

TRANSLATION AS A MEASURE OF LITERARY DOMINATION: THE CASE OF QUEBEC LITERATURE TRANSLATED IN SPAIN (1975-2004)

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Abstract

Recent literary manifestos claim that “the center is no longer the center” (*Le Devoir* 2007). Indeed, it is generally admitted that Quebec literature has been more or less independent from the French field since the 1970's. However, the analysis of the translation of this literature –its international circulation, and the almost compulsory stopover in France before being selected for translation by the agents of other literary fields– reveals various mechanisms through which the French symbolic center still exerts its power. Drawing on the application of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture to the international space (Casanova 1999; Sapiro 2007, 2008; etc.), this article argues that translation could be considered as the ultimate variable when testing literary domination, especially in the case of peripheral fields claiming independence. I will illustrate this through the case of Quebec literature translated in Spain (into Spanish and Catalan) between 1975 and 2004.

Resumen

Ciertos manifiestos literarios recientes alegan que “el centro ya no es más el centro” (*Le Devoir* 2007). Y de hecho, es algo comúnmente aceptado que, desde los años setenta, la literatura de Quebec es relativamente independiente con respecto al campo literario francés. No obstante, el análisis de la traducción de esta literatura –su circulación internacional y su paso casi obligatorio por Francia antes de traducirse en otros campos literarios– pone de manifiesto los distintos mecanismos que, todavía hoy, emplea el centro simbólico francés para ejercer su influencia. A partir de una aplicación de la sociología del campo de Pierre Bourdieu al espacio literario internacional (Casanova 1999; Sapiro 2007, 2008; etc.), en el presente artículo se sostiene que la traducción puede considerarse como una variable imprescindible a la hora de “medir”

la dominación literaria, especialmente la de los campos periféricos que dicen ser independientes. Ilustraré este aspecto por medio del caso de la literatura quebequesa traducida en España (en español y en catalán) entre 1975 y 2004.

Keywords

Pierre Bourdieu. Sociology of translation. International literary space. Translation and literary domination. Quebec literature in Spain.

Palabras clave

Pierre Bourdieu. Sociología de la traducción. Espacio literario internacional. Traducción y dominación literaria. Literatura quebequesa en España.

*Le centre, ce point depuis lequel était supposée rayonner
une littérature franco-française, n'est plus le centre.
(Le Devoir, 24 mars 2007)*

Recently, much has been written about the “Sociological Turn” in Translation Studies. While new ground has been broken, I propose to see this shift as an advance within the descriptive paradigm developed in the 1970’s (known as Descriptive Translation Studies, or DTS, and predicated on Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory), rather than as a total “paradigmatic shift”, as Inghilleri (2005: 125) put it in the issue of *The Translator* entitled *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Translation and Interpreting*.

Granted, in its earliest formulations, Polysystem Theory and DTS had been accused of overlooking questions concerning power relationships between social groups or polities. As Gentzler put it, Even-Zohar seldom related texts to the “real conditions” of their production, but only to hypothetical structural models and abstract generalizations (1993: 123). Nevertheless, albeit implicitly, the social dimension was present in the early works of DTS scholars. It is important to remember that the dynamic functionalism that inspired Even-Zohar’s Polysystem Theory had little to do with static and a-historical Structuralism *à la Saussure*, with which it has often been mistakenly identified, and in addition, DTS scholars progressively moved toward more sociologically oriented approaches. For instance, Even-Zohar himself, between 1978, the publication date of his *Papers on Historical Poetics*, and 1990, when the revision of that paper was published in *Poetics Today*, had familiarized himself with Pierre Bourdieu’s work, which he deemed “fascinating” (1990: 3). By the 1990’s, Toury had modified his formalist orientation to adopt a more sociological point of view (see Toury 1999), and Hermans, in his *Translation in Systems* (1999), had insisted on redefining Polysystem Theory in light of Pierre Bourdieu’s and Luhmann’s models.

That said, what does seem to be new is the way in which questions related to translation as a social practice –studied through the prism of the agents and institutions involved, or the social conditions of the circulation and reception of translations –are being tackled. No longer resorting to the help of

rather vague terms such as “patronage” (Lefevre) or “norms” (Toury), scholars are now articulating these questions within more elaborate models, such as Bourdieu’s Sociology of Fields.

While Translation Studies scholars have become more and more interested in Bourdieu, Bourdieu scholars have also become more interested in translation. In passing, it is important to mention that Bourdieu himself did not talk *per se* about translation until the very end of his career. Indeed, given that his field was conceived, at least ideo-typically, as monolithic, homogenous and imminently national, it comes as no surprise that the intercultural practice of translation was not a privileged object of study for the French sociologist. However, in 1989, during a conference at the University of Freiburg, Bourdieu proposed what he referred to as “a science of international relationships in the field of culture”, where translation was addressed.

The paper presented at this conference, “The social conditions of an international circulation of ideas”, was published in 1990 in an issue of *Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte/Cahiers d’histoire des littératures romanes* and later, posthumously, in December 2002 in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, the prestigious French journal that Bourdieu had founded.

Bourdieu would not later return to the question of translation, but between his presentation at Freiburg and the publication of the paper in *Actes* in December 2002, his disciple Pascale Casanova had published *La République mondiale des lettres* (1999), in which she applied Bourdieu’s sociology of fields to what she called the “international literary space”, and in so doing, elevated the scope of his model to the international level.

Rejecting simplistic superposition between literary and political spaces, Casanova presented an emerging regime of inequality where dominated languages and literatures are subject to the symbolic violence of their dominant counterparts. In this hierarchical universe, translation has two main functions: translation-consecration (i.e. in which writers from dominated literary fields are translated by the central fields, who hold the authority to determine what literature is), and translation-accumulation (i.e. in which dominated fields translate the “classics” in order to accumulate symbolic capital).

Other Bourdieu disciples, working at his Centre de sociologie européenne, would enlarge the model to a global sociological analysis of the circulation of books. In order to do so, they specifically returned to the question of translation, which became a central preoccupation. In September 2002, eight months after Bourdieu’s death, an entire issue of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* was dedicated to the role of translation in international literary exchanges. The issue, directed by Gisèle Sapiro and Johan Heilbron,

proposes a specifically sociological approach to literary translation. According to the editors (2007: 95), this approach “take[s] into account several aspects of the conditions of transnational circulation of cultural goods: first of all the structure of the field of international cultural exchanges; secondly, the types of constraints, –political and economic– that influence these exchanges; and thirdly, the agents of intermediation and the processes of importing and receiving in the recipient country” (Heilbron and Sapiro 2007: 95).

It is precisely this Bourdieu-inspired sociology of translation –fed by the contributions from Bourdieu’s disciples interested in translation, as much as from DTS scholars interested in Bourdieu– from which this article will borrow its theoretical foundations. In what follows, I will focus on a particular literary exchange, the translation of Quebec literature in Spain, into Spanish and Catalan, from 1975 to 2004. I will start by situating the Quebec literary field within the international literary space theorized by Casanova, before concentrating on the literary exchange in question, in particular the international circulation of the Quebec literature *before* being translated in Spain (i.e. the role of France). I will finally analyze three case-studies that will allow me to illustrate the different forms of the domination mechanisms in this triangular Quebec-France-Spain transfer.

