

Michel del Castillo's Works in Sweden and Spain: Translation and Reception

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Abstract

In this study the translations and the reception in Sweden and Spain of the works of the French language author of Spanish origin, Michel del Castillo, are examined in the light of two concepts in the sociology of literature: consecration and legitimization. Consecration refers to the status accorded to an author by means of acts of recognition (literary prizes, etc.) while legitimization refers to the active part played by an author in the literary debate in a certain society. Whereas the first is a single, irrevocable act, the second is of longer duration but is subject to change. The books published in Michel del Castillo's early career (the late nineteen fifties and early sixties) made him a legitimized author in Sweden at that time. In Spain he did not become a legitimized author until the early years of the new millennium, when his subject matter coincided with the topics addressed in many other Spanish novels written at that time.

Key words: Michel del Castillo, consecration, legitimization, the Spanish Civil War, Spain in French literature, migrant literature, contemporary Spanish literature

1. Introduction

In this brief study, I will discuss the translations into Swedish and Spanish of the literary works of the French language author Michel del Castillo (born in 1933). The timing and selection of the works translated into the two languages will be linked to the literary themes in the works concerned and to the discussion in the sociology of literature on consecration, legitimization and canonization, drawing on the theoretical studies of Jacques Dubois (2005). I will also be referring to Benoît Denis (2010) for remarks on these theories.

As this study is part of a project dealing with the transfer into Swedish of literature written in Romance languages, the focus will be on the translations of del Castillo into Swedish. However, del Castillo is of Spanish-French origin and has a long career as a writer in French behind him. The topics explored in his writing are to a very large extent connected with Spain, which also makes it relevant to give a brief presentation of the translation of his texts into Spanish. This will be done at the end of the article. Since his debut with *Tanguy. Un enfant d'aujourd'hui* in 1957 (in English in 1957 as *Tanguy. The Story of A Child of Our Time*), del Castillo has published some forty novels, essays and plays. He has been honoured with several literary prizes, e.g. the *Renaudot* prize for *La Nuit du décret* in 1981 and the *Prix Fémina* for *Colette, une certaine France* in 1999.

I will commence by discussing the notions of consecration and legitimization in literature, which will be followed by a short survey of the literary themes in del

Castillo's work. I will then describe his position in what could be called the French canon, followed by a presentation of the translations of his work into Swedish and of his reception by literary critics in Sweden. The following section, on del Castillo's works in Spain, shows that the choice of texts translated into the two languages, Swedish and Spanish, is very different, which provides an interesting subject for reflection. The analysis of del Castillo in Swedish will take the actual translations and their reception by the critics as the point of departure, whereas the section on the Spanish translations will focus more on the content of the books translated and their role in the literary debate in Spain. The study is both descriptive (mapping what has been translated into the two languages) and analytical. The analysis will concern the themes in his writing commented upon by the Swedish critics as well as the concepts of consecration, legitimization and symbolic capital. In preparation for this study I went through the newspaper archives at the Royal Library in Stockholm and the archives at *Näringslivscentrum*, Stockholm for the part on reception in Sweden, and the archives of the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid for the part on reception in Spain.

The translation of Michel del Castillo's work into Swedish is so far something that concerns the author's earliest production only. The Swedish versions appeared soon after the publication of the originals but since the early 1960s, no Swedish translations of del Castillo's works have been published. For the translations into Spanish, the situation is completely the opposite. In 1963, three years after the original version, a Spanish translation of *La Mort de Tristan* (a book that the Swedish critics found superficial) was published. In 1976 (eighteen years after the original version), a translation of *La Guitare* (a book that the Swedish critics had evaluated as heavy and lacking in interest) was published. Translations into Spanish only became significant in the early years of the second millennium. What is the reason for these differences both in time and in selection between the two languages? What can be said about the role of literary criticism regarding del Castillo's translated works? How do the critics look upon the relationship between del Castillo and French and Spanish literary canons? Is Michel del Castillo, as he presents himself to the Swedish and Spanish readers, to be looked upon as a *consecrated* or as a *legitimized* author?

