

The Spanish Women Poet's Contribution To The Literature Of The 20th Century

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Abstract

The 20th century offers us a wealth of literary authors. The Spanish poets of the 20th century that usually come to mind are mainly male due to the fact that the female poets never received proper recognition and were ignored for many years. The historical events of the 20th century could have ceased the literary works of the Spanish authors. However, instead, the Spanish utilized the poetry of protest as a means of rebelling towards their social reality. Not only male poets but also women were extremely prolific in their craft. First during the Civil War and after during the thirty six years of dictatorship that followed in spite of the hardships, censorship and vigorous opposition. A few of these women are Carmen Conde, Rosa Chacel, Ernestina de Champourcin and others. This research studies the contribution of a few outstanding women poets to the 20th century Spanish literature and language.

Key Words: Spanish Female Poets, Twentieth Century, Spanish Literature

تلخیص

بیسویں صدی ہمیں ادبی دانشوروں کے خزانے سے مالا مال کرتی ہے اور پچھلے کئی سالوں سے ہسپانوی شاعروں کے جو نام ذہن میں ابھرتے ہیں ان میں زیادہ تر مرد شاعر ہیں کیونکہ خواتین شعراء کو مانا نہیں جاتا اور نظر انداز کیا جاتا ہے۔ بیسویں صدی کے تاریخی واقعات اسپین کے ادبی کام کا منہ بولتا ثبوت ہیں جبکہ ہسپانوی شعراء نے اپنی شاعری کو سماجی حقیقتیں بیان کرنے کے لئے بغاوت کے طور پر استعمال کیا۔ صرف مرد ہی نہیں خواتین شعراء بھی اپنی تخلیقات میں مہارت رکھتی ہیں۔ خانہ جنگی کے دوران اور اس کے بعد آمریت کے چھتیس (۳۶) سالوں میں جو کہ پابندیوں اور انتہائی مخالفت کا دور تھا اس میں کچھ نمایاں خواتین کے نام ابھر کر سامنے آئے جیسا کہ کارمن کونڈے، روزا چاسلی، آرنیسٹینا ڈی چامپورسین اور دیگر۔ یہ تحقیقی مقالہ بیسویں صدی کی ممتاز خواتین شعراء کی ہسپانوی زبان اور ادبی خدمات کا احاطہ کرتا ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: ہسپانوی خواتین شعراء، بیسویں صدی، ہسپانوی ادب

Introduction

Spanish female drama wrights, poets, fictionists, novelists and prose writers have contributed considerably to literature although discouraged by the local culture and societal environment. Spanish society exhibited endurance for female writers as original

culture of the land but the days under the dictator created enormous hurdles for the female creativity especially in the domain of literature. The thirty six year dictatorial rule from 1939 to 1975 curbed the literary writings. Female writers were the most affected and as it is usually the case suffer more. However, daring enough the female were still engaged in producing literary works, whether they served society at large or went against the controlling dictator.

Analyzing the literary events and trends of a complete century is not an easy task. Especially, in the case of Spanish female poetry works it is an arduous one, considering the wide range of social and historical events that took place in the nineteen hundreds in Spain.

There is no doubt that the Spanish reality of the beginning of the century was a male dominated one. Spain at that time was mainly an agricultural nation where Catholicism enjoyed a deeply rooted stronghold. It was a complicated environment in which not all the affecting societal factors were playing an obvious role. An interesting intellectual movement of the time was the Generation of 98 composed by a group of poets, essayists, philosophers and novelists who criticized the contemporary educational policies and rebelled against the negative results of the Spanish-American War of 1898. They were profoundly patriotic, suffered from an intense historical cynicism and were in continuous conflict with the educational policies of the time. They used to meet in cafes to discuss and receive information from one another. Some important names which were member of this intellectual and literary movement were Pío Baroja, Antonio Machado, Valle Inclán, Azorín and Miguel de Unamuno.

