

**Translating Italian-Canadian Migrant Writing to Italian:
a Discourse Around the Return to the Motherland/Tongue**

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ABSTRACT

A two-way bond between translation and migration has appeared in the most recent texts in the social sciences and humanities: this connection between the two is exemplified by the mobility metaphor, which considers both practices as journeys across cultural, linguistic and geographical borders. Among the different ways this mobility metaphor can be studied, two particular areas of investigation are of interest for this research: firstly, migrant writing, a literary genre shaped from the increasing migratory movements worldwide; the second area of interest is literary translation, the activity that shapes the way these narratives are disseminated beyond the linguistic borders they were produced in.

My investigation into the role of literary translation in the construction and circulation of a migrant discourse starts with the claim that writing and translation in itinerant contexts are driven by, and participate in, the idea of the *journey*: an interlingual and intercultural flow regulated by social/economic/artistic constraints, a movement in which the migrant experience is ‘translated’ in writing and then ‘migrated’ across languages and spaces.

The present analysis focuses on the representative case study of migrant narratives by Canadian writers of Italian descent: their shared reflections on the themes of nostalgia and the mythical search for roots, together with a set of specific linguistic devices – hybridity, juxtaposition of languages, idiolects and registers – create a distinctive literary migrant discourse, that of the return to the land of origin.

Guided primarily by the theoretical framework of Cultural Studies, the first part of this work seeks to illustrate how thematic and linguistic elements contribute to the construction of a *homecoming* discourse in original migrant narratives, and how this relates to the translation practice. Subsequently, the analysis moves to the examination of how these motives are reproduced in the translated texts, and what is/are the key rationale/s behind the translation of this type of works. Ultimately, my research takes a sociologically informed interest in the influence of translation and its agents in endorsing and/or manipulating this rationale in the receiving culture. In fact, this research aims to represent equally the human and cultural-linguistic aspects that affect these translational journeys, concentrating, firstly, on the actors (authors and literary translators) and the social and artistic environments that surround the production of both the source and target texts and, subsequently, on the texts themselves.

RÉSUMÉ

Un lien entre la traduction et la migration a commencé à surgir dans les textes les plus récents dans le domaine des sciences sociales et humaines: ce lien est illustré par la métaphore de la mobilité, qui considère les deux pratiques comme des voyages à travers les frontières culturelles, linguistiques et géographiques. Afin d'étudier cette métaphore, deux domaines d'enquête sont intéressés par cette recherche: l'écriture migrante et la traduction littéraire.

Mon enquête sur le rôle de la traduction littéraire dans la construction et la circulation d'un discours migrant repose sur l'affirmation que l'écriture et la traduction dans les contextes itinérants sont façonnées par l'idée du voyage: un flux interlinguistique et interculturel réglementé par des contraintes économiques/artistiques/sociales, un mouvement dans lequel l'expérience des migrants est «traduite» et ensuite «migrée» à travers les langues et les espaces.

La présente thèse a pour but l'étude des récits migrants par les écrivains canadiens d'origine italienne: leurs réflexions partagées sur les thèmes de la nostalgie et de la recherche mythique des racines se combinent avec un ensemble de dispositifs linguistiques spécifiques – hybridité, juxtaposition des langues, idiolectes et registres – pour créer un discours littéraire migrant spécifique: le retour à la terre d'origine.

Dans le cadre théorique des études culturelles, la première partie de ce travail considère les éléments thématiques et linguistiques qui contribuent à formuler le discours du retour à la terre d'origine dans l'écriture migrante italo-canadienne et son rapport avec la pratique de la traduction. Ensuite, la deuxième partie propose d'analyser des traductions Italiennes des textes Italo-canadiens mettant en évidence la façon dont les éléments mentionnés ci-dessus ont été transposés dans les textes cibles. De plus, ma recherche s'intéresse à l'influence de la traduction et ses agents dans la reproduction/manipulation du discours du retour à la terre d'origine pour la culture cible. En fait, cette recherche vise à représenter à la fois les aspects linguistiques et sociaux de la traduction des textes migrants.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Context and Background to the Research

Supporting the exchange of knowledge between Translation Studies and Migration Studies within the Canadian context, the present doctoral research investigates the manifold translational phenomena of the linguistic and cultural type that both characterize and affect literature in migrant settings.

Against the backdrop of the *age of migration* (Castles and Miller 1993), and echoing the *mobility turn* that has impacted the social sciences from the 1990s (Cresswell 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006), this dissertation adopts a translation studies perspective to examine how the discourse around mobility and the migrant experience is portrayed in literature and transposed across boundaries. In particular, my investigation analyzes the meaning and value of translation for migrant narratives, within the specific framework of the *homecoming* of the ethnic author – a concept, that of the *passion du retour* (Nepveu 1995), which has started appearing in literary scholarly works paralleling both the increase in worldwide mobility and return migrations to the motherland.

As a result of the growing awareness of the relevance of mobility and its cultural effects on society, the migrant topic has slowly moved to the centre stage of international scholarly research. In our globalized civilization, border crossing has become a cross-disciplinary topic of discussion, especially for historically immigrant societies and cultures. In Canada, for instance, immigration has for years been a key factor in the nation-building process and the promotion of a model of a multicultural society that respects cultural diversity.

The topic of migrancy has also been important for emigrant nations, such as Italy, whose societies are numerically and culturally affected and shaped by migrations. In fact, emigration is as socially and culturally influential as immigration. While the effects of mobility are most visible in the political and economic aspects of the home societies, cultural phenomena such as the maintenance of a national identity abroad and the creation of a transnational hybrid migrant culture (and its products) are also relevant and worthy of consideration.

Although it has been ascertained that migration has been affecting the world for centuries, or even millennia, the humanities have not traditionally concerned themselves directly with research on migration. Despite the strong presence of narratives by or about migrants/migration in the international literary market, and regardless of the precious insights on the phenomenon that can be gained through

these accounts, pure statistics and scientific surveys have conventionally been the source of information on what we know about migration (White 1985).

The phenomenon, however, is calling for new frames for interpretation. Current cultural practices born out of contexts of itinerancy invite us to reconsider the representation of migration beyond statistics, in order to shed light on the way identities are formed and imagined across physical and cultural borders and boundaries, on both the sending and receiving ends.

Moreover, despite the current abundance of research on migration in many fields of study, especially in the geo-political domain, real interdisciplinary discourse has rarely taken place, leaving each discipline to formulate hypotheses independently, without a common objective or much perceptible interaction.

It is with the aim of formulating a different framework for the study of migration, making capital of the growing interest in this contemporary question, and from the perspective of the visible increase in global mobility, that multidisciplinary and international discourses need to find a convergent path towards collaboration. More specifically, despite the rise of studies focusing on the social and cultural aspects of migration that parallel the expansion of the phenomenon and the appearance of return migration, the relationship migrants and their descendants have with source and target cultures and languages as well as the important role played by language in mediating the encounters between the Self and Other are topics that have yet to be fully explored, and which could impact the way migration is perceived and studied worldwide.

In recent years, researchers in the field of linguistics have become increasingly interested in the relevance of language in shaping human mobility and the integration of migrants, as well as the ensuing phenomena related to language use and contact. Among these investigations, however, the particular interrelation between acts of translation and migration remains largely uncharted territory.

In view of this growing interest in migration and its cultural-linguistic relevance and the centrality of both translation and migration in contemporary scholarship, as well as their international and interdisciplinary nature, this thesis starts with a search for theories that shed light on the common aspects of the two activities. The few works available in the literature that combine the study of migration with the study of translation seem to suggest that the two practices share the essence of a

journey, of *moving across*¹. In these journeys, the significance of the human factor is as fundamental as the cultural and linguistic baggage that individuals move across.

In order to represent the human and cultural-linguistic aspects that affect both translational journeys, the present analysis focuses on migrant literature as a product of both receiving and sending cultures (that of the country of immigration and emigration, respectively). More specifically, it observes the relevance of the translational act for the cultural product when this migrates back to the country of origin. In particular, the investigation concentrates, firstly, on the actors (authors and literary translators) and the social and artistic environments that surround the production of the source and target texts. It then turns its attention to the texts themselves. Expressly, the research identifies the elements that come into play in the construction of specific migrant discourses in and around the source text, and how these may be preserved or manipulated in translation.

In light of the central role played by the migrant element in the texts analyzed here, I will refer to these literary productions as *migrant writing*, borrowing Paul White's label *Migrant Literatures* (White 1995): with such definition White contends that *migrant literature* includes the artistic endeavors of both migrants and their descendants, thus understanding the migrant experience as a condition that affects the construction and perception of self-identity of many generations, including those that did not live the journey in the first person. The migrant discourse in these literary works is usually connected to the presence of a nostalgic element, which lingers, regardless of the time and generations elapsed since the move. As opposed to the terms *emigrant* and *immigrant literatures*, which tend to restrict the focus of these works on either the source or host countries, the nomenclature migrant literature puts this type of literature in a transnational perspective, one that contemplates writing about mobility as movement.

Because of its highly cathartic nature – even more so in works that are overtly autobiographical –, I contend that migrant literature may be subject to a double *translation* process. The first occurs when the feeling of existential/cultural deracination and the linguistic displacement experienced by migrants and their descendants is originally transposed in writing. Subsequently, translation in its more common acceptation ensues when these works return to the author's country of origin, via the linguistic journey back to the motherland/tongue. A case study of Italian-Canadian migrant narratives is presented here in order to portray how these two translation processes occur.

Due to the shared reflections on the themes of journey and exile, nostalgia, the re-construction of a fragmented identity and the mythical search for roots, Italian-Canadian writers can be considered a

¹ As theorized by Terry Threadgold in her essay "When Home Is Always a Foreign Place: Diaspora, Dialogue, Translation" included in *Translation, Translation* by Susan Petrilli: "meanings 'migrate' freely between and across semiotic systems, just as flows of migration move across and between the boundaries of nation-states and dominant monocultures" (2003, 581).

coherent literary group. The recurrent themes in their narratives, together with the presence of another idealized country to which Canada is often compared, are expressed through specific linguistic devices – hybridity, juxtaposition of languages, idiolects and registers – that define the post-modern literary identity often labelled as displaced, exiled, ethnic, minority. Hence, this study seeks to understand to what extent these elements come into play in the creation and *translation* of a migrant discourse in literature.

This study will contribute to the current body of knowledge in both translation and migration studies by providing insights drawn from empirical analysis based on existing theoretical approaches in both fields: firstly, by investigating the migrant experience as seen through the eyes (and words) of Canadian writers of Italian descent, the hybrid narratives that originate through the encounter of (at least) two cultures, and by discussing how these can be interpreted as acts of translation. Subsequently, the study will explore how translation and its agents relate and affect the migrant experience and its discourses when these travel back to the country of origin.

In Canada, Italian-Canadian works did not have to struggle to find a place in the sun: their value and contribution to the national literature has long been appreciated and recognised. Departments of literature in universities across Canada have been introducing the major works of this group into their curricula, anthologies have been published, essays written, and nationwide congresses held. Besides the fact that Italians represent one of the largest ethnic groups of Canada, one of the reasons for the success of Italian-Canadian writing in the Canadian framework is the founding role played by the migrant discourse in Canadian Literature, in which works (regardless of the ethnicity of the writer) are often strongly connoted by memory, the idea of roots and place.

Despite the attention paid to these writers in Canada, Italian-Canadian literature as an independent and established body of literature is little known in the Italian literary market, and even less present in the educational curricula. Only in the last two decades have some of the most prominent exponents of the group started to make their first tentative steps via translation into the Italian literary market, and the first scholarly analyses of this literary phenomenon are beginning to appear.

In the substantial body of criticism on Italian-Canadian literature, most of which has been produced in English within Canada, its involvement with translation has often been disregarded. What has been written so far on the subject of Italian-Canadian literature has rarely considered the translation aspect or the translation studies perspective, in none of the accepted meanings contemplated in this work. Many are, in fact, the English language analyses or collections of Italian Canadian works that examine themes and stylistic elements of these narratives from a literary standpoint; however, the role

of translation in the rise/promotion of this literary phenomenon has occupied little space in these investigations.

What emerges from the entirety of the existing works on the topic (to which I will return in the following chapters) is: the novelty of these studies, which have only started appearing in the last twenty years, and their geographically limited foundation – most of the analyses have been conducted within the Canadian territory by Canadians and Italians – underlining the relative disinterest of Italy in its émigrés, an issue that should have even more relevance now that Italy is dealing with increasing immigration.

These two premises uncover the fact that the research potential in the topic of migration (and consequently migrant literature) is commonly considered as a fact of the receiving culture rather than of the source culture – a parallel can be drawn with a traditional approach to translation. For this reason, this may be the right moment for research on the role of translation in the promotion of these minority voices outside of the receiving countries, because the migrant and exiled narratives represent some of the most valuable and representative works in our nomadic times, but are often, ironically, confined to geographically limited areas.

2. Research Questions, Structure and Methodology

My investigation into the role of translation in the construction and circulation of a migrant literary discourse starts with the assertion that writing and translation in itinerant contexts are driven by, and participate in, the idea of the *journey*: an interlingual and intercultural flow regulated by social/economic/artistic constraints, a movement in which the migrant experience is ‘translated’ in writing and then ‘migrated’ across languages and spaces.

Assuming that writing and translating in migrant contexts imply a journey across languages, cultures and places, this work seeks to illuminate the hypothesis that the return journey to the ancestral motherland is the driving force behind (the main discourse in) original migrant writing, as well as the rationale behind the translation of this type of work.

In this regard, the research questions arising from the above assumptions branch out as follows:

1. What role does translation play in shaping the main discourse in original migrant writing?
2. How does translation reshape this discourse when it travels back to the migrant’s land and language of origin?
3. Moreover, what is the role of the agents of translation in the representation of this discourse?

A study that attempts to confirm the bond existing between the practices of migration and translation, and between the disciplines of Migration Studies and Translation Studies starts with the necessity of providing a broad understanding of both fields, so as to uncover the double nature of translation with reference to the migrant narrative phenomenon.

In order to respond to these research questions, and contextualize the study of how the migrant discourse is portrayed in literature and how this is carried across linguistic, cultural and geographical borders through translation, the present work is divided into sections that gradually explore the multifaceted character of this investigation.

The first chapter, *From Migration to Translation: State of the Art of Research on two Practices 'on the Move'*, begins with an overview of the relevant scholarly approaches to migration: the convergences and divergences highlight how mobility is perceived, portrayed and researched across disciplines. The analysis reveals a manifest lack of scholarly research on the cultural artefacts ensuing from migration.

The relevance of the artistic representation born out of migrant contexts lies in their constituting a framework for the study of the intercultural encounter and its outcomes, the perception of identity across borders, and language use. In the first chapter, these alternative routes to the study of migration are outlined: from *hybridity* to *métissage*, the most significant viewpoints on the question are tackled, identifying how these contribute to the creation of a specific migrant discourse.

To conclude the outline of the theoretical context of this study, after a general overview on the studies conducted worldwide on migrant literature, an analysis of the existing literature on the latest developments in translation studies (and its social focus) and the meaning of *translation* in migrant contexts is provided, with a specific interest in the commonalities between the practices of migration and translation, as well as the complex and close relationship between translation and writing.

Following the presentation of the theoretical framework of the research, I establish a corpus to be analysed by formulating criteria for the collection of relevant data. In particular, the necessary characteristics for a text to be considered as part of my corpus are:

- First and foremost, texts are written by writers who define or consider themselves as Italian-Canadians, a label that can be applied regardless of the writer's birthplace or writing language;
- In order to be considered relevant, the texts need to have been published, therefore available to the reading public. This way, it will be possible to analyse their reception and the role of the agents involved in the publishing process (or uncover eventual cases of self-publishing);

- Texts selected will fall into the fiction genre: they might be novels, short stories, poems or plays, but not essays. This research is in fact dedicated to literature and not scholarly works;
- Ultimately, the works that may be considered for the analysis have to be relevant to the migrant theme.