1.2 Literary consecration, legitimization and symbolic capital

The Belgian literary theorist Benoît Denis (2010) pointed out that the concept of consecration, which is often used in the sociology of literature, has religious roots and that it is useful to refer to the performative aspects of the phenomenon in question. Denis stresses the verbal and *temporary* character of consecration, a term that he nevertheless qualifies as a *quasi-notion*:¹

¹”La raison en est sans doute que la consécration est en réalité une « quasi-notion » : elle résulte de l’usage métaphorique d’un terme originellement religieux et, comme souvent dans ces cas de figure, son maniement semble aller de soi parce qu’il s’inscrit presque sans heurt dans une continuité culturelle et historique qui ne paraît pas exiger a priori de le problématiser” (Denis 2010: 4).

[...] la consécration relève du performatif : elle est un acte verbal (« le prix Goncourt 2010 est attribué à ... ») qui institue cela même qu'il nomme et désigne. On ajoutera que cette performativité est d'autant plus forte qu'elle présente un caractère public, puisque le geste verbal de consécration est exposé aux yeux des profanes, qui n'ont cependant pas le pouvoir d'intervenir dans le processus. (Denis 2010:7)

Jacques Dubois, in his book *L'institution de la littérature* (2005), summarizes the different steps in the legitimization process of literary works, of which the act of consecration is the third one:

D'une façon fort schématique, on peut représenter chacune d'elles comme exerçant sa juridiction d'un point précis de la chaîne qui permet l'entrée d'un écrit (ou d'un écrivain) dans l'histoire : 1° le salon ou la revue supportent l'émergence; 2° la critique apporte la reconnaissance ; 3° l'académie (sous toute forme) engage, par ses prix ou ses cooptations, la consécration ; 4° l'école, avec ses programmes et ses manuels, intègre définitivement à l'institution et garantit la conservation. (Dubois 2005: 129-130)

Still Denis concludes that the Dubois paradigm, however clear and readable it may seem, can be criticized for its linearity, since not all books will go through all the steps in this process:

[...] la clarté théorique du modèle proposé par Dubois peut aussi constituer sa faiblesse lorsqu'on le confronte à la réalité des phénomènes. Ainsi, la linéarité du processus de légitimation qu'il propose peut s'avérer trompeuse : tous les auteurs et toutes les œuvres ne passent pas par toutes les phases du procès de légitimation : la consécration, en particulier si on l'assimile à l'obtention d'un prix ou d'un siège dans une académie, fait souvent défaut dans le parcours des auteurs les plus canonisés et son absence peut même faire figure de titre de gloire. (Denis 2010:10)

Moreover, Denis pinpoints another aspect which the Dubois model does not account for. It is the effects of the consecration act on the author himself:

[...] quelle espèce de capital symbolique la consécration confère-t-elle à celui qui l'obtient ? Est-il de même nature que celui que possède l'artiste d'avant-garde, l'écrivain canonisé ou le poète maudit ? (Denis 2010: 11)

An alternative to this linear model of explanation would be to look upon the amount of prestige that an author accumulates. Denis brings in Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the legitimization of literature (*légitimité*) in order to illustrate this point of view:

[...] une des questions centrales que pose la notion de consécration est de savoir quels rapports elle entretient avec la notion bourdieusienne de légitimité. Pour le dire nettement, en littérature, un auteur (ou une œuvre) consacré est-il un auteur (ou une œuvre) légitime ? Doit-on distinguer des degrés de légitimité (dont la consécration serait un indicateur), correspondant à un certain état d'accumulation de capital symbolique ? (Denis 2010:12)

According to Denis, *légitimité* and *consécration* are two incommensurable entities. This is mainly for two reasons: legitimization signifies a sort of social authorization,

the nature of which is changeable, whereas consecration expresses an act that confers on the author a sacred and irrevocable status. Thus "[...] la légitimité est une forme spécifique d'autorité sociale, la consécration un acte instituant une sacralité (dont la nature doit être définie)", and also "[...] la légitimité est une réalité fluctuante, soumise à de constantes révisions, là où la consécration est un titre obtenu et non révisable" (Denis 2010:12).

From this it follows that an alternative way of looking upon the path that a book or an author takes on its way towards becoming part of a literary canon would be to look at the amount of symbolic capital that it has attracted. Arguably, different amounts of symbolic capital (i.e. translations, literary prizes, appearances in massmedia, etc.) correspond to different levels of legitimization. This capital reflects the level of validity or legitimacy of a certain book or author within a specific cultural or linguistic sphere. This is something that can partly occur independently of the acts of legitimization as described by Denis. The analysis of the position of an author within a cultural sphere can be carried out in two ways. On the one hand, it can be looked upon from the more dynamic point of view expressed by the idea of legitimization. This refers to the social status of the author within a certain society and is something that can be subject to change. Or, on the other hand, the position of an author can be discussed from the point of view of consecration. In this case the focus is on the acts of sacralization that the author has gone through. This has both a quantitative aspect - the number of prizes and awards that the author has received, for example - and a more qualitative dimension such as the effects of these prizes as well as status of the author in a certain society.

