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## MARÍA ZAMBRANO: A WOMAN, A REPUBLICAN AND A PHILOSOPHER IN EXILE

### ABSTRACT

The subject of this presentation is an attempt to understand the concept of exile in terms of the works of Spanish philosopher María Zambrano, a woman who left her country after the Spanish civil war and lived the life of an exile. This work focuses on the difficulties encountered by thinkers when they try to reflect on the experience of exile, and it aims to bring Zambrano's thought on exile closer to her main philosophical concepts.

**Key words:** María Zambrano, exile, woman, Spanish philosophy, poetic reason.

Within the panorama of Spanish philosophy, we can find the great thinker, María Zambrano, in whose works we can identify three essential themes, that of "woman", "Republican" and "exile". Vocational philosopher and disciple of Ortega y Gasset, she committed herself to the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War and as a result, had to abandon her country when troops of General Francisco Franco occupied the city of Barcelona in 1939. From Mexico to Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico to Havana, Cuba to Rome, this thinker's life paralleled that of the many thousands of Spanish exiles who sought shelter in South America and Europe after the end of the war.

### MARÍA ZAMBRANO: A REPUBLICAN PHILOSOPHER IN EXILE

Zambrano was born in Vélez-Málaga, a village in the south of Spain, but her family soon moved to Madrid and later to Segovia. During the Spanish Civil War, María Zambrano was a committed intellectual, participating in the so-called educational missions, the "Misiones Pedagógicas" travelling to villages around Spain in order to teach people who did not have the resources to do so by themselves. She contributed to magazines such as "La Hora de España"<sup>1</sup>, and other similar projects, always openly supporting the Republican government that had been democratically elected. When Franco's troops entered Barcelona, where she had been residing for some time, she was forced to abandon the city heading towards France. Her exile began in 1939 and ended in 1984 with her return to Spain. In the intervening years, she first lived around Central America: Puerto Rico, Mexico and Havana, and later in Europe. During her exile Zambrano experienced many financial difficulties, as demonstrated by numerous letters that she exchanged with friends and other intel-

<sup>1</sup> Spanish magazine published between 1937 and 1938.

lectuals. In these we find the story of her years as an exile, as well as a taste of what it must have been like for all those Republican intellectuals who had to leave Spain, as we can see in letters (Elizalde, 2012, pp115-139) sent to the American journalist and writer Waldo Frank<sup>2</sup>. In these, and through the stories of the difficulties that Zambrano experienced in Puerto Rico and Mexico, we discover not only a testimony of what it was to be a Spanish exile in the Americas, but also how Zambrano was forgotten and ignored by other Spanish intellectuals in exile. "Going to Mexico city is difficult, (...) it is possible for the House of Spain, and then, there is the Spanish group<sup>3</sup> who have money and the means to work, and as for me, there has been nothing. I'm the only intellectual woman who has managed to reach this country, I endured the war and my husband was indeed at the front and for neither of us, there has been anything. Do you understand? Within no time, those people will only have money and nothing else, not an atom of love from anyone, hope will have run away and they will find the backs of the best and even of the most turned. The deception is too big, too big the lie, that impersonation of the revolution." (Elizalde, 2012, p. 126)<sup>4</sup>. We must not forget the difficulties that intellectual women experienced at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Elena Laurenzi states in her essay "María Zambrano: A Female Philosopher": "For a woman who chooses to practice philosophy nowadays, it is still considered to be unnatural. Female philosophers haven't been that numerous in history" (Laurenzi, 1995, p. 13).

When Zambrano returned to her country in 1984, over forty years had passed since she had left. In the subsequent years the decades of her intellectual work began to be recognized in Spain. In 1985 she was named Andalusia's favorite daughter, in 1987 the Foundation in Vélez-Málaga was created which bears her name and in 1988 she was awarded the Prize for Spanish Literature, "Miguel de Cervantes".