Given these prerequisites, in the second chapter entitled *Italian Migrant Writing: a Tile Within the Canadian Literary Mosaic*, I focus my attention on the resulting corpus: that of Italian-Canadian migrant writers. A literary history of Italian writing in Canada – its themes and imageries as well as its generational continuities and discontinuities – is provided. The historical overview highlights the existence of different migrant generations with varying standpoints on the migrant issue. The literature of this ethnic group differs from canonical Canadian literature in terms of both themes and languages adopted, and similarities can be underscored among the various generations of Italian-Canadian writers: specifically, nostalgia for a place and a time in the past and a desire to return to the ‘land of origin’ – as exemplified in the section of this work entitled *The Return*. Italian-Canadian migrant writing is here understood as an act of translation in itself, which originates from the migrant’s underlying desire to understand the deracinated self and to return home. Hence, the act of translation *proper* into the language of origin (in this case, Italian) can be interpreted as a means for the migrant author to be ‘translated back’.

Even in this relatively limited social and national focus, the migrant experience and the relation between language use and identity continue to be intricately linked. At the same time, the perspective highlighted in this ‘small’ literary group carries an important significance for the transnational migrant discourse in literature as a whole.

The second part of the research begins, at a macro level, with a quantitative analysis of data regarding the number of English and French Italian-Canadian works that have been translated into Italian for the Italian market. The figures obtained provide a general picture of the presence and relevance of the phenomenon in Italy, and how this differs from their presence in Canada.

This statistical analysis allows for a generalization of the observable facts, however, numerical data needs to be contextualized for a qualitative evaluation. Specifically, information about the agents of translation – publishing houses and translators – involved in the publication of each of the translated texts is collected, dates of publications of the original texts and their respective translations are compared and inserted in a virtual timeline of the Italian-Canadian literary phenomenon in order to provide information on its transnational evolution.

Next, the pairing of translated texts with their respective source works draws attention to the complex network of relations between, on the one hand, the source text and the political, social, cultural, literary and textual norms and conventions of the source system (and its agents) and, on the other hand, the target text, its agents and the political, social, cultural, literary and textual norms and conventions of the target system.

Moreover, in the third chapter, *A Translational Journey Home*, I illustrate in more detail the link between the two translational practices within the narratives of the three generations of Italian-Canadians: while migrant works – such as those explored in this thesis – can represent cases of linguistic and cultural translation, for the migrant author, translation *proper* (into the ancestral mother tongue, Italian) is interpreted here as both a physical and metaphorical journey back to the land of ancestral origin, and a reconciliation with the mother tongue.

The observation of the translation flows of these works (back) to the Italian literary market, and the actors participating in them, shows that the idea of translation as a homecoming is far from being mere conjecture, but is rather an agenda sustained by the *agents of translation* within the field of Italian-Canadian literature, who have created a discourse around the return of the migrant in order to initiate and support the translation and circulation of these translated works into the Italian literary market.

Many of the works translated back into the language of the ancestral land of origin contain autobiographical elements, interweaving personal history with a fictional story, in which the motive of the return journey becomes highly manifest in the form of a strong nostalgia expressed by the protagonist/author. For this reason, the last chapter, *The Return in/of the Fictionalized Memoir: a Translational Analysis*, applies the hypotheses, theoretical tenets and postulations presented in the preceding chapters to two works representative of the Italian-Canadian autobiographical sub-genre: Joe Fiorito's *The Closer We Are To Dying* (1999), and Mary Melfi's *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009). In concord with the approach intended for this research work, I emphasize the role and agency of these actors that contributed to the return of the authors and their literary work to their land of ancestral origin. Such agency will be mirrored and highlighted in the translation strategies adopted.

To conclude, this doctoral research aims to contribute to the field of translation studies by increasing awareness around the role of translation in the creation and circulation of a migrant discourse.

CHAPTER 1

FROM MIGRATION TO TRANSLATION: STATE OF THE ART OF RESEARCH ON TWO PRACTICES ‘ON THE MOVE’

1. Introduction: background to the research

According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, the authors of the influential book *The Age of Migration*:

[t]here can be few people in either industrialized or less developed countries today who do not have personal experience of migration and its effects; this universal experience has become the hallmark of the age of migration.

(Castles and Miller 1993, 5)

The United Nations estimated that, in 2006, there were around 200 million migrants worldwide, two thirds of which lived in developed countries and the other third residing in developing countries.² These figures, based on the current UN definition of international migrants, include exclusively those who have lived outside of their usual country of residence for a period of at least one year. However significant, the estimated number does not wholly represent the full-size of world mobility. The data, in fact, do not include internal migrants – individuals who move within the given borders of a nation – nor does it include those who move for periods shorter than the year, or those commuters who live in the so-called *borderlands* and move across national borders on a daily basis (nor can it account for the high share of unrecorded illegal mobility). Despite its shortcomings, the UN analysis helps us understand the great significance of an issue that cannot be ignored because of its effects both on contemporary society as a whole and on knowledge across numerous fields of study.

Based on these considerations, in the initial chapter of this research work, I will present the extent to which the migrant phenomenon has affected contemporary world knowledge and how its outcomes have been studied, and what other related issues have been overlooked. By introducing the perspectives adopted to study the movements of people and the changes these have brought to the concepts of subjectivity, culture and literature, I show that migration issues have received little investigation in other related fields, such as that of translation studies.

² For this, and other statistics about international migration, please refer to the UN 2006 Report of the Secretary General on international migration and development, to be found at the website:
[http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/Text/Report%20of%20the%20SG\(June%2006\)_English.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/Text/Report%20of%20the%20SG(June%2006)_English.pdf)

Whereas translation studies and migration studies seem to have conducted mostly separate lives, the paths of studies dedicated to the two practices have been running side-by-side for decades. The historical overview of the studies on translation sheds light on the many occasions in which the two research paths have in fact crossed, a connection that has habitually gone unnoticed but has become more evident in the most recent cultural and sociological approaches, and has found its exemplification in the idea of translation as a migrant practice.

In a figurative voyage across theories and definitions, the aim of this initial chapter is to provide a literature review of both fields of research in order to point out the existence of a common ground and language between migration and translation (intended both as practices and as disciplines ‘on the move’) which make this research possible. The concepts and terminology introduced in the following pages will serve as the platform for the development of a methodology to respond to the research questions.

2. ‘Migrating Theories’: a Literature Review of the Study of Migration across Disciplines

We live in an *age of migration* (Castles and Miller 1993). The steady but variable waves of relocations across the globe have caught scholars’ attention: academia is fascinated by a phenomenon that affects many spheres of human life and knowledge. The wealth of scholarly articles and volumes written on the issue makes the project of a comprehensive literature review almost impossible. But while works on the topic are more than abundant, interdisciplinary research still seems to be scarce: in a world characterized by intense flows of goods, people and information across physical and imaginary frontiers, knowledge about these movements seems to barely cross the borders of our distinct academic disciplines.

American sociologist Douglas Massey and his colleagues – who attempted to summarize the most noteworthy approaches to international migration in order to build an all-inclusive theory for contemporary mobility (Massey et al. 1993) – did not fail to notice that:

[s]ocial scientists do not approach the study of immigration from a shared paradigm, but from a variety of competing theoretical viewpoints fragmented across disciplines, regions, and ideologies. As a result, research on the subject tends to be narrow, inefficient, and characterized by duplication, miscommunication, reinvention, and bickering about fundamentals. Only when researchers accept common theories, concepts, tools, and standards will knowledge begin to accumulate.

(Massey et al. 1994, 700-1)

Despite the wealth of research on international migration, these same scholars assert that the understanding of the issue is grounded in nineteenth century models and concepts, so much so that currently “there is no single, coherent theory of international migration” (Massey et al. 1993, 432).

Moreover, most of what we know about migration and migrants today relies on theories of the economics of migration and/or on numerical statistics about the flows, which have attempted to explain where, why and how these movements occur by the means of measurements and quantifiable data. Without discarding the importance of these studies, which provide us with information regarding the scale of the phenomenon, as well as the practicalities of these movements, there still seems to be little interest and few studies on the more human elements of these flows. It is not the aim of this research to provide a unifying theory about migration but, rather, suggest a new path to explore in order to understand aspects of the phenomenon that statistics and figures may never be able to shed light on.

2.1. From Which Perspectives Has Migration Been Researched?

A comprehensive survey of research on migration would ideally take into account all texts on the subject. Given the scope of this thesis, however, I will concentrate only on a brief interdisciplinary overview of the different approaches to migration; convergences and divergences among the viewpoints will help us understand how the question is usually framed, how research has been carried out – i.e. the methodology – and with which result – the theories.

For this purpose, the analysis that follows is informed by the discussion of the most influential approaches to migration proposed by Caroline Brettell and James Hollifield in their *Migration Theories Talking Across Disciplines* (2000) and reproduced in the table that follows.

Table 1 Approaches to migration according to Brettell and Hollifield (2000)

Discipline	Research Question(s)	Levels/Units of Analysis	Dominant Theories	Sample Hypothesis
Anthropology	How does migration effect cultural change and affect ethnic identity?	Micro/ individuals, households, groups	Relational or structuralist and transnational	Social networks help maintain cultural difference.
Demography	How does migration affect population change?	Macro/ populations	Rationalist (borrows heavily from economics)	Migration has a major impact on size ³ , but a small impact on age structure.

³ This refers to the size of the population in both the country of departure and arrival.

Economics	What explains the propensity to migrate and its effects?	Micro/ individuals	Rationalist: cost-benefit and utility-maximizing behaviour	Incorporation varies with the level of human capital of immigrants.
Geography	What explains the spatial patterns of migration?	Macro, meso, and micro/individuals, household, and groups	Relational, structural, and transnational	Incorporation depends on ethnic networks and residential patterns.
History	How do we understand the immigrant experience?	Micro/individuals and groups	Eschews theory and hypothesis testing	Not applicable.
Law	How does the law influence migration?	Macro and micro/the political and legal system	Institutionalist and rationalist (borrows from all the social sciences)	Rights create incentive structures for migration and incorporation.
Political Science	Why do states have difficulty controlling migration?	More macro/political and international systems	Institutionalist and rationalist	States are often captured by pro-immigrant interests.
Sociology	What explains incorporation and exclusion?	Macro/ethnic groups and social class	Structuralist or institutionalist	Incorporation varies with social and human capital.

The above table is a reproduction of “Table 1.1: Migration Theories Across Disciplines”(Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 4)

The above-mentioned scholars analyze the perspective adopted by eight different disciplines under the bigger denomination of Social Sciences – namely Anthropology, Demography, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Political Sciences and Sociology – in the study of migration by underlining the research question(s), the levels and units of analysis, the dominant theories and hypotheses for each specific discipline. What emerges from their study is that, regardless of the discipline and the perspective held, all disciplines hold a set of shared objectives: discovering what motivates the move of migrants, who these migrants are, and what happens after the move is made.

Anthropologists, for example, tend to work at the two ends of the migration process – the source and the target (Brettell 2003, 1). With their context specific *participant observation*, they immerse themselves in the community of origin to discover the reasons why individuals leave and, similarly, in the place of destination to understand what happens to them when they arrive in the new community, and if any bonds with their homeland are maintained. By focussing on individuals or small groups, they aim to discover how migration effects cultural change and affects ethnic identity. The study of migration from an anthropological perspective starts from the presumption that “outcomes for people who move are shaped by their social, cultural, and gendered locations and that migrants themselves are agents in their behaviour, interpreting and constructing within the constraints of structure” (Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 5).

Insofar as the individual dimension of the migration process is fundamental, and this research will also focus on this particular aspect, scholarly work has also pointed out how “[m]igration is a demographic problem: it influences sizes of populations at origin and destination” (Jansen, 1969: 60). The discipline of demography thus approaches the study of migration by analyzing how population movements affect the demographic dynamics in both the sending and receiving territories. Demographic aspects pertaining to the migrant sphere include: “the relationship between migration and fertility, migration and mortality and morbidity, and the socio-demographic and economic aspects of migration” (Salzmann et al. 2010, 12).

Undeniably, the economic aspects of the process have received the most attention in the sphere of migration studies. Much of the research on migration within the sphere of economics is based on the assumption that “individuals act rationally to maximize their utility”, the so-called *microeconomic model of individual choice* (Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 7). Economics reads human migration as any other activity that uses and produces resources and, as such, it treats it in terms of costs and returns, both private and public (Sjaastad 1962).

Geography has been one of the first and most engaged and prolific disciplines in the study of mobility. In fact, one of the earliest studies in the field of migration theory is thought to be *The Laws of Migration* (1889) by German geographer Ernst Georg Ravenstein: an attempt at drawing systematic tenets based on the empirical analysis of migration waves in England. Naturally, migration has a geographical character, on the grounds that, regardless of all the related implications, it primarily defines movement across space. Nonetheless, the interest in the geography of migration lies in the way mobility re-shapes the concept of geography itself. In other words, the geographical perspective “involves an attention to ‘space’ and to such spatial concepts or metaphors such as ‘place’, ‘node’, ‘friction of distance’, ‘territory’, and ‘scale’”, as well as territory and home (Samers 2010, 1).

Geography’s engagement with territorial notions in the analysis of migration has developed towards the direction taken by Sheller and Urry (2006) when they anticipate “the new mobilities paradigm” in the social sciences: because “all the world seems to be on the move” (207), theoretical perspectives in social sciences should explore ideas of mobility rather than stability; in other words, geographers and all the other social scientists should discard all notions of fixed borders that enclose regions and embrace the fluidity of transnational flows of people.

If human migration is as old as mankind, studying the phenomenon from a historical perspective means studying the general history of mankind.

History shows us that every individual living on earth today is a product of multiple past migrations, of large or small groups, not to speak of single individuals in their autonomy and creativity, their hope, their desperation.

(Isaacs 2007, ix)

Historical approaches to migration emphasize the patterns of migration over centuries and millennia, and while an all-encompassing examination of human migration is sought after, questions tend to still be strictly related to specific places and times (Lucassen et al. 2010). For historians, migration becomes “the narrative of how various people settled, shaped their communities, and constructed their identities” (Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 4). From this viewpoint, the history of the more recent past migrations could be summarized in three big migratory periods – identifiable in every ethnic migrant group⁴ – instigated by as many major historical events: the *Colonial period* (1500s to 1800s) or *Mercantile period*⁵, the *Industrial Period* (XIX and early XX century) and the *Post-Industrial period* (which coincides with the end of WW2).

Because transnational moves involve legal implications in both the sending and the receiving territories, law observes how each political and legal system with its own laws and regulations on immigration may encourage or discourage newcomers. As legal scholar Peter Schuck attests in Brettell and Hollifield (2000): law’s “most important contribution to the study of migration is to provide insights about how legal rules, institutions, processes, and decisions – their nature, behavior, competence, consequences, and legitimacy – affect the movement of people within and across national borders” (189).

Similarly, political scientists devote their work to the study of state policies that (try to) control migration: issues related to migrant rights and citizenship are at the centre of their attention, specifically at the receiving end of the mobility process. As underlined by Brettell and Hollifield (2000), political science is preoccupied with three main elements in the study of migration: “the role of the nation-state in controlling migration flows and hence its borders”, “the impact of migration on the institutions of sovereignty and citizenship, and the relationship between migration on the one hand, and foreign policy and national security on the other” and “the question of incorporation, which raises a host of ethical, normative and legal issues” (8).

⁴ The same threefold development proposed by historians of migration is in fact retraceable in many migratory waves, such as that of Italians, as analyzed in the following chapter.

⁵ The label *Mercantile Period* is first used by Douglas S. Massey (1993) who drafts a modern history of international migration in four periods: the *mercantile* (1500-1800), the *industrial* (1800-WWI), a *period of limited migration* (WWI-1950) and, last, the *post-industrial* (1960s).

Human relations within society are fundamental to the study and understanding of the migrant process from a sociological perspective; they are, in fact, the source of social change, as well as being a result of social changes too. For this reason, migration is at the core of sociological concerns: from August Comte to Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx, many theorists of sociology have been interested in the flow of people across territories and its consequences. Renewed attention to the social aspects of migration came in the 1920s from the so-called Chicago School of Sociology: Albion W. Small, William I. Thomas, Robert E. Park, E. W. Burgess and Louis Wirth were among those scholars who laid the theoretical and empirical foundations for a sociology of migration (Richmond in Jackson 1969).