2. Literary themes in Michel del Castillo's writing

In order to shed light on the mechanisms behind the choices of books translated into Swedish and Spanish and the link between the themes treated and the symbolic capital attributed, it is appropriate to first give some general information about the content of Michel del Castillo's works. .

Several themes run through Michel del Castillo's literary production. One of these is an autobiographically inspired strain with novels that have a strong grounding in historic reality. Del Castillo's first novel *Tanguy*, which deals with a child's suffering in the camps during the Second World War, and which reflects important parts of del Castillo's own life, is one of the most prominent examples of this kind of writing. Another example within the same category is *De père français* (1998), which tells about the relationship between a father and son, i.e. about del Castillo's relationship with his French father, who abandoned him and his mother in his early childhood, but also about the link between del Castillo and his uncle in Paris, a person who played the role of a substitute father and who could be looked upon as the protagonist's real father in a psychological, Freudian sense. Another example of the importance of the historical setting is a number of novels about Spain before and during the Civil War, for example *Le Colleurr d'affiches* (1959), which relates the tensions between fascists and communists before the Civil War. Other examples are *Le Manège espagnol* (1960), *La Nuit du décret* (1981) and *Le Crime des pères*

(1993). Spain is a recurrent theme in the author's production. It is a country that is looked upon with a rather critical eye at the beginning of his career, but which is regarded more benignly in the later work. Spain gradually comes to be seen as a country to love, not with restrictive love but with boundless love, as del Castillo puts it himself in *Dictionnaire amoureux de l'Espagne* (2005:12). Another thematic line in del Castillo's work is provided by those novels which express a sort of dialogue with literary role models. For example in *Mon frère l'idiot* (1995), it is Dostoevsky who is addressed, and in *Colette. Une certaine France*, the narrating I reflects on the famous French female writer. Michel del Castillo's cultural or historical essays form a third type of writing. His book on Algeria, *Algérie, l'extase et le sang* (2002) and the historical essay on the Franco era in Spain, *Le Temps de Franco* (2008) are two examples. The problematization of the link between fiction and historical reality is a constantly recurring theme in del Castillo's work. The author tends to present possible versions of the socio-historical past by means of a sort of personal hermeneutics which he dramatizes in the literary text. In his foreword to the novel *Les Portes du sang* (2004: 9-10), del Castillo praises the potential of literature and questions the validity of the frequent attempts made to interpret his texts as autobiographies. Another central subject in del Castillo's work is the idea of literature as witnessing. The literary text is seen as an act of experiencing the world on a profound level, both culturally and psychologically. At the same time, del Castillo is aware of the specificity of literature and of its limitations as a mediator of factual reality. He insists on the fact that literature is not an activity that is cut off from reality. This he has shown in *Le Crime des pères*, where he demonstrates how literature can be an active force in real life. In *De père français*, he also shows how literature intervenes in the protagonist's own life and becomes the reason why he survives.

3. Overview of Translations

The table below lists Michel del Castillo's principal literary production and the translations into Swedish and Spanish.

Michel del Castillo's Works ²

Translations

| <i>Novels</i> | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Tanguy</i> (1957) | Swedish, Spanish |
| <i>La Guitare</i> (1958) | Spanish |
| <i>Le Colleur d'affiches</i> (1959) | Swedish |
| <i>La Mort de Tristan</i> (1959) | Spanish |
| <i>Le Manège espagnol</i> (1960) | Spanish |

²Sources: Pueyo Dolader (2001: 229-231) and https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_del_Castillo

