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# *The Presence of Aristotle in the Works of Maria Zambrano: Initial Readings*

## *La presencia de Aristóteles en la obra de María Zambrano: lecturas iniciales*

### Abstract

This article argues that Aristotle is a major influence in Zambrano's works, and that several of the key concepts in her thinking can be explained by reading them in relation to Aristotle. Aristotle is the most quoted author after Ortega in Zambrano's unpublished manuscripts, and he is continuously mentioned throughout her works. Even so, there have been few attempts at a comprehensive reading of the presence of Aristotle in Zambrano's works. This article aims to initiate the discussion on what Zambrano used Aristotle for, and what the presence of Aristotelian concepts means for the interpretation of Zambrano's philosophy. It is argued in the article that Zambrano uses Aristotle for the conception of a metaphysical structure of life and the human being. The article will show how Zambrano uses Aristotle's concept of the soul (*alma* in Spanish, sometimes translated as *mind* in English versions of Aristotle) and of place (*lugar* in Spanish) in order to discuss the ontological and metaphysical grounds for human subjectivity.

### Keywords

Aristotle, soul, place, mind, physics, transcendence

### Resumen

El presente artículo propone que Aristóteles es una de las influencias importantes en la obra de Zambrano, y que varios de los conceptos clave en su pensamiento se pueden explicar mediante una lectura que toma como referencia al autor griego. Aristóteles es el pensador más citado, aparte de Ortega, en sus manuscritos, y, además, se menciona continuamente en su obra publicada. El artículo intenta iniciar una discusión sobre cómo usa la pensadora a Aristóteles y cómo podrían contribuir sus conceptos en la interpretación de la obra zambranianiana. Un argumento expuesto en el artículo mantiene que Zambrano utiliza a Aristóteles para una concepción de una estructura metafísica de la vida y del ser humano. El artículo muestra cómo la malagueña desarrolla el concepto del alma (frecuentemente traducido al inglés con el término «*mind*») y del lugar para discutir el fundamento ontológico y metafísico de la subjetividad humana.

### Palabras clave

Aristóteles, alma, lugar, *mind*, física, transcendencia.

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## Introduction

Which authors, if any, were influential in the development of Zambrano's poetic thinking is a topic under constant debate. Spinoza, and also Nietzsche and Heidegger, are among the authors that are often used to interpret Zambrano's writings.<sup>1</sup> Aristotle is sometimes mentioned, for example, both Agustín Andreu and Jesús Moreno Sanz make longer interpretations of Aristotle in relation to Zambrano,<sup>2</sup> but most often it is the abovementioned authors that are held to be key influences for understanding her philosophy. However, and ultimately what are considered key contexts to a philosopher has as much to do with the interpreter as with the object of interpretation, there are nevertheless good arguments for emphasising the relationship between Zambrano's thinking and the works of Aristotle. One important such argument is the fact that Aristotle is mentioned in nearly all of Zambrano's published works. And Aristotle is, in addition, besides Ortega the most cited author in her unpublished manuscripts.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible to argue that given how Zambrano uses author citations in her texts, sometimes quoting without giving reference, and often enough excluding any mention of both texts and authors while clearly using ideas or even concepts from other authors, that this would lessen the value of the authors that she does mention. This argument falls back upon a specific understanding of Zambrano as non-systematic and as developing a symbolic, metaphoric and creative poetic reason. From this perspective, citation of authors should be not necessary and sometimes even counterproductive. It is the case however, that Zambrano does sometimes cite, as one of the many tools that she uses to convey meaning. It is obvious that Zambrano did not strive for clarity in the manner of a philosophical or scientific treatise,<sup>4</sup> but she did sometimes use references in order to say something that contributed to the overall meaning in her writings. Zambrano writes something significant concerning the relationship between thought and tradition, in *El hombre y lo divino*: “Todos los vencidos son plagiados, en el sentido amplia de la palabra ‘plagio’, que puede llegar a ser hasta el desenvolvimiento, el desarrollo de un tema inicial; hasta el rapto de una figura representativa. La suerte del razón del vencido es convertirse en semilla que germina en la tierra del vencedor.”<sup>5</sup> Zambrano writes this precisely in relation to the way in which the thought of Aristotle takes up and uses the idea of the soul that she holds to stem from the Pythagoreans. But, it could also be understood to say something about the way in which Zambrano uses representative figures, and even other author's names, to develop her own ideas.