Amongst the most contemporary theories in the field of the sociology of migration, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *social capital*, *social network*, *habitus*, *field* and *network* stand out in their success in embodying the different sociological elements that play a key role in the migrant phenomenon. Here follows a brief overview of these perspectives; these models will recur in the sociological outlooks that have been recently emerging in translation studies.

2.2. Bourdieusian Theories of Migration

Pierre Bourdieu's *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (1972) has been a milestone of social theory for over forty years. The notions developed in this work, specifically those of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*, have had a long and productive life, both in Bourdieu's own rewriting of his Theory of Practice – i.e. *The Logic of Practice* (1990) and *Pascalian Meditations* (2000) – and in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and the Social Sciences as a whole.

These notions, developed within the framework of his anthropological field research in Algeria, were subsequently adapted and adopted for geographical, social and cultural research that differed from the context they were originally conceived in. As a matter of fact, Bourdieu's work never expressly focused on the migrant experience, and how the *habitus* changed and 'regenerated' in the case of migrants, although he did refer to the consequences of displacement and marginalization in his early work on Algerians (1979).

Nonetheless, the theoretical model and terminology presented by Bourdieu have lately entered and been re-examined in the sphere of migration theory. Since sociology has been one of the most fruitful disciplines in terms of theorizing the issue of migration, Bourdieu's theories have seamlessly migrated from the field of sociology to that of migration studies, as they have into other fields (such as translation studies).

Seeking to understand how human behaviour is regulated – after observing that human conduct does seem to follow patternized schemas – and, at the same time, “rejecting the determinism of mechanistic explanations of social life” (Jenkins, 2006: 40), Bourdieu (1977) attempts to formulate a theoretical model of *social practice* of which *habitus*, *field* and *capital* are some of the main tenets.

His study of social practice is fundamentally a reading of what individuals do in their daily lives: rejecting the concept that practice is regulated by total determinism or, contrarily, by free will and decision-making, Bourdieu uses⁶ the notion of *habitus* to bridge these two extremes. For the French sociologist *habitus* is the compound of:

durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.

(Bourdieu 1977, 72; translated by Richard Nice)

In other words, what Bourdieu defines as *habitus* are the (unconscious) mental and physical dispositions and competences that we acquire informally from our early years through socialization and social interactions, which orient our actions in everyday social practices, our behaviour.

This concept is not fixed, or viewed as absolute: Noble (2013), for example, draws on and questions the concept of *habitus* in examining a specific case of the experience of migrant resettlement and the “disorientation and reorientation of the sensory, linguistic and social experience of the migrant” (343). The case proposed by Gregory Noble is that of a bilingual (English/Arabic) presentation at a community organization event attended by new migrants in Australia, given by a 50-year old Lebanese person who has lived in the country for almost 40 years. Noble assesses the dissimilar reactions that the same speech provoked in the two different languages. The case explored by Noble challenges Bourdieu’s view of *habitus* as a stable, “generative and unifying principle” that regulates and defines “a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, good practices” (Bourdieu 1998, 8; translated by Randal Johnson).

Although *habitus* offers a useful point of entry from which to explore the interdependence of social determination and human agency, its seemingly unchanging nature may not apply to the case of migrants, as exposed by Noble, for whom resettlement entails a momentary clash – a “disjuncture” (Noble 2013, 346) – between the migrant’s original *habitus* and the conditions of the place of

⁶ The notion was, in fact, not devised by Bourdieu himself. It derives from Latin, in which it indicated the physical characteristic of a person, his/her bodily disposition. Bourdieu appropriated the word in 1967 when he contributed to the translation into French of Panofsky’s *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*.

settlement, and the subsequent transformation of those acquired mental and physical competences and the formation of a new set of capacities. This transformed and transformative *habitus* is what Parker (2000) called *diasporic habitus*: “the embodied subjectivities poised between the legacies of the past, the imperatives of the present, and the possibilities of the future” (75).

Kelly and Lusi (2006) underline how Bourdieu’s definition of *habitus* is as useful as it is unclear around the social and spatial boundaries of its formation: while the French theorist uses it to differentiate among groups constructed on the basis of class and occupation mainly (but also gender, ethnic identity and nationality) in order to trace the way in which privilege is reproduced among the individuals of a particular social stratum, the definition has often been applied to place, in its geographic acceptance. Indeed, many of the analyses of the migrant experience contextualized within the Bourdieusian framework rely on a strong component of spatiality, which seems to be constitutive of the notion of *habitus*.

The spatialization of *habitus* is underlined in Kelly and Lusi’s specific study on Filipino-Canadian migrants and their construction of a transnational *habitus*, understood here as the transnational connections of social, cultural and economic ties that regulate the lives of migrants. Moreover, academics working in the discipline of geography highlight that “the juxtaposition and changing of habiti creates a disjuncture that might be productive of new conceptions of the self” (846).

In another study of migration and its effect on societies, Deirdre McKay (2001) redefines the concept of *habitus* as bodily history: “a practical sense of place producing the embodied rituals of everyday life” (44). In other words, the individuals’ bodily practices that generate the idea of space are the same as those that produce the *habitus*; this process is especially visible in the concept of ‘home’. The concept of *habitus as bodily history* is used by McKay to explore the way in which Filipino returning migrants bring home new bodily dispositions (as well as cultural capital accrued abroad) – in this specific case new performances of gender – and create a new *translocal habitus*.

However, as underlined by Raghuram, Henry and Bornat (2010) migration theorists often look at the *habitus* of migrant and non-migrants as two different categories, neglecting the shared networks between the two groups.

The notion of *habitus* is the background against which the different forms of capital are given value and meaning. The different forms under which, for Bourdieu, capital may appear depend on the *field* in which it functions: *economic capital*, *cultural capital* and *social capital*. *Economic capital* is the collection of assets that are “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu 1986, 243). Despite its importance, reducing

the notion of capital to the strictly economic assets means reducing social life to the decisions of *homo economicus*.

The concept of *cultural capital*, while not being directly related to economic liquidity, “is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (idem). By further explicating the complex concept of cultural capital, Bourdieu argues that these symbolic assets may be understood as existing in three states: the *embodied state* (culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, which is not directly transmissible but acquirable through a process of embodiment), the *objectified state* (physical cultural goods that are/can be owned and transmitted for profit or to symbolically transfer the capital) and an *institutionalized state* (qualifications and credentials offered at the institutional/academic level leading to formal and lasting cultural capital to those sanctioned).

Research on migration has underlined the important role played by *cultural capital* in the building of the migrant’s new life abroad, especially in the occupational sphere. However, Erel (2010) points out how “the very act of migration disrupts ideas of linear production of cultural capital” (647), because, as mentioned above in the analysis of disjunctures in *translocal habiti*, the conditions in which *cultural capital* was produced are not homologous to those of its functioning. Consequently “migration-specific cultural capital negotiates existing distinctions and creates new categories of distinction within a migration-specific field” (650).

It is also within the migration-specific field that the concept of *social capital* acquires novel meanings from those initially devised by Bourdieu (1986) when he asserts that *social capital* symbolizes:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

(248-249)

In other words, *social capital* is the collection of networks and connections that can be mobilized to produce benefits, the usefulness of which depends on the volume of capital possessed by those belonging to the network.

In the case of migrants, ethnic ties – which imply a network of solidarity based on sharing common origins and similar circumstances – have been traditionally considered as a form of *social capital*. Even when these bonds are not directly connected to an advantage in terms of capital, “they may contribute in indirect ways to the management of disadvantage” (Anthias 2007, 789).

In fact, migrants live in a social and cultural world that consists of far more than economic calculations, and Bourdieu's understanding of the interdependence between various forms of capital provides a useful basis for understanding the broader calculations made (Kelly and Lusis 2006). What is thought to be low economic capital in the country of arrival may be considered as high social and cultural capital back in the home country.

To conclude, all the approaches to migration inspired by Bourdieusian concepts of *habitus* and *capital* direct us towards the importance of developing a more integrated approach that defines mobility from the viewpoint of migrants themselves.

2.3. Other Routes to the Study of Migration

The table presented above provides a quick overview of the main approaches to the study of migration. Brettell and Hollifield's attempt at constructing a diagram that "summarizes principal research questions and methodologies, as well as dominant theories and hypothesis" in the social sciences (2000, 3), fails at being truly interdisciplinary; psychology and linguistics, to name just a few, are among the disciplines that have been neglected by the above analysis⁷.

The analysis of international mobilization and its results according to statistical data has revealed its weaknesses: while it outlines the questions and draws attention to group tendencies, it rarely offers insights into each personal experience. A different perspective on the issue is offered by psychology, for instance, which has provided insights into the psychic world of the migrant: the effects of mobility on the individual's experience of reality and the perception of one's self and identity, resulting from the abandonment of the land of origin and the subsequent processes of negotiation that the migrant carries out in order to adjust to his/her new way of life. Psychology, thus, focuses on the microlevel of the migrant question, observing the motives and the effects of mobility on the human psyche. While the outcomes of such a process are, surely, different for each individual, they are often ascribable to some variables: the age at the time of migration, the temporary or permanent nature of the move, the possibility of home visits (so-called 'refuelling'), the reasons for and the degree of choice in leaving the place of origin, as well as the magnitude of difference between the country of departure and that of arrival (Akhtar 1999).

⁷ This may be partly accounted for by the fact that these disciplines are not considered to belong to said categorization, or be due to the difficulty in measuring the data and results of the hypotheses upon which these disciplines rely.

According to psychologists, migration is a process implying three consecutive stages (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). During the first, early stage, that of the initial move, the predominant feeling is usually referred to in terms of a *loss* (Volkan 1993; Elovitz and Kahn 1997).

The loss of the familiar physical environment, culture, family and style of social interaction can produce a sense of anomie (even in those immigrants who are familiar with the language of the host country).

(Ramanujam in Elovitz and Kahn 1997, 140)

Also:

La migration s'accompagne d'une perte de multiples enveloppes de lieux, de sons, d'odeurs, de sensations, dans lesquelles l'individu baignait depuis sa naissance et qui constituaient les bases de son fonctionnement psychique.

(Lhomme-Rigaud and Désir 2005, 89)

Afterwards, during the second phase, the trauma of separation and its subsequent feeling of loss cause grief and an ensuing state of mourning:

Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on.

(Freud 1917, 243)

This leads migrants to a process of self-scrutiny and a questioning of their identity. Since "[t]he establishment of a sense of identity depends most importantly on the internalization of object relations and their assimilation by the ego", dramatic changes such as migration may cause a threat for the sense of identity (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989, 129).

If and when the mourning process has been finally elaborated, the migrant will have undergone a transformation of his/her own identity (Akhtar 1999). At this last stage, the mourning has been finally worked through, bringing with it a remodelled sense of identity (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989).

On the other hand, however, the failure of this transitory mourning process

[...] leads to a continuing search for the idealized lost object, and inability to love new objects, a depreciation of objects in one's current life, and an endless pursuit of nostalgic memories for themselves at the expense of an inhibition in many areas of existence.

(Werman 1977, 396)

The migrants' nostalgia underlined within the framework of psychology – a wish and fantasy never fulfilled to go back to a place or a time (real or imaginary) that is lost – is one of the most evident thematic elements in the cultural works by migrants who seem to have never dealt with the mourning process deriving from the separation from and loss of the homeland, such as in the case of the narratives presented in these pages.

Another fundamental element in the migrant experience is language, conveyor of both knowledge and meaning: with words we learn about the world that surrounds us and we make sense of the others

and ourselves. Language is the carrier of a system of symbols: it is the beholder of our cultural world, our affections and our personal sphere. We give voice to our culture and our individuality through language, just as it is language itself that shapes us, the way we think and live. It allows us to form reality and be formed by it.

For the migrant self, the multiplicity of realities deriving from the existence of a multilingual landscape translates the expressive power of language into another level of difficulty in the building of a life across boundaries: the loss of one's own language and the struggle to integrate into the new social surrounding by means of a new language (the loss of the self *into* the new language).

Linguistics studies the way language may contribute to social processes of inclusion, 'othering', and exclusion in migrant contexts (Simpson 2011). The bivalent role of language becomes evident in the migrant's struggle to belong:

[l]a langue est à la fois une source d'angoisses très importante, mais apparaît aussi comme une voie (ou voix) permettant la résolution de ces angoisses.

(Lhomme-Rigaud and Désir 2005, 89)

The difficulties caused by the loss of the native language are counterbalanced by the excitement of the encounter with the new, foreign language and the power represented by mastering it: "le plaisir et la puissance de se dilater et d'être un étranger nulle part" (ibid).

The study of the linguistics of migration has been mostly centred on the analysis of the features and role of multilingualism: from language acquisition to language teaching, multilingual work and institutional environments, interpreting and translation, linguists' work tends to underline the interaction between the self and the different dimensions of language(s).

To conclude, both psychology and linguistics approach the study of migration by looking into the way personal and social migrant identity is shaped and developed, shedding light on the existence of processes that lead to the building of a specific migrant culture.

3. The Migrant I (Eye): a Review of the Literature on Migrant Subjectivity and Culture

We tend to think about culture as linked to/constructed in a specific location. According to James Clifford (1992) we owe the localizing/localized concept of culture to the practice of anthropological fieldwork; it is in fact in the eyes of the ethnographer that cultures come to be identified with a specific bounded site: "centering 'the culture' around a particular locus, 'the village,' and a certain spatial practice of dwelling/research which itself [...] depended on a complementary localization – that of 'the field'" (98).

The territorial notion of bounded states, which coincide with culturally and racially homogeneous societies, is one of the most enduring illusions – to which many, in addition to ethnographers, have contributed over the centuries – challenged by the advent of the *age of migration*. Meanings are not locally constructed, but rather depend on variables of, and have consequences on, a global scale. In a world of worldwide networks, every action produced in a culturally specific context will be read in a different way when travelling throughout the network.

Similarly, Clifford suggests rethinking culture in terms of movement and travel, rather than as having a static character – an observation that is even more fitting in the age of migration.

If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalizing bias of the term culture – seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, etc. – is questioned. Constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view.

(Clifford 1992, 101)

If the current *age of migration* encloses the idea of movement more strongly than ever before, the concept of culture as tied to a place is now weakened, if not non-existent. Rather, we should turn our attention to the multiple “roots and routes” of globalized culture (Tomlinson 1999, 29).

3.1. Studying Migrant Culture: from Destructing Binarism to Unrepresentability

Since the world has traditionally been divided into separate blocks (read the North and the South, the East and the West, etc.), we learn to construct cultural/artistic debates around similar types of binary oppositions: the known/unknown, the I/Other, the source/target, the original/copy, and the centre/periphery, among others. This conceptual labelling has reinforced borders and differentiations even when not physically existent. However, the ambiguity of these intangible borders and the new fictional spaces created by itinerant beings and their narratives have started to undermine previously established binary imaginaries.

In the current *transnational*⁸ postmodern world, the *age of migration*, it is necessary to explore the new roots and routes of culture: rethink culture as a body that lives, and translates (as in transforms and moves), in which the traditional constructed dualities give way to ever-changing sites of interference and interaction, and of which the many tales of manifold perspectives and juxtaposition

⁸ The term was coined in the early 20th century by the intellectual Randolph Bourne in his “Transnational America” (1916) in which he called for an American culture that would embrace racial and ethnic pluralism.

lead to the abolition of borders, of definable separated spaces, of identifiable binary oppositions between here and there.

In his account of the *risk society*, the condition of contemporary Western society, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck argues that we have entered “late modernity”: the changes in the globalized economy – its production and distribution methods – have brought about a paradigmatic shift in the “modern mental habits” (Beck 1992) of conceiving the world according to dualisms or binaries, such as the opposition between the Self and the Other. We (the Self) have no other choice than to think beyond dualisms: the Other is among us, and even more, we are the Other.

As asserted by Julia Kristeva in her *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991), the question in this regard today is “no longer that of welcoming the foreigner within a system that obliterates him, but of promoting the togetherness of those foreigners that we all recognize ourselves to be” (2-3; translated by Leon S. Roudiez).

To get beyond the traditional dualistic perspectives is “to reevaluate the significance of the modern nation state as a political, economic, and cultural unit. Neither political nor economic structures of domination are still simply co-extensive with national borders” (Gilroy 1993, 7). This means, essentially, that the notion of identity is often no longer coincident with politically bounded territories.