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| | |
|---|---------|
| <i>Tara</i> (1962) | |
| <i>Les louves de l'Escurial</i> (1964) | Spanish |
| <i>Les Aveux interdits : Le Faiseur de rêves</i> (1965) | |
| <i>Les Aveux interdits : Les Premières Illusions</i> (1966) | |
| <i>Gérardo Lain</i> (1967) | |
| <i>Le Vent de la nuit</i> (1972) | |
| <i>Le Silence des pierres</i> (1975) | |
| <i>Le Sortilège espagnol</i> (1977) | |
| <i>Les cyprès meurent en Italie</i> (1979) | |
| <i>La Nuit du décret</i> (1981) | Spanish |
| <i>La Gloire de Dina</i> (1984) | |
| <i>La Halte et le Chemin</i> (1985) | |
| <i>Le Démon de l'oubli</i> (1987) | |
| <i>Mort d'un poète</i> (1989) | |
| <i>Une femme en soi</i> (1991) | |
| <i>Le Crime des pères</i> (1993) | Spanish |
| <i>Rue des Archives</i> (1994) | Spanish |
| <i>Le Sortilège espagnol : les Officiants de la mort</i> (1996) | |
| <i>La Tunique d'infamie</i> (1997) | |
| <i>De père français</i> (1998) | Spanish |
| <i>Les Étoiles froides</i> (2001) | |
| <i>Colette en voyage</i> (2002) | |
| <i>Les Portes du sang</i> (2003) | |
| <i>Sortie des artistes</i> (2004) | |
| <i>La Religieuse de Madrigal</i> (2006) | Spanish |
| <i>La Vie mentie</i> (2007) | |
| <i>Mamita</i> (2010) | |
| | |
| Plays | |
| <i>Une répétition</i> (2002) | |
| <i>Le Jour d</i> (2003) | |
| <i>La Mémoire de Grenade</i> (2005) | |
| | |
| Essays | |

| | |
|--|---------|
| <i>Les Écrous de la haine</i> (1968) | |
| <i>Seville</i> (1986) | |
| <i>Andalousie</i> (1991) | |
| <i>Carlos Pradal</i> (1993), with <i>Yves Belaubre</i> | |
| <i>Mon frère l'Idiot</i> (1995) | Spanish |
| <i>Colette, une certaine France</i> (1999) | |
| <i>L'Adieu au siècle, journal de l'année 1999</i> (2000) | |
| <i>Droit d'auteur</i> (2000) | |
| <i>Algérie, l'extase et le sang</i> (2002) | |
| <i>Dictionnaire amoureux de L'Espagne</i> (2005) | |
| <i>Le Temps de Franco</i> (2008) | |
| <i>Goya</i> (2015) | |

As far as del Castillo's place in the French literary canon is concerned, one could say that his work has gone through all the stages described by Dubois (2005), namely *émergence*, *reconnaissance*, *consécration*, and *conservation*. As we have seen he has been awarded prestigious French literary prizes and is a writer who is read and discussed in France up to the present time. Moreover, he has been a member of the *Académie Royale de langues et de littérature françaises de Belgique* since 1997. But looking at the selection of books translated into Swedish and Spanish, one is struck by a significant difference. The translation of del Castillo into Swedish concerns only two works, both from his very early production. The translations were published shortly after the original texts had been written. The translation of the author's texts into Spanish—altogether eleven works—follows another pattern. Even though a few translations into Spanish were made of his early texts soon after their creation, little attention was given to this at the time. The majority of the translations into Spanish took place in the 1990s and early 2000s and concerned the novels depicting Spanish society during the Franco era.

4. The reception of del Castillo's works in Sweden

4.1 Few translations into Swedish

Only two novels, *Tanguy* (*Tanguy. Ett barn i vår tid*, 1959) and *Le Colleur d'affiches* (*Affischklistraren*, 1960) have been translated into Swedish, both by a translator of Finnish origin, Elisabeth von Törne-Arfwedson, and both published by the Bonniers publishing house. One short story, *La Vieille dame du Sacré-Coeur* (*Den gamla damen vid Sacré-Coeur*), was published in the daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* in 1960, translated by Ingemar Leckius and Michaela Berg. What kind of novels were translated into Swedish and what did the Swedish critics focus on in their reviews? What can be said about the accumulation of symbolic capital in Sweden as far as Michel del Castillo's production is concerned?