Female poetry has often been marginalized by the male literature experts and poets. In fact, Quance states:

Quizá por ser la poesía el más sacerdotal de los oficios literarios –la casta superior– es en ella donde las mujeres se han topado con los prejuicios más obcecados y resistentes.¹

Interestingly enough, this phenomenon seems to have a worldwide nature. According to Chapman:

Moreover, poetry written by women is assessed in histories of literature and elsewhere by male standards: it is judged by tastes that were formed by the reading of poetry written by males. Hence, poetry by women is almost totally ignored or at best condemned for failing to satisfy the expectations of such an exclusively masculine worldview.²

The term for female poet in Spanish language is *poetisa* (from the Latin term *poetissa*).³ Nevertheless, it seems that this term had unpleasant connotations for Spanish

female poets and they preferred to be called just like their male counterparts *poetas* (from the Latin *poēta* and this one from the Greek ποιητής).⁴ Today the term *poetisa* is used for females who write and compose poetry and the term *poeta* indistinctively for both genders.

It was a challenging environment for women poets. In fact, Unamuno himself, a high profile Spanish literary figure of the time, used to use the term *poetisas*⁵ with a derogatory intent to designate male poets of inferior quality.⁶ In fact, such was the aversion of female poets towards this term that Ernestina de Champourcin in an interview stated:

En la actualidad no puedo oír mi nombre, acompañado por el terrible calificativo de poetisa, sin sentir vivos deseos de desaparecer, cuando no de agredir al autor de la desdichada frase.⁷

What Champourcin is complaining about here is the derogatory style with which male influential poets used to address their female counterparts. Nevertheless, Spanish female poets had a profound and in many cases still unrecognized impact on the literature of the 20th century.

If the nineteen twenties were considered happy, the Spanish Civil War changed all of that. There was repression, suffering, hunger, etc., later, as the war ended, Francoist censorship was at its peak. Society was spiritually troubled, impoverished and psychologically violent.

According to Gayle Rogers, Spender believes that

“...poets and poetry played a considerable part in the Spanish War because to many people the struggle of the Republicans has seemed a struggle for the conditions without which the writing and reading of poetry are almost impossible in modern society.”⁸

Interestingly enough there seems to be a high degree of satire in the Spanish poetry of the war, in which the female poets also played a role. In one occasion a poet was able to insult the previous dictator, Primo de Rivera with one of its poems. In fact the language utilized was of such gentleness that it was not understood by the editor of the newspaper and the poem was published assisting in this manner to bringing down the government of the dictator.⁹ In other cases, it did lack kindness and it was extremely direct as in this case by an anonymous poet who represented the ideology of its government:

Azaña, como Negrín
Son esclavos de Stalin
A Pasionaria se imputa
Que es una grandísima bruta

Aguirre el chocolatero
 (menos seso que un jilguero)
 Y Portela el masonazo
 ¡Ah canalla! ¡Ah ladronazo!
 Casares es un cretino
 Con instintos de asesino.
 Y pensar que ha estado España
 ¡En manos de esta calaña!¹⁰

Some of this poetry was read aloud on speakers on both sides of the fronts. Many of the soldiers had memorized these poems and chanted them to enlighten their spirits.

Women Poets of the 1900s

A proliferous and distinct group of women belongs to these years, although the impact of their poetry can be felt much later during the 20th century.

Francisca Herrera Garrido (1869) Galician, was a poet since the age of twelve; her main themes were the difficulties of rural Spain even though she herself belonged to a city upper class. She was given the honour to become a member of the *Real Academia Galego* in 1945. Her work was not as extensive as that of Conde but was one of the first Galician women to publish in her native language Galician. She was, interestingly enough, antifeminist and belonged to the romantic idealist movement that Rosalia de Castro had started.

Her main poetry works are *Sorrisas e bágoas* (Madrid, 1913), *Almas de muller...* ¡Volallas na luz! (Coruña, 1915) y *Flores do nosopaxareco* (Coruña, 1919).