1. Is Quebec literature as independent as its agents claim?

French-Canadian identity became *Québécois* after the Quiet Revolution of the 1960’s. This revolution involved a transition from an ideo-typical identity based on three main ideological axes –agriculturalism, anti-statism and messianism¹– to a new identity equipped with a political content and rooted in a well-delimited territorial space, Quebec. The existence and development of Quebec literature from the 1960’s, as something independent from the French literary field, is tightly linked to this awareness of a collective Québécois national identity. In other words, the *independence*² of the Quebec literary field rests on national foundations.

1. That is, the fact of being an agricultural and rural society, faithful to its country traditions (agriculturalism), the fact that a national destiny is not accomplished around political institutions, but religious ones (anti-statism), and the fact that the providential fate of the French-Canadian “race” is to be spread along the North American continent (messianism), rather than to be limited to a specific territorial entity.

2. A word of caution concerning the term independence is nevertheless necessary here. Independence, as I am using the term, refers to the detachment of Quebec literature from the French literary field, both from its literary norms, and also from its publishing and critical apparatus. I am therefore talking about Quebec literature becoming a field in a Bourdieusian sense, i.e. having its own agents and practices, its own stakes and symbolic

By the 1970's, once the institutionalisation of the Quebec field had been consolidated, not only were Quebec authors not "following" the French norm, but the French center was no longer "decreeing" what was to be retained or rejected in Quebec as "good" literature (Thério 1992). In other words, in order to be legitimated in Quebec, Quebec authors no longer needed to travel to France to obtain their "certificate of literariness" (Casanova 1999). This does not mean, however, that France stopped being a magnet for certain Quebec authors. In fact, as I will show, being published in France has been for certain Quebec authors not only a way to be recognized internationally, and thus get translated, but also a strategy to sell more copies back home, in Quebec.

Although the imprimatur of France has not been strictly necessary for Quebec writers to succeed domestically since the 1970's, I will show, through the examination of translation flows, that when it is a question of exporting Quebec authors, the French "verdict" continues to be of prime importance (and not for instance, or not so far, the verdict of other literary centers, like the American³, British or German). Accordingly, I will argue in this article

struggles, and its own instances of production (i.e. publishing houses), legitimation (critical apparatus) and consecration (school), independent from those of the French. One could argue that while the Quebec literary field becomes independent from France, it also becomes more dependent on national and political imperatives, that is, on the Quebec State, but also the Canadian State, whose patronage has guaranteed its development and export since the 1960's. To avoid any kind of confusion –and given that the "angle of vision" in this article is not that of the center– I will use the term independence (proposed by Aron 1995) to talk about the relationship of the Quebec literary field to that of the French, and heteronomy/autonomy when talking about the relationship of a field (central or not) to external economic forces.

3. The importance of other literary centers, such as the American one (it could be thought as a second magnet for Quebec authors, who are, after all, North American), does not seem to be at stake in the transfer in question. In part, this is due to the 1972 inauguration of the Canada Council Translation Grant Program (which promotes and funds the exchanges between the literatures of Canada), through which most English translations of Quebec works have been published in Canada by Canadian publishers. Needless to say, the English-Canadian literary field does not seem to have enough of a central position (economic or symbolic) to act as a legitimating center. Yet even in the case of Quebec authors passing through the U.S. field, the American legitimation does not seem to have had an impact on Spanish publishers and their selections for translation. I am thinking in particular of the case of Marie- Claire Blais' novel *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel*, which was legitimated in France (it won the prestigious Médicis prize), but also, and more importantly, (I would say), in the U.S., where it was prefaced by the eminent American critic Edmund Wilson, "the broker of Blais' American career" (Grutman 2006: 34), as well as published and globally distributed by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, an important New York publisher. That Wilson's preface was reprinted in the Italian, Mexican and Danish translations (*ibid.*) was a sign of the influence of the U.S. translation (i.e. legitimation) at an international level. The novel has not, however, been translated in Spain.

that translation could be considered as the ultimate variable when testing literary domination, especially in the case of peripheral fields claiming to be independent.

2. Quebec literature translated in Spain: a triangular transfer

The literary exchange that I will be looking at consists of 77 Quebec fictional works (listed in the appendix) translated into Spanish and into Catalan in Spain between 1975, a key date in contemporary Spanish history (the end of Franco's dictatorship), and 2004, the date at which I started my research.

The first problem one must face in developing such a corpus is how exactly to define "Quebec literature". Is a Quebec work one written by an author born in Quebec? (what do we do then with all the foreign-born authors, known as migrant authors –*écrivains migrants*– and clearly considered as Quebeckers by the Quebec literary institution?); by an author who lives in Quebec? (but for how long does an author have to live in Quebec to be considered part of the Quebec literary field?); who has their work published in Quebec? (does this mean that Quebec authors who choose to publish in France should be excluded for this corpus?); who talks about Quebec? (so a Japanese author writing about Quebec should then be included in this corpus?).

To avoid these potential objections, I have restricted my corpus using the Bourdieusian notion of "trajectory", defined as the series of positions that agents occupy in a given field. Consequently, I have retained those authors whose trajectory is intimately linked with the Quebec literary field, that is, authors who have actively "taken position" (Bourdieu 1992) in this field by publishing articles in journals or magazines, who have membership in its writer's associations, who attend conferences, etc. In summary, authors who participate in the symbolic struggles of the Quebec field.

While one of the most salient trends in this corpus as defined is precisely its diversity, the trend that will retain my attention in this article has to do with the international circulation of Quebec literary products: the almost compulsory "stopover" of Quebec fictional works in France before being selected for translation in Spain. In other words, the majority of the Quebecois works chosen to be translated into Spanish in Spain, and to a lesser extent into Catalan, depend on their previous legitimization by the agents of the French literary field, who seem to have the power to decide not only which Quebecois authors are published in France, but also which are published in Spain.

This form of dependence, or domination, with respect to the French center, does not express itself exactly in the same way in every case. Generally speaking, the corpus under study reveals three main forms of domination, that I will qualify as (1) direct domination, (2) indirect (symbolic and economic) domination, and (3) zero domination.

The direct domination group comprises translations of Quebec authors in which the Spanish publisher bought the translation rights directly from the French publisher, whether a Quebec edition (previous or simultaneous to the French one) existed or not. This is the case, for instance, of the translations of Anne Hébert, Nelly Arcan, Jacques Folch-Ribas, and Madeleine Gagnon, among others, a full 33% of the corpus of adult Quebec fiction translated in Spain.

The indirect domination group embraces cases in which, although the translation rights are bought from the Quebec publisher, “passing through” the French center is practically a requirement for the author to be selected for translation by Spanish publishers. This form of domination can be symbolic (i.e. the previous legitimation of the Quebec work by the agents, publishers or critics of the French literary field) or simply economic (i.e. it is a question of distribution: French publishers, even the small ones, often because of simple reasons of geographic proximity, can more easily distribute and promote the work among Spanish publishers). This is the case, for instance, of the translations of Gaétan Soucy, Ying Chen, Yves Beauchemin, and Émile Ollivier for symbolic domination, and Élise Turcotte or Agop Jack Hacikyan, for instance, in the economic domination category. The number of works in this second category amounts to 44 % of the corpus of adult Quebec fiction translated in Spain.