The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996) theorized a similar concept in terms of *translocality*, an idea that is both in opposition to, and constitutive of, locality, intended as a site of ethnographic enquiry. As a product of transnational migrations, *translocalities* are “deterritorialized imaginings”, “virtual neighbourhoods”, “displaced public spheres”, and “delocalized transnations” (166).

In these postmodern times of mass relocations, *deterritorialized*⁹ spaces/cultures/identities – entities that symbolize the dissolution of cultural boundaries, the impossibility of ‘being’ within the given margins – place (or rather find) themselves at the centre of the international debate in the humanities, a debate that addresses the reductionism of any “politics of polarity” in the age of migration (Bhabha 1994).

In contexts of mobility, the traditional concepts of culture have now proven inadequate. The interrelation between movement and culture formation is exemplified by the fact that “[o]ur cultures are the moving testimony of the communication, sharing, obstruction and re-elaboration that accompany the movement and the mixing of people” (Isaacs 2007, ix).

⁹ The term was first coined by Deleuze and Guattari in their 1972 *Anti-Oedipus*.

The diasporic nature of the “new world order of mobility, of rootless histories”¹⁰ has indeed brought about a re-elaboration, a transformation, of subjectivities and cultural dynamics. For contemporary thought, culture can no longer be territorialized or relegated to a bipolar opposition between the Self and the Other. As stated by Appadurai, “it may be useful to begin to use culturalism to designate a feature of movements involving identities consciously in the making” (Appadurai 1996, 15).

These *identities in the making* are the migrants: the “hyphenated identities”¹¹, the beings of “selected discontinuities”¹², “bicultural, bifocal or even multicultural and multifocal”¹³ inhabitants of a “third space, where boundaries are blurred and cultures collide, creating at once a disabling confusion and an enabling complexity”¹⁴.

As pointed out by Paul White (1995), the complexity of the migrant condition lies, in the “ambivalence and ambiguity of identities” (4), their “dislocation” and “alienation” (6), but also the “pluralism” and “syncretism” (6) that affect both the migrant individuals and those of migrant origin.

The above conceptualizations come together to deconstruct binarism in the cultural discourse within the framework of migration, often by highlighting the difficulty of locating migrant culture because of its instability, its fluidity.

Let us not seek to solidify, to turn the otherness of the foreigner into a thing. Let us merely touch it, brush it by, without giving it a permanent structure. [...] An otherness barely touched upon and that already moves away.

(Kristeva 1991, 3; translated by Leon S. Roudiez)

3.2. Studying Migrant Culture: Location and Cartographies

Migrant writers and bicultural writers speak from a place between cultures.
(Thomsen 2008, 61)

Despite the difficulties of locating something as fleeting as mobility, contemporary scholarship on the subject has suggested the existence of a spatial dimension to (migrant) culture. All discourse on the dimensionality of culture must start with those theorists that, in opposition to the traditional binary imagery connected to culture, claim the existence of a ‘special’ space where cultural meeting occurs, such as in the case of Mary Louise Pratt’s abstract spatial dimension where migrant encounter happens

¹⁰ Clifford 1997: 1

¹¹ Caglar 1997

¹² Rushdie 1998: 427

¹³ Shukla 2006: 5

¹⁴ Bose 2003: 239

– the famed *contact zones*: the “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt 1991:,1).¹⁵

Pratt aims at showing the intercultural encounter as a two-way flow where previously separated entities come to intersect and interact, thus, (involuntarily) reinforcing the concept of cultural bipolarity. As a matter of fact, even though she seems intent on fighting constructs of discrete, structured, separated cultural/linguistic/literary edifices, her interpretation seems to produce the opposite effect, as it suggests an idea of cultural separation.

Moreover, what Pratt does not address in her definition of the *contact zone* is the role and awareness of the cultural bodies meeting in the contact zone. Indeed, what emerges from Pratt’s theory is the idea that the contact zone “might imply a mechanical-casual impingement by one body on to another, stationary, body”, a sort of geometrical juxtaposition where the cultural bodies seem to be unaware of what is taking place (Arshi et al 1994: 228). Contrarily, there is nothing casual or involuntary in the migratory movements that are often at the origin of these cultural contact zones, as it would be incorrect to think of culture as a sort of disembodied object that is separated from the individual carrying it.

The idea of a new space of coincidence (but difference) created by the cultural contact is also found in Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of the *third space of enunciation* (Bhabha 1994). With this definition, Bhabha denounces the prevalent binary reading of the cultural dialogue, which is usually understood as a reading of the Other by the Self, suggesting that all cultural instances are created in an ambivalent third space that contradicts the assumed idea of the purity of culture.

In the scholar’s words:

[t]he intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force [...] it is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.

(37)

In the case of cultural representations, the Third Space is therefore an *unrepresentable* place of constant negotiation and hybridization where cultures are not discrete phenomena but always in contact

¹⁵ Examples of contact zones that see the cohabitation and interaction of cultures and languages in migrant settings are Sherry Simon’s “Cities in Translation” (2011). For the scholar, the interactions within these linguistically divided cities (she takes as an example Calcutta, Trieste, Barcelona and Montreal) can be read as translation – intended both in its conventional and expanded understanding.

with one another. For Bhabha this impure *third Space of cultural interaction* is placed on the borderlines of cultures, the threshold, the *liminal* space. Borrowed from anthropology, the term *liminality* was first introduced by Arnold Van Gennep in his 1908 *Rites de Passage* to describe the condition of the individual undergoing rites of passage in a given society: “the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal rites*” (Van Gennep 1960, 21).

Van Gennep’s anthropological study of cultural socialization is an apt framework for the discussion of migratory (and translation) processes; the scholar himself had pointed out the similarity between the structure of rites of passage and migrations, which he calls “territorial passages” (ibid, 15).

Homi K. Bhabha resorts to the idea of liminality, as proposed by Van Gennep, in order to describe the “signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourses of minorities [...] and tense locations of cultural difference” (Bhabha 1994, 148).

These discussions on migration and migrant culture reflect the marginal position to which migrants (and their cultures) are relegated, subjected to the hegemonial claims of the majority:

The minority subject occupies a liminal space within which identity is constantly being negotiated, rewritten and performed, that is, refashioned in an endless articulation of self in relation to two spatial and cultural polarities.

(Beneventi 2004, 232)

These performing spaces of negotiation and rewriting provide “a place from which to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal, and the emergent” (Bhabha 1994, 167). The hybrid space of liminality as conceived by Bhabha has the benefit of stressing the transitional and always-changing nature of the cultural encounter, making the idea of cultures and ethnic collectives as homogeneous and static entities inconceivable.

Bhabha (1994) endorses an idea of the intercultural (migrant) encounter happening in a space of liminality, emphasizing the *hybrid* nature of said space. *Hybridity*, a notion popular in postcolonial studies but relevant to all instances of cultural encounters, evokes the existence of a “contaminated and impure space [...] mixing two or more than two and engendering the new” (Shukla 2006: 5).

Hybridity has the potential to deconstruct that dualism of Self/Other while reconstructing a subversive discourse. As seen by Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2001): “[h]ybridity is to culture what deconstruction is to discourse: transcending binary categories” (238). Hence, the hybrid discourse is able to transcend, to go beyond, to initiate “collaboration and contestation” (Bhabha 1994, 2). The liminal hybrid space is no longer seen as a “badge of failure or denigration, but as a part of the contestational weave of cultures” (Mudrooroo 1990, 24).

Despite its versatility and its inherent celebration of difference, the application of the hybridity concept to cultural studies in the *age of migration* has received fierce critiques. Criticisms draw attention to the fact that the idea of hybridization does imply (and reinforce) the existence of originally distinct ‘units’ that can be ‘mixed’. Among others, Jonathan Friedman (1994) argues against the image of cultures as whole independent bodies:

[...] the elements making up any culture are imports. For the once pure cultures that now interact across borders have never existed as such. The hybrid nature of culture defined in terms of the origins of its elements is nothing recent.

(75)

Moreover, Friedman is not convinced that hybridization has effectively deconstructed the traditionally binary oppositions and borders between cultures; matter-of-factly, it has reconstructed them.

In a world of multiplying diasporas, one of the things that is not happening is that boundaries are disappearing. Rather, they seem to be erected on every new street corner of every declining neighbourhood of our world. It is true that a little bit of this and a little bit of that are flowing across all sorts of boundaries, but they are not being used to celebrate hybridity. Quite the contrary, they are incorporated and naturalized by group formation that strives to homogenize and maintain social order within its own boundaries.

(241)

It is that homogenization found within the borders at the base of the system of binary oppositions that the current discourses on intercultural encounter – especially the study of migration and mobility – try to dismantle:

[o]r le métissage contredit précisément la polarité homogène/hétérogène. Il s’offre comme une troisième voie entre la fusion totalisante de l’homogène et la fragmentation différencialiste de l’hétérogène. Le métissage est une composition dont les composantes gardent leur intégrité.

(Laplantine and Nouss 1997, 8-9)

Contesting the necessity of belonging to one homogeneous entirety, the concept of *métissage* offers a third way, “une pensée – et d’abord une expérience – de la désappropriation, de l’absence et de l’incertitude qui peut jaillir d’une rencontre. La condition métisse est très souvent douloureuse” (Laplantine and Nouss 2001, 7). The *métissage* engendered by the cultural meeting thus becomes symbolic of the pain caused by a feeling of loss, of uncertainty and disappropriation, which is often portrayed in the artistic productions of migrants, as explored in the following pages.

For deterritorialized migrant beings, *métissage* is not only a way of thinking and understanding the world, but a means of existing: “[m]étissage is such a concept and a practice: it is the site of undecidability and indeterminacy, where solidarity becomes the fundamental principle of political

action against hegemonic languages”¹⁶, “a site for writing and surviving in the interval between different cultures and languages [...] a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy, and pedagogical praxis” (Hasebe-Ludt et al. 2009, 9).

All the above approaches and terminology regarding the intercultural encounter have highlighted the need to deconstruct the fixed binary models upon which we have often based our ideas of culture. Artistic products, such as migrant literatures, are also working towards the dismantling of traditional and stable models of culture.

4. Departures, Arrivals, and Translational Journeys: a Review of the Literature on Migrant Writing

Cultural practices born out of contexts of mobility invite us to reconsider the representation of migration beyond statistical figures, in order to shed light on the way selves are created and transfigured across physical and cultural borders and boundaries. Artistic productions, such as literature, aptly depict the way transnational identities are often constructed and self-defined.

Regardless of the type of narration and how fictitious characters may or may not appear, the narratorial voice in literatures by migrants and the way/place it speaks from – “narration, voice and point of view, who is telling the story, from whose, or what perspective, emplotment, especially in relation to contingency and chance, and closure are all relevant to an interest in the narrative construction of identity” (Whitebrook 2001, 11) – reveals a lot about the experience of leaving a homeland to settle in a new environment.

The arts, a fertile soil for multi-domain collaboration, have been influencing the way the experience of migration is portrayed and perceived by the masses. The increasing interest in migrant literature seems correlated to the rise of cultural studies and the ongoing debate around the issue of I/Other and familiarity/foreignness that is at the core of a world of intercultural exchanges.

Cross-disciplinary discourses are gradually shifting attention towards the cultural performances issued from migration “[a]s a way of envisioning and representing migrants and their histories, these artistic products become iconic strategies of multilayered image making” (Davis, Fischer-Hornung, and Kardux 2010, 2).

In the *age of migration*, the long-established dichotomies are being slowly dismantled in order to give way to a multifaceted idea of identity, to which these narratives have been strongly contributing.

¹⁶ Lionnet 1991, 6

The first issue is that of defining narratives that pertain to the topic of migration as a genre, and examining what elements of these narratives are recurrent and relevant for the construction of a migrant identity. In this section, I will consider how narratives depicting mobility have been studied worldwide, how these studies have focused on questions of oppositions and inclusiveness, territory and language, and how these have been reflected on nomenclature. Finally, I expose how and why these cultural products and their study may represent the *contact zone* between the migration and translation activities.

4.1. Studying Mobility Through Literature: International Perspectives

As claimed above, while interdisciplinary scholarship on migration and its cultural product is still largely unmapped, the twentieth century has seen an exponential growth in the works on literary representations of mobility beyond national and temporal borders. However, given the heterogeneity of migration waves across the world, as well as the diversity of each national literary scenario, these international discourses around migrancy and literature are very diversified.

Many works on migrant literature originate within the European framework, where migrations have been interpreted as the consequence of European colonial outposts: “disenfranchised people venturing toward the wealthier European metropolises that – as central locations of culture and rationality – are thus opposed to the migrants’ lands of origin, seen as multiple peripheral arteries that depend upon the center for their definition” (Ponzanesi and Merolla 2005, 2).

The collection of essays edited by the above-quoted authors, *Migrant Cartographies: New Cultural and Literary Spaces in Post-colonial Europe* (2005), addresses the question about whether a cohesive European literature would now be more suitable rather than the traditional concept of single national literatures, given the current constant travelling of people, ideas and cultures between the European borders. As the above-mentioned scholars aptly state:

[...] grand historical narratives of former European metropolitan centers are being interrupted and de-centered by people shifting among multiple locations whose diasporic sensibilities refashion traditional definitions of literary canons, identities, and genres.

(2005, 1)

The collection of essays *Migration and Literature* (2008) by the Danish comparative literature scholar Søren Frank deals with the same question by offering an insight into the phenomenon of migration and its influence on literature. Four contemporary novelists – Grass, Kundera, Rushdie and

Kjærstad¹⁷ – from different countries and with different experiences of migration are compared in order to draw attention to the way migration acts on both the structural and thematic level of a literary work: “[m]igration [...] signals oscillatory and inconclusive processes that manifest themselves on different levels in the literary work – for example, in relation to personal, national, and cultural identity, language, narrative form, and enunciation” (8).

Amongst the most active scholars in the field of migration and literature are Paul White and Russell King, both British scholars in the Geography field, who believe in the use of creative literature for the study of migration and its relation to the perception of space/place (White 1985). The collection of essays *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration* (King et al. 1995) by the same authors offers a good example of the variety of international insights on the question of identity, migration and literature. Spanning a few continents, and with a constant interest in the notion of place, a few chapters of said work are dedicated to the motif of insularity and the ‘periphery of the periphery’, island authors and migration: the perspectives on emigration in Irish literature, the migrant novels of the Barbadian author George Lamming, French West Indian *creolité* and the works of the francophone writers from Martinique and Guadeloupe, contemporary Maltese migrant fiction and Samoan migrant identity in the work of Albert Wendt.

The same theme is represented in *Small Worlds, Global Lives* (King and Connell 1999), a collection of essays by the same scholars entirely dedicated to the “periphery of the periphery” (27), and its insider-outsider dynamics.

Another European perspective on world migrant literatures, this time from an anthropological viewpoint, is offered by Máiréad Nic Craith in *Narratives of Place, Belonging and Language: An Intercultural Perspective* (2012): a study that attempts to explore the role of language in the formation of identity within these narratives and the relationship between self and community. What is common among these authors from different geographical backgrounds (not limited to the European continent) is that “their experience of ‘in-betweenness’ [...] is usually perceived as belonging ‘no-where’ rather than ‘else-where’”(ii).

A wealth of publications on the topic of migrant literature has also been originating outside of Europe, not only as a consequence of European imperialism – in which case the labels of exile, diaspora or postcolonial literature are commonly used – but also from those areas originally defined as

¹⁷ The Norwegian author Jan Kjærstad, is “not a migrant in the traditional sense of the word” (Frank 2008, 15) but is included in the analysis because he represents a “new type of literature that both formally and thematically interbreeds with the increasing number of migrant authors just as his work is clearly shaped by and answers to the new social processes of globalization” (idem).

settler societies, where increasing waves of migration in the last century also originate from the same European former colonizer countries: the United States, Australia, New Zealand¹⁸, and Canada.

An example of this ‘new wave’ is the collection edited by Alapana Knippling (1996), *New Immigrant Literatures in the United States: A Sourcebook to Our Multicultural Literary Heritage*, in which each section of the study is dedicated to a particular ethnic group: Asian-American, Caribbean-American, European-American, and Mexican-American writings are all represented, with a specific focus on ‘new’ literature produced since World War II.