Particular authors often play the role of a symbol in Zambrano's texts, conveying the meaning of an entire system of thought. This is, for example, the case in Zambrano's *Filosofía y poesía*, were Plato is given the position of a symbol of philosophical idealism.<sup>6</sup> By narrat-

1. On Nietzsche see, Maillard García, M. L., *El Nietzsche de Zambrano*, Madrid, Trotta, 2012; Bundgård, A., “Nietzsche y María Zambrano: nihilismo y creación”, in *Aurora*, 2009:10, pp. 19-28; Mayos Solosona, G., “Zambrano y Nietzsche, camino al language”, in *Aurora*, 2009:10, pp. 56-68; Eguizábal, J.I., *El exilio y el reino en torno a María Zambrano*, Madrid, Huerga y Fierros, 2002. On Heidegger see, Zamboni, Ch., “Heidegger y Zambrano, dos formas diferentes de amor a la Naturaleza”, in *Aurora*, 2011:12, pp. 74-82; Acevedo Guerra, J., “La razón poética, una aproximación (Zambrano y Heidegger)” in *Aurora*, 2008:9, pp. 6-14. On both authors see, Moreno Sanz, J., *El logos oscuro: tragedia, mística y filosofía en María Zambrano*, Madrid, Verbum, 2008.

2. Andreu, A., *El Dios de su alma*, Granada, Comares, 2007; Moreno Sanz, J., *El Logos Oscuro, tragedia, mística y filosofía en María Zambrano*, Madrid, Verbum, 2008.

3. Fenoy Gutiérrez, S., *La obra inédita de María Zambrano*, Barcelona, Balmes, 2008, p. 188.

4. See for example, Zambrano, M., *Cartas de la Pièce – correspondencia con Agustín Andreu*, Agustín Andreu (ed.), Valencia, Pre-textos, 2002.

5. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, in *Obras Completas III*, Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2011, p. 153; “All vanquished are plagiarised, in the ample sense of ‘plagiarism’ that can come to be the very unfolding, the development, of an initial theme; even the rapture of a representative figure. The vanquished's reason is lucky when converted into the seed that germinates in the soil of the victor.”

6. Zambrano, M., *Filosofía y poesía*, in *Obras Completas, I*, Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2015, pp. 687-697.

7. Zambrano, M., M-462: 0657 in the archive of the Fundación María Zambrano: "THE ENTIRE ARISTOTELIAN CONCEPTION OF THE PHYSIS AND OF THE UN-MOVABLE MOTOR TRANSFERRED TO THE HUMAN BEING."

8. Aristotle, *Physics*, IV 4, 212a6-7 and III 5, 204b5.

9. Zambrano, M., M-214. Also published in *Algunos lugares de la poesía*, Juan Fernando Ortega Muñoz (ed.), Trotta, Madrid, 2007.

ing the history of thought in such a manner as to radically distinguish between two forms or modes of thinking — philosophy and poetry — and by positioning Plato as the origin of that separation, Zambrano is free to use Plato as the symbol of the entire historic development of philosophical idealism. This is the reason why she, in *Filosofía y poesía*, can jump without blinking between Plato, Descartes, Fichte and Kant, as if the history of philosophical idealism somehow could be contained in these authors. The description of the separation between philosophy and poetry is an important part of a larger historic narrative that Zambrano repeatedly comes back to during her later writings, where she emphasises the forgotten forms of reason excluded by rational thought. Referring to particular authors is one tool that Zambrano uses to make the sharp distinctions between forms of thought and for conveying specific descriptions of these forms. This is the case with Zambrano's use of Aristotle too.