In an article written after her return to Spain she confesses "I cannot imagine my life without the exile that I have lived. Exile has been like my country, or as a dimension of an unknown country, but once you realize this, it becomes inescapable" (Zambrano, 2009, p. 66) Exile for Zambrano became an unavoidable part of her life that defined her both as a person and as a philosopher. In other words, without her exile María Zambrano is aware that she would never have become the thinker that she is.

## MARÍA ZAMBRANO: A PHILOSOPHY OF EXILE

The long years María Zambrano spent in exile not only made a mark on her personal life, but also, as previously noted, transcended her own thinking. Perhaps this is what gives her such singularity, the fact that her philosophical reflections are constructed from the particular experiences that are continually happening to her. Therefore, the experience of being an exile deeply marked her way of doing philosophy. Thus, exile not only becomes an issue of fundamental reflection for Zambrano, but also changes forever this thinker's attitude towards how to

<sup>2</sup> Waldo Frank (1889-1967) was an American journalist who wrote the famous book *Our America*.

<sup>3</sup> Zambrano refers here to a Spanish group of intellectuals led by José Bergamín.

<sup>4</sup> Translations from Spanish into English of quoted works have been made by Seán Meehan.

carry out philosophy. In line with this idea, we can see in her essays the need to find a new way of philosophizing and a different language that will help bring thinking closer to life. Carmen Revilla has pointed out the difficulty of placing the works of María Zambrano within the philosophical tradition, precisely because of her interest in seeking out a philosophical method and language that addresses the experience (Revilla, 1998, p. 13). This interest made her a great reader and student of authors such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Ortega y Gasset, Unamuno and even mystical poets such as St. John of the Cross, placing herself amongst the so-called “philosophers of suspicion”. But this positioning of Zambrano would be meaningless without the strong criticism towards Western culture in her work and, with it, towards instrumental rationality adding to the criticism that other authors such as Theodor Adorno made in parallel at the Frankfurt School in the early fifties. “Reason has given us safety but is already tired” (Zambrano, 1993a, p. 116), says the thinker in her essay *Filosofía y poesía*<sup>5</sup>, a work considered by herself as the focus of her spirit (Elizalde, 2012, p. 124). This idea that reason, which had sustained traditional philosophy, lost its ability to interact with reality creates in María Zambrano the need for a new rationality that takes into account the aspects neglected by the dominant tradition. Her main theoretical concept “poetic reason” is a good example of this. The proposal for a new type of reason takes different names throughout her intellectual career: first “entailed reason”<sup>6</sup>, then “mediator reason”<sup>7</sup>, and finally becoming “poetic reason”. However, we must bear in mind that this concept is not only a way of understanding human rationality, but is also a method with which to approach an understanding of reality. Why “poetic reason”? This new rationality seeks to accommodate the reflection on aspects that traditional philosophy has not taken into account, aspects related to human passions and feelings. Carmen Revilla has described it as follows: “Poetic reason, perhaps the core theoretical contribution of Zambrano, follows in its deployment a double spiral movement: descending to those places that barely reach the level of reason, dark dimensions of life that usually do not have access to words, down to the realm of feeling to then start ascending to the level of light, through a language coined to give voice to the experience” (Revilla, 1998, p. 51). In the end, the goal is the creation of a language and a methodology that help us to understand and approach the theorization of the individual experience. Here is where the term “poetic” makes sense, since it corresponds to the creative side of this rationality. Revilla has highlighted two features of her proposal of poetic reason, its fidelity to life and its biographical or confessional character. That being the case, why would we find it strange then that Zambrano shows the need to think about the experience of exile from her own experience? Her essay writing is somewhat confessional if we understand confession as she does, as a literary genre found in *Confessions* of St. Augustine, in the novels of Joyce or Proust, and shows the true individual who writes as someone who experiences a mismatch between his life and thought. In other words, for Zambrano the confession is a literary genre that exposes its writer

<sup>5</sup> *Philosophy and Poetry*.