Clementina Arderiu (1889) was another female poet who started her work in her youth. She married a poet and received influence from him while keeping her own style and writing in Catalan language. She travelled extensively through Europe prior to the Civil War and in 1939 went into exile to France for four years while in company of her husband and the famous Spanish poet Antonio Machado. Her poetry is apparently descriptive of nature which actually hides events of her life and past experiences. It is characterized by her sense of womanhood. Her work is extensive, although she only wrote one more book after the death of her husband.¹¹

Her most important works are *Cançons i elegies* (1916), *L'altallibertat* (1920) *Sempre i ara* (1946), for which she received the prize Joaquim Folguera, *Poesies completes* (1952), *És a dir* (1958). She received the prestigious award Premio Óssa Menor in 1958 for this work and one year later *La Letra D'or*. And *L'esperança encara* (1969).

One of the most charismatic female poets of the time was Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895) whose principal traits were to be an anarchist militant, activist and feminist and was the only female poet to participate in a movement that the Spanish called 'Ultraísmo'.¹² She wrote the lyric 'poem in prose', with an aesthetics rather than informative interest, abundant adjectives, poetic lexicon, sensorial syncretism, synaesthesia, etc. She was the founder, with other women, of a movement called 'Mujeres Libres' (Free Women) which proposed worker's feminism in an attempt to rebel against the chauvinistic policies of her fellow republicans. She proposed that Social Revolution was the answer to achieving equality of genders.¹³ She wrote under a male pen name and through this was able to explore controversial topics such as women homosexuality at a time when the topic was criminalized and subject to censorship. Her most important works are *Romancero de Mujeres Libres*, (1937) and *Desesperanza in De Poesía* (1996).

Rosa Chacel (1898) was a feminist poet of the Generation of 27. She won various awards and her most famous poetry work was *A la orilla de un pozo* which was published in 1930. She received the National Prize of Letters as well as other awards. As a follower of the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, she had his ideas which were expressed through narrative and essays. Further she wrote about the Civil War realities. Far from being a feminist she did not pursue a separate identity from that of men, rather she emphasized the view that since society was dominated by men, women should think and act as such as well, rather than accentuating the differences between both genders and excluding women from cultural and society studies.¹⁴ In 1978 she wrote the poems *Versos Prohibidos* and *Timoteo Perez Rubio y sus retratos del jardín* following the death of her husband.

Ángela Figuera Aymerich (1902) was a Basque poet and member of the Generation of 36, because she published late in 1948, although by age she should have been a member of the Generation of 27. She was another feminist poet who touched topics as war, social injustice, and love and family through a feminist viewpoint. The Civil War had a huge impact in her life since she lost her post as a teacher due to her support for the Republican Party. Her hatred for the Spanish contemporary reality became more accentuated at this time. Although she was one of the few female poets who continuously rebelled in her poetry against the dictatorship of Franco.¹⁵ She was a pacifist. Her writing career spans almost forty years. Her most important works are *Mujer de barro*, (1948). *Soria pura* (1949). *Vencida por el ángel* (1951). *El grito inútil* (1952). *Los días duros* (1953). *Víspera de la vida* (1953). *Belleza cruel* (1958). *Toco la tierra*. *Letanías* (1962). *Obras completas* (1986). *Cuentos tontos para niños listos* (1979). *Canciones para todo el año* (1984), published after her death.

Another interesting woman poet of the time was Elisabeth Mulder (1904). Her father was Dutch and her mother Puerto Rican. She was born in Barcelona, travelled extensively and

received a refined education.¹⁶ Although she could speak four other languages, her native languages were Spanish and English,. Her first work of poetry was published in 1927 with the title of *Embrujamiento*. Apart from poetry she wrote in other literary genres such as novels, theatre and children books. She was also a poetry translator. Her poetry trademark is that of a decadent symbolism style to Modernism. Mulder started her writing career and was prolific in writing poetry books from 1927 to 1934 when she stopped. From that time until 1985 wrote in other literary genres with the exception of a poetry book in 1949 titled 'PoemasMediterraneos'. Hermainworks are:

Embrujamiento(1927), *La canción cristalina*. Barcelona (1928). *Sinfonía en rojo* (1929).*La hora emocionada*. (1931),*Paisajesy meditaciones* (1933),*Poemasmediterráneos*(1949).