### Aristotelian concepts and figures in Zambrano's texts

One way of reading Zambrano's texts is thus to analyse which concepts, and figures, are connected to Aristotle, and in what discussions they are given meaning. This way of reading may contribute to a better understanding of Zambrano's philosophical project, as well as furthering our knowledge of Zambrano's way of conceiving problems. In the following I will use the term 'concept' to denote actual Aristotelian concepts in Zambrano's texts, and 'figures' to denote both symbols, structures and metaphors that can be interpreted to fit with Aristotelian philosophy.

A first example can be given. In a manuscript of uncertain date (M:-462: 0657) Zambrano writes in capitals: "LA CONCEPCIÓN ENTERA ARISTOTÉLICA DE LA FYSIS Y DEL MOTOR INMOVIL TRASLADADA AL HOMBRE."<sup>7</sup> The manuscript gives no further explanations of what this might mean, except for the fact that Zambrano connects the discussion on physis to that of time as she explains that in Aristotle time is a limit-concept that produces a horizon for every living being. This suggests that whereas *fysis* is an Aristotelian concept that Zambrano uses, her account of time could possibly be understood as a structure in Zambrano's thinking directly influenced by Aristotle. Interestingly enough, and because horizon isn't a very prominent concept in Aristotle's writings, it is likely that Zambrano is making reference to a certain reading of Aristotle: the Heideggerian interpretation in which the concept of horizon can be found. (Instead of horizon Aristotle uses 'a body bounded by a surface' in his *Physics*.<sup>8</sup>)

As a second example, and in yet another significant manuscript, M-214, entitled "Los lugares de la poesía", Zambrano writes about the concept of place, *lugar*, that it must be conceived of as a non-fixed room of events. The latter is a notion that she refers to Aristotle.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear from the manuscripts that Zambrano intended to use Aristotle's physical conceptions in relationship to her own philosophical project. In the first manuscript cited here, Zambrano indicates that she wants to transfer the Aristotelian concept of *physis* to the human being. This is a statement that she repeats later, in *De la Aurora*, where she also refers directly to Aristotle. Discussing a three-partite division of the human soul — consisting of *inconsciente* [unconscious], *subconsciente* [subconscious] and *consciente* [consciousness] — Zambrano writes:

Es decir: que en el subconsciente reside la *dynamis* que clama por la *energeia*, por el acto que la actualice. | La física de Aristóteles sirve para dar cuenta del subconsciente, y no solo en lo que hace al alma vegetativa — los sueños — sino en el proceso de transformación del ser vivo desde la potencia a la forma, del ser en potencia al ser en acto. Proceso que no aparece en el tratado del alma [sic.] que da estratificadamente los [p]lanos del alma, la tríada reveladora y en cierto modo sacra.<sup>10</sup>

Here, Zambrano uses the concepts *dynamis* and *energeia* in order to describe structures and functions of the human soul/mind. It can be noted that the concept that Aristotle uses, *nous*, [voūç] is translated as *alma* — i.e. soul — in the Spanish translations but as *mind* in the English translation of *De anima*, as well as in the *Metaphysics*. As we will see, this difference in translation is significant because it allows Zambrano to conceive of different agents or kinds of agency in the unity of human cognitive capacities. In the passage quoted here, concepts from Aristotle are used to distinguish between different kinds of human agency: firstly, a passive and vegetal state that Zambrano also draws from the description of different kinds of souls in Aristotle's *De Anima*. And secondly, what can be conceived of as a function — *dynamis* and *energeia* — that works to actualize the potential of the *inconsciente* into conscious form.

It can be concluded from the citations above that Zambrano uses Aristotle to discuss physics in a broad sense, and more specifically conceptions of time and the totality of the human cognitive faculties. In fact, in *De la Aurora*, Zambrano uses Aristotelian concepts to indicate a discussion on the human being and its place in the universe.