4.2 The appreciation of the psychological and spiritual message

Starting with articles in the Swedish national daily newspapers, one can see that they concern four novels written by del Castillo, all belonging to the early part of his career. Apart from the two translated novels mentioned above, two other texts, *La Guitare* (1958), del Castillo's second novel, and *La Mort de Tristan* (1959), his fourth novel, are briefly commented upon. The main focus in the Swedish press is on the novel *Tanguy*. The publication of *Tanguy* in its original version in French was reviewed positively by Swedish critics and one area of interest that the critics focused on was the psychological and spiritual content of this novel. Gunnell Vallquist, in an article entitled "Det mänskligas seger" (The Victory of the Human Aspect) in *Svenska Dagbladet*, on September 2, 1957, reviewed two French books by authors who had experienced life in the concentration camps, one of which being del Castillo's *Tanguy*. Here Vallquist discusses Man's fundamental resources of cruelty, something that is always there and which can be mobilized at any moment. She also states that peace is something that exists on the surface only, something visible but not necessarily profoundly established. In addition to this, Vallquist writes about the fluid border between active and passive executioners and gives as examples *Tanguy*'s suffering in Nazi Germany, but also in a reformatory in Spain after the war, two environments where executioners (in the physical as well as in the psychological sense) were to be found, not only during the war itself but also after it. She is extremely positive in her comments on del Castillo's book and expresses her astonishment that somebody who has been through all the suffering depicted in the novel can still grow and reach such an imposing spiritual stature. This transpires clearly in the following comment: "No document is more apt to make us believe in the potential of the human spirit than this novel" (my translation).³ Vallquist focuses particularly on the transmission of hope and of a belief in Man's invincibility that the novel expresses. In *Dagens Nyheter* (10 September 1959), Ingrid Arvidsson writes, on the occasion of the publication of Elisabeth Törne Arfwedson's translation into Swedish of *Tanguy* in 1959, about the century of the child. Arvidsson contrasts Man's instinct for survival with a child's unknown inner strength in *Tanguy* on the one hand with the pedagogical debate of the time on the other. This debate often dealt with the need to give children security and a sheltered "child-centred" upbringing. It is interesting to note that this discussion with its focus on security took place during the Cold War and that this concern is something that appears in stark contrast to the proximity of the Second World War and the possibility of the outbreak of a third war. Arvidsson also draws attention to the absence of hate and bitterness in del Castillo's novel and is impressed by the child's ability to live through the worst chamber of horrors without being broken down. She stresses that the book is not about justice but about the existence of miracles. The book is about the survival of a child in the century of the child, she continues. Evert Lundström in *Expressen* (3 March 1958) also focuses on the absence of bitterness in the book and argues that del Castillo has come to play

³"Intet dokument kan vara bättre ägnat att stärka ens tro på det mänskliga än denna roman".

the role of a confessor and a confidant for a great number of people with similar experiences of the war as those of the author. Lundström also stresses the novel's role as a historical document.

A small number of interesting analyses of del Castillo's early work discuss the relationship between French literature and the war and use *Tanguy* as an illustration. Many of them were written by Gunnel Vallquist. She provides for example an analytical survey of the French novel of the time and its relationship with the *Nouveau Roman* in her article "Människor i krig" [People at War] in *Svenska Dagbladet* (31 March 1959). Vallquist identifies two main tendencies in the French literature of the time. One tendency is characterized by a lack of political engagement, a trend that is often decadent, while the other one expresses a political and societal involvement. Vallquist identifies two strands in the latter. The first comprises authors who experienced the Second World War. These writers belong to an older generation and were so to speak already "politically engaged" during their youth. The second type of authors is those who, according to Vallquist, write about colonial problems and about the demands for freedom made by the inhabitants of the former French colonies.⁴

Swedish provincial newspapers also wrote about del Castillo's novels and the focus was similar to that in the national newspapers. In *Sundsvalls Tidning* (28 August 1959), Örjan Wallquist claimed that del Castillo's message in *Tanguy* makes him an important European voice, calling the book a heroic document. In *Östersunds-Posten* (10 September 1959), Carl-Göran Ekerwald voiced a similar opinion to Vallquist, claiming that the book conveys no less than a miracle as it is a living proof of the fact that a human being is capable of keeping faith, hope and love alive although he has been through hell already as a child. A critical voice is however heard in an article published in *Uppsala Nya Tidning* on 12 January 1961. The critic, writing under the pseudonym *Tone*, considers that del Castillo uses violent scenes for entertainment purposes and should be looked upon as an amateur with literary ambitions.