Finally, the third group, “zero domination”, consists of a minority of works (for adults). It is the case, for instance, of the translations of works by Nicole Brossard, Marie Célie Agnant and Jean-Paul Filion. As I will discuss, most of these authors will have to pay a price for not getting “French approval” before being translated in Spain. This third group also includes a very distinct category: Quebec children’s literature. In this case, the stopover in France, whether for symbolic or economic reasons, is rarely required. As we will see later, the central position of Quebec’s children literature within the sub-field of international children’s literature could explain the discrepancy from the trend observed in the adult literature.

3. Case Studies

The first two case studies will follow a chronological order. From the translations of Anne Hébert's works of the 1960's and 70's, I will pass to a contemporary case, Gaétan Soucy's Spanish and Catalan translations. This will allow me to show to what extent the evolution of the relations of domination between the Quebec and the French literary fields have had an impact on the transfer of Quebec authors to Spain. The last section focuses on a specific sub-corpus, children's literature.

3.1 *Publishing in Paris to sell more copies in Quebec (and everywhere else): the case of Anne Hébert*

Born in Quebec in 1916, Anne Hébert moved to Paris in the mid-1950's, where she would spend most of her career. Her literary trajectory (Bourdieu 1992) outside of Quebec and the fact that all her novels were published by the French publisher Le Seuil would not prevent her from being considered a true Quebec author and an important part of the Quebec literary canon. Furthermore, as we will see in the course of this section, not only does a Quebec imaginary haunt her fictional works, but her reception and success can be said, after all, to be mainly concentrated in Quebec, however international (mainly Parisian) Quebec critics and other agents tend to (re)present the acclaim of her work.

The question to ask is whether Anne Hébert would have been so celebrated by the agents of the Quebec literary field if she had not first been legitimated in France. Although it is difficult to answer this question, let me bring to your attention that before moving to France, Hébert had a hard time convincing Quebec publishers to publish her collection of short stories *Le Torrent* (1950).⁴ In fact, she published her first works at her own expense ("Anne Hébert" 2003), and she also self-funded her most famous anthology of poems *Le Tombeau des rois* (1953).

It is true that Hébert was not the first example of this kind to be found in Quebec literary history. In fact *Maria Chapdelaine : récit du Canada français*, by Louis Hémon, considered to be the very first French-Canadian best-seller, was noticed at home only after becoming a success in France: "Since the novel has been proclaimed a masterpiece by French criticism, what we took as a

4. "[They] had rejected *Le Torrent*, saying it was too violent, that French Canada was a young, healthy nation and that this was an unhealthy thing that shouldn't be put into everyone's hands." (My translation.) Source: Anne Hébert's web site: http://www.anne-hebert.com/les_annees_d_apprentissage.htm

stone is now a pearl” (quoted by Héroux 1980: 152). And in fact, Le Seuil was very aware of this mechanism when publishing the works by Hébert. As Françoise Blaise (1991: 235), editor in Le Seuil, put it, a publication in Paris is always perceived as a “certification” (“une homologation”): “Far from harming the recognition of an author in his or her own country, [French publishing] helps instead, especially when it comes with a success. Marie-Claire Blais, Anne Hébert and Yves Beauchemin would agree with this” (ibid.: 236, my translation).

The ties between Anne Hébert and Le Seuil were established through two intermediaries, the French poet Pierre Emmanuel (who was well-connected with Le Seuil) and Albert Béguin (editorial director of the publisher in the mid-1950’s), whom she had met in Quebec (Serry 2007: 180-181). Upon their return to France, Emmanuel and Béguin would show Hébert’s poems to other key agents in Le Seuil, and Béguin would publish some of them in *Esprit*, a review founded in 1932 by Emmanuelle Munier and published by Le Seuil since 1944 (ibid.). Paul Flammand, the founder of Le Seuil, wrote to Hébert to express his admiration for her poems. After several exchanges by mail and in person (Hébert spent 1954 in Paris thanks to a scholarship granted by the Royal Society of Canada), Flammand offered to publish, without conditions, her next manuscript *Chambres de bois*, which would finally appear in 1958 (ibid.). The novel was prefaced by the distinguished French critic Samuel de Sacy.

Although the preface was in principle targeted to a French readership, the fact that it was not eliminated from the edition distributed in Quebec (where it was made available by the Montreal publishing house Format) suggests that Quebecers’ sensitivities would not be offended by what was said (indeed, quite the opposite). The preface presents a heroic portrait of French Canadian society, living and surviving, in spite of adverse circumstances, in the middle of an Anglophone majority. De Sacy insisted that French-Canadian literature was rich and vibrant, and could not be reduced to the “folkloric” or “regionalist” dimension to which the French had usually ascribed it. Moreover, *Chambres de bois* was described by de Sacy as a potential masterpiece, written in “the most simple and pure French language” (de Sacy 1958: 10).

The novel was also awarded the France-Québec prize. What is interesting is that this prize was not well known in France, nor did sales of the novel really ever pick up in France. In fact, although the book sales for *Chambres de bois* were significant (42,200 copies), 93% were sold in Canada, Belgium and Switzerland, and only 7% in France (Serry 2007: 181). Not an isolated event in the history of Quebec-France literary relations, to be sure (ibid.: 182).

If this “pseudo” French *imprimatur* had convinced Quebecers, had it done the same for others? It is obvious than being published by Le Seuil could not only potentially lead to more sales in Quebec, but also to the sale of translation rights to foreign publishers. Three translations of the novel saw the light, but at a much later date than the original. An English-Canadian translation appeared in 1974, a Romanian one in 1992, and a Catalan edition as late as 2001.

Many more signs of legitimation had to happen (e.g. strong sales of *Kamouraska*, and prizes, including the Femina) before foreign publishers decided to invest in Hébert. Lest we forget that the only “real” sign of French legitimation, the fact of her having been published by Le Seuil, did not have the same impact in 1958 as it would have had today, since at the time Le Seuil did not occupy a position as central as the one it has had since the 1970’s (Serry 2002, 2007).

Although in 1958, the Quebec publishing field was in the process of being consolidated, and thus the choice of France was almost the norm for a Quebec author, by the 1970’s, Hébert could have easily chosen to publish her second novel, *Kamouraska*, at home. However, her choice would again be Le Seuil. After all, Le Seuil could “guarantee” in a certain way her success in Quebec, and the French publisher might also provide her with a better chance of making her way internationally. This was indeed the case with *Kamouraska*, published in 1970.