La temporalidad, ese campo del Dios latente, dios entendido aquí simplemente como potencia. El tiempo es la potencia originaria que actualiza el ser, que sin él sería sí, mas como si no fuse, sin poder alguno. Y sin amor, sin el amor primero que mueve toda cosa.<sup>11</sup>

Time is the “field of the latent God”, says Zambrano, a God that needs to be understood only as *potencia* and that actualizes being. And furthermore, potency is equated with love, according to the quotation above. And Zambrano continues:

10. “That is to say: *dynamis* resides in the subconscious, and it demands *energeia*, it demands the act that actualizes it. | The physics of Aristotle serves to give an account of the subconscious, and not only when it comes to the vegetative soul — the dreams — but in the process of transformation of a living being from potency to the form, from being in potency to active being. A process that does not appear in that *on the soul* [sic.] which gives in a stratified manner the three planes of the soul, revealing and to a certain extent sacred.” Zambrano, M., *De la Aurora*, p. 147. Cursive in the original.

11. “Temporality, that field of the latent God, god understood here simply as potency. Time is the originary potency that actualizes being, without which it would be, yes, as if it wasn't there, without any power. And without love, without the initial love that moves everything.” Zambrano, M., *De la Aurora*, p. 112.

12. “Time as a pure heartbeat and space as a pure quality, which opens up without breaking away, like something that gathers without dispersing, that without unfolding goes on to signal innumerable directions; the real image of the universe, of the One from which all things and beings come, and from which they become separated when taking form.” Zambrano, M., *De la Aurora*, p. 112.

13. Sánchez-Gey Venegas, J., “Lo originario en el pensamieto religioso de María Zambrano”, in *Aurora*, 2005:7, pp. 78-83. Jesús Moreno Sanz calls the entire book “*el colofón*” of what Zambrano had written up until 1955. See, “Anejo a *El hombre y lo divino*”, in Zambrano, M., *Obras Completas III*, Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2011, p. 1173.

14. See, Moreno Sanz, *ibid.* pp. 1177-1178. Moreno Sanz makes reference to the manuscript M-171, in which Zambrano outlines a metaphysics parting from Aristotle. See also Andreu, A., *María Zambrano, el dios de su alma*, Granada, Comares, 2007.

El tiempo como un puro latido y el espacio como una pura cualidad, que se abre sin desprenderse, como algo que recoge y no que dispersa, que sin desplegarse va señalando innumerables direcciones; imagen real del universo, de ese Uno de donde todas las cosas y seres proceden, del que al tomar figura quedan separadas.<sup>12</sup>

Time is a pure heartbeat, and space is a pure quality, that “opens up without breaking away”, that without “unfolding” — *sin desplegarse* — signals numerous directions. As becomes evident, Zambrano is using Aristotle to develop a conception of the universe that is one, in the sense of a common origin before the separation that occurs when things become *figura*. Interestingly enough, Zambrano gives primacy to time rather than space, and describes the latter as something that is contingent in relation to time. Zambrano is developing a time-space conception, conceived in direct relation to Aristotle. This is somewhat surprising seeing how Zambrano’s most famous impasse on Aristotle — the chapter “La condenación Aristotélica de los Pitagóricos” in *El hombre y lo divino* — seemingly condemns his cosmology in favour of a Pythagorean world-view.

### Aristotle in *El hombre y lo divino*

Aristotle is an important influence in Zambrano’s *El hombre y lo divino*, and most particularly so in the chapter “La condenación aristotélica de los Pitagóricos”. Concepts of Aristotle are present in other parts of the book too, as for example in the discussion on ruins, and of temples. In order to understand how Zambrano uses Aristotelian concepts in the latter two discussions, however, it is necessary to understand the critique or debate that she holds with Aristotle in the aforementioned chapter. The text has been understood as a key text in Zambrano’s thinking and, for example, Sánchez-Gey Venegas uses it to enforce an interpretation of Zambrano’s thinking as beginning in a clear distinction between philosophy and poetry.<sup>13</sup> However, and as both Moreno Sanz and Andreu have noted, the chapter should not only be considered a critique of Aristotle, but the beginning of a metaphysical project developing directly from Aristotle.<sup>14</sup> Since the critique that Zambrano turns against Aristotle in this chapter, clearly is a critique of a way of conceiving the human being that reduces it to a rational being, it could be expected that the chapter would not only critique reason, but try to debate or synthesise poetry and reason, thinking and delirium. Nevertheless, the chapter hardly mentions poetry at all, and instead discusses time and different times as essential to this metaphysical project. She even goes so far as to suggest that the theory of relativity with its new time-space conception could be used to lay the grounds of a new metaphysics. When she does separate between different kinds of knowledge, she does so directly related to Aristotle. Interestingly enough, Aristotle is not only the point of departure of her critique but also the fountain from which she draws concepts to delineate other forms of knowledge. Zambra-