<sup>6</sup> In Spanish “razón entrañada”.

<sup>7</sup> In Spanish “razón mediadora”.

as a person who no longer fits into the expectations he had of his life and what is really happening in the present. It is a genre that emerges in crisis times, written in the first person, from an individual experience and from very specific experiences and places. "Confession as a literary genre has not had the same fortune in all eras. It is something unique to our western culture and within it there appear decisive moments, moments in which culture seems to be bankrupt, in which man feels helpless and alone. These are moments of crisis." (Zambrano, 1995, p. 53). As we look at the genre of confession, we see that it can be found in a range of works from the most philosophical works to novels, as long as the text we are talking about contains the previously mentioned features. If we understand it from this perspective, there is something of the confessional literary genre in many of Zambrano's essays, they are a testimony of the experiences of this philosopher that always depart from lived experiences in order to accomplish philosophy in the troubling times at that point in history. María Zambrano lived through one of the most terrible moments of European history, the period of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, which finally forced her to flee into exile. This fact raises many questions about the causes that lie behind the European cultural and political crisis, which eventually lead her to reflect on the reasons that have caused so much suffering for man.

*La agonía de Europa (The Agony of Europe)* and *Persona y democracia (Person and Democracy)* are the keys to understanding the criticism that Zambrano makes of Western culture and thought. In these essays she begins her reflections on the loss of traditional values and fall of Idealism within the context of philosophy. Zambrano prescribes, like Nietzsche had previously ventured with nihilism, a total state of emptiness and belief in death for man and Western culture. Zambrano cites early twentieth century art, governed by its aesthetic forms of destruction and disfigurement. This art clearly demonstrates the decline of traditional values on which our European civilization rested. But one of Zambrano's main contributions through these two works is to explain how the violence and destruction, into which Europe had fallen and which had led it to a state of nihilism, was indeed inherent in European culture itself and at the very heart of the Christian moral tradition. "Europe had become violent, a violence that encompasses every possible form, a violence that comes from the roots, (...) Where does the origin of European violence lie? Asking this question is like asking about the origins of Europe, about its birth. And about the substance of European life (...) (Europe) has revealed the origin of its violence, in its worship, in what for centuries it has venerated ever more furiously, in its all absorbing adoration, so fanatical that being a cult towards the truth it may seem, at times, an idolatry" (Zambrano, 1988, p. 30). It is this cult towards truth coming from a rationality dressed as instrumentalism which has caused the outbreak of violence in the heart of Europe.

In the rationalist stream, which had dominated Western thought up until that time, the idea of the absolute slept silently, that idea which Zambrano describes as a tendency to want to go further, not to give in, to be insatiable, a desire that reality become one and transparent to the eyes of man. The longing of which we speak is a passion of an undetermined nature, which drives man to go further

and create something new. Therefore, the very nature of this longing produces a spontaneous tendency without limits that can lead an entire society to its destruction. A longing that at its most base reveals a void in the hearts of man. A longing that tries to fill the same void that it had previously generated. "The longing is like the breathing of the soul. It requires a void to be filled, that "withiness"<sup>8</sup> that is life wherever it manifests itself (...) Well, the simple fact of longing is in its essence destructive. The very fact that it is something abstract, it tends to create an emptiness where a fullness is found and also because of its transcendence, well, nothing that it finds satisfies it". (Zambrano, 1992, p. 63). This insatiable desire that we are talking about has been left as our legacy as Europeans, provoking the tendency towards the absolute and hence, political absolutism. Absolutism is born not only out of Christianity, says Zambrano, but also out of a rationalism taken to extremes which becomes absolutism when it seeks to extend the principles of reason to reality as a whole. Rationalism at its roots contains the desire that reality be clear to thought, that reality and reason show total equivalence to each other, like two sides of a pane of glass. But as Zambrano points out, reality is not absolute, in it there is no ultimate unity because the only thing that one finds is dispersion and movement. Nor is it absolute because it simply cannot be, since the eyes of man are the only means through which it can be observed, therefore, reality is always fragmentary, scattered and fluctuating. Life is made up of a heterogeneous conglomeration of specific and mutually irreducible situations and entities that cannot be reduced to an absolute. The opposite of life, unity, can only be achieved through death. Therefore, what underlies the crisis, its most fundamental cause can be found in how we understood reason up until then, in the sort of reason that formed the basis of European civilization. This conception of reason was understood only in instrumentalist terms that left aside other aspects which were also essential to man i.e. moral aspects and feelings. This absence of these previously essential European values from modern Western culture are indeed, for Jesús Moreno Sanz, the roots of poetic reason. (Moreno, 2008, p. 74) "Not only from bread does man live, not only from science and technology" says María Zambrano, and thus she expresses her criticism of a type reason that led Europe and its old values towards catastrophe.

