Champourcin, Ernestina de (1905-1999)

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Champourcin, Ernestina de (1905–1999)

Arguably the most celebrated woman poet of Spain’s *Generation of 1927, Champourcin went into exile in Mexico at the conclusion of the civil war (1936–1939) with her husband, poet Juan José Doméncchina. She lived there until her 1972 return to Spain.

Champourcin’s poetry evolves from the emphasis on emotions and formal experimentation to mysticism and the remembrance of her past. Her first book, *En silencio (1926; In Silence), contains poems clearly influenced by romanticism and modernism. Subsequent poetry collections, such as *La voz en el viento (1931; The Voice in the Wind), follow avant-garde tendencies and present a conceptual, pure poetry that underlines the poet’s self-determination and creative liberty.

During exile, Champourcin finds in religion a solution to her existential agony. After a 16-year lapse, in poem collections like *Presencia a oscuras (1952; Presence in Darkness), the poet dialogues with God and yearns for spiritual union with Him.

*Primer exilio (1978; First Exile) initiates Champourcin’s last and retrospective poetry with memories of the Spanish Civil War and her trip into exile. Her final works suggest that human loneliness can be surmounted by faith in life after death.

*Iker González-Allende

See also Civil War Literature in Spain; Poetry in Spain: 1900 to Present.

Work By:


Work About:

A product of 20 plus years of research by Afro-Colombian novelist Manuel Zapata Olivella (1920-2004), the novel Chango el gran putas (1983; Chango, the Biggest Badass, 2010) serves as an important reminder of Latin America's African heritage and the region's connection to other African populations in the New World. Its references to Africa, Colombia, Haiti, and the United States demonstrate a connection among dispersed African-descended populations and their shared historical background. The text is divided into five sections that relate the universal black experiences of slavery, racism, and social upheaval. The first part, "The Origins," narrates the beginnings of the African population dispersal throughout the Americas. The second part, "The American Muntu," captures the experience of Slavery in the Americas, specifically the African's enslavement in Cartagena, Colombia. Part III, "The Rebellion of the Voodoos," focuses primarily on the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) under the leadership of Bouckman, a Jamaican-born slave who spearheaded the rebellion. Next, the fourth part, "Conflicting Bloodlines," deals with 19th-century Spanish American Independence and the blacks who fought in these wars, such as Mexican José María Morelos y Pavón (1765-1815). Although Morelos is known nationally as a Mexican revolutionary, Zapata Olivella focuses on the leader's lesser-known African heritage, which becomes the character's most important aspect. Part V, "The Combative Ancestors," completes the cycle of black exploitation in the United States and portrays the civil rights movement (1955-1968). These events explicate the history of the black experience in Colombia and the Americas and position this novel to be an Afro-American saga similar to the novel Roots (1976) by Alex Haley (1921-1992).

Sonja Stephenson Watson

See also Afro-Hispanic Literature in Spanish America.