Interestingly enough there are no women associated with the Generation of 27, although the next two women received recognition from Gerardo Diego in 1934 due the fact that they did, in fact, publish during this time period. Ernestina de Champourcin (1905) is a female poet generally associated with it. She received influence by other literary figures of the time, as well as the mystics Juan de la Cruz and Teresa de Jesus which shaped her mystic poetry. Her first book was published in 1926 and by 1931 had published four collections. Champourcin spent her life in this endeavour while cultivating friendships with other literary figures of her time in Spain and abroad. Her poetic works have been divided into four influential periods. The youth, the more mature period which ends with the Civil War, the period of her exile in Mexico 1940-72 and the posterior period after her return to Spain.¹⁷ Some of hermainworks are *En silencio* (1926), *Ahora*.(1928), *La voz en el viento* (1931), *Cántico inútil* (1936), *Presencia a oscuras* (1952), *El nombre que me diste....* (1960),*Cárcel de los sentidos*(1964),*Hai-kais espirituales*(1967), *Cartas cerradas*(1968), *Poemas del ser y del estar* (1972), *Primer exilio* (1978),*Poemillas navideños*(1983),*La pared transparente* (1984),*Huyeron todas las islas* (1988), *Antología poética* (1988), *Ernestina de Champourcín*(1991), *Los encuentros frustrados*(1991),*Poesía a través del tiempo* (1991), *Del vacío y sus dones* (1993),*Presencia del pasado* (1994-1995) (1996),*Cántico inútil, Cartas cerradas, Primer exilio, Huyeron todas las islas*. (1997),*Epistolario* (1927-1995) (2007), *Poesíaesencial*(2008).

In the middle of this perplexing literary environment was born Carmen CondeAbellán (1907), the one who would write more than one hundred poetry books and whose influence within her field would reach to the point of landing her a position no other female had attained so far. She received the honor of being the first woman to become member of the *Real Academia de la Lengua Española* in 1978¹⁸and the recipient of several literature, theater and poetry awards.

Her most important poetry works are:

La lectura (1929), *Júbilos* (1934), *Pasión del verbo*, (1944), *Honda memoria de mí.* (1944), *Ansia de la gracia* (1945), *Signo de amor* (1945) *Sea la luz* (1947), *Mi fin en el viento* (1947), *Mujer sin Edén* (1947), *El Escorial: Una meditación más* (1948), *Iluminada tierra* (1951), *Canto a Amanda* (1951), *Mientras los hombres mueren* (1952), *Retablo de navidad* (1953), *Poesía femenina española viviente* (1954), *Vivientes de los siglos* (1954), Winner of the International Prize of Poetry Simón Bolívar 1954, *Réquiem por Cayetano* (1958), *Los monólogos de la hija*, (1959), *En un mundo de fugitivos* (1960), *Derribado arcángel* (1960), *En la tierra de nadie.* (1960), *Requiem por el Dr. Luis Calandre* (1961), *Los poemas del Mar Menor* (1962), *Su voz le doy a la noche* (1962), *Jaguar puro inmachito* (1963), *Obra poética* (1929-1966), Winner of National Prize of Poetry 1967 (1967). *A este lado de la eternidad* (1970), *Cancionero de la enamorada* (1971), *Corrosión.* (1975), *Cita con la vida* (1976), *Días por la tierra* (1977), *El tiempo es un río lentísimo de fuego* (1978), *La noche oscura del cuerpo* (1980), *Desde nunca.* (1982), *Derramen su sangre las sombras* (1983), *Brocal;* y *Poemas a María* (1984) *Del obligado dolor* (1984), *Cráter* (1985), *Memoria puesta en olvido: Antología personal* (1987) *Al aire: VII Poemas* (1987).

Josefina de la Torre (1907) is another female poet of the time who published her first poem in 1920. Unlike Champourcin and Conde, she was involved in other arts such as singing, films and theatre. She had developed friendships with many of the poets of the Generation of 27. Her poetry work was not very extensive and it is mainly rooted at the beginning and the end of her artistic career. Her works start with *Versos y estampas* (1927), to continue with *Poemas de la isla* (1930) *Marzo incompleto*, Segunda Edición, (1947). (col. San Borondón), (1968) *Poemas de la isla*, (1989) [including the three previous books and *Medida del tiempo*] *Poemas* (2003) and *Poemas* (2004).