As we can see, the European crisis on which she reflects has affected her on a personal level so much so that she feels compelled to theorize about it, and as a philosopher she finds herself in a difficult dichotomy: How to translate life to thought? How to make the jump that leads from the individual experience to theory? She says "the seriousness of learning from experience is that, if it's true, it comes after, it is not useful and is not transferable" (Zambrano, 2009, p. 68). And then she asks, how does a human being manage to be what he is, if he knows from experience that it is not possible to pass it on to others? Indeed, the most individual experience is not transferable, but this does not imply that it is incommunicable, in other words, we can communicate it to others. This is not something new, literature and the human sciences in general are able to share their experiences, but at that time philosophy had lost, according to Zambrano, the link with reality. As

<sup>8</sup> This is a concept of María Zambrano, the word she uses in the original text is "dentro".

a philosopher she feels the need to return thought to life. Her philosophy, as mentioned above, feeds on life which is the source of her poetic reason. An example is her work *Los Bienaventurados* (*The Blessed*), an essay that originates in her experience as an exile in order to generate thought.

In this work Zambrano says that exile offers those who suffer revelations, visions that cannot be analyzed, which makes it difficult to translate the experience of an exile into theory. How then does one turn an experience into theory when it cannot be analyzed? How does one theorize about exile if, furthermore, one considers that not all experiences of exile are the same given that there are so many individuals on the Earth? In *Los Bienaventurados*, María Zambrano takes into account this diversity and provides notable differences between the banished<sup>9</sup>, the refugee and the exile. While the refugee feels welcomed by the new country to which he flees and the banished feels expulsion, the exile feels abandoned, something which does not occur to the other two. Zambrano calls this feeling of abandonment by the exiled “andar fuera de sí” (“walking outside of oneself”). When you leave your house, the exiled “walks outside of himself”, he remains trapped outside of what is essentially him (the place that was his home and had made him human), which now, by going to another country, it becomes impossible to be him. Thus, the exile no longer has a place in the world, living in utter helplessness (“desamparado”). The Spanish term “desamparado” as opposed to “amparado” (covered) is a concept that comes from the religious tradition. The “desamparado” is a person who feels unprotected and alone. So the exile lives, as a being who is “desamparado”, unprotected and helpless. “And that which characterizes him more than anything: not having a place in the world, neither geographical, nor social, nor political (...) nor ontological. Being nobody, a beggar, being nothing. Being only what cannot be left or lost, and in exile more than anyone else” (Zambrano, 1990, p. 36).

The exile does not know where to belong, and he tries to project into reality the memory of the country which he left behind and cannot find it anywhere because it ceased to exist when he left. Zambrano knew a Spain full of democratic hopes and expectations in the second Spanish Republic which ended in a dream of progress thwarted by civil war. That country which she knew was never the same again. Paul Ilie explains how the returning exile never again feels like a non-exile, because the land that he left is not what he remembers, in fact he is no longer the same person he was when he left. The words of Zambrano then are not surprising when she affirms that never, not even on her return, does she stop feeling like an exile. Rogelio Blanco tells us in relation to this that Zambrano “once she lost her homeland and unable to achieve the country of her destiny, accepts exile as her definitive homeland or habitat. This is expressed in the text “I love my exile” (Zambrano, 2009, pp. 65-67). Upon her return her exile does not come to an end” (Blanco, 2009, p. 41-42). Exile becomes an essential part of his own existence, to such a degree that the individual is unable to conceive of himself without exile.