The book sales were those of a best-seller: almost 90,000 copies, 65% of which were sold this time in France (Serry 2007: 182). A Canadian paperback edition reached 110,000 book sales (*ibid.*), and the critical attention that the work captured was unprecedented for a French-Canadian novel in France (Gerols 1984: 12). Given this critical and commercial success, it comes as no surprise that foreign publishers soon found their way to the novel. Five translations were published in the years immediately following the original. The Spanish and Italian translations appeared in 1972, followed by the English-Canadian version in 1973, the German in 1975, and the Czech in 1977. A second round of translations began in the 1990’s, potentially attributable (at least in part) to Hébert winning the Femina Prize in 1982, with a Dutch translation in 1991, Polish and Chinese versions in 1992, the Danish in 1995, and finally a Romanian translation as late as 2008, almost forty years after the original.

The Spanish translation of *Kamouraska* was published by Plaza & Janés in 1972, at a time when Franco’s official censorship on cultural productions was still in force. Although the translation had certainly gone through the *Juntas de la Censura*, a comparison between the original and the translation reveals

that the latter was not modified in the first edition, nor in subsequent re-editions. This would lead us to believe that the theme of this historical novel was not harmful, and likely useful, to Spanish government priorities at the time. Indeed, the novel might have been seen as a way of reinforcing the *status quo*.

Based on an actual murder committed in 1839 in the village of Kamouraska (Quebec), it tells the story of a woman, Elizabeth D'Aulnières, who, at the deathbed of her second husband, Jérôme Rolland, revisits the story of her tormented youth: the abuses of her first husband, Antoine Tassy, seigneur of Kamouraska, and her secret love for George Nelson, an American doctor exiled in Sorel with whom she conspired to kill Antoine. Nelson would end up killing Antoine himself, and this murder is followed by a trial, but Elizabeth herself is acquitted for plotting this crime of passion.

The emancipating program carried out by Elizabeth fails at the end of the novel and a patriarchal symbolic economy is restored: she no longer sees her lover, and, even if she is not accused of her husband's murder, she is socially condemned for life, and lives unhappily with her second husband. In spite of her liberating attempts, Élizabéth reincarnates the model of a "good" Catholic woman of her time: submissive, mother of several kids, "un ventre fidèle, une matrice à faire des enfants" (K: 11). If, retrospectively, from the 1990's, feminist critics have seen the pre-feminist dimension of the novel (Fortier 2001, Sarkar 2001, etc.), Spanish censors certainly hadn't seen any potential subversive dimension. They would likely have viewed the novel as a moral lesson of what happens to a woman adulterer. It is important to remember that women's adultery was not legalized in Spain until 1977.

Apart from the fact that the translation fit well with the ideological climate of the time, the fact that the work had been published by Le Seuil, which had significantly more symbolic capital than ten years earlier, and that the novel was a critical and commercial success, certainly influenced Plaza & Janés's decision to translate it.⁵

5. The publisher informed me (personal e-mail with Silvia Duso, from the commercial department of Plaza & Janés, May 18, 2007) that the "dossier Kamuraska" had been destroyed because it was old. This is, in fact, one of the effects of overproduction in the contemporary publishing sector: in the absence of space, not only books are thrown away, but also their publishing dossiers. It is thus impossible to know for certain the decision process regarding this translation, but what can be deducted is that the translator did not have a central role in the choice. According to what I have found in the catalogue of the Spanish National Library, we know that José María Martínez Monasterio had frequently translated for Plaza & Janés (25 translations in total, published between the 1970's and 1980's). He translates mainly mass-production authors from English and French, but occasionally consecrated authors such as Nabokov. But what is important

The influence of the Le Seuil edition can even be traced in the summary of the book that appears on the jacket of the Spanish translation. The phrase, “une histoire de passion, fureur et neige” [a story of passion, fury and snow], used in the jacket of the French edition and constantly repeated by the French critics (Gerols 1984: 162), is again reproduced in the Spanish translation. This “tone” is in harmony with the cover that Plaza & Janés had chosen for the translation, which depicts a woman in the foreground, sensually posed with blouse slipping off her shoulders, and in the background, a man on a horse-drawn sleigh, whip in hand, driving hard. All of this rendered the novel “exotic” and apt to appeal to a popular public. All of these publishing strategies seem to have worked with *Kamouraska*. The fact that the novel was published in 1970 by Plaza & Janés, then re-published in 1977, and in the same year produced in paperback edition by G.P. (the publishing house owned by Germán Plaza, who in 1959 would join José Janés to create Plaza & Janés) may indicate that the translation was, at least, a commercial success in Spain.

As mentioned above, the case of Anne Hébert is not the only example of “direct domination” in the corpus under study. *Putain* by Nelly Arcan –also published by Le Seuil (80,000 copies sold in French) translated in Spanish by Seix Barral (2002) and in Catalan by Columna (2002), and republished in Spanish paperback by Planeta (2005)– is the most recent example in this category. That said, with the consolidation of the Quebec literary field and the institutional support dedicated to the export of Quebec authors, the dependence of the Quebec field with respect to the French has taken on new forms.

From the end of the 1980’s, and particularly in the 1990’s, Quebec authors published in France have usually been previously published in Quebec, or published simultaneously (in the form of a co-publishing agreement between a Quebec and a French publisher). As concerns exporting Quebec authors, and in particular, selling their translation rights to Spanish publishers, two trends can be observed.

First, Spanish publishers buy the translation rights directly from the French publisher, meaning that the Quebec publisher had ceded the rights for the Spanish version (probably thinking that the French publisher had more resources to promote the work among Spanish publishers in any case⁶), as happened in the case of *¿Esta granada en las manos del joven negro es un arma*

here is that Hébert is the only Canadian or Quebec author that he has ever translated. It is then reasonable to think that it was the publishing house who proposed the novel to him, and not the reverse.

6. The drawback of this ceding of rights is that the French publisher is not allowed to apply for translation grants from the Quebec and Canadian governments.

o una fruta? by Dany Laferrière, where El Cobre ediciones bought the translation rights from the French independent publisher Le serpent à plumes, and in the case of *Las mujeres dan la vida, los hombres la quitan*, by Madelaine Gagnon, in which Crítica bought the rights from Fayard. I consider this to be the new form of what I have here called “direct domination”, simply an updated version of the domination we have seen in the Hébert case.

Second, the Spanish publisher buys the rights from the Quebec publisher, but only after France has stamped its *imprimatur*. This is the case, for instance, of *Gatuperios* by Yves Beauchemin, *La ingratitud* by Ying Chen or Gaétan Soucy’s translations. This is what I have called “indirect domination”, and will be the subject of our next discussion.

3.2. *How literary hierarchies are unconsciously internalized by centers and contested by the peripheries: the case of Gaétan Soucy in Spanish and in Catalan*

Apart from certain children’s literature authors, Gaétan Soucy is the Quebec author most translated in Spain. In addition, all the Spanish translations of this author’s work have been published by Akal, a Madrid-based publishing house.⁷ Jesús Espino, Akal’s editorial director, reiterated his satisfaction with respect to this investment in an interview with me on January 14, 2008⁸: “We are very satisfied. We don’t regret at all having published any of the works by Soucy and having gone for him three times and this year, a fourth time. [...] The bet was clear. [...] in spite of the fact that there has not been a success from a sales point of view”.⁹

The translation of *La petite fille qui aimait trop les allumettes*, *La niña que amaba las cerillas*, reached the highest sales of all of Soucy’s Spanish translations, some 1,300 copies (Espino in interview 2008), which obviously is not the reason that motivated Akal to carry on publishing the author. Espino

7. Except for *La absolución (L’acquittement)*, the first Spanish translation of Soucy, which was published by Andrés Bello, a Chilean-based publishing house with an imprint in Spain. However, this work has been retranslated by Esperanza Martínez and published by Akal in May 2008.