Excluding the writings of Native Americans or African-Americans because “the former group lays claim to the origins of this country and is indigenous to it, while the latter group suffered a brutal and forced immigration that deserves a separate and fuller treatment” (xi), the book aims to represent “hitherto marginalized literatures” (idem), portraying the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the new migrant culture in the US. What is also relevant is the choice of including references to non-English writing, as well as the rejection of the “ubiquitous hyphen” (xii) – such as in the case of the alternatives “Italian/American Literature” or “Filipino American” – which is often associated to migrant literature and which “emphasizes ethnicity and a minority status” as well as “unequal power relations” (idem)¹⁹.

Attempting to dismantle the construct of unequal power relations implied in multicultural contexts, the work of Sneja Gunew has analyzed Australian migrant literature by minority ethnic groups from the framework of feminist theory and poststructuralist theory. Her works *Striking Chords: Multicultural Literary Interpretations* (1992), *Framing Marginality: Multicultural Literary Studies* (1994), and *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms* (2004) all explore the impact of new Australian writers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds on the perception of Australian multiculturalism. Sneja Gunew was also the first to compile a listing of works by Australian writers with non-English backgrounds: *A Bibliography of Australian Multicultural Writers* (1992).

On the other side of the world, the *hyphenated identities* (Caglar 1997) of Canada have received much attention in the scholarly sphere, as a steady presence of works dedicated to the question in the past twenty years attests: *Beyond Silence: Chinese Canadian Literature in English* (1997), *Icelandic Voice in Canadian Letters: The Contribution of Icelandic-Canadian Writers to Canadian Literature* (1997), *Textualizing the immigrant experience in contemporary Quebec* (2004), *Bridging the Ocean: Italian Literature of Migration to Canada* (2006), and *Voices of Exile in Contemporary Canadian Francophone Literature* (2010), just to name a few.

¹⁸ Analyses on migrant writing in the country are still rare, and are often included within the wider umbrella of Australia.

¹⁹ We should rather encourage the perception of the hyphen as a mark of union (or *trait d’union*, in French), a bridging element between two previously distinct heritages/ethnic groups/selves: a connection without total assimilation.

Canadian hyphenated writing, whether we consider it ethnic, minority or im/migrant literature, and whether we consider Canada's founding European cultures – the Catholic French and the Protestant Anglo-Celtic – as belonging to the category, dates as far back as the 1800s. One of the earliest cases of writing about the migrant issue in Canada are British-Canadian Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It In The Bush* (1852) – a pioneer account/part memoir in the form of sketches of a British immigrant to Canada, intended for fellow British prospective settlers, warning them about the harshness of the country – and her sister Catharine Parr Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836): a series of letters intended for their mother in England that, unlike Moodie's, provides a positive outlook on the settler's life in the country.

Canada and its migrant literature, nevertheless, represent an exceptional case: the dualism experienced by migrant writers (Padolsky 1996) here is reinforced (and doubled) by the political/cultural dualism represented by the English/French mainstream cultural productions. On this question, Barbara Godard (1990) highlighted how the dominant definitions of Canadian national literature have regularly developed around the English Canadian/Quebec binary model and its official bilingual policy. This has meant that both minority and ethnic writing are being associated more and more often to types of literatures that distance themselves from this binary construction. In fact, according to Pivato, "ethnic literature has traditionally been defined as writing in the unofficial languages of Canada" (1985, 27). This signifies that when the ethnic writer chooses to write in a foreign language, he/she is consciously opting to remain obscure, out of sight, outside the boundaries of major literature. Once again, the question of language becomes central to the discourses around ethnic and minority literatures. However, as will be shown in the next chapter, migrant (ethnic) writers in Canada have not always made a choice of writing in the foreign (native for them) language, and yet have still managed to convey their *detrterritorialization/delocalization/uprootedness* through language.

Despite the diversity of global approaches and focus, the growing interest in literatures born out of contexts of mobility is calling forth the necessity of finding a unanimous label to define them.

4.2. A Question of Terminology: *Migrant Literature* as the Most Comprehensive Label

Due to the relative novelty of the topic, there is still much debate around the label to be given to these narratives, while it is also not clear what type of literary productions said label should really encompass. Despite the difficulty of defining borders for narratives originating from different social/geographical backgrounds, and regardless of the name one may conventionally adopt for them, it is nonetheless possible to observe what is commonly found among works produced by writers that have

lived (both in first person or indirectly) the experience of migration.

The discourses that pervade the artistic productions²⁰ by migrants are namely: a questioning of the established dichotomies between home and away, self and other, familiar and foreign; the motif of the journey and the reception of the country of arrival, the rite of passage into the new *homeground*²¹; the resulting sense of social and cultural displacement and the feeling of belonging to neither the source nor to the host culture and, thus, the continuous search for roots and a nostalgia for what is lost (Robertson et al. 1994).

The migrant voice tells us what it is like to feel a stranger and yet at home, to live simultaneously inside and outside one's immediate situation, to be permanently on the run, to think of returning but to realize at the same time the impossibility of doing so, since the past is not only another country but also another time out of the present.

(King, Connell, and White 1995, xv)

One of the most attested labels to refer to these writings is *Migrant Literatures* (White 1995). Whether written by migrants or their descendants, for Paul White, *Migrant Literature* provides important insights into the construction and perception of self-identity in the migrant experience: “[m]igrant literature is individual, subjective, diverse” (xv), it is often autobiographical and written for the purpose of catharsis (White 1995, 9), while it also has a political intent of highlighting issues of discrimination.

[...] much ‘migrant’ literature is not, in fact, by migrants, but by writers who are labeled or racialised in some way by the societies they live in, and in which they were actually born. The emergence of distinctive cultural voices amongst such writers reflects a growing series of issues concerned with group identity and the search for self-confidence, acceptance and legitimation in an environment of alienation and conflict.

(xv)

Carine Mardorossian (2002) points out how, over the last decade, the term *migrant literature* has become so popular that it has been unsuitably applied to writings by postcolonial authors. Literatures by those who have experienced *exile* – intended by the scholar as “unwilled expulsion from a nation, such that no return is possible unless it be under the shadow of imprisonment, execution, or some other coercive physical response” (17) – and *migrancy*, which implies a “relatively voluntary departure with the possibility of return” (idem), are gradually merging into one definition. This is confirmed by some exiled postcolonial writers, who have also adopted the term *migrant* to describe their own transcultural

²⁰ A detailed analysis of the narratorial devices used by authors of migrant origins will be conducted in the following chapters with regards to the specific case of Italian-Canadian writing.

²¹ *Homeground* is the title of a 1990 play by Caterina Edwards, originally entitled *Terra Straniera* (Foreign Land), which deals with the idea of home as a place where one reproduces the illusion of the old, familiar country as opposed to the hostility of the new land.

literary productions (i.e. Salman Rushdie among the many). The similarities in the motivations that lead to the departure of the emigrant or the exile are certainly disputable, as is the way the return is perceived (as well as the feeling of belonging); however, narratives by both groups offer an insight into the concepts of identity and *home* – as not a *space of inhabitation*, but of belonging (Ahmed 1999).

In migrant literature, writing itself becomes home, the ‘space of inhabitation’; words become, for the migrant author, a way to “reconcile with one’s own culture of origin, with one’s own traditions, with one’s own set of reference values, while approaching the culture of the ‘host’ country and setting in motion processes of ‘integration’ that allow one’s own multiple identities to coexist”²² (Fiorucci 2006, 221; my translation).

Ponzanesi and Merolla (2005) have also adopted the terminology of *migrant literature* when referring to narratives that “address and investigate issues of home and abroad, identity and language, private and public domains” (4) and the “negotiation between the legacy of the past and the accelerated momentum of the present” (6).

All standpoints on migrant literature seem to agree on the existence of a double perspective offered within these narratives by the migrant writer’s “double-voice” (Young 1995, 23). A similar concept had been expressed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) describing the linguistic constructions of the *novelistic hybrid* which, like the migrant author,

is not only double-voiced and double-accented [...] but is also double-linguaged; for in it there are not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are two socio-linguistic consciousnesses, two epochs, that, true, are not here unconsciously mixed (as in an organic hybrid), but that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance.

(360)

Thanks to their double perspective, migrant writers attempt to bridge the gap between different languages and cultures, increasingly attracting public interest despite the complexity of some of their narratives. The appeal of migrant literatures might be explained in their authentic depiction of a borderless world:

First, migrant and bicultural writers relate very well to the phenomenon of globalization which is changing the way we think about the world and how people experience their own worlds [...] Second, the literature of migrants presents a certain double perspective on things by someone who is both at home and away at the same time. This is not just a quality of the content of this

²² “Riconciliarsi con la propria cultura d’origine, con le proprie tradizioni, con i propri sistemi valoriali di riferimento avvicinandosi alla cultura del paese ‘ospitante’ e mettendo in moto processi di ‘integrazione’ che facciano convivere le proprie molteplici identità.”

literature, but also, and third, a formal quality that creates the opportunity to create a particular narrative voice.

(Thomsen 2008, 99)

Migrant literatures are hence defined by two elements: on the one hand the physical (and psychological) dislocation of the writer, who experiences the uprooting from the native land, the journey across countries and cultures, and the settlement into the Other's territory; on the other, migrant literatures represent a poetical and stylistic statement, with the above mentioned themes of exile and loss shaping the way stories are being told.

If the creation of new hybrid and multilayered voices and styles is influenced by the contexts of mobility in which these narratives are conceived, conversely, migrant writing plays an important role in shaping the development of national and international literatures in which it can be found²³.

Ce sont les écritures migrantes, marannes, qui façonnent le nouvel imaginaire, qui confèrent une nouvelle dimension aux littératures "nationales" qui s'essoufflent.

(Robin 2000, 40)

The traditional idea of (canonical) national literatures is questioned, inasmuch as the traditional idea of a homogenized culture in the age of migration is no longer accepted or acceptable.

The French language label *écritures migrantes* used above was coined by the Haitian-Canadian poet Robert Berrouët-Oriol²⁴ to describe the literary production of writers who immigrated to Canada and settled in Québec in the early 1980s (Dupuis 2008). The adjective *migrantes* was (and still is) used here to identify the different origin of these writers with comparison to those belonging to the so-called canonic national literature, since underlining the ethnic value of these narratives "marks a more profound shift in the development of the literary canon by questioning the very concept of national literature" (498).

This manipulation and change in national literature is operated through the insertion of the ethnic subject within the framework of the country's literary system. Said insertion may occur at different levels: if, for some, the discriminating factor for distinguishing the *écriture migrante* – in this case between Québécois and non-Québécois literature – is language²⁵, or the use of a non-official language,

²³ It is moreover problematic to speak of migrant writing as belonging to specific and single national literatures.

²⁴ The magazine *Vice Versa* founded in Montreal in 1983 played the role of bringing into the spotlight migrant writing in North America. The terminology *écritures migrantes* used with specific reference within the framework of Québécois literature was then used by Pierre Nepveu in his 1988 *L'écologie du réel*, for which the label *migrante* "insiste davantage sur le mouvement, la dérive, les croisements multiples que suscite l'expérience de l'exil" (234), and more recently in its singular alternative, by Mousan and Hildebrand (2001) in their *Histoire de l'écriture migrante au Québec*, the first Québécois literary history dedicated entirely to migrant literature.

²⁵ In the case of Québec the matter is further complicated by the political use of the French language as a vehicle for a nationalist discourse in the Francophone province within/against a largely monolingual Anglophone Canada.

for others, like Daniel Chartier and his *Dictionnaire des écrivains émigrés au Québec* (2003), *écriture migrante* may indeed use official languages while still bringing to the forefront the ethnic matter.

The issue of ethnicity and the question of Otherness have also been at the centre of the debate around migrant literatures in Italy: various labels have been adopted to describe the phenomenon – *letteratura della migrazione*, *scrittori migranti*, *migranti scrittori*, etc. – and to define writers from a variety of geographical and linguistic backgrounds who share the migrant experience. Because more traditional terms *immigrato/a* and *emigrato/a* have now come to acquire negative connotations, the adjective *migrante* seems to have now become the most used definition even in the Italian language – probably as a translation of the English ‘migrant’ – to refer to authors who “change life and language, wandering across time and space, passing through worlds. They elevate the presence of the man of letters in the world and creolize the regions they stop in” (Gnisci and Moll 2002, 194; my translation)²⁶.

Scrittori migranti, migrant writers, are those whose mobility becomes art, and whose aim is that of making creole migrant art visible to the world. This visibility is enacted in the “manifestation in their work of a clash or meeting of different cultures as a result of the emigration of the author (or of that of the author’s parents, in the case of second generation migrants)²⁷” (Marchand 1991, xxxii; my translation).

This said, despite the rising global interest in *Migrant Literature/écritures migrantes/letteratura migranti*, some authors still refuse the association with said labels, being concerned that this spotlight on cultural diversity could channel them into marginality and peripherality compared with mainstream national literature (Nic Craith 2012) – to which some of them wish to be integrated.

Whether they aspire to complete assimilation or wish to preserve cultural uniqueness, immigrants in a new country all experience the feeling of belonging to a minority, that of their specific ethnicity – different from the majority of the receiving country. According to Padolsky (1996), in circumstances of *social pluralism* (Loriggio 1996) – which are often found in migrant contexts – a series of “minority issues” (Padolsky 1996, 250) take place: “language, immigrant experience, discrimination, acculturation, audience relations, literary and social connections” are all narrative elements reminding us of the migrant’s *alterity*. For Padolsky, the writer’s alterity returns to define itself according to traditional binary oppositions: self/others, minority/majority and ethnic/mainstream, among others.

The migrant’s alterity is also the distinctive trait of migrant literatures in the Australian literary

²⁶ “[...] cambiano vita e lingua, che girano il tempo e lo spazio, che trapassano i mondi. Essi accrescono la presenza del letterato nel mondo e creolizzano le contrade dove si fermano.”

²⁷ “[...]manifestazione nell'opera di uno scontro o di un incontro di culture diverse in quanto risultato dell'espatrio dell'autore (o dell'espatrio dei genitori per gli autori della seconda generazione).”

contexts, where the term has been traditionally and specifically adopted to recognize texts written by non-Anglo-Celtic authors, bringing to the forefront the question of ethnicity:

We should [...] note here the rhetorical distinction which has become pervasive in Australia between “migrants,” who can be people who have been born in Australia but who are from non-British or Irish backgrounds, and “Australians,” sometimes identified as “real Australians.” These are the people whose ancestors, it is implied, settled in Australia. These people may themselves only be second, or even first, generation residents in Australia.

(Stratton 1998, 10)

The question of literature and belonging is thus strongly connected to that of ethnicity. Discourses around ethnicity and ethnic writing have been thriving in North America for decades: “[w]ith the immigration and importation of multiple groups speaking different languages from a range of social and economic backgrounds, the Americas have proven a fruitful terrain for studying such polylingual voices and transnational discourses” (Gentzler 2012, 2).

Historically multicultural societies like Canada²⁸ (Siemerling 1996) and the United States (Ferraro 1993) have long written about ethnicity and its role in literature. However, recent discourses on ethnicity and its cultural representation have been often associated to the question of *minorities*. From Padolsky (1994) to Pivato (1991), the use of the definition *ethnic minority writing* seems intricately linked to the North American literary scene, and even more specifically to Canada, where it has come to define both “a site for the voicing of ‘narrow’ ethnic and racial allegiances” and “a primary cultural site for the discussion of plural, cross-boundary, and intersecting concerns” (Padolsky in Verduyn 1998, 22).

Ethnic minority writing is often understood to be the “literature created by the numerous ethnic groups that arrived after the first British and French settlers [...] Works in one of the non-official languages fall under this heading [...] but minority writing is not the same as writing in non-official languages” (New 2002, 764).