4.3 The novels as war documents

A few articles in the national press tried to evaluate del Castillo's literary production. In *Expressen* (16 November 1959), Evert Lundström wrote a summary of del Castillo's works until that time. He considers that del Castillo's books are alternately good and disappointing. The first novel *Tanguy* was excellent, the second one, however, *La Guitare*, was too dreamy and unrealistic. The third novel, *Le Colleur d'affiches*, was a realistic and straightforward story about the Spanish Civil War (basically a positive assessment of the book), whereas the fourth novel, *La Mort de Tristan* was second-rate and not convincing. Gunnel Vallquist generally agrees with this evaluation of del Castillo's production and says about the two less well-written

⁴Interestingly enough, Glissant's novel *La Lézarde* (a text that represents the literary tendency of *antillanité* and other post-colonial literary concerns) and del Castillo's third novel *Le Colleur d'affiches* (a text dealing with war themes) are treated by Vallquist in the same article.

books in an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* (11 January 1960) that this shortcoming could be due to the author's youth and lack of experience. She also comments that it seems as if del Castillo needs the historical framework in order for his books to become genuine literary creations, taking *Tanguy* and *Le Colleur d'affiches*, which were in fact written against a historical background, as proof of this. As has already been seen, Vallquist esteems the writing of the young del Castillo highly. She continued reading and commenting on his work in Swedish newspapers for some time. Thus, in *Svenska Dagbladet* (25 March 1961), she published a review of the original version of del Castillo's next novel, *Le Manège espagnol*, and described it as the author's best book so far from a formal point of view. The novel is a well-written satire of Spanish society and the plot is good, it is a sort of picaresque novel filtered through Stendhal, Vallquist writes. After this, not much more is said about del Castillo in the cultural sections of the Swedish daily press.⁵

4.4 Remarks on del Castillo's style

In order to see how Michel del Castillo's books acquired symbolic capital in Sweden it is also important to study reviews of his work in some literary magazines and prestige periodicals. In *Ny Tid* (29 November 1960), Torsten Söderling focuses on del Castillo's wish to be objective when writing about the development of Spanish society in the 20th century. The ambition to give a balanced picture of both sides in the Civil War is something that del Castillo will return to himself in his comment on the background of his book *Le Temps de Franco* some forty years later. In *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, there are a few texts dealing with del Castillo's early production. Margit Abenius, in an article entitled "Skärseldar" (*Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, no 8, 1959: 719), raises a topic that was also discussed in the Swedish daily newspapers: Tanguy's incredible survival instinct, something that del Castillo renders in its literary form in a most convincing way. Abenius also discusses the topic of Spain as a country of paradox where both austereness and noble spirit as well as courage and mercy coexist, thus creating an elevated spiritual environment. In an article with the title "Spanien 1936" (*Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, no 8, 1960: 690-691), Bo Widerberg generally evaluates *Le Colleur d'affiches* very positively. But he also expresses some criticism, saying that the author has not quite succeeded in bringing general truths (for example the existence of injustice) down to the level of individual truth in his text. Widerberg also comments on stylistic aspects, remarking that it remains to be seen for how long del Castillo will be able to go on using his bare and naked style. The fact that the author often lets atrocity be clearly visible in the text without any type of mediation could be an obstacle for the author's further development, according to Widerberg.

It is clear that the translation into Swedish concerns Michel del Castillo's early production. His international best-seller *Tanguy* was translated and a couple of the

⁵The legendary introducer of French literature in Sweden, Carl Gustaf Bjurström, in a short note in *Dagens Nyheter* on 7 November 1981, wrote that del Castillo's *La Nuit du décret* was one of the candidates for the *Goncourt* Prize.

following novels as well. His later production dealing with Spain's modern history from a novelist's point of view has not been translated, nor have the cultural essays about Spain. The two full novels translated into Swedish are both the work of the translator Elisabeth von Törne-Arfwedson, about whom very little information can be found. A search in the Swedish national library catalogue, *Libris*, showed that she has translated some eight books into Swedish from English, French and Italian. *Svenskt översättarlexikon (Swedish Dictionary of Translators)* also lists a translation into Swedish of *The Fountain Overflows* (1956) by Rebecca West, translated in 1957 as *Källan flödar*.⁶

Michel del Castillo has been awarded no literary prizes in Sweden, nor has his later career been followed or commented upon by the cultural media in the country. His position in Sweden cannot be said to be a dynamic and living one and he cannot be said to be a legitimized author as far as his entire career is concerned. However, his two translated early novels could be said to be part of a legitimization process that was limited in time since they were positively evaluated by prominent critics and also reviewed in the prestigious literary magazine *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*. His book *Tanguy* is still read in Sweden and in 2005 a recorded version of the Swedish translation of this novel was released. Considering this fact, one could say that the legitimization process concerning del Castillo in Sweden is "dynamic" in the sense that it was intense at the beginning of his career, then faded, but did not completely disappear since parts of his work are still given attention today.