8. The interview, which was recorded, was oral and semi-structured. It took place in Madrid on January 14, 2008 and it lasted approximately one hour. The interview was based on a questionnaire that was sent in advance to Jesús Espino and consisted of open and semi-open questions.

9. My translation of “Nosotros estamos muy satisfechos. No nos arrepentimos en absoluto de haber publicado ninguna de las obras de Soucy y de haber apostado por él tres veces y este año la cuarta. [...] La apuesta está clara. [...] a pesar de que no haya habido éxito de ventas”.

stated that he is very aware of the fact that the literary works they publish are not addressed to a general public and will never be best-sellers. In Bourdieusian terms, Akal clearly belongs to the pole of small-scale circulation, which denies the relevance of economic profit (at least in the short-term) and is characterized by an economic world reversed.

Weak sales do not necessarily imply a bad or non-existent critical reception – quite the opposite. In fact, in contrast with most of the other Quebec authors translated in Spain –who are hardly mentioned by the Spanish cultural press, except for in Catalonia– Soucy has captured the attention of *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, and *Avui*.¹⁰ However, the university criticism, “a natural niche of reception for Soucy”, according to Espino (*ibid.*), has not paid the least attention to him.

Furthermore, the choice to invest in Soucy was not influenced by the hope of getting funds for the translations. Akal could have applied for funding from the Canada Council for the Arts or from the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles du gouvernement du Québec (SODEC), but Espino explains that they wanted to get the work out as soon as possible, and so avoided potentially lengthy grant application processes. The only funding they went after for the translation of *La niña* concerned promotional expenses, half of which were covered by the Embassy of Canada in Spain (*ibid.*).

With a weak track record in sales, little external funding, and a critical reception that had not pierced academia, what fed the “belief” (Bourdieu 1980) in the “value” and continuity of the Soucy project? The idea of translating *La petite fille*, the novel that brought Soucy international recognition, took shape during the Frankfurt fair. According to Espino (*ibid.*), Anne-Marie Vallat’s advice to consider the novel was of prime importance: “del criterio de Anne-Marie nos fiamos mucho” [we place considerable trust in Anne Marie’s opinion]. Vallat is a Spain-based literary agent who represents the Quebec publishing house Boréal (where Soucy published the original) in Spain and

10. There are eight reviews in total for Soucy’s Spanish translations. For *La niña*: six praising reviews in *El País*, *La Vanguardia* (x2), *El Mundo* (x2), and *Avui*; and two articles about *Music-Hall*: a not so praising review in *El País*, but a favourable one in *Avui*. The reviews in question are (for *La niña*) “Soucy explora el lenguaje de la infancia en ‘La niña que amaba las cerillas’” by Juan Carlos Merino, *La Vanguardia*, April 19, 2001; “La (inquietante) intimidad de la familia” by Isabel Núñez, *La Vanguardia*, September 14, 2001; “Las declinaciones del dolor” by Marcos Giralt Torrente, *El País*, August 4, 2001; “Gaétan Soucy habla sobre la pérdida de la inocencia en su último libro”, *El Mundo*, April 18, 2001; and in Catalan “‘Chapeau’ Monsieur Soucy”, by Alba Alsina, *Avui*, April 5, 2001; for *Music-Hall*, by Marcos Giralt Torrente, “El estupor de existir”, *El País*, February 19, 2005 and by Alba Alsina again, “Frankenstein”, *Avui*, April 7, 2005, p. XX.

Portugal. With a deep knowledge of the Spanish publishing sector, Vallat was also able to judge the potential of putting Akal and Boréal in contact; they are both medium-size, independent publishers.

Vallat was also aware of the fact that Le Seuil had just bought the copyright of the novel for the French territory, a detail that did not pass unnoticed by Akal. Espino highlighted that the publication of the novel by Le Seuil was for them a “guarantee” (“un sello de garantía”), and it seems that Akal was not alone in this belief. After the French edition of *La petite fille* by Le Seuil in 2000 (published in Boréal in 1998), more than twenty translations were published.¹¹ However, there was not a single translation published before the French edition (a trend observed throughout my direct and indirect domination categories). Moreover, after the publication of the novel by the French publisher, Soucy’s works published by Boréal before *La petite fille* would also be selected for translation. Among others, this was the case, for instance, for *Immaculé Conception* published in 1994 and translated into Spanish and English in 2005, into Dutch in 2007, and German in 2009, more than ten years later. In other words, a transfer of symbolic capital¹² from the French publishing house –which occupies a central position in a central field– to the author took place. Boréal, which was not equipped with the same amount of symbolic capital, would not have been able to guarantee such a “transaction”.

Beyond this external influence, Espino noted that there were two principal internal factors that influenced his choice: the literary “value” of the work, in particular its innovative language and its structure, followed by the existential and universal theme of the novel, “an international work that is not limited to a specific local context” (ibid.). On a scale of 1 to 5,¹³ Espino attributes 5 points to these aspects (and 2 to the feminist dimension of the novel).

When I asked Espino what importance he would give to the fact that Soucy is a Quebec author (that is, an author coming from a peripheral literature), he said that no importance should be attached to this aspect and expressed his discomfort with putting labels in literature:

11. See http://www.editionsboreal.qc.ca/fr-result_isbn.php?id=953 for a list of all the publishers to whom Boréal has sold the translation rights for *La petite fille*.

12. That may eventually become economic: “The conversion of symbolic capital into economic capital is a long-term process, as opposed to the search for short-term profit that is typical of the book industry’s commercial pole”. (Sapiro 2008: 155).

13. That is: 1. Without any importance; 2. Not very important; 3. Important; 4. Very important; 5. Crucial.

We don't believe in the concept of "minority literatures" nor "gender literatures" or think that a work is better or worse because of being written by somebody from an ethnic minority or religious minority, women, homosexual, nothing of the sort. Writers are good or bad. [...] Labels don't motivate me to make a decision for or against a certain work.¹⁴

This insistence on not labelling literary works or their authors is borne out in the classification (Bourdieu 2002) or branding of the translation of *La petite fille* by Akal. On the dust jacket of *La niña*, Soucy is (re)presented as a "un escritor de lengua francesa", rather than as a Quebec, Canadian, or Francophone author (Francophone being a label over which a lot of ink has been spilled). His international recognition, as well as the universal and existentialist dimension of his work are also highlighted: *Music-Hall* is described in the blurb as "one of the purest songs ever written about mental suffering, human solitude and the awe of existence" (my translation), and *La niña* is described as containing "halting and dazzling language" and "a festival of language" (my translation). The Spanish cultural press highlights these same aspects.