no criticises Aristotle's notion of substance, and compares it to Plato's ideas, as an entity of thought designed to securely found the worldly realm of appearances. Zambrano's critique is thus directed toward a conception of the world that reduces appearances to entities with essential properties. Zambrano writes that with Aristotle's concept of substance a clear-cut differentiation was introduced between the world, and the Gods, since only the un-moved mover was found to stand beyond the notions of substance. Zambrano thus suggests that from Aristotle, and in relation to the un-moved mover, a concept of unsubstantiated — *insustanciales* — being can be deduced.<sup>15</sup>

The separation between two different kinds of realms, one of unsubstantiated beings and one of substantiated identity, is crucial for understanding Zambrano's philosophical project, at least from the publication of *El hombre y lo divino*. This is a major structure that Zambrano will repeatedly represent in different figures in her late books. In the chapter on Aristotle and the Pythagoreans, Zambrano refers to the unsubstantiated realm as *alma pura* — 'pure soul' — and as *un sentir originario y por tanto pasivo* — 'an originary sense perception and for that reason passive'.<sup>16</sup>

So far we can conclude that there are two parts to Zambrano's positive interpretation of Aristotle: on the one hand ideas about physics, and on the other ideas about the soul. These two parts of Zambrano's Aristotelian interpretation could be treated as completely separate but, as Zambrano indicates in the quotation given above, she wants to use the Aristotelian concept of physics to understand the human being. This suggests that in fact questions of soul and of physics are intimately connected. Furthermore, both in *De la Aurora* and in *El hombre y lo divino* Aristotle is invoked as a means of discussing time. In the chapter under discussion here, Zambrano's discussion on soul, matter and time is outlined beginning in the critique of parts of the Aristotelian conception of the soul. Zambrano suggests that by equating substance and soul — something Aristotle does in *De Anima*<sup>17</sup> — the philosopher tried to reduce the human soul to an actively thinking substance.<sup>18</sup> But, writes Zambrano, without being aware, Aristotle also reproduced some of the notions held by the Pythagoreans. She notes that the passive soul, as outlined in *De Anima*,<sup>19</sup> is in fact close to a Pythagorean conception of the soul, and that it is connected to the passive sacred. Zambrano writes that while Aristotle, when conceiving of the active soul, tried to place time in the substance and thus tried to reduce it to one kind, he also opens up for time as multiple when he speaks of concepts such as potency and coming into being (*devenir*).<sup>20</sup>

That Aristotle wanted to reduce time to one kind, must be considered an interpretation that can at least be contested since, as Zambrano herself shows, there seems to be two somewhat conflicting notions of time in his works. Zambrano suggests that in Aristotle

15. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 146.

16. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, pp. 160, 162-163.

17. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 2:1, 412a20-21.

18. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 171.

19. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3:4, 429a14 and 3:5, 430a14-15.

20. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 171.

21. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12:3, 1069a-1076b. "Neither matter nor form comes into being."
22. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 171.
23. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 171.
24. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 5:11. For further arguments concerning time as number in Aristotle, see Ursula Coope, *Time for Aristotle, Physics IV*: 10-14. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005.
25. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 171.

time is always the time of a substance, i.e. time is the change that occurs when something comes into being according to its substance. Time is always given in concrete substances, according to Zambrano's interpretation of Aristotle. And here, again, she quotes the *Metaphysics*, "*ni la materia ni la forma devienen.*"<sup>21</sup> In this interpretation time is equal to the change that occurs in a substance.<sup>22</sup>