5. Michel del Castillo's works in Spain

The partly Spanish origin and the Spanish subject matter of the novels of del Castillo make it interesting to look at the translation of his work into Spanish. However, only an overview is given here and a more detailed description remains to be carried out.

To a certain extent Michel del Castillo can be looked upon as an author who writes himself into a thematic field already existing in French literature: the theme of Spain. This phenomenon in French literature can be seen already in work by Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo for example.⁷ A Spanish researcher, Carmen Molina Romero (2003), discusses what she calls del Castillo's conceptual bilingualism, his language being French but his content being Spanish. However, in spite of the fact that Michel del Castillo writes about Spain, he remained unknown in Spain for a long time. Carmen Mata Barreiro (2012: 273), discussing the reception of del Castillo's work in Spain, concludes that from the Spanish point of view he was seen as a *French* author from the beginning of his career and onwards. It was not until the publication of Olga Beltrán de Nanclare's translation into Spanish of *Tanguy* in 1999 that he really started to become recognised in his

⁶The translation is by Håkan Bergstedt, which according to the dictionary in question is a pseudonym for von Törne-Arfwedson.

⁷This is something that the Swedish critics at the end of the 1950s (for example Vallquist) seem fully aware of.

native land. As has been shown, a very small part of del Castillo's production had been translated into Spanish before this late date. But in the first years of the new millennium, the important novels dealing with Spanish 20th century history were published in Spanish: *De père français* as *De padre francés* in 2000, *Rue des Archives* as *Calle de los archivos* in 2002, and *Le Crime des pères* as *El crimen de los padres* in 2005.

As has been seen, Michel del Castillo is one of several exiled Spanish writers living in France. In her book about migration literature in French, Ursula Mathis-Moser (2012: 25) mentions among others Fernando Arrabal and Jorge Semprún in this group, commenting that France received these authors but did not give them the status of political refugees. Mathis-Moser also states that the writing of all these authors is politically engaged, even though they are very different in their styles and themes. In the case of Michel del Castillo, the question of maimed identity is the central issue.⁸ While del Castillo can be seen as a French writer continuing the theme of Spain in French literature, he can also be seen as an author forming part of a literary tradition characterized by the wish to convey Spanish history in writing, but in the French language. More of this can be found in the research carried out by Maryse Bertrand de Muñoz, for example in the book *La Guerre civile espagnole et la Littérature française* (1972).

Another way of looking upon Michel del Castillo's work in the Spanish context would be to consider his writing from the point of view of contemporary Spanish literature. His oeuvre can be seen as part of a literary tendency taking an interest in Spanish history after the war, something that can be found in Spanish language literature published during the past ten to fifteen years. As Ulf Eriksson (2011) has shown by referring to the seventh volume of the new Spanish literary history directed by José Carlos Mainer, *Derrota y restitución de la modernidad 1939-2010* and written by Gracia & Ródenas (2011), there was a heated debate in Spain about the democratic process (*la transición*) after the death of Francisco Franco in 1975. A book on Michel del Castillo and his Spanish past in the city of Huesca in the nineteen fifties was also published by Olga Pueyo Dolader in 2011. The book bears the title *El crimen de los padres en la narrativa oscense de Michel del Castillo*. The topics discussed in Spain after Franco's death concerned among other things the silence about the past civil war and the unexplained disappearance of a number of people. This subject is dealt with not only by literature but also in a number of films. The theatre and literature researcher María Delgado (2014) has shown how the attitude in Spanish official cultural and societal discourse to the fate of the executed poet Federico García Lorca can be said to illustrate a fairly common way of looking upon the past. According to Delgado who has studied the poet's role in the cultural climate in Spain, the fact that Lorca's corpse still has not been found and identified can be seen as the ultimate sign of reluctance to remember that is typical of Spain

⁸ In the works of Fernando Arrabal, the central issue is exploring violence and provocation, while Jorge Semprún writes about freedom, evil and the function of language and fiction in the transmission of memories.

today. Still, this unwillingness is accompanied by a certain receptivity to the past. The new-born interest in translations of del Castillo's work in Spain should probably also be seen in the light of this. If one takes this into consideration, Michel del Castillo is also an author who continues a line within Spanish literature itself, not only within French literature, something that would strengthen the idea of his cultural and conceptual bilingualism.