Soucy himself has also insisted on the "universal" scope of his work on several occasions: "I try to write from a universal point of view. For too long, we have wanted to allow our false uniquenesses to speak instead of touching on our real uniqueness, which is stranger and more frightening than we want to believe"¹⁵ (quoted by Meudal, *Le Monde*, March 19, 1999, my translation).

Is it then this universal scope that the publisher, the critics, and the author himself seem to consider the main explanatory factor for the international success (critical, if not always economical) of Soucy, and in particular of *La petite fille*? Merino, in *La Vanguardia* (April 19, 2001) remarks that it is not at all usual for a Canadian book written in French to have such a reception and diffusion. In this line, what about the main external factors mentioned above? Would *La petite fille* and Soucy's work on the whole have had the same internal and external reception¹⁶ and diffusion if it hadn't been published by Le Seuil?

14. My translation of "Ni creemos en el concepto de literaturas minoritarias ni literaturas de género ni creemos que sea mejor o peor una obra porque la escriba alguien que sea de una minoría étnica o una minoría religiosa, que sea mujer, homosexual ni nada en absoluto. Los escritores son buenos o malos. [...] Las etiquetas no me impulsan a tomar una decisión a favor o en contra de una obra".

15. My translation of "J'essaie d'écrire d'un point de vue universel. On a trop longtemps voulu donner la parole à nos fausses singularités au lieu de toucher à notre véritable singularité qui est plus étrange et plus épeurante qu'on ne voudrait le croire".

16. By «internal reception» I mean the reading and assessment of a literary work by the agents of the publishing house, Akal, in this case; by external, I refer to the traditional

Espino's answer concerning this point is rather ambivalent. He attributed three points to the reception (internal or external) of the novel in France as a factor motivating their decision to translate Soucy, and the same score to the reception of the novel in Quebec. In other words, it seems that the publisher attached the same importance to the legitimating power of the Quebec literary field as to the French "center". However, in his discourse there are signs that contradict his answers on the Likert-scale questions.

For instance, at the beginning of our interview, Espino said that at the Frankfurt fair, he heard about "an author from Quebec, *but* (italics and bold are mine) who had written a novel that has had a great impact in France".¹⁷ While this statement was purely descriptive, why didn't he say "an author from Quebec who has had a great impact in France"? Doesn't the adversative conjunction "but" indicate that being from Quebec was a kind of negative point that was only compensated for through the fact that the author had been recognised in France?

Apart from this slip of the tongue, Espino (2008) insists on the fact that Le Seuil had published *La petite fille* in France and that this was a "guarantee". He repeats on several occasions during the interview the trust that he places in the French publisher and the good reception of the novel in France. In fact, just the mere fact that he is fully aware of the publication and reception of the novel by Le Seuil in France, even when he had bought the translation rights from Boréal, is indeed revealing of the weight that he attributes to the opinions of agents in the French center. He did not mention, for instance, the reception of the novel in other countries where it has been translated, and makes no reference whatsoever to the central position that Boréal occupies in the Quebec literary field, nor the reception of Soucy's novel in Quebec. Although, consciously (i.e. in terms of score attributed), Espino attached the same importance to the legitimating power of a central and a peripheral field, his oral and spontaneous discourse possibly points to the extent to which he has internalized the hierarchies that ordain the international literary field, and that orientate the economy of symbolic exchanges.

The behaviour of Límits,¹⁸ the publishing house in charge of the Catalan translation of *La petite fille*, *La nena que li agradaven massa els llumins*, is dif-

use of the term «critical reception», so reception by the cultural press or scholarly reception.

17. My translation of "Me hablaron de un autor de Quebec, *pero* (italics are mine) que había escrito una novela que tuvo mucha repercusión en Francia".

18. Límits is a publishing house located in the micro-country of Andorra. In spite of the fact that the publication of this translation does not take place within the political

ferent. Concerning the book's labelling and introduction, in the very center of the book's cover it says "Traduït del francès del Quebec per Joan Casas", an explicit reference to Quebec French that does not exist in the Spanish version (or in fact in any of the Spanish translations of Quebec fiction for adults published in Spain). As Glissant rightly puts it (1996: 112, my translation), "speakers of non-dominant languages are more aware of language issues".¹⁹ Hence, perhaps, the fact that the publisher of *Límits*, given the dominated position of Catalan within the world language system (de Swaan 2001; Calvet 1999), would be in principle more inclined than Akal's agents to think in terms of language and language difference.²⁰

However, concerning the issue of stressing cultural or linguistic difference (i.e. labelling), Maria Àngels Vilana and David Zabala, editorial directors of *Límits* (interviewed by e-mail, April 4, 2008),²¹ answered two on the five-point scale to the question of the importance they attributed to the fact that Soucy was an author from Quebec (remember that "2" meant that this criterion was not important, but was still a criterion). When interpreting Vilana and Zabala's statement, it is important to keep in mind that they define themselves as purely independent publishers who only publish translations of "high literary quality". A statement conceivably backed by the fact that they do not make a living out of their publishing work (*ibid.*); and in a certain

space of Catalonia, this translation is included in my corpus because Andorran literature in Catalan is part of the Catalan literary field. In fact, most of the copies of this translation have been sold in Catalonia (Vilana and Zabala, in an interview conducted by e-mail, April 4, 2008).

19. My translation of "le ressortissant de la langue dominée est davantage sensible à la problématique des langues".
20. There are also some biographical reasons for this choice mentioned by Vilana and Zabala (2008): Vilana specifies that she studied in France, where the specific origin of the translation (i.e. «Spanish from Mexico», «English from the U.S.».) are more often than not mentioned by publishers. She clarified that she discussed this aspect with the translator and Zabala, who was less used to this practice, and that, in the end, they decided to include this mention "given the specificity of the original text, its very local language and the translation problems that the translator had to face". I wonder if some of the deviations from standard French were identified as typical of Quebec French instead of as Soucy's idiosyncrasies. Indeed, along with Quebecisms, *La petite fille* is riddled with neologisms, children's words, uncommon collocations, and deformed proverbs. In fact, Soucy confesses to be more influenced by his daughter, a French-Japanese bilingual, than by French from Quebec per se (Soucy quoted by Meudal, *Le Monde*, March 19, 1999).
21. The interview took place on April 4-13, 2008 and was conducted electronically and was thus asynchronously, which means that the discourse was not as spontaneous as in Espino's case. It was also based on a questionnaire that was sent in advance, and consisted of open and semi-open questions.

way, they pride themselves on not having to depend on any kind of imperatives (economic or otherwise). As such, perhaps attaching more importance to Soucy simply because he is from Quebec, and so comes from a dominated literary field, would mean admitting identity sympathies that would contravene their “l’art pour l’art” philosophy.

Indeed, the main reasons mentioned by Vilana and Zabala for selecting Soucy for Catalan translation were purely literary, in particular the originality of Soucy’s writing and the theme of the novel, as well as his skill in developing the enigmas and mysteries of the plot²² (ibid.). These aspects did not pass unnoticed by the Catalan journal *Avui*, which praised the novel *and* the translation, which, as we all know, is quite unusual in reviews.²³ This alone provided the publishers with enough satisfaction as to think that their enterprise was worthy (ibid.).