This feeling of exile does not show anything other than a sort of dissolution of one’s identity. Anca Jimenez described the figure of exile in Zambrano as an uprooted subject which results in a new subject halfway between modernity and post-

<sup>9</sup> In Spanish María Zambrano says “desterrado”. This word has the sense of taking apart from a land.

-modernity, which is no longer that which it was but which does not disappear completely, a subject which can only become known as citizen or what Zambrano has defined as "person"<sup>10</sup>. "The person is more than the individual: the person is the individual endowed with consciousness, known and understood to himself as a supreme value, as an ultimate terrestrial finality (...) not as a present reality but as a future to be discovered" (Zambrano, 1992, p.103). In other words, a person is a human being who is always on the path to finding his emancipation without ever managing to complete himself, always looking for perfection. A being we could call "perfectible". The exile, who in this sense, is a completely uprooted being, can only manage to know himself following this path of perfection which guides him to become a person in a democratic society. Moreover Rogelio Blanco explains "The person, the highest point that a human being can potentially reach, can only be achieved within society" (White 2009, p. 84). And the only place where a man can develop himself as a person is within democracy. In fact, Zambrano defines democracy as the place where man is required to be a person. "If we had to define democracy, it could be said to be the society in which not only is it allowed, but required, to be a person." (Zambrano, 2011, p. 474)

Gomez Blesa noted two dimensions of exile in the work of Zambrano, a more historical exile and the other more metaphysical. We could say that exile for this Spanish thinker transcends reality to achieve the realms of the metaphorical, in the sense that she may be referring to facts from her own experience in exile, from a historical or biographical perspective, and at the same time she transcends this to theorize about the experience. So much so that exile, for Zambrano, is no longer a situation for a small group of people, but rather becomes an essential condition of man. "I think that exile is an essential dimension to human life" (Zambrano, 2009, p.66). With these words Zambrano is universalizing the experience of exile translating it to the entire of humanity. Mercedes Gomez Blesa explains how the cause of the exile is the quintessential human condition, it is in the loss of links between man and the sacred element. "The exile represents, for Zambrano, like no other figure, the essential human condition, a dramatic condition determined by the uprooting from the ultimate depths of reality, because of a departure from the sacred that is the basis of the nihilism of the contemporary subject" (Zambrano, 2009, pp. 36-37). Modern man, as an exile, feels a terrible emptiness. While the emptiness of the exile is that of leaving one's country, the hole found in the heart of contemporary man is the lack of traditional values. These are values in which modern man can no longer believe, beliefs that come undone in his hands. It is in this sense that Zambrano identifies the figure of the exile with that of the contemporary man. Both are beset by an absence, both feel that the ground beneath their feet has disappeared. In the case of first, the ground is indeed in the literal sense his country; whereas for the other, the earth is in the figurative sense the foundations that had supported his beliefs.

However, up to what point can theorizing about exile lead us into forgetting the particularity of each experience lived by every exile?

Attempts at theorizing about exile, if we consider the plurality and diversity

<sup>10</sup> This idea can be found in an essay of Jiménez Anca (2012)



of every one of the individual exile experiences, lived by real people and individuals, seems to become an impossible task. As Michael Ugarte warns, in his essay *Spanish Literature in Exile*<sup>11</sup>, the critic must be aware of the differences between different specific exiles and he must take into account each one in their specific contexts. "The critic, however, should never lose sight of the particular political context that gives each work of the exile its specific stamp. Does one note a significant difference between the concept of exile in the works of Dante and of those we find in the twentieth century? Is the political dilemma of Dante, the struggle for power within the family and the reason why he was forced to leave Florence, very different in nature from the spiritual exile of the character-narrator in *The Divine Comedy*?" (Ugarte, 1999, p 35.)

