas both in relation to the vicissitudes of her own biography and to the philosophical tradition from which her poetic reason emerged and evolved. Karolina Enquist Källgren's central original thesis is that Zambrano's philosophical project constitutes "one extended elaboration on subjectivity and exile" (p. 5). In other words, her main argument is that Zambrano's notion of the subject is "constituted by acts of expressive creation" (p. 3) which are deeply rooted in her exile ontology. Enquist Källgren's interpretation of expressive subjectivity, offers a framework which encompasses the different dimensions of Zambrano's work, namely, her epistemology, ontology, aesthetics, theology, ethics and politics. This brings welcome cohesion to what is often described as a fragmented and hermetic, yet seemingly inexhaustible, body of work.

María Zambrano's Ontology of Exile offers a systematic analysis of expressive subjectivity, taking the reader in a journey through the different stages that marked Zambrano's arguably ever-lasting exile. The book is arranged in six chapters. After an introductory Chapter 1, which sets the scene by presenting and contextualising the research, Chapter 2 explores how –during the late 1920s and early 1930s– subjectivity and agency for Zambrano were mainly connected to political concepts like people and nation. Then, it traces Zambrano's winding journey through exile and how the evolution of her notion of subjectivity is closely linked to what Enquist Källgren refers to as an exile ontology. Chapter 3 focuses on Zambrano's Caribbean years (1939-1952) and on her exploration of individual subjectivity through the figure of the confession and the concept of originary sensing. Here Enquist Källgren approaches subjectivity from the point of view of embodiment and explores the significance of key recurrent semiotic figures such as, the soul, the heart, and the entrails. Chapter 4 starts in 1953, the year that marked Zambrano's definitive return to Europe. This chapter argues how settling in Rome (1953-

1964) not only meant becoming part once again of several intellectual circles, but also prompted Zambrano to devote more attention to spatial and architectural figures such as the horizon, the ruin and the threshold. Enquist Källgren postulates that, in contrast with Kant's architecture of reason, what Zambrano develops is nothing short of an architecture of being. In addition, this chapter also offers a detailed treatment of Zambrano's stance on the new physics, that is, into the theory of relativity and quantum physics respectively. Thoroughly documenting the likely extent of the knowledge and access (both direct and indirect) that Zambrano would have had to Einstein's and Schrödinger's theories, Enquist Källgren's work disproves previously widely upheld positions which assumed that Zambrano's treatment of these debates was superficial and undocumented (see Bungaard, 2000: 31). Chapter 5 covers the period when Zambrano settled in the small hamlet of La Pièce (1964-1984). This is a time, marked by seclusion, when she produced her most hermetic writing. Enquist Källgren argues that this seclusion led to the development of transcending and generative notions of expression with profound ethical implications. Here Enquist Källgren also explores Zambrano's distinction between sign and symbol, making the point that it is the absence of content in the sign that enables an understanding of the sacred, as it allows God to be both present and absent at the same time (p. 156). Also, those interested in ontology may find Chapter 5 particularly useful since it contains a number of succinct explanations of Zambrano's use of concepts such as being, life and reality (see p. 127). Finally, this is followed by some concluding remarks on poetic reason and expressive subjectivity which comprise Chapter 6.

Contrary to the label of exceptionality frequently associated with Zambrano's style, one of the vital contributions of this book is that it reinserts her thought into the genealogy of European philosophy. Enquist Källgren highlights and nuances the familiar influence that some canonical authors, from Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas to Ortega y Gasset and Zubiri, had on Zambrano, while at the same time, she also highlights other influences that are perhaps less well-known and which shed new insights into her thought, crucially, Kant's. In addition, Enquist Källgren is careful to also draw attention to the influence that Zambrano herself has had on other philosophers, writers and artists –particularly during her Roman period– such as Agambem, Passolini, and Elsa Morante (pp. 3-4).

There is no doubt that this volume contributes decisively to our understanding of the conceptual foundations of poetic reason. On the other hand, while I will not suggest here that the asystematic quality of Zambrano's thought means that it cannot or should not be analysed under the light of reason, nevertheless, there is still a risk that this may be done at the expense of reducing the scope of poetic reason to a particular philosophical structure or set of ideas. In my view, Enquist Källgren convincingly argues in favour of the need to apply a systematic analysis to poetic reason. Even so, I invite the reader to remain open to the idea that there may very well be aspects of poetic reason which escape such analysis.

In summary, this book can be read profitably by students and specialists on Zambrano thought, as well as by scholars interested in European philosophy and the history of ideas in the twentieth century. Conveniently organized chronologically, it is entirely possible to consult individual chapters to find out more about a particular period of Zambrano's long exile, although the reader would benefit the most from following Enquist Källgren's argument from beginning to end.

This is a timely monograph. Following the recent publication of this and other English-language monographs and anthologies devoted to María Zambrano, one can only hope that this signals the long-overdue inclusion of this thinker in the philosophical canon on both sides of the Atlantic, so that her name may appear more often next to Ortega's and Unamuno's, but also alongside that of Simone de Beauvoir and Hannah Arendt.

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