But what about the external factors? What is the role of *Le Seuil*, and French legitimation on the whole, in the choice of *Límits*? First of all, like Akal, Vilana and Zabala did not give much importance to the potential economic profit of the translation enterprise, as they rightly predicted that the novel wouldn’t sell many copies. Indeed, only 400 copies of this translation were sold (which, on the other hand, is not so catastrophic, and almost impressive, when compared with the number of copies sold in Spanish, a super-central language). The fact that the Spanish translation was published only a couple of months after the Catalan edition did not help either.²⁴ However, the

22. “l’originalitat de l’escriptura i de la temàtica; la destresa amb què l’autor va descabdellant els enigmes i misteris de la trama”.

23. “Serà molt difícil fer-los veure la grandesa d’aquesta obra sense explicar-los res més de l’argument, però potser els podré convèncer si els dic que, una part importantíssima de la seva genialitat rau en el llenguatge de l’autor, al qual només se li pot dir *Chapeau, Monsieur Soucy* (i del traductor, Joan Casas, que ha fet una gran feina. *Chapeau, també*).” *Avui* (Alsina, April 5, 2001) [It would be very difficult to show you the value of this book without telling you anything about the argument, but perhaps I can convince you by telling you that a very significant part of its genius rests in the author’s language, for which Mr. Soucy deserves a Bravo! (as does the translator, Joan Casas, who did excellent work.)]

24. “Segurament no hauríem publicat l’obra si l’edició d’Akal hagués sortit amb anterioritat [abans de l’edició en català]. De fet, quan nosaltres vam sol·licitar els drets en català, els drets en castellà encara no estaven venuts. Vam saber que hi hauria una edició en castellà poc abans de treure la nostra” (ibid.). [Probably we wouldn’t have published the work if the edition by Akal had appeared before the Catalan version. In fact, when we asked for the Catalan translation rights, the Spanish translation rights had not been sold. We found out about the Spanish edition a little before we had published ours.]

grants obtained from the Canada Council for the Arts and from the Department of Tourism of Andorra must have made the decision somewhat easier.²⁵

Concerning Le Seuil and French legitimation, from a strictly economic and logistic point of view, being published by Le Seuil guaranteed dissemination and exposure in Europe that, most certainly, Boréal could not have guaranteed. Its promotional apparatus is much more powerful than Boréal's, and geographically, Le Seuil is also much closer to Spain, Catalonia and Andorra, which facilitates the promotion and diffusion of its works. Indeed, the very fact that the novel was being discussed in France was critical to Límits becoming aware of it in the first place. Symbolically speaking, however, Límits' agents attach little importance (two on a scale of five) to the favourable internal or external reception of *La petite fille* in France. In their case, it was Vilana, and not an intermediary agent, who discovered *La petite fille* through the popular French T.V. program "Bouillon de culture", hosted by Bernard Pivot, and also through several articles published in French magazines (*ibid.*).

Indeed, Vilana and Zabala (2008) qualified as irrelevant the question concerning the influence that the acclaim of the novel in Quebec had on their choice, precisely because they discovered the novel through the French cultural media and so decided to read it without being aware of its reception in Quebec. On the other hand, on the dust jacket of the Catalan translation of *La petite*, Límits accentuates the critical success of the novel not only in Europe, but also in Canada. Concerning literary awards, only Quebec prizes are mentioned: the prize du Salon du livre de Montréal and the prize Ringuet de l'Académie des lettres du Québec. It is not even noted that the novel was nominated for the Renaudot prize, a French prize, and much more prestigious, internationally speaking.

In short, the peritext reveals that the publishers recognize and value the legitimating power of the Quebec criticism, the power of a peripheral field similar to their own. Likewise, there seems to exist an attempt at minimizing the symbolic power of the French center. Indeed, Soucy's translation is not the only example of a Catalan attempt at minimizing French symbolic power.

25. While Vilana and Zabala insist that translation grants are not crucial for them (*ibid.* 2008) –if they are interested in a work, they are going to invest in it anyway– in a small-scale production publishing house with an anti-economic logic (Bourdieu 1992) these grants can be very important. Moreover, while for the case of Akal, publishing school and reference books allows them to invest in literary works that more often than not do not produce any economic profits, Límits exclusively publishes translations belonging to the pole of small production.

Similar strategies are observed in the other Catalan translations of the corpus under study.

3.3. *Neither symbolic nor economic: zero domination*

For the Quebec works that had been translated into Catalan or Spanish without being previously published, republished or legitimated in some way in France, the general trend that can be found is that they end up in the hands of very small publishers, often from the peripheries. As a result, their distribution is usually very limited. This is the case, for instance, of *El libro de Emma* by Marie-Célie Agnant published by Txalaparta, a Basque independent publishing house that produces works in Spanish and Basque, or *Del cap tempesta al cap de joia* by Jean-Paul Filion, published by Pagès, a Catalan publishing house that prints exclusively in Catalan and whose series are run mainly by academics.

Another case in which symbolic and economic domination is absent, and one which will retain my attention in this section, is that of children's literature (see appendix for an overview of this sub-corpus of translations). Except for the translation of illustrated albums by Cécile Gagnon and Paul Brière, the rest of this sub-corpus, 33 translations in total, do not have anything to do with France: they have not been published, republished or legitimated by the agents of the French sub-field²⁶ of children's literature.

Moreover, for these authors (unlike the writers of adult fiction), there is no price to pay for ignoring the authority of the center: most translations appeared in publishing houses that hold a central position in the Spanish and Catalan subfield of children's literature (e.g. Edelvives, La Galera, Edebé, Everest, Ediciones B., etc.). As such, the difference between these translations and the adult fiction cases mentioned above has to be found in the specific

26. According to Boisclair (2004), inspired by Bourdieu's sociology of fields, a subfield is "[...] a field initiated by a specific commitment that installs the instances needed to drive the production, circulation, distribution, legitimization and recognition of the authors and works that help form the subfield without undermining the general field's domination. Subfields use apparatuses from the general field, but install, as needed, apparatuses that could benefit their relative autonomy" (20-21). My translation of "[...] un champ initié par un engagement spécifique qui met en place les instances nécessaires afin d'assurer la production, la circulation, la diffusion, la légitimation et la consécration des auteurs et des œuvres qui participent à sa formation, mais sans attenter à la domination du champ élargi. Le sous-champ recourt aux appareils du champ élargi, mais installe, au besoin, les appareils qui pourraient être bénéfiques à son autonomie relative" (20-21).

sub-field to which these works belong, and the dominant position of this Quebec sub-field within the international (sub)field of children's literature.

Quebec children's literature has existed since the 1970's, but since the 1980's could be said to have become a sub-field on its own, i.e. it has its specific stakes, stakeholders, prizes, magazines and "classics". Furthermore, according to Le Brun (1960: 60), if statistics concerning book sales and borrowings can be believed, Quebec's children literature is the most widely read type of literature in Quebec.