Rosa Leveroni (1910) is another writer of this period. Her poetry works are not very extensive but she received the Premio Cruz de San Jorge for cultural services rendered to the government of Catalonia. Some of her writings are *Dotze cançons, de París* (1948), *Trespoemes*, for which she received the award la Flor Natural dels Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana de Cambridge (1956), *Cinc poems desolats* for which she received la Creu de Sant Jordi from Generalitat de Catalunya (1982).

Susana March Alcala (1918) was a writer who not only engaged in poetry winning various awards, but also was a novelist of the post-war era. Nevertheless, she is better known for her poetry works which include *Rutas* (1938), *La pasión desvelada* (1946) *Ardiente voz* (1948) *El viento* (1951) *La tristeza* (1953) *Esta mujer que soy* (1959) *Los poemas del hijo* (1970), etc. Interestingly enough it seems that some of her novels were heavily censured during the post-war era by the Francoist regime.¹⁹

Matilde Camus (1919) displayed extensive works of poetry from 1969 until 2006 at the same time she was member of innumerable social and literary organizations. She received several literary awards apart from being a contributor to newspapers as well. Some of her extensive works are these: *Voces* (1969), *Vuelo de estrellas* (1969), *Manantial de amor* (1972), *Bestiario poético* (1973), *Templo del Alba* (1974), *Siempre amor* (1976), *Cancionero de Liébana* (1977), *Corcel en el tiempo* (1979), *Perfiles* (1980), *He seguido tus huellas* (1981), *Testigo de tu marcha* (1981), *Testimonio* (1982), *La preocupación de Miguel Ángel* (1982), *Tierra de palabras* (1983), *Coral montesino* (1983), *Raíz del recuerdo* (1984), *Cristales como enigmas* (1985), *Sin teclado de fiebre* (1986), *Santander en mi sentir* (1989), *Sin alcanzar la luz* (1989), *El color de mi cristal* (1990), *Tierra de mi Cantabria* (1991), *Amor dorado* (1993), *Ronda de azules* (1994), *Vuelo de la mente* (1995), *Reflexiones a medianoche* (1996), *Mundo interior* (1997), *Fuerza creativa* (1998), *Clamor del pensamiento* (1999), *Cancionero multicolor* (1999), *La estrellita Giroldina* (1999), *Prisma de emociones* (2000), *Vivir, soñar, sentir* (2005), *Cancionero de Liébana* (2006), *Motivos allicantinos* (2007).

Maria Beneyto Cuñat (1925) is an example of poet who suffered the advent of the Civil War first hand. Her poetry started in 1947 with *Canción olvidada*, continued with *Eva en el tiempo* in 1953 and other works followed. In 1977 came out *Vidrio herido de sangre*. It continued in 1993 with *Tras sepulta la ternura* and *Poemas de las cuatro estaciones*. Also the same year appeared three poem collections which had been written from 1975 to 1993. In 1994 there is a new poem collection *Para desconocer la primavera*. There is another collection of poems in 1997 which had been written from 1952 to 1993 as well as *Elegías de la piedra quebradiza*. In 2003 she publishes her last poetry works *Bressoleig al insomnio de la ira*.

The case of Aurora de Albornoz (1926) is an enigmatic one. Her poetry works can be classified as hybrid although her most important works are influenced by the Spanish Civil War. She published eleven books of poetry during her lifetime and came from a family of literary and educated men as her father and grandfather used to engage in the writing of poetry and her uncle Severo Ochoa won the Nobel Prize of Medicine for his RNA discoveries. Some of her works are *Poemas para alcanzar un segundo* (1961), *Por la primavera blanca* (1962), *Poemas* (Verso y prosa), (1965), *Palabras desatadas* (1975), *Palabras reunidas* (1967-1977), (1983) *Aventura*, (1989) *Al sur del sur* (1991), etc.