It would appear that the question of language is an integral part of the definition of, and debate around, ethnic minority literature (and more generally, migrant literature). The same premise according to which ethnic writing is distinguished and distinguishable from mainstream literature by its use of language is also supported by Blodgett (1990) and Gobard (1976) – the latter of which proposed a tetraglossic model based on four different codes (*vernacular*, *vehicular*, *referential* and *mythic*²⁹) that

²⁸ For a sampling of the literature written about ethnic writing in Canada, see also the collection of essays *Identifications* edited by Jars Balan (1982), *Tricks With a Glass Writing Ethnicity in Canada* edited by Rocio G. Davis and Rosalia Baena (2000), and all the work of Enoch Padolsky, among which his essay *Canadian Ethnic Minority Literature in English* (1994).

²⁹ The four symbolic roles of language correspond, according to Gobard, to the following four subcodes: the *vernacular* is “local, parlé spontanément, moins fait pour communiquer que pour communier et qui seul peut être considéré comme

may be used by the ethnic writer engaged in the construction of an ethnic subject.

The desire to at once belong and remain different, distinct, from the society these ethnic minorities inhabit is the same described by Deleuze and Guattari (1986) in their definition of *minor literature*, which depicts the dissolution of cultural boundaries and the impossibility of existing and remaining within given margins: i.e. *detrterritorialization*. Contesting the idea that a minor literature is of an inferior value, the philosophers identify three points that characterize it, which may also apply to migrant narratives: the particular use of language as a vehicle of detrterritorialization, the political nature of the works, and the collective value of the utterances.

“A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16). One of the most important characteristics of minor literature is, thus, the conscious use of language as an instrument to carry out a specific message by, for example, using the language of the host community, in an effort to reach the audience of the new country or, conversely, adopting the mother tongue to address the pockets of fellow immigrants from the same region. This use of language in bridging cultural differences has brought scholars to interpret migrant writing as a special form of translation.

4.3. Migrant Writing as a Translational Performance: the Rise of the Mobility Metaphor

I, too, am a translated man. I have been *borne across*. It is generally believed that something is always lost in translation; I cling to the notion [...] that something can also be gained.

(Rushdie 1984, *Shame*, original italics)

While, conventionally speaking, there exists a distinction between creative writing and translation, recent developments in the field of cultural studies have debatably vitiated this compartmentalization, bringing to the forefront a mobility metaphor for which both activities can be similarly considered as movement and exchanges across borders.

The hierarchical division between the two practices, which places writing at the highest level of creativity and translation as mere copy, has often been based on the idea of artistic originality – where originality stands for both novelty and temporal precedence. This divide is so deep-rooted in the

langue maternelle (ou langue natale); the *vehicular*, which is “national ou régional, appris par nécessité, destiné aux communications à l’échelle des villes”; the *referential* is “lié aux traditions culturelles, orales ou écrites, assurant la continuité des valeurs par une référence systématique aux œuvres du passé pérennisées”; last, the *mythic* code “fonctionne comme ultime recours, magie verbale dont on comprend l’incompréhensibilité comme preuve irréfutable du sacré”. (Gobard 1976, 34)

understanding of the two activities that it has also shaped the terminology used when talking/writing about them.

Translators themselves admit that the two practices, although similar, involve different working phases and different attitudes to the ‘game’; such is the case of Susan Bassnett who declares that, indeed, there exists a difference “which has led to translation being seen as the poor relation of writing, often referred to as ‘original’ or ‘creative’ writing, and widely perceived as superior” (Bassnett and Bush 2006, 173). Moreover, for the scholar the dissimilarity of the two practices is based on the working performances they entail: “translating involves consciously and deliberately working through several draft stages. There is a game element here, a playfulness that does not emerge in my other writing, where the game [...] happens internally before the practical writing stage begins” (178). Writing is believed to be at once instinctive and unconscious, while translation is the result of rational strategies.

Loffredo and Perteghella (2007), in response to these views of translation as “a form of writing by proxy, and activity that people engage in as a kind of second best because they cannot find words of their own” (92), try to provide evidence for the creative aspects of the translational activity. In their collection of essays, scholars and translators advocate for the creative literary agenda hidden in every work of translation through their “re-voicing of other authors”, the “projects of telling and remembering the self through the other (or as an other)” (31).

It is especially in migrant narratives that this process of “remembering the self through the other (or as an other)” allows for a redefinition of the relationship between writing and translation and the concept of originality/creativity. The boundary between the two activities is permeable even for José Saramago, a writer living in self-imposed exile, who declared: “[t]o write is to translate. It will always be like that. Even when we are using our own language. We transfer what we see or feel [...] into a conventional code of symbols, into writing” (1997, 85). According to the Portuguese Nobel Prize winner, the originality of the translating experience is at the core of every act of migrant writing.

Michael Cronin (2006) similarly contends that “[t]he condition of the migrant is the condition of the translated being,” because “[h]e or she moves from a source language and culture to a target language and culture so that *translation* takes place both in the physical sense of movement or displacement and in the symbolic sense of the shift from one way of speaking, writing about and interpreting the world to another” (45, original italics).

These symbolic interpretations of the bond between migration (and migrant writing, as a result) and translation rely on the idea of movement, which both processes entail. Polezzi (2012) sees both

activities as being “forms of mobility” (102) that involve agents traversing the boundaries between familiar and Other. Nonetheless, it is not only the presence of an itinerant agent that makes the two practices similar: “cultures, languages, texts and people often move together and the permeability (or otherwise) of any borders to one type of movement also carries implications for the others” (idem).

The feeling of otherness experienced by displaced migrant writers who move from one geographical and cultural environment to another is perceived at different levels: adapting to a different environment, getting used to a different culture and customs, and the foreignness of the linguistic encounter with the other. From this perspective, translation and migrant writing do share similarities: “when translation occurs as fully as possible, the translator not only conveys or communicates a ‘message’ but may also experience the ambivalence, the absence of ease, and even the abrasion that are no doubt inherent in any *dépaysement*” (Maier, 2002, 185). The feeling of displacement experienced by the translator approaching a new source text is compared to the migrant’s arrival in the foreign country; despite the fact that translation may not necessarily involve geographical mobility, it does involve (linguistic) border crossing, a journey between a *source* and a *target*, which are in this case reversed (while in translation *source* becomes a synonym of foreign and *target* of domestic, in migration the *source* is the country of origin, the known world, and *target* is the unknown, the unfamiliar).

The binary framework upon which the discourse on both translation and migration writing has been traditionally built, seeing the opposition between I/Other, original/copy, source/target, etc., is challenged by those who opt for “translating one’s own writings into another language” (Grutman 2009, 257): multilingual writers who are also self-translators, both I and Other. This is a recurrent practice in the works by migrant authors: Giuseppe Ungaretti, Nancy Huston, Manuel Puig, Ariel Dorfman, Vladimir Nabokov and Samuel Beckett, are just a few cases of migrant authors and self-translators around the world who have helped blur the borders between writing and translating.

Figuratively, self-translation creates a ‘contact zone’ (Pratt 1991) between translation *proper* (Jakobson 1959) and creative writing, contesting the incompatibility of the two practices, and testing the dualism upon which translation is conceptually defined: “since the bilingual text exists in two language systems simultaneously, how do the monolingual categories of author and original apply?” (Hokenson and Munson 2007, 2).

In his analysis of Beckett’s work as an author/translator, St-Pierre (1996) contests that self-translators themselves do not perceive this traditional polarity between activities. For them, translation stops being “mere reproduction” (233) and becomes part of that creative process granting them the “double status as both author and translator, a status which – at least in the minds of his readers –

affords him greater leeway in terms of the original text” (234-235).

The dichotomy original/translation is blurred, and so is any standard of reference to gauge the correspondence between two texts in two different languages:

[...] in the case of an author translating his or her own works, the standard—although by no means unproblematic—measure of the faithfulness of a translation is no longer operative: the conformity, or lack thereof, of the translation to the form or to the sense of the original text is no longer pertinent, replaced by the author's mere presence, which becomes, for such readers and critics, the guarantee that what is essential in the work has not been lost in the passage from one language to another.

(St-Pierre 1996, 235)

Despite the efforts to be granted recognition as a creative act, translation still stands secondary to the primary creative writing: “[t]ranslation, like imitation, can be a means of learning the craft of writing, for if writers can recognize and learn to speak in different voices it becomes more probable that they will identify a distinctive voice of their own” (Bassnett 2006, 174). First, one learns to translate, then, to write creatively.

The differentiation between writing and translating, in addition to being determined on the basis of creativity, is also measured by the degree of ‘freedom’ allowed in the practice, which places writing at the highest level. This said, however, the translator’s freedom should not be undervalued:

[I]ike all intermediaries needed for exchange, translators require the professional freedom to move from culture to culture, land to land, accepting a certain disenfranchisement and even disinterest as the condition of their task. Theirs need not be a territorial sense of culture. If they have a culture, it is about borders, not limited by them. Their conceptual geometry is ultimately that of the nomad.

(Pym 2003, 462)

The translators’ freedom is their borderless condition, analogous to that of migrant writers, for which “[e]very voyage can be said to involve a re-siting of boundaries [...] having constantly to negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, and an elsewhere” (Minh-ha, 1994, 8).

We are thus confronted with the multiple meanings of border crossing: on the one hand, translation *proper* as the interlingual mediation involving issues of cultural-political agency (cf. Doris Bachmann-Medick) and, on the other, migrant writing, which enacts processes of cultural translation at the intralingual level, reformulating cultural specificity in a new, foreign way.

In migrant writing, as in ethnography, translation acquires further denotations, the same highlighted by Michaela Wolf (1997), who sees translation as “rewriting or cultural textualization” (123): migrant authors who write in their mother tongue ‘translate’ or ‘rewrite’ the unfamiliar

surroundings into the familiar framework of their language, while those who write in the language predominant in their ‘unfamiliar surroundings’ translate their own culture into the unfamiliar.

The *unfamiliar*, that feeling of otherness of the migrant experience, is (metaphorically) translated into the works of these writers: if the authors are then translated into the new cultural environment, their written word draws attention to the cultural dimension of translation. In their search for self and cultural identity in the new lands, migrant writers appropriate the language of the others; this appropriation being itself a process inherent in the act of translation: the others’ language is the vehicle that translates the expression of their own reality. In Deleuze's words, in migrant literature language becomes *detrterritorialized*.

In the second accepted meaning, translation *proper* happens when migrant literature is either translated into the language of their actual place of residence or into any other language. Therefore, if for Frank (2008) the very nature of migration literature is “rewriting [...] identities in order to evoke their impure and heterogeneous character” (18-19), then it follows that the translation of these narratives (into the writer’s native language) becomes itself an act of writing or ‘writing back’ (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 1989).

The metaphorical equation of writing as translation exemplified by the term ‘writing back’ is best known in post-colonial studies (Bandia 2008; Tymoczko 2000), where “the representation of cultures of orality in colonial language writing is viewed as a double transposition process involving translating oral narrative cultures into written form and translating between distant or alien language cultures” (Bandia 2010, 265). For this reason, the counter-discourse implied in ‘writing back’ used to identify the “strategy for contesting the authority of the canon” (Thieme 2002, 1) may be applied to the case of (non-postcolonial) migrant writing, which also shows a degree of resistance, and a means for the displaced author to write back to the migrant’s original culture.

In fact, outside of the postcolonial context, the two-fold connotation of the translation act in migrant contexts is also found in Italian-Canadian writing specialist Pivato (1998), who asserts that:

Whether the immigrant writer uses the language of the old country or that of the new he/she is involved in translation. The representation of cultural difference through the old language in the new country may produce the deterritorialisation of the dominant language (Deleuze, Guattari), but it also changes the minority language in terms of context, meaning and even sound [...] The use of the new language, like English or French, in the new country by the immigrant writer or his/her children presents other problems of translation. Representing the immigrant experience, which was originally, felt in Italian, or in Japanese, or in Bengali, into English changes the experience. The ethnic minority writer is involved in the process of translation, in the search for the authentic presentation of the experience.

(154)

The process of translation conducted by migrant writers who try to read through, elucidate and bridge cultural differences is similar to that undergone by engaged ethnographers who “seek to render the unfamiliar to familiar and the familiar to unfamiliar” (Petrilli 2003, 391): a process of “cultural translation” (Asad 1986). The combination of ‘translation and culture’ is far from uncommon in the discourses around translation and migration: from Asad’s anthropological enterprise of “cultural translation” (1986), Bhabha’s formulation of “culture as translation” – here, translation is used figuratively to indicate “the performative nature of cultural communication” (Bhabha 1994, 229) in the process and condition of human mobility – and Salman Rushdie’s interpretation of “migrants as translated men” (see excerpt above), to Sherry Simon’s focus on the immigrant districts of Montreal as a metaphor that echoes the theories of *cultural translation*.

The neighborhood itself is a space of translation [...] Translation is enacted not through the crosstown voyage, but through an ingathering of multiple influences. The neighborhood reflects a diasporic consciousness, an awareness that *one’s own* culture begins and continues through translation.

(Simon 2006, 60)

These echoes tend to rely on metaphorical interpretations of the two practices (Polezzi 2012), a metaphorical treatment that has been condemned by some:

One wonders why “translation” should be the word of choice in a collocation such as “cultural translation” in this new sense when perfectly good and theoretically sanctioned words for this new phenomenon, such as migrancy, exile or diaspora are already available and current. But given the usurpation that has taken place, it may be time for all good men and true, and of course women, who have ever practised literary translation, or even read translation with any awareness of it being translation, to unite and take out a patent on the word “translation,” if it is not already too late to do so.

(Trivedi 2005)

Nevertheless, this figurative interpretation of the term ‘translation’ has promoted reflections on the nature of both migrant writing and translation as sites for the production of *différance* (in the Derridean sense) where meaning is deferred and differed, plural and derivative (Karpinski 2012). This mobility metaphor, which pervades both studies on migrant writing and translation, has arisen within the new interdisciplinary agenda that led to the concurrence of the *cultural turn* in Translation Studies (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, 1) and the *translation turn* taken in Cultural Studies (Bassnett 1998), as explored below.

5. Where the Studies on Migration and Translation Intersect: an Overview of Commonalities

The reading of migration through the lens of translation studies locates itself within the *espace translationnel* evoked by Antoine Berman, for which its study represents the “*histoire des migrations, et une ‘théorie’ de l’être humain comme être-migrant* (la migration fonde la translation) et, là même, *l’être-mutant* (toute migration est mutation [...])” (Berman 1995, 56; footnote 46). If, thus, all humans are migrant beings and have always practiced translation, then it is only natural for translation studies to turn its attention towards a phenomenon that embodies movement across space.

The recent increasing attention to both migration and translation practices has stimulated interest in relating these two experiences of exchanges beyond borders, of ‘moving across’³⁰. Thus far, translation studies and migration studies seem to have conducted mostly separate lives and, on the surface, never really touched, although the paths of the studies dedicated to the two practices have been running side-by-side for decades. The overview that follows sheds light on the occasions in which the two research paths have in fact crossed, a connection that has habitually gone unnoticed.

In order to appreciate the connection between the two practices, it is necessary to consider that the object of study of translation in the heart of migration – inherently linguistic but at once embedded in culture – includes any form of communication taking place in contexts of mobility that bridges the two (social/cultural/linguistic, etc.) universes of the migrant: that of departure and that of arrival. Thus, any exchange that takes place in the heart of migratory contexts involving the negotiation of linguistic and cultural systems could potentially become the entity of study from a translational perspective.

The noun *translation* is universally intended as both the act of translating and the result of such endeavour. Similarly, as seen above, the study of migration has been approached from two perspectives: the one considering migration as a process, and the one looking into the results and changes brought about by said process. Let us, for the time being, consider translation as a process rather than its final object. We shall consider translation – what follows is a rather broad definition – as the movement of linguistic material, as well as the extra-linguistic elements that contribute to the creation of its meaning, between/among language and culture systems, so that the message created in the system of arrival expresses what the initial message had expressed in the language/culture system of departure.

³⁰ As theorized by Therry Threadgold (2003): “meanings ‘migrate’ freely between and across semiotic systems, just as flows of migration move across and between the boundaries of nation-states and dominant monocultures” (581).

Translation as a process is inherently connected to migration, inasmuch as it is a practice that entails movement from one context to another; it is the encounter with the Other *par excellence*; in addition, the meeting with, understanding and interpretation of otherness is a daily practice for all migrants living, communicating and making meaning in a language (and a culture) that is not theirs but, rather, a *borrowed tongue* (Karpinski 2012). It is exactly this borrowing of tongues, the linguistic displacement, taking place in the heart of migration that is addressed by translation studies: both “the subject’s universal displacement from language and the translating (translated) migrant’s displacement from the host language” (3).