But as Zambrano also notes, time is the concept that in Aristotle most resembles the Pythagorean world-view, since time can also be understood as a scale of numbers.<sup>23</sup> This statement seems somewhat strange since a change in substance must be an essential change, given that Zambrano has interpreted substance to be similar to platonic ideas. But number is usually understood as measurement, i.e. as a designation or order given to things insofar as they are countable. If I want to know how many chairs there is in a room, I cannot answer that question by also including the tables in my account. (Even though, if I wanted to know how much furniture there is in a room, this could be answered by counting both chairs and tables and any other object that I designate as furniture.) In this sense for something to be countable means that it must be at the one time different from other things (this chair and not that chair), and at the same time similar (all chairs). If substance is interpreted to be that thing by which something is what it is, it seems problematic to speak of time as both number and change in substance, since the notion of substance seems to exclude the condition of similarity pertaining to number. Another aspect of number, however, can help understand how Zambrano could combine the definition of time as both a change in substance and as number.

Number orders in a certain manner, and this is particularly true when it comes to time. If we were to look at the numerical series as such, any of its positions — for example, two, or five, or 365 — could not occur in any other place than where it does. Three is always more than two, and 366 always comes after 365. In this sense each number has its unique position. And when concerning time, it is because we separate entities in time — before, now and after are entities that could occur in no other order — that we can speak of time at all. This is at least the case in Aristotle's account of time in the *Metaphysics*, where it is the measured distance between before, now and after that discloses what time is.<sup>24</sup> And it seems to be this ordering of unique positions that Zambrano refers to when stating that in Aristotle time is both a change in substance and a number. Zambrano writes that in Aristotle time is the movement from non-being to being, and that the form of this movement is circular because non-being can only be conceived of after having become actualized.<sup>25</sup> So, in Zambrano's interpretation of Aristotle's time-concept, time is a circular shaped order that posits potentiality and actualization in a paradoxical relation to each other. According to Zambrano's account it is impossible to speak of potentiality or non-being before a thing has become actualized into being. In

relation to what was said above of the un-moved mover, this suggests that Zambrano's notion of a kind of unsubstantiated realm referred to as the sacred, or as non-being or *la nada* — nothingness,<sup>26</sup> in fact stands in a mutually dependent relationship to being. That is, being could not be actualized without potency, whereas there could be no conception of origin or potency without a thing already actualized.<sup>27</sup>

With this argument, Zambrano is in fact drawing attention to what can be conceived of as another discussion in Aristotle's *Physics* concerning time, which connects time to the discussion of location. If the solution of how to conceive of time as both a change in substance and as a number is a time-conception that emphasises ordering of unique positions, then the conception that Zambrano is developing can be understood to include ideas about space too. At the end of the chapter discussed here, Zambrano suggests that, in fact, the puzzles that she has drawn out by counterpoising Aristotle and the Pythagoreans, could maybe be resolved within the new physics of relativity.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, what Zambrano develops, with the help of Aristotle, is a time-space concept closely connected to human subjectivity.

### Time-space and place as a changing surface

We have already seen that in the manuscript M-214 Zambrano discussed the place — *el lugar* — as an Aristotelian conception. In *El hombre y lo divino*, space is discussed through a series of spatial figures, such as, for example, the ruin and the temple. The latter is a good example of how Zambrano creates figures structured around Aristotelian concepts.

El lugar sagrado originario ha encontrado su cumplida revelación. La potencia contenida en lo solamente sagrado se expande recorriendo todo el templo y sus contornos visibles, uniendo cielo y tierra con el mar, que se tornan enteramente visibles cada uno dentro de la unidad que los trasciende, en un lugar que se diviniza humanizándose o se humaniza por divinarze.<sup>29</sup>

The quotation describes the temple as a space that is identified by it being the revelation of the sacred, and by being organized in space — “*todo el templo y sus contornos visibles, uniendo cielo y tierra con el mar*” (the entire temple and its visible surroundings, unifying heaven and earth with the ocean) — as a specific kind of location. Zambrano equates the sacred with potency, and distinguishes the revealed temple from the *lugar sagrado originario* — the originary sacred place. The temple as a place can thus be conceived of as the product in both time and space whereby something pertaining to the originary realm takes shape as something “completely visible”. Furthermore, the quotation describes the character of the temple as an object that is completely visible, stating that it is so by differenti-

26. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, pp. 211-213, 247.