Núria Albó (1930) is a Catalan poet, instructor and politician. She also received the Cruz de San Jorge award and the Vila de Arenys' Prize. She has three poetry books from 1962 to 1979. She also wrote prose in the form of children's books and novels. She shared one poetry book with Maria Àngels Anglada (1930), *Diptic* (1972). This last author had written a few poetry books and received the Lletra D'Or Prize and the

Josep Pla Prize for her novel works. Some of her other poetry are *Lamàpel front* (1962) and *L'encenedor verd* (1979).

Ana María Moix (1947) wrote four books of poetry from 1969 until 1983 while she kept on writing prose from 1970 to 2002. She cultivated friendships with many literary figures of her time. Some of her poetry works are *Baladas del dulce Jim*, (1969) *Call me Stone* (1969), *No time for flowers y otrahistorias* (1971), *A imagen y semejanza*, (1983), a complete collection of all her poems.

The poetry works of Cèlia Sánchez-Mústich (1954) are more extensive than her prose works. She wrote eight poetry books from 1988 to 2014. Some of her contributions are *Lacendrai el miracle* (1989), *El lleurespir* (1991), *Temperatura humana* (1994) *Taques* (1997), *Llum de claraboia* (2004) *A la taula del mig* (2009), *On no sabem*. (2010) *Al'hotel, a deshora*. (2014).

Blanca Andreu (1959) wrote five poetry books and received five poetry awards from 1980 to 2002. She obtained the Premio Adonais" with the book *De una niña de provincias que se vino a vivir en un Chagall*, in 1980. The main themes of her works, are love, childhood and the passage of time. Some of her main works are *De una niña de provincias que se vino a vivir en un Chagall*, (1980), *Báculo de Babel* (1982) *Capitán Elphistone* (1988), *El sueño oscuro* (collection of poems written between 1980 and 1989) (1994), *La tierra transparente* (2002), *Los archivos griegos*, (2010). She has received other prizes such as Premio Adonais in 1980; Premio Premio Mundial de Poesía Mística, Fernando Rielo in 1982, Premio Ícaro de Literatura in 1982, Premio Internacional de Poesía Laureà Melain 2001.

Salome Ortega's (1965) first published work was a book of poems published in 1987 titled *Los Siete Velos*. She won the International Literature competition of Melilla and became finalist in the poetry prize of San Fernando, Cadiz. She has been named one of the most influencing figures of the contemporary Spanish literary scene.²⁰

Lucía Etxebarria (1966) is another awarded poet. Her poem collection *Actos de placer y amor* received the 2004 Barcarola Poetry Prize. Her other poetry book is titled *Estación de infierno* (2001).

Lupe Gómez (1972) is another writer of this period. She is a Galician journalist who has written 6 books using her constant provoking poetry themes with a lesbian background. Some of her works are *Pornografía*. Vol. 10 of *Poeta en Compostela*. (1995), *Azul e estranxeira*. (2005), received the prize Eusebio Lorenzo Baleirón. *O útero dos cabalos*. Vol. 153 of *Poesía*. (2005), etc.

Olga Novo (1975) is a Galician poet who studied philology and has been an instructor in several schools and a university professor. She has three books of poetry to her credit from 1996 to 2004. These are *A teta sobre o sol* (1996), *Nósnus* (1997), *A cousavermella* (2004). She received the LosadaDiéguez de Creación award for one of her books.

Yolanda Castaño (1977) is another contemporary who has received eight awards for her poetry books, five in total in Galician and Spanish. She has also three poetry books for children. Some of her works are *Elevar as pálpebras* (1995). Received the Prize Fermín Bouza Brey (2004). *Delicia* (1998), *Vivimos no ciclo das erofanías* (Espiral Maior, La Coruña, 1998). Received the II Premio Johan Carballeira, y later the Prize of Crítica de poesía gallega. *O libro da egoísta* (2003), *Profundidade de campo* (2007). Received in 2007 the XV Prize of Poetry, Espiral Maior. She also has to her credit two books of children poetry, *Punver* (2006) *Cando eusaibaler* (2009).