Indeed, when we look closer at the poetic and literary examples of exile, we can only but admire the obvious differences in each work due to the context in which each one was created by its author. Ugarte writes that there are differences between the conflicts of the literary type and political type that can push one into exile. For that reason, we cannot put on the same level a territorial exile who had to leave his country, with that of a spiritual exile where a citizen remains in his homeland. Nor is it possible to compare an exile that is imposed with that of an exile that is voluntary, in which the person leaves his homeland by choice, such as in the case of James Joyce. These statements might lead us to think that exile is so diverse that it is impossible to find commonalities. However, there are common features as well as essential and inseparable differences of the real experienced situation of each individual. Loss, perhaps, would be the defining feature of any kind of exile; the differences however, depend on the theoretical perspective of the phenomenon.

Claudio Guillén dedicates the first chapter of his essay *Múltiples moradas* (1998) to reflect on exile. Exile, writes Guillén, is a constant shifting in the history of mankind. For him the experience of exile can be summarized in two positions that have had their development and continuation throughout history. Two positions that have sometimes led to intermediate attitudes. The first one begins with classical Greece and the cynical and stoic positions, continued by Plutarch. The second is that of Ovid. However, both the position of the cynic and the stoic, despite their differences, have common ground, both having a positive attitude towards exile. The cynic because he feels like a foreigner everywhere and believes that the freedom offered by exile is necessary; and the stoic because in every place he feels at home, therefore, exile becomes the perfect opportunity for improvement and to excel personally. The cynic cannot help but have a positive conception of exile since his own way of thinking requires individual freedom and the liberation from all bonds. This is the opposite in the case of the stoic where the human being is seen for the first time as a world citizen, a cosmopolitan living in exile as an opportunity for moral improvement. Plutarch, in the first century continues the positive stance regarding exile that cynics and stoics previously maintained. Exile can bring the advantages of a quiet life with no distractions in order to concentrate on the study of philosophy, an opportunity to deepen our understanding of what

<sup>11</sup> Ugarte, M., (1999), *La literatura española en el exilio*. Siglo XXI. Madrid.

unites all of humanity. "Man, then, as he changes place and society, finds himself in a position of discovery or understanding at ever greater depths, all of which he has in common with other men, uniting them across both local and particular frontiers: the cosmic dimensions of nature, in other words, of a nature governed by the order of the stars, which communicate to us with divine truths and laws" (Guillén, 1998, p. 33). Although, as Claudio Guillén indicates, Plutarch wins the argument most of the time in favor of a transcendental Platonic reality, it is also true that he tries to combine the universal spirit of the experience of exile with the unique and untransferable personal experience. Exile, despite the inevitable pain and helplessness that it causes to us, can help us to better understand all other men, it can lead us to a process of globalization only made possible by the exiled condition of the human soul, since exile is an irremediable state of man. In opposition to this view appears someone who will start a whole line about exile; that is the case of Ovid, exile from Rome and sent to Romania after a confrontation with the emperor. His experience of exile has been passed on to us through his poems in *Tristes*. Nostalgia and regret for the loss of his beloved city fill the pages of this book, turning exile into a negative event in the life of the individual. Exile from Rome and cultural exile which feature the abandonment of the city, explains Claudio Guillén, meant the loss of the city and with it, the loss of something really important and substantial in the life of a Roman citizen. We can easily imagine what this meant for an intellectual being far away from the cultural hub of that time. Poetry becomes the catalyst for the emotions of nostalgia and regret that the exile experiences in banishment and also, his only consolation. Guillén explains the complete rejection of Ovid towards his exile and the interest and effort made by this thinker in order to obtain the annulment of his exile and his return to Rome. Exile is transformed, not into an object of reflection, but rather into an object of poetry. Beginning with Ovid, a line of reflection and poetization about the individual experience of exile unfolds which places itself in a negative position, which is anchored in the feeling of sadness and the longing of someone who feels it is as a loss or emptiness. This second line of thinking opposes that which we have already introduced, which started in Greece and continued with Plutarch.