The following pages are dedicated to the most recent developments in translation studies: the historical perspective provides us with the foundations for a better understanding of the directions taken by the field in these last few decades, and it also encourages further unexplored (or little explored) routes for development, such as the ones that are at the centre of this work. This overview will highlight the common traits shared by the translation and the migration practices while also comparatively emphasizing when and how the study of translation intersected that of migration.

5.1. Translation Studies: a Review of the Most Recent Developments

It is arguable that the major shifts in the study of translation have occurred starting from the second half of the twentieth century. Translation studies is a relatively young discipline: it is conventionally thought to have commenced in 1976 on the official occasion of the Louvain Colloquium on Literature and Translation, when James S. Holmes proposed a new name for the field under which the studies that dealt with the production and description of translations would be gathered from that day on. Translation studies has since gained the status of a recognized academic discipline, while until that time the field had been relegated to the role of secondary branch of comparative literature and linguistics.

Much has changed since then: refusing to confine itself to the role of niche and isolated discipline, translation studies has been welcoming theories and approaches from the most unexpected sources, with the aim of depicting a field and an act that is constantly changing and acquiring new meanings. In what is a critical assessment of the most recent developments in the field, the preface to her third edition of *The Turns of Translation Studies*, Mary Snell-Hornby states: “the discipline now institutionalized as Translation Studies has branched out in several directions, and a new perspective is needed to do it justice” (Snell-Hornby 2006, iv). These developments see the expansion of the field of

interest and the object of analysis of translation scholars, new methodologies and brand new points of view: interdisciplinary and international standpoints.

Its newly acquired interdisciplinary and internationalized character has allowed translation studies to cross path with migration studies, another research field that had, likewise, rapidly evolved and rooted itself in various disciplines especially since the 1970s and 1980s. Coincidentally, despite both having behind them a (partly uncharted) history of a few centuries, if not millennia, translation studies and migration studies saw their ‘birth’ as distinct and independent fields of interest only in the late twentieth century; their sanctification as disciplines in their own right brought a renovated interest mutually in translation and migration processes and the results of said processes, and even more so in their impact on global(ized) communication, on the cultural sphere as a whole, and on the literary domain, more specifically.

The enrichment both translation studies and migration studies benefited from under the internationalization and the openness to multidisciplinary approaches has, however, brought with it a multiplication of dissonant perspectives on the two themes. The fragmentation in the contemporary study of migration perceived by scholar Marco Martiniello (2013) is comparable to the one that the field of translation studies has been undergoing in recent decades. Fragmentation, Martiniello states, is a result of the developments in both the methods and results of research.

Behind the facade of homogeneity that a name gives a discipline, what happens over a few decades in its development is anything but harmonized. This has happened to migration studies, as seen in the previous sections, as well as in the study of translation. Over the past few decades, there has been an observable shift in the object of examination within the study of both translation and migration, although the changes seem to have taken an opposite direction (while trying to achieve similar scopes) in the two fields. While translation studies has moved its focus from the micro to the macro unit of analysis – in other words from a *word to word* or *sentence to sentence* search for equivalence to the investigation of texts and beyond – Migration Studies seems to have manifested a reverse tendency: from the macro analysis on the migration of large groups of people in order to draft global tendencies, to the micro-analyses that take an interest in the migration choices of individuals, explaining them in a rationalist perspective in terms of specific behaviours induced by calculations of costs and benefits – which are indeed different in each case, depending on the type and purpose of migration.

The last two decades of the twentieth century were the most fertile for the development of new translation theories, and one that saw the reassessment of the relevance of translation in promoting cultural change: different approaches to the study of translation emerged, having in common a reaction

to the prescriptive models previously dominating the field. The pragmatism of these new approaches made the emergence of translation studies possible (Snell-Hornby 2006).

Among these approaches is Polysystem Theory, conceived by the Israeli scholar Even-Zohar and aimed at filling the void in translation research on “the role translation has played in the crystallization of national culture” (Even-Zohar 2000, 192). Even-Zohar understood translated literature as a system being part of a larger framework: a polysystem that included social, literary and historical systems of the target culture of a given nation. Shifting the attention to the ideological dimension of the translation act, within the framework of Polysystem Theory the text is no longer considered as a unit of analysis in isolation, but as one operating inside a larger *milieu* of heterogeneous factors.

This approach to the study of translation, which encouraged the examination of the environment surrounding the unit of analysis, seems to promote interest in the whole of social sciences and humanities – including Migration Studies, for which “outcomes for people who move are shaped by their social, cultural, and gendered locations and [where] migrants themselves are agents in their behaviour, interpreting and constructing within the constraints of structure” (Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 5) – in both the anthropological and sociological perspectives, which would influence and dominate the Cultural Turn that was just about to start.

Within the formulation of his Polysystem Theory, and in order to discuss the heterogeneity of cultural and literary systems, Even-Zohar himself approaches the study of migration and its effects on the ‘crystallization of national cultures’. The Israeli scholar examines the various migrant flows of Jewish groups and their building of a cultural identity: first, the immigrations to the Slavic lands (and much later those to the United States and the United Kingdom) that contributed to the building of new language and literature systems – the multilingual and multi-territorial Hebrew-Yiddish Polysystem³¹ – and the following different waves of migration to Palestine. The first meant the abandonment of Hebrew by many secularized Jews in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) and its replacement by, first, Yiddish and, after, by the local languages – meaning that these groups would only read Hebrew literature in translation. Migration to Palestine contrasted with the former migrant flows in other areas in the way immigrants there were able to preserve their language and create an entirely new culture due to the ‘lack of a target culture’. As a matter of fact, according to Even-Zohar, what made this migration movement distinctive was “the deliberate, conscious activity carried out by the immigrants themselves in replacing constituents of the culture they brought with them with those of another” (Even-Zohar 1990, 177).

³¹ See Even-Zohar (1990).

No longer multilingual or multi-territorial, a new local literary institution was created by indigenous writers, though “initially just as a minor branch of the European center, but later as a substitute for it” (166). It is in the framework of this new minor literary branch that, according to Even-Zohar, translation comes to acquire two fundamental roles: “(1) Translated literature supplied literary texts to a Hebrew-reading public, and constituted, quantitatively, the majority of the texts of that literature [...] (2) Translated literature was a major channel for the creation of literary contacts with other literatures. By means of translation, foreign literary norms infiltrated the polysystem. The importance of this function increased even further as Hebrew literature became more and more autonomous and the multi-lingualism of the population decreased” (169). In this sense, translation helped the crystallization of a national literature of a cultural and linguistic group that had been continually disrupted by its many migrations.

Having worked with Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury borrows some of the ideas from his supervisor and expands them in the formulation of his own theory presented in the essay *A Rationale for Descriptive Translation Studies* (1985): for the Israeli scholar, works of translation occupy a position in the social and literary systems of the target culture; it is this position that determines the translation strategies employed. His ambitious project of elaborating a general and comprehensive theory of translation using a descriptive methodology, and focusing on the entire system rather than single case studies, aims at uncovering the *norms* that regulate the translation process. By the observation of translation behaviors and tendencies, Toury seeks to make generalizations regarding the translator’s decision-making process, uncovering the regularities behind it.

At the start of the 1990s, the Belgian born scholar André Lefevere developed his theory of translation as rewriting, an approach that witnessed the strong influence of the Polysystem Theory and the Manipulation School³² (developed from the former) even in the following decades. Lefevere focuses on the examination of those factors that govern the reception or dismissal of literary texts: issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation become even more relevant to translation than the linguistic features of the text. Within the new framework, the study of translation provides insights on how a text can be manipulated by groups or individuals, holders of authority, in order to influence specific cultural spheres; this rewriting of literature – the translator is only one of the agents taking part in this process – serves ideological or economical purposes.

³² The name *Manipulation School* derived from Theo Herman 1985 collection of essays entitled *The Manipulation of Literature*, to which Toury himself contributed, and whose scope was “quite simply, to establish a new paradigm for the study of literary translation, on the basis of a comprehensive theory and ongoing practical research” and this approach to literary translation would be “descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic” (Hermans 1985, 10).

The object of analysis of the theories dominating translation studies in these decades was a broadening towards the inclusion of extra-linguistic elements that contribute to the translation of texts; this brought about the emergence of new groundbreaking approaches: it is time for the *Cultural Turn* – in translation studies as in many other social sciences and disciplines in the humanities (including migration studies). Used for the first time in the field of translation by Mary Snell-Hornby (1988), the label described the move (in the whole of social sciences) towards culture-focussed theories, as demonstrated in the 1990 volume *Translation History and Culture* edited by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, which collected a number of papers presented at a conference at the University of Warwick that demonstrated the power of translation in the construction of culture.

Traditionally anthropological³³, the concept of culture is broad and multifaceted. Its relevance to the theories of translation may appear straightforward today, but it has assumed multiple forms with the various theories and its appearance in the field in the 1990s made this one of the most vibrant academic decades in the twentieth century. For Peter Newmark (1988), for instance, culture is “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (84) while he also states that he does “not regard language as a component or feature of culture”, although “language does however contain all kinds of cultural deposits” (85).

This view is partly contradicted by Vermeer (1992) who claims that “language is part of culture”, seeing culture as “the whole of norms and conventions governing social behaviour and its results” (38). Similarly, Israeli translation scholar Gideon Toury understands *culture* as the context surrounding texts, including social structures, values, norms, conventions and ideology.

These first definitions of culture in the heart of translation studies were useful for the theories they were meant to support; nevertheless, the term soon acquired broader connotations which seemed to confirm that “translating as an activity and translation as the result of this activity are inseparable from the concept of culture” (Torop 2002, 593).

The inseparability of culture from any human activity became evident in many other fields, such as the study of migration. In an essay aptly entitled “Migration and Culture” (1992), geography scholar

³³ The very first definition of culture in ethnography can be attributed to Edward Burnett Tylor, for whom “[c]ulture, or civilization, taken in its wide, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1871, 1). However, one of the most influential definitions in the anthropological field is surely that of Clifford Geertz (1973) for whom culture is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life” (89). By comparing the two definitions proposed we may notice how, even in the field of anthropology, the central concept of culture may assume different facets: if, for the first, culture is an asset of capabilities and habits that are socially acquired, the latter stresses its historically inherited and symbolic nature.

Tony Fielding asserts that “[m]igration is a statement of an individual’s worldview, and is, therefore, an extremely cultural event” (201). Fielding’s statement is testimony to a transition within migration studies (and in all social sciences and humanities) to an epistemology that puts culture at the centre of any human behaviour, the driving force of human agency. Consequently, the approaches to migration that followed delved into studying the building and developing of migrant cultures and identities, relying profoundly on anthropology, ethnography and sociology. With this in mind, the scholars turned their attention to personal narratives and creative literature as sources and units of analysis to understand how migration affects ethnic identity and cultural change.

The diverse theories and approaches that followed in all of the social sciences and humanities reflected the multifaceted nature of culture, and exposed the growing worldwide interest in cultural studies. Cultural studies bridged disciplines that were previously considered unrelated – such is the case of translation and migration studies – bringing about greater internationalization and interdisciplinarity of the disciplines (i.e. the increasing emergence of theories from the different corners of the world) and of the same concept of culture.

The virtual annihilation of geographical boundaries both in communication and in economic and commercial transactions favoured an internationalized idea of knowledge and culture. Ironically though, the very emergence of theories and approaches in languages other than English (or other main European languages used to date) came to represent a challenge, an obstacle for the newly internationalized translation studies. It is indeed surprising, or even paradoxical, how a discipline that was born thanks to, and deals with, the Babelian diversity of languages could be unsettled by the very existence of a multilingual terminology.

Up to the twentieth century the majority of interventions in the field of translation originated from European (or, more generally, West-centred) perspectives. Since the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, an increasing number of conferences, articles and monographs on the topic have appeared outside the canonical locations of traditional Western cultural centres. These once peripheral voices – which provide a wider view on the world of translation and that finally ventured across and over the borders of the West – started to appear and gain recognition. The long-established foundations of the Western translation theories and practices were shaken by the arrival of new, international perspectives; but while the contribution brought by these ‘de-centralized’ voices is indeed valuable, often even these ‘peripheral’ studies of translation were/are still grounded in those ‘central/centric’ theories developed in the West.

The idea of location and the concepts of centre and periphery used here, which first appeared in the field of cultural studies and particularly in postcolonial studies, gained increasing relevance in translation studies, where the two concepts have come to represent the clash and inequality of cultural (and social) perspectives after the end of European colonialism: the discrepancy between a dominant centre and a silent periphery. The periphery/centre conceptual dichotomy, incidental to the study of migration, is reframed and becomes a pervasive part of translation studies.

The dangers of the traditional and multiple boundaries erected between centers and peripheries are made clear in the work *The Politics of Translation* by Indian theorist Gayatri Spivak, in which the scholar solicits attention for the figure of the postcolonial feminist translator, while also marking a connection between gender studies and postcolonial studies within the framework of translation studies. Researchers such as Gayatri Spivak and Tejaswini Niranjana highlight how the influence of translation lies in its creation of cultural difference, a result that is similarly produced by migration.

Tejaswini Niranjana and Gayatri Spivak soon took an interest in the relevance of migration for the production of cultural difference within the postcolonial framework. While the former studied the *Subaltern Diaspora* of Indian in Trinidad and the formation of a migrant *Indianness* abroad (Niranjana 2006), Spivak dealt with post-colonial Eurocentric migration, read by the scholar as the “new transnationality, ‘the new diaspora,’ the new scattering of the seeds of ‘developing’ nations so that they can take root on developed ground” (Spivak 1999, 357).

Emerging in the second half of the 1990s and the early twenty-first century, the postcolonialist approach bridges countries in different continents on the ground of them all having experienced the oppression of colonization. According to post-colonialists, translation as it has been practiced for centuries is an instrument in the hands of the colonizers, which contributes to the production of a rewritten and distorted image of the colonized people: remarkably, however, the colonized world includes the inhabitants of countries as diverse as India, Brazil (with its *Manifesto Antropófago*) and Ireland (of particular interest are the studies conducted by Michael Cronin and Maria Tymoczko). The fundamental role played by Postcolonial Studies is not only that of having given voice to cultures and viewpoints that were long absent from translation theories, the peripheries, but also that of having uncovered the unequal nature of power relations within the sphere of translation itself, eventually giving prominence to the notion of cultural pluralism.

In his short introduction to postcolonialism, Robert Young (2003) asserts that no other activity comes as close to the politically charged idea of postcolonialism as that of translation, which he sees as

a way of thinking about how languages, people and cultures are transformed as they move between different places. It can also be used more metaphorically, as a way of describing how the individual or the group can be transformed by changing their sense of their own place in society.

(29)

It is indeed in the heart of the postcolonial theories that the application of a parallelism between migration and translation has first expressed its full potential; it suffices to remember the ubiquity of Salman Rushdie's metaphor of the *migrant as translated man*. Within the post-colonial framework, translation becomes inherently linked to the idea of movement, migration across space and the perception of the self with relation to place. According to this agenda, the double bind in place between translation and migration becomes everything but unfounded: translation distances itself from the search for equivalence between texts and looks towards the ideas of movement, cultural understanding and bridging that the practice involves. This said, the bridging of cultures is far from being a harmless activity; it is highly embedded in the context of cultural plurality and the inequality of power relations, as postcolonialist theorists duly note. Translators are no longer conceived as passive mediators of linguistic exchange, but are encouraged to be active promoters of cultural change, making translation a virtual place where plurality meets and regenerates.

These recent currents have had the effect of underlining the implications and the ethics of the translation activity and, as a consequence, the increasing complexity of the role of translator, which now closely resembles that of the engaged ethnographer. The advent of translation studies has underlined the agency of the translator and, simultaneously, issued a call for greater visibility of his/her role, of which one of the most notorious pleas is certainly that made by Venuti (1995).