27. This argument indicates that Zambrano in fact conceived of being in a way similar to Heidegger. To being, its own foundation is always presented from the point of view of being. The difference seems to be that according to Zambrano, being is not first presented as a question, but as a confirmation. I have developed this argument further in Enquist Källgren, K., *Subjectivity from exile, place and sign in the works of Maria Zambrano*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg, 2015.

28. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 176.

29. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 307. “The originary sacred place has found its fulfilled revelation. The potency held within the purely sacred expands itself passing through the entire temple and its visible surroundings, unifying heaven and earth with the ocean, which become completely visible each and every one inside of the unity that transcends them, in a place that becomes divine through humanization, or that becomes human through divinization.”

30. Aristotle, *Physics*, IV 4, 212a6-7 and III 5, 204b5.
31. Aristotle, *Physics*, IV 11, 219b9-220a24.
32. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 162.

ation — temple and surroundings — within a unity that transcends everything. In a sense then, time and space, as described in Zambrano's figure of the temple, cannot be thought the one without the other. Time-space is an ordering in number — here understood as a geometrical relationship — and as change in substance — when the temple comes into being as revelation from the sacred potency.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle defines place as “the boundary of the containing body at which it is in contact with the containing body”, or as “that which is bounded by a surface”. In this definition place can be understood as a qualitative space that belongs to each and every individual as the inner limit that distinguishes its individuality. The individual is defined as place by being boundary to something else, as well as by being in a particular order composed by each thing's multiple surfaces. In this sense, location here equalled to identification, is characterised by being both countable as differentiated only by a boundary, and qualitative, since it could come in no other order (if it did it would no longer be bound by the same surfaces and, hence, be something different). It can also be noted that in the *Physics*, time plays a crucial role when speaking of location, as the time-concept that Aristotle proposes is derived from that of space; time is exemplified and discussed as change.<sup>31</sup>

The figure of the temple in the quotation above seems to imply then, that Zambrano developed a space-time concept heavily dependent on Aristotle. To her understanding, space-time should be conceived of as a change in substance, which by her interpretation was to be equalled to the change of place by which things became individualised as inner limit. In addition, the quotation suggests that it is the sacred that is to be understood as that ordinary realm from which individualised forms — such as the temple — come into being. This gives some account of things that are created by man, but at the outset Zambrano was quoted stating that her intention was to use the entire physics of Aristotle and place it in the human being. For this we have to turn to Zambrano's late writings.

### Aristotle in *Claros del Bosque*

The author returns to the concept of the soul in her late book *Claros del Bosque*. And even though she criticised Aristotelian concepts in *El hombre y lo divino*, there are good reasons to believe that it is at least partially indebted to the same notion in his works. As has been indicated in the earlier book, Zambrano speaks of a Pythagorean soul opposed to Aristotelian logic. She describes it as an entity that travels the universe freely. On its journey the soul is in fact only directed by two things, on the one hand the longing for its origin, and on the other hand towards the earthly hell.<sup>32</sup> In this sense the soul is a figure of human agency, moving between (or towards) origin and formed being. The soul can for this reason be understood as one of the most important figures in Zambrano's thinking, that

works as the tool by which the human being moves between potency and actualization. The question is what gives the soul this capacity? It is here that Aristotle comes into play.