Later, Guillén differentiates between Plutarchian and Ovidian, as two opposing positions towards exile and, above all, as two ways of coping with it, from the theoretical or the poetic praxis. These two positions form the roots of one of the most important problems in the reflection on exile. Is it possible to theorize about an event as personal and specific as the experience of exile? Can we understand exile in universal terms? In the works of Shakespeare, where exile is used as a metaphor, exile is seen as a symbol of a man helpless and broken, not suitable for universalization. "From a personal, social or political standpoint, the work of man according to Shakespeare in *Richard II* is the correlation between the inner and the outer, between behavior and substance, or soul and body, before death. But the integrity of the person demands his integration at home, in his own homeland. And the word exile which in Iberian languages can also be called "destierro", "desterro", "desterrament", because it indicates the loss of land and the clearing of terrain itself, it is not a

commendable path to the universal, according to the supreme poet, but rather is a symbol of a helpless man, broken dramatically. "(Guillén, 1998, p. 63) The Ovidian stereotype continues to be perpetuated into modern times. In modern times, there has been an increase in the number of individual experiences of exile which combine with a very important factor of our times, the rise of nationalism and the subsequent nationalization of culture. Claudio Guillén notes that the concept of culture as a combination of national values makes the task of universalization that could be carried out by exile impossible. From there on the Ovidian stereotype sees in exile the metaphor of the perpetuated loneliness of man. The exile is experienced as the loss of the only possible environment or the nation. The emigrant becomes after the French Revolution a somber and failed literary hero who drags behind him a thread of melancholy over the loss of his nation.

However, there are intermediate positions, Guillén writes, as he proposes in the case of Dante. Dante, just as occurs in the Middle Ages, sees exile as a way of perfecting the soul. Exile becomes a difficult process of pilgrimage. Notice how the author introduces the word pilgrimage instead of exile. We should keep in mind that the terms used for exile change throughout history. Banishment, Clara Lida (1991) writes in her essay *Del destierro a la morada*, which traditionally in the Spanish language was conceived as the loss of land and until the nineteenth century usually meant expatriation and isolation for life. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the beginning of the Spanish War of Independence, the characteristics of exile change, turning it into a temporary and political phenomenon, associated with the use of the word exile. On the other hand, as Claudio Guillén mentions, pilgrimage is a term connected with a difficult journey but which involves the improvement of the one's soul. In Dante, where exile is conceived as a pilgrimage, both the "Ovidian" and "Plutarchian" positions can be found. On one hand, there is in Dante the pain resulting from the loss of one's homeland, but on the other, Dante is willing to leave behind the suffering that the loss implies in order to start out on the path to moral perfection of the individual.

We see the dialogue between the Ovidian Principle of individual suffering and the universal perspectives that make exile possible. "The tension between these opposing forces is inherent in the ascending process of exile. In Dante's works there is dialogue, they prod and poke and fight one another, what I have been calling the Ovidian Principle, which focuses on suffering and the amplifying perspectives that are perhaps universal of exile." (Guillén, 1998, p. 47). This middle ground in which Dante stands could easily be compared to the position of Zambrano with respect to exile. It is an experience that has caused her pain, but that she will never renounce because of the perspective that this experience has given to her. Converting exile into metaphor and trying to theorize about the experience, can cause many problems which do not only involve the fundamental problem of going from the specific to abstraction, but also the trivialization of exile itself. The theorist that approaches this issue, even if he does so from a metaphorical point of view and finds similarities, must take into account differences and not forget that the actual experience of exile is always a specific and personal experience and is not transferable. If we consider this factor and do not allow ourselves to be confused easily, we can

talk about the metaphorization of exile and the existence of shared characteristics.