In 1993, the favourable evolution of this sector was emphasized in the review *Lurelu*: "Ten years ago, only the bold were getting into children's literature. Today it's a viable market, a very viable one, it's almost a necessity. Why? Booksellers will tell you: young Quebecers are reading Quebec novels, unlike their elders" (Thibault, quoted by Sernine 1993: 4, my translation).

In addition to individual efforts to create children's literature reviews (i.e. the creation of *Lurelu*, "vouée exclusivement à la promotion de la littérature québécoise pour la jeunesse"), and prizes, the institutional support coming from the Quebec provincial government and the Canadian federal government was not insignificant (see Madore 1998). This institutional support is, as for adult literature, linked with the "national question". If the national affirmations from the 1960's entailed the formation of a Quebec national literary field, the same logic applied to books for children, a sector that until the 1970's had been bombarded with books coming from Europe, especially from France.

In 1978, in her recommendations to the Socio-Economic Conference on Quebec Cultural Industries, Cécile Gagnon, president of Communication-Jeunesse at the time, highlighted the fact that "[i]t's in books from *here* that children learn about *our* reality" (quoted by Madore 1994: 34, my translation, italics are mine). Several journalistic articles also insisted on the fact that "children need to know –provided that it exists– their national literature in order to be able to identify themselves with their people" (ibid.: 30, my translation).

At the end of the 1980's, once the sub-field in question was solidly built at a domestic level (indeed, the number and diversity of titles was such that some publishers feared a saturation of the domestic market), it was time to move a step ahead and internationalize this production. In 1987, La courte échelle, a Quebec publishing house exclusively devoted to children's literature, was the first to make its way in the international market. By 2004, its titles had been translated into 18 languages and 300 over its 500 titles had been translated in seven or eight languages (Proulx 2004: 81). Other publishers

would follow, such as Québec/Amérique, Dominique et Compagnie, Héritage, Boréal, Pierre Tisseyre, etc. Many of these would see their works translated in more than 10 languages.

The signs of the central position occupied by Quebec children's literature within the international subfield of international children's literature are many: the considerable translation flows of Quebec children's publishers into English, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, but also into languages such as Catalan, Basque, Serbian, etc.; the fact that certain Quebec authors have made it to the honour list of the International Board on Books for Young People; and that certain Quebec collections such as *Caillou* have become international best-sellers and the sensation of book fairs, selling not only comics but also cartoons, games, etc. The importance of children's literature in the Quebec publishing sector was especially apparent in the Guadalajara book fair (2003) and in Liber (2008), where Quebec was the guest of honour. Stands devoted to children's literature were numerous and occupied a central and visible spatial position in these fairs. In fact, children's publishing is one of the most important cultural industries in Canada: in Quebec, in particular, the number of titles in the children's literature section has gone from 471 in 1996 to 813 in 2005, in comparison with the rest of the publishing sector, whose increase for the same period amounted to an average of 29% (Laforce 2007).

As I have mentioned above, for this sub-corpus of translations, France did not act as an intermediary center, economically or symbolically. Some of the authors in this sub-corpus (for instance, Raymond Plante, Michèle Marineau, Sylvain Trudel, Robert Soulières, to cite a few) were published in France, but this would happen only after the publication of several international translations, and not the reverse. Consequently, being published in France could be considered as a confirmation of the international legitimization of the author, but not a requirement for such a legitimization.

On this topic, for our purposes here (Quebec translated in Spain), it is important to note that the ideological affinities between Quebec and Catalonia, and the consequent formal ties (among them cultural) that have been established between these two "little nations" have certainly played a favourable role in the directness of the transfer.²⁷ More than half of the publishing houses that have published Quebec children's literature in Spain during the

27. For a detailed analysis of how the political affinities between Quebec and Catalonia have influenced their cultural exchanges, see Córdoba Serrano (2007).

period observed were based in Catalonia, and published the same work in Catalan and in Spanish.²⁸

Of course, these same cultural relations existed for the corpus of adult fiction; however they have evidently not sufficed to avoid French domination.

The “abnormal” behaviour of this sub-corpus points to two conclusions: first, that the sub-field of children’s literature on the whole (i.e. not only in Quebec) obeys its own mechanisms, and is ordained by its own hierarchies and dominations, which do not necessarily correspond to the ones affecting the general international adult literary field; secondly, that the Quebec children’s literature subfield is truly independent. Its agents pride themselves on the degree of development of this sub-field in Quebec nationally, but also internationally, and this study indeed validates that claim.

4. Conclusions

The importance of translation as a powerful weapon through which writers may find a place in the sun in the “world republic of letters” is becoming more and more apparent to literary scholars and to sociologists of culture. What I have tried to show in this article is that translation can also be considered as a methodological tool in the hands of researchers interested in analyzing international literary domination. The study of translation flows, their specific routes of circulation, the different economic or symbolic centers that they detour through, or conversely, the directness of the transfer, allows us not only to better understand the geopolitics of international exchanges, but also to empirically confirm or refute self-legitimizing discourses about fields’ independence.

“The center, this point from which Franco-French literature was supposed to shine, is no longer the center” claims a recent literary manifesto signed by authors from the Francophonie (*Le Devoir*, 24 March 2007, p. f2, my translation). By using translation to test these claims and similar ones as they relate to Quebec independence, I have shown that indeed the “center is no longer the center” in the case of Quebec children’s literature. For the case of adult fiction, however, the analysis shows that French dominance is still at work: passing through France remains central not only for symbolic, but also for logistical and economic reasons. However, we have also seen that this dependence has evolved, and that nowadays the cases of indirect domination are

28. For a detailed analysis of the nationalist use of Quebec children’s literature in Catalan translation, and in particular those Catalan translations published in La Galera, see Córdoba Serrano (2009).

much more numerous than those in the direct domination category. Although the shadow of the French still lies over the Quebec field, Quebec publishers do not usually cede their translation rights, and have power of negotiation and decision in this matter.

Given that the decline of the Parisian symbolic center (believed to represent the autonomous pole of the international literary field) is continuously evoked in contemporary discourse, as is the advent of the heteronymous or commercial pole (mainly associated with the American field) (Casanova 1999), can we predict a change of pattern in future translation flows from Quebec to Spain? Would America, and in particular New York, become the new center for this transfer, especially for the case of Quebec best-sellers?

In a very recent article from the Quebec magazine *Le libraire* (2009: 40-41), different figures (writers, publishers, etc.) claim that after years of disillusionment, France is less and less their destination of choice, and that it is instead *translations* of their works, and in particular English translations, that guarantee their international recognition. For the moment, at least to be translated in Spain, it may appear that moving through France is still the way to go. Nevertheless, immutability is not a characteristic of the international literary field.

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Interviews

Interview with Jesús Espino, Madrid, January 14, 2008

Electronic interview with Maria Àngels Vilana and David Zabala, April 4, 2008.

E-mails

E-mail with Silvia Duso, commercial department of Plaza & Janés, May 18, 2007.

Appendix 1

Legend :

* = Catalan translations

CL = Children's literature

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