Zambrano's description of the temple, as well as her notion of *sentir originario*, indicates that the originary realm that she equalled with potency could also be found in the human being. As mentioned above, the primary sensing is a kind of passive pre-condition of experience. In Zambrano's *Claros del Bosque*, the soul is described as an *espacio interior* — “inner room” — and directly connected to the heart.<sup>33</sup> Zambrano furthermore compares the human heart to the Aristotelian un-moved mover and uses a poetic description of its bodily functioning to describe how the heart works to organize bodily composition.<sup>34</sup> Whereas the soul is free to move in the universe, the heart is the bodily agent that maintains the unity of a living body. Zambrano is describing what could be understood as two pools of human agency; on the one hand the passive activity of a heart that with its rhythmic flow maintains the unity of the body, and on the other hand the active soul that moves freely in the universe. And as she suggests, these two kinds of agency are closely connected, something that can be seen in the changes in beating of the heart when humans feel joy, disgust or desire. The two kinds of human agency distinguished by Zambrano bear close resemblance to the two kinds of soul that Aristotle distinguishes in *De Anima* III: 5, 430a14-15. In this passage Aristotle distinguishes between a passive part of the soul in which thinking is like being affected by something “by becoming all things”, as he writes. The other part of the soul is active insofar as it is not impressed by other things, but creates them. “By virtue of making all things”, writes Aristotle. There are different opinions on how to interpret this passage in Aristotle. Some understand the active soul to be interior to the human being while others have interpreted it to be exterior and resembling of a divine mind.<sup>35</sup> In Zambrano, however, both soul and heart are functions necessary to explain how the human being can move from potentiality to actualized expression. In *De Anima* III:10, 433a 17-19 and 20-21 this is at least partially explained by the concepts of desire and imagination, where desire of an object is said to be the causes of locomotion. In Zambrano, it seems, it is the double functioning of heart and soul that produces a human being with the faculty to perceive (i.e. receive) and to create by expressing. But, in *El hombre y lo divino*, Zambrano also introduces a concept of love to explain what effectuates the motion between human potency and actuality.

Y, llevados por el amor los hombres recorrerán ese largo camino cuyo logro es la propia unidad, el llegar a ser de verdad uno mismo.<sup>36</sup>

Like the concept of desire in Aristotle's *De Anima*, Zambrano suggests that love as an emotion is what in reality causes motion. In her account it does not primarily cause locomotion (i.e. changes of

33. Zambrano also equals heart and soul in *La Confesión, género literario*, even though this book was written around thirty years earlier.

34. Zambrano, M., *Claros del Bosque*, Barcelona, Espasa Galpe, 2004, p. 63-67.

35. For an account of different opinions, see Miller, F. D. Jr, “Aristotle on the Separability of Mind”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012.

36. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, p. 272, “And, led by love, the human being perambulates that long road whose goal is the proper unity, the coming to be oneself.”

37. Zambrano, M., *El hombre y lo divino*, pp. 114-116.

38. Zubiri, X., *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*, Madrid, Alianza, 2007.

place) but motion in the sense of becoming oneself, i.e. actualization. However, and as we have seen above, since for Zambrano individuality is closely connected to the notion of place in Aristotle's *Physics*, it is quite plausible that in fact actualization means to come into a certain place, and, thus, individuality. Because, according to Zambrano, what every being desires more than anything else is its own identity.<sup>37</sup>

### Concluding discussion

It can be concluded that Zambrano drew heavily on Aristotelian concept when elaborating on what she conceived to be a new notion of subjectivity. Even though there were, among other things, parts of the Aristotelian conception of substance that she criticised, other concepts such as time, place, soul and desire could be found either between Zambrano's own concepts or in the poetic structures with which she describes the human being. In addition, it can be concluded that it was not only the *Metaphysics*, but also the *Physics* and *De Anima* that Zambrano used to develop her own thinking. This is particularly prominent in her book *El hombre y lo divino*.

Nothing has been said in this article about the sources on which Zambrano based her Aristotle interpretation. It is known that she read Greek, and it is probable that she read the original sources directly. But we also know, from Zambrano herself, among others, that the course on Aristotle that her teacher Xavier Zubiri held in 1931 in Madrid was transformational for her understanding of philosophy. Zubiri's book on Aristotle, *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*, was also one of few books that Zambrano cited with page numbers.<sup>38</sup> This would indicate that, as opposed to many other works that she is known to have cited out of memory, she had his book beside her when writing *El hombre y lo divino*. Zubiri's course was in turn influenced by the visit he had made to Germany in the previous two years. During his visit he had attended Heidegger's classes in Freiburg, among other things, as well as the physics seminar of Albert Einstein's in Berlin. His interest in Aristotle was visibly tainted by Heidegger's interpretation of the same author and in his previously mentioned book, he synthesizes Aristotle, quantum physics and Paulinian theology. It is a matter for future research to investigate in what way Zambrano's interpretation of Aristotle concurs and differs from Zubiri's and Heidegger's.

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