Conclusions

In this study we find ourselves unable to discuss each poets' characteristics, personal style and trends individually due to the lack of space and the long list of poets that comprises a yet unrecognized immense female contribution to Spanish literature. To some extent the contributions of the most important Spanish female poets of the 20th century have been discussed. An interesting factor to observe among the majority of them is that there is a clear distinction between the female and the feminist. The great majority of them were educated, well off ladies, who belonged to good families and in this sense they did not consider themselves feminists, rather advocates of women's rights, with a few exceptions. Furthermore, during their entire career or at some point during it, wrote in reaction to the ideas of women as intellectually a weaker gender.

The work of Carmen Conde is exceptional in length and quality. This is proven by the fact that out of all of the women we have discussed she was the only one who rose to become the first female member of the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (Royal Academy of Spanish Language, the entity regulating and recording the changes that occur in the Spanish language). *Mujer sin Eden*, one of her collections, has been described as "the most significant book of poetry written by a woman in Spanish language".²¹

The Spain of the first half of the 20th century was deeply catholic. This was reflected in the values expressed especially by female poets. Some of them like Conde, wonders about the condition and status of the female in the eyes of the divinity. Others like Champourcin were influenced by the mystics such as Juan de la Cruz and Teresa de Jesús.

Poetry experienced a renewal during the forties, not before reflecting with detailed accounts the miseries of the war. In this period the poetry was filled with great imagery, rebellion, depression, despair, famine, anger, etc. Angela Figuera Aymerich, María Beneyto Cuñat, Aurora de Albornoz and the mature poetry of Champourcin belong to this period. Some of the poets such as Rosa Chacel had to go into exile to France and other European cities.

Some poets of the postwar period were Clementina Arderiu and Rosa Leveroni who had kept strong connections with the Barcelona literary circles being influenced by cultural meetings or reunions and who published side by side with their male counterparts. Other works of poets of the postwar years such as Mulder specially are not typical of this time, this seems to be the reason some of her work has been thoroughly misinterpreted and misunderstood.²²

However, the postwar era brought with it the new Franco regime. During the Franco era some of the Spanish poets were publishing their works outside of Spain. Such is the case of Rosa Chacel who published in Argentina and was unable to do so in her native land. She wrote about the regime and the difficulties of a female writer to overcome the typical problems of being one.

The poetry of protest under Franco has been called poetry of political protest.²³ The new era was marked by a heavy censorship law which was passed in April 1938 and lasted for approximately thirty years. The prices of paper also soared and it had become cheaper to publish in other Spanish speaking countries.²⁴ It was a time highly marked by two main trends which could actually combine into one; the stronghold of Franco's government and the strengthening of the Catholic Church and Catholic views of the world. The dictator needed to instil these values into the popular mentality.²⁵ They were years of conflicting ideologies and the South American poetic influence was starting to have certain impact on the Spanish poetry of the time.²⁶ A non-conformist feeling had started settling in at the same time that a feeling for conservation of the literary past had begun to gain importance. This gave birth to the clandestine publications and protest poetry of the 40's. The most controversial poets of the time were Carmen Conde and Angela Figueras Aymerich. Francisca Aguirre on the other hand seems to have interrupted her poetic career to follow a more feminine path under Franco.²⁷ Susana March Alcala belongs to this time as well.

By the 50's and 60's a new trend had developed. This was the social poetry. The main topics were the problems of the world, solidarity with fellow men and the fact that poetry should become a transforming instrument of society. The form lost importance to the message. A clear message was important since the poetry was intended to reach all men in every social class. However, it seems this poetry failed in achieving its purpose due to

the fact that the poetry talked about the nation but not to the nation. Nevertheless, after the war, women were severely subjugated. Thoughts of equality were not possible for Spanish women in general until the sixties. It seems it was a time of “ideological bombardment of women.”²⁸

On the contrary, the women poets of the post Franco era found themselves at a significant historical stage. It seems this group of women has realized that it is their responsibility to consolidate the poetic tradition of the women of the past. They have developed a new identity. The strong feminist movement of the sixties had given birth to new opportunities for women of the seventies and eighties.²⁹

According to Mudrovic, this new identity is reflected on the fact that they use the page as a ‘mirror’. He calls this catoptric imagery; the mirror as a quest for identity.³⁰ This view is based on the fact that the mirror provides a platform for psychoanalytical aspects of the female identity, a medium of obtaining self-definition. All of the sudden they found themselves with freedom of speech and empowered to embark on a new journey of discovery of the new democratic Spain.