Michael Ugarte states that the personal experience of exile is a marker of its universality, even if it seems otherwise. Ugarte's paradigmatic example is found in Ovid as a model of the literary imitation of exile. It shows how the experience of a particular individual can become universal, precisely because of his individuality. Another example which he offers is that of Luis Cernuda. Ugarte writes that his literary creation in exile is an effort to transcend the specific, personal and real experience. Exile is not only found in individual suffering, in many cases, it is the opportunity for the poet from his tragic experience to transcend the pain and reflect on himself and his country. This raises the possibility that perhaps the Ovidian position on exile as an individual experience and the reflection on exile can complement one another. Similarly this affirmation refutes Claudio Guillén's claim about Shakespeare in that exile could not serve as a gateway to universality. Indeed, thanks to the particular characteristic in his plays, we can identify with the characters living in exile or in other circumstances that have been particular to man throughout history. In Ugarte's line of thinking, the experience of exile becomes a hallmark of its universality. This, as indicated above, does not mean that the theory has to take into account the specificity of each exile and the tension that always exists between theorizing about exile and specific experiences of exile.

In Zambrano's case, poetic reason is an attempt to reconcile life and theory, to bring the theory sufficiently close to life but without suffocating it. It is this attempt to resolve the constant tension between theory and life, between universality and experience which we find in the literature of exile. It is a tension between forces that, on the other hand, as Ugarte pointed out when he explained Dante's case, is inevitable when the topic at hand is exile. One of the main functions of the method proposed by Zambrano is to attempt to act as mediator. If she tries to elevate her specific experiences of exile to philosophical theory, she needs a new "method" that can cover the particularities of her experience, a method capable of reaching those places within man that have remained in the shadow of traditional thinking. What this method attempts to do is remove it from the shadows, taking into account "the other of thought" which forms a part of man just as much as other things that were instead attended by more traditional philosophy. In relation to the method of traditional philosophy that is based in Descartes, Zambrano says: "the method becomes a *forma mentis* sustained by an attitude of distrust of what at a glance appears obvious (...) resulting in an increasing hermetization of the spontaneous life of the subject, referring to above all to the results (...) This leads to a testable split in the same individual who releases that he is separate from himself, outside of his own life" (Zambrano, 1989, p.24-25) Although, life and with that the experience must precede the method, or in any case maintain that balance between a method that can guide us in life but without constraining it, without turning man into a stranger in his own life. The new method attempts to maintain a balance of this type.

Michael Ugarte notes how works in exile are contrary to the canon. If we take this statement as true, both literary and philosophical works that have been produced in a situation of exile would contrast sharply with those that have been

written in the country of origin, which would more easily fit into the canon. Marginality would become a symbol of identity and distinction in contrast to traditional Spain. So exiled writers and philosophers like Zambrano move in a marginal space, in that "liminal" place occupied by the exile who is always crossing political and moral barriers. Texts written from exile, says Ugarte, seem on the edge of something, we never know if they belong to the history of the current country or the country of origin of the writer. Therefore, this author thinks texts written from exile resist classification and easy definitions. A resistance which some have also identified in Zambrano, which remind us of the words of Carmen Revilla when she says that Zambrano is an author difficult to classify within tradition. Whether for this reason or any others, the fact is that Zambrano did not begin to be recognized by her countrymen until almost the nineties, when democracy had already been in place for fifteen years. Twenty years later, we are starting to really consider the intellectual work of this thinker who has reflected on exile from a perspective which is both universal and inclusive to thinking in life. "I think that exile is an essential dimension to human life, but upon saying that my lips burn, because I wish that I had never been exiled, that we were all human and cosmic beings, that exile was something unknown. It's a contradiction, what can I do, I love my exile, is it because I didn't look for it, because I didn't go chasing it" (Zambrano, 2009, p. 66).

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