Michel del Castillo's novel *Tanguy* and his main novels on 20th century Spain have come to fit into the intellectual debate in contemporary Spain. His place there seems a fairly dynamic and living one. If we return to the idea of the dynamics of legitimization discussed above, one can say that del Castillo's degree of legitimization is stronger in Spain today than in Sweden. In the late nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties the situation was the opposite. His degree of legitimization was then higher in Sweden than in Spain.

6. Conclusion

The discussion in this article has concerned the themes focused on by Swedish critics in their comments on Michel del Castillo's books as well as on the notions of consecration, legitimization and symbolic capital. In view of the author's origin and literary subject matter, the Spanish translations of his work were also brought up in order to provide an object of comparison.

The translation of *Tanguy* into Swedish at an early stage (the late nineteen-fifties) coincided with an international tendency. The book was a success when it was first published and the topic of a child during the Second World War was a topical one at the time. The novel was thus rapidly translated into many languages, though not into Spanish. Among the important Swedish critics at the time, there was also a high level of understanding for the sublime and mystical aspects of the novel *Tanguy*. The novel *Le Colleur d'affiches* also meets high standards and was appreciated by Swedish critics. Consequently, it was also rapidly translated into Swedish. The other two early novels that the Swedish critics wrote negatively about were not translated, however. The link between literary criticism and translation often seems obvious. The political situation in Spain explains the absence of translations into Spanish of the two early novels, given their political content. The two novels characterized by a more fictional story-line (and which Swedish critics thought were melodramatic) were translated into Spanish at an early stage, albeit after some hesitation. After this there was a long period of silence which lasted until the late nineteen-nineties as far as the transfer of del Castillo's texts into Spanish is concerned. This silence can be explained by the political situation in Spain and echoes the situation of Spanish literature in Spain during that period.

In answer to why translations of del Castillo into Swedish ceased after the early sixties, the following explanations can be suggested. It may be due to the fact that the quality of del Castillo's writing was judged to be too uneven and that the publishing houses then lost interest. Another explanation is probably the themes he dealt with in his later books, which may have been considered too closely concerned with Spanish society to be of interest to Swedish readers. Another reason is that del

Castillo himself published less in the mid-sixties and only started writing more regularly again in the seventies. When he eventually did so, there were no critics in Sweden who were still interested in his books, which led to a situation where nothing was translated. As we know, Gunnel Vallquist was to move on to other interests within the field of literary transmission, i. e. the translation into Swedish of Marcel Proust.

A straightforward, linear insertion into the scheme of legitimization proposed by Jacques Dubois seems problematic when looking at Michel del Castillo's position in Sweden and Spain. The legitimization process of Michel del Castillo's works via translation has been but incompletely achieved in Swedish and Spanish due, of course, to the lack of translations. As has been seen, consecration is a temporary and performative act at the same time as it gives the author a sacralized status, something that is not temporary but timeless. Consecration is performed by institutions or by prestigious persons. Thus it is conditioned by several things, e.g. certain critics being in favour of the topic of the book, the literary climate in general welcoming a particular subject matter, but also the societal context and climate. In the nineteen-fifties the questions raised by the Second World War were still discussed in Sweden and at the same time some prominent literary critics who were familiar with continental European philosophical and spiritual thought actively participated in the cultural debate. Gunnel Vallquist was the most important of these intellectuals active in the daily press and when she ceased to take an interest in del Castillo's work, no more translations into Swedish appeared. In Spain, the existence of translations is linked to the general debate in society there and to the cultural discourse on the country's totalitarian past a certain number of years after the death of Francisco Franco. The accumulation of symbolic capital is important in the legitimization process, which is a dynamic phenomenon that is more or less intense if looked upon from a chronological point of view. It is also moveable in space. As has been seen in this study, the accumulation of symbolic capital was in effect in Sweden between 1957 and approximately 1961, whereas in Spain it started around 1999 and still continues since it coincides with societal discourse in that country. Looked upon from a distance, this development contributes to the accumulation of symbolic capital for Michel del Castillo on a global level.

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