Strictly related to the concepts of *agency* and *visibility* of the translator is the idea of translation as a place/space; this, in turn, has raised the question of the position of the translator in the 'mapping' of cultures: *in-between* and the *third space* are just some of the responses to the issue of the site within which the translator operates in the cultural encounter. As agents of cultural encounters, migrants live a similar dilemma to that of translators, both parties being caught in-between the politics of geographical and cultural borders.

Coincidental to the pervasive development of cultural studies is the expansion of the notion of translation as "necessarily embedded within social contexts" (Wolf 2007, 1): the social setting within which translation occurs sheds light on the *agency* of the many voices (bearers of culture) that contribute to cultural representations and shaping. This shows how the two approaches – the social and

the cultural – are intrinsically inseparable³⁴: while translation practice is shaped by the society it is embedded in, it can conversely shape culture at the receiving end.

The spotlight is now on translators as actors and translation as a socially regulated activity. The sociological perspectives offered by scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour and Niklas Luhmann have been introduced as a framework for translation research in that direction. The influence of sociology and its intellectuals is indicative of the flourishing of the social sciences and of the importance of social theory to many disciplines, such as translation and migration studies.

5.1.1. The Birth and Development of a Sociology of Translation

As predicted by Douglas Robinson (1991), the real turn in translation, or the *translator's turn*, “is a social one – a concern with what translators (and translation theorists) do, in a social context who they interact with, how social (historical, economic, intersubjective) factors condition their professional activities” (267). Despite this *translator's turn* becoming more noticeable in the past decade, the understanding of translation as an inherently social activity can be said to have had its origin in the system-oriented approaches of Polysystem Theory.

While not expressly providing any theorization on the social implications of translation (the approach has been often been criticized for its deterministic nature³⁵), it did highlight the role of translated literature within the broader and dynamic system of the receiving culture, and its function in “the network of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables ('occurrences', 'phenomena')” (Even-Zohar 1990, 27). Inside this network, Even-Zohar recognized some *interdependencies*, although the nature of these interdependencies was never actually expressed or detailed. His analysis remained strictly centered around the notion of text and its performance within the system rather than the interaction between its agents: “Even-Zohar seldom relates texts to the ‘real conditions’ of their production, only to hypothetical structural models and abstract generalizations” (Gentzler 1993, 123). His definition of *repertoire* – “the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the making and use of any given product” (Even-Zohar 1990, 39) – could have potentially explicated the conditions under which these interdependencies occur, but failed

³⁴ Wolf (2007) underlines how the two ‘turns’ originated separately and warns us against the risks of keeping the two viewpoints distinct: “society cannot be adequately described without culture nor culture without society” (4). The scholar further calls for a unified perspective since “[a]n emphasis on the relationship between culture and society would help to avoid dichotomisation and allow us to transcend traditional deterministic views” (6).

³⁵ Bourdieu, for example, repeatedly criticised Polysystem Theory for its approach at literary works and their relationships in isolation, without a real analysis of the social context they are embedded in.

to contemplate the social factor.

In defining *norms*, Gideon Toury (1995) also accounted for the social factor, which both influences their acquisition and defines *translatorship* as the quality of “being able to play a social role, i.e., to fulfil a function allotted by a community – to the activity, its practitioners and/or their products – in a way which is deemed appropriate in its own terms of reference” (53). Although the norms determining translation behaviour are obviously dependent on the social-cultural setting they originate from, the analysis of the social context of norms (i.e. the social elements contributing to their creation and internalization) with regards to translation was not further looked into. In his theorization, Toury concentrated on the objective description of norms (*initial*, *preliminary* and *operational*).

Theo Hermans, who interprets translation “as a complex transaction taking place in a communicative, socio-cultural context” (Hermans 1996, 26), enhanced the concept of norms in order to incorporate their broader social meaning, including questions of power and ideology and the agents involved in the transaction. In his view, Polysystem Theory did not take into proper account the social and political environment (the agents and institutions involved in the production and consumption of translations) linked to translation as a practice. For Hermans, norms are interpreted as a way to identify socially acceptable translational behaviour and understand choices made and strategies adopted by translators themselves, rather than just being a prescriptive tool.

During the same period, André Lefevere also remarked on the relevance of the social element within the translation activity. According to the scholar (Lefevere 1992, vii), translation is a *rewriting* practice that follows certain ideologies or poetics to suit and function for a selected audience. This activity is characterized by a certain degree of *manipulation*, performed under constraints of professionals, patronage, poetics and ideology of the target system, in order to promote or diffuse certain ideological or literary elements or the image of artists of the source society. From this perspective, the manipulation enacted by this type of rewriting is strictly correlated to the issue of power and its influence on culture (its shaping, innovation or repression): for Lefevere, translation is a *shaping force* (viii). Lefevere’s work stresses the social implication of “those in the middle, the men and women who do not write literature, but rewrite it” (1). The role of these middlemen is fundamental since they are “able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in another culture” (Lefevere, 1992, 9), allowing the survival and diffusion of artistic productions to a global audience.

This type of rewriting is, as suggested by Tymoczko (2000), inherently partial: the information carried in the source text and its interpretation is usually more extensive than what a translation can

convey. The translator³⁶ is accountable for choices that will influence this information, thus creating biased representations of the source texts. However, Tymoczko claims, “[t]his partiality is not merely a defect, a lack, or an absence in a translation – it is also an aspect that makes the act of translation partisan: engaged and committed, either implicitly or explicitly” (Tymoczko 2000, 24).

The 1990s saw the birth of several currents within translation studies; among the many, a small group within the Franco-Canadian translation environment showed a particular interest in the study of literary translation from “un nouveau paradigme, descriptif et sociocritique” (Brisset 1989, 51). Among the first to recognize the sociological significance of translation were Annie Brisset, with her *Sociocritique de la traduction* (1990) and Jean-Marc Gouanvic and his *Sociologie de la traduction* (1999). Despite these early efforts, however, it was only in the first decade of the 2000s that an increasing number of scholars contributed to the development of a sociology of translation.

In 2005, the scholarly journal *The Translator* dedicated an entire issue – *Bourdieu and the Sociology of Translation and Interpreting* edited by Moira Inghilleri – to the sociological perspectives on translation based on Bourdieu’s sociological models. Highlighting “the interaction between agency and structure – the initiating activities of individuals and the structures which constrain and perhaps enable them” (2005, 126), Bourdieu’s sociological notions such as *field*, *habitus*, *capital* and *illusion* were given prominence as a precious resource for translation research in a series contributions by: Inghilleri, Gouanvic, Hanna, Buzelin, Blommaert, Thoutenhoofd, Vidal Claramonte, Meylaerts, Grbić, Miguélez-Carballeira, Arsenault and Chan.

The undertaking was repeated in 2007, when Michaela Wolf edited *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*: a series of essays that had the scope of laying the foundations for a new wave of studies within the sociological framework. According to Wolf three types of studies have been shaping this field: the *sociology of agents*, the *sociology of the translation process*, and the *sociology of the cultural product* (Wolf 2007, 13-18). In the collection, Wolf reminds scholars in the field of the importance of including textual analysis within the sociological studies of translation, which seems to be the shortcoming of some of the works encountered: text structures and textual strategies are everything but negligible elements that highly contribute to the construction and diffusion of images, identities and ideologies.

These theories or studies produced under the heading of *sociology of agents* bring to the fore the

³⁶ If indeed translation is an act of choosing, other actors are also to be accounted for the *manipulation* of both the process and the product. While the translator is responsible for many of the selections, editors, for example, are in charge of the selection of works to be translated and/or published; although, as Buzelin (2007) identified, there are cases in which works are published expressly under the suggestion of the translator – a practice that is far from being habitual.

individuals who act in translation as part of a social process, and examine their roles in the formation and transformation of national literatures/cultures: their profession, their subjectivity, their sociological profile, as well as gender specific issues are all dealt with. The relationship with ‘pure’ sociology is the most apparent in these types of studies.

As the denomination of the second categorization suggests, the *sociology of the translation process* regroups studies of a descriptive nature that consider how historical and cultural factors influence the concept of identity formation involved in the translation act. Both source and target texts are considered as social products embedded in social discourses, hence the view of the translation process as having an influence in their transformation (and translation being a social discourse itself). These studies rely on the concept of norms and how these are relevant to the social discourse.

Lastly, under the heading *sociology of the cultural product* come approaches that encompass both the agents involved in the production and reception of translation and translation as a final product that, by its circulation, shapes the different systems and their relations. Such studies often exploit the analytical tools designed by Bourdieu to examine translation flows and the conditions under which they occur in our globalized world, and specifically within the “international space of translation exchange” (Wolf 2007, 17).

The notion around which Bourdieu’s theory revolves – and upon which much of the sociology of translation contained in the two above volumes (as well as the sociology of migration) is based – is that of *fields*³⁷: intricate and autonomous networks of relations between social agents and institutions whose dynamics are regulated at once by the agents’ *habitus* (which both structures a *field* and is structured by it) and also by the distribution of the various forms of *capital* at stake. Inside the *field*, each of the agents “commits the force (the capital) that he has acquired through previous struggles to the strategies that depend for their general direction on his position in the power struggle, that is, on his specific capital” (Bourdieu 1990, 143; translated by Matthew Adamson). It is within this field of force and struggles that the agent takes part in the game, making more or less subjective choices dependent on his/her specific *habitus*.

³⁷ For Bourdieu (1990) fields are “historically constituted areas of activity with their specific institutions and own laws of functioning. The existence of specialised and relatively autonomous fields is correlative with the existence of specific stakes and interests; via the inseparably economic and psychological investments that they arouse in agents endowed with a certain habitus, the field and its stakes (themselves produced as such by power relations and struggle in order to transform the power relations that are constitutive of the field) produce investments of time, money, work, etc. ... In other words, interest is at once a conditioning of the functioning of a field, in so far as it is what ‘gets people moving’, what makes them get together, compete and struggle with each other, and a product of the way the field functions”. (Bourdieu 1990, 87-88; translated by Matthew Adamson)

The main contribution of this approach is the enormous importance assigned to the role of agents, their practices and their position within society. However, the model was not received without criticisms because, for example, applying Bourdieu's *field theory* to translation means presuming that translation is indeed a field in itself, a fact that is not obvious. Indeed, as translation scholars point out, "[t]he pseudo- or would-be field of translation is much less structured than the literary field, its structuring being far more heteronomous" (Simeoni 1998, 19) and is "always situated between various fields, such as the literary field, academic field, political field, and others" (Wolf 2006, 136).

Regardless of the critiques, the *field theory* model has received wide appreciation, as the wealth of Bourdieusan-based translation research demonstrates. In his article "The Pivotal Status of the Translator's Habitus" (1998), the same Daniel Simeoni exploits Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*³⁸ in order to establish parameters (encompassing the notion of *norms*) that influence the translator's working behaviour.

In the issue of *The Translator* edited by Inghilleri, Jean-Marc Gouanvic asserts that the relevance of Bourdieu's *theory of social practices* to translation lies in "the analysis of the differential relationship between the *habitus* of translation agents (including publishers, critics, etc.) who have taken a position in a given target field in a given epoch, and the determinant factors of the target field as the site of reception of the translation" (Gouanvic 2005, 148). Through their *habitus*, thus, social agents of translation may establish and consolidate their position of power in a social space, a *field*, in which struggles for the acquisition of power occur.

The translator's *habitus* is what influences the act of translating and, hence, determines the translation strategies. The *habitus* is built upon previous translation experiences in the *field* in which the agent translator acts. Moreover, as Gouanvic asserts:

L'*habitus* spécifique de traducteur se construit dans la rencontre de deux cultures, la culture indigène [...] et la culture étrangère, que le traducteur a acquise la plupart du temps par un contact avec l'étranger ou par immersion. La culture indigène est celle de l'*habitus* primaire du traducteur, celle vers laquelle le traducteur traduit.

(Gouanvic 2007, 86)

The scholar rightly observes that the translator's *habitus* plays a fundamental role in the production and reception of the translation, since the work will carry the signs of the *habitus* of the translator and not only that of the writer's, with which it overlaps. Since *habitus* is "the product of an

³⁸ While the capital gathered by agents, their *habitus* and their dispositions eventually define their place within the power field, by the 'simple' act of translating a work for a specific literary *field*, translators have the influence of conferring symbolic capital to the author of said work.

individual history” as well as of “the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class” (Bourdieu 1990, 91; translated by Matthew Adamson) it is evident that the *habitus* of the writer differs from that of the translator and that subjectivity in artistic creativity becomes paramount.

Mindful of the influence *habitus* plays on translation activity, translators make an effort to maintain in the target text the elements that they recognize as being central to the source text and that create the *illusio* which the reader of the original took part in.

L'*illusio* littéraire, cette adhésion originaire au jeu littéraire qui fonde la croyance dans l'*importance* ou l'*intérêt* des fictions littéraires, est la condition, presque toujours inaperçue, du plaisir esthétique qui est toujours, pour une part, plaisir de jouer le jeu, de participer à la fiction, d'être en accord total avec les présupposés du jeu; la condition aussi de l'*illusion* littéraire et de l'effet de croyance [...] que le texte peut produire.

(Bourdieu 1992, 455)

The task of the translator is thus still considered that of finding the way to recreate the ideal conditions for the reader of the target text to experience the literary *illusio* (*illusio* derives from the latin *in-ludo*, to be at play) that the source text originally offered.

Providing a different approach to the sociology of translation, Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro (2008) combining elements from the interpretive approach, and its focus on texts, and the economic approach that considers them only as goods, while inserting it within the larger context of the exchanges of goods taking places between any two countries. In developing their methodology of analysis, the scholars rely on the Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic goods*:

Réalités à double face, marchandises et significations, dont la valeur proprement symbolique et la valeur marchande restent relativement indépendantes, même lorsque la sanction économique vient redoubler la consécration culturelle (i. e. intellectuelle, artistique et scientifique).

(Bourdieu 1971, 52)

Their approach understands the relevance of the elements that influence the production of cultural goods (be they 'original texts' or translations) and their reception in the respective cultures. Specifically, the model developed by these scholars describes the social relations within which translations are produced, disseminated, and consumed.

Such analyses of translation flows force us to take into consideration the international relations between two given systems, their languages, and cultures – exchanges that are shaped by the asymmetric forces between certain languages, and the cultural/political/economic systems they represent. Heilbron and Sapiro pinpoint that these three factors are the main influencers in the domain of cultural exchanges (and thus the circulation of translations): the external constraints, such as the political and the economic relations between the systems involved, and the inner logics of the cultural

field itself. These constraints are not phenomena that occur naturally or spontaneously, but they are the results of the actions carried out by the agents and institutions operating within the political, economic and cultural fields and their struggle to accrue capital and change the power forces within the fields.

An overview of the various sociological tools and models that have been applied to the study of translation, which have focused primarily on Pierre Bourdieu's *field theory*, would not be complete without a brief excursion into other contributions to the field, namely those of Latour's *actor-network theory* and Niklas Luhmann's *social systems theory*.

Actors remain the central concept of one of the major critics of Bourdieu: philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour and his *actor-network theory* (ANT). However, contrary to common misconceptions, Latour's actors – or *actants* – are not necessarily human. Indeed, Latour claims that to understand a society one must, above all, analyze the way humans and non-humans interact, i.e., how the artefacts that circulate in this society are produced. And while the actor is a central concept, the ANT “is based on no stable theory of the actor; rather it assumes the *radical indeterminacy* of the actor” (Callon 1999, 181).

However influential, and while providing some interesting insights for the study of translation as a social practice, Latour's *Actor-Network Theory* (ANT) was never particularly popular among translation scholars – in fact, it has been introduced in translation only more recently – probably for his inconvenient position as a challenger of the ever-present Bourdieu. Latour's work is opposed to Bourdieu's theorization on a number of levels. For Latour, actors – human and non-human, actors can also include ideas, texts and objects – enact particular forms of knowledge by engaging in the activities related to and relevant to their production, the *logic of practice*. Indeed, this methodology sets out to examine how knowledge is formed and developed, by observing the actors in the operative network. Initially developed to account for how scientific knowledge is produced and diffused (he was mostly interested in the sociology of sciences), it has since been applied to numerous fields.

One of the cornerstones of his theory is that of translation – not to be misunderstood with its inherently linguistic acceptance – that he sees as