During the eighties some of the exiled poets had made their way back to their country. Rosa Chacel for example who had come back to Spain in 1973 seemed to be flourishing in the new settings of democratic Spain.³¹

The new generation of female poets is actually completely free to touch whichever topics they chose in their poetry, including those that were at one point in history forbidden, such as sex, feminism, homosexuality, politics, etc.

Freedom of expression and of course poetic expression is the result of a different and new progressive environment in Spain where women poets are thriving alongside their males counterparts.

End Notes

1. Roberta Quance. *Entre líneas: posturas críticas ante la poesía escrita por mujeres*. La Balsa de la Medusa. (1987) 4. 78.
2. John Chapman Wilcox. *Women poets of Spain, 1860-1990: toward a gynocentric vision*. University of Illinois Press, (1997) 1.
3. *Diccionario de la Lengua española*. (2001) Real Academia Española. 22 Edición. <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=poetisa>
4. Ibid. <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=poeta>
5. In Spanish language a grammar rule exists by which a large number of nouns which end in the vowel ‘a’ are female and to designate the male the vowel ‘o’ is used. In this

sense the male of *poetisa* was made *poetiso*. This was done because males did not appreciate females who wrote poetry, as culturally this was a male tradition. In this sense *poetiso* became a derogatory term for a male poet, while the accepted ones were *poetas*. At the same time female poets were rebelling against the use of this term in a female form as well. For more information in this regard see *Entre líneas: posturas críticas ante la poesía escrita por mujeres*.

6. Juan Cano Ballesta. *La poesía Española entre pureza y revolución*. (1930-1936) Madrid (1972). 76.
7. Interview to Ernestina Champourcin by Edith Checa. (1996). http://pendientedemigracion.ucm.es/info/especulo/numero9/e_champ2.html
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10. *Ibid.*, 124.
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14. Roig, Diana Sanz. "Origen del yo poético femenino: la escritura de Rosa Chacel." In *Campus stellae: haciendo camino en la investigación literaria*, pp. 451-458. Servicio de Publicaciones, 2006.
15. Wright, Eleanor. *The poetry of protest under Franco*. Vol. 89. Tamesis Books, (1986).
16. *The Feminist Encyclopaedia of Spanish Literature*. 573.
17. *Ibid.*, 132.
18. Ángel L. Prieto de Paula. Carmen Conde, la primera mujer. Article in *El País*, August 11, 2007. http://elpais.com/diario/2007/08/11/babelia/1186789823_850215.html
19. O'Byrne, Patricia. *Post-War Spanish Women Novelists and the Recuperation of Historical Memory*. Vol. 337. Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014. 93
20. <http://olerki-poesia1.blogcindario.com/2008/11/01502-perdi-las-estrellas-de-salome-ortega.html>
21. *The Feminist Encyclopaedia of Spanish Literature*. 144.
22. *Ibid.* 436.
23. Wright, Eleanor. *The poetry of protest under Franco*. Vol. 89. Tamesis Books, (1986) 5.
24. *Ibid.* 13.
25. Ortiz, Carmen. "The uses of folklore by the Franco regime." *Journal of American Folklore* (1999): 479-496.
26. *The poetry of protest under Franco*. 25.

27. Mudrovic, W. Michael. *Mirror, Mirror on the Page: Identity and Subjectivity in Spanish Women's Poetry* (1975-2000). Associated University Press, (2008)24.
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29. Lauter, Estella. Women as mythmakers: poetry and visual art by twentieth-century women. Indiana University Press, 1984. 7.
30. *Mirror, Mirror on the Page: Identity and Subjectivity in Spanish Women's Poetry* 13.
31. Faszer-McMahon, Debra. Cultural Encounters in Contemporary Spain: The Poetry of Clara Janés. Bucknell University Press, 2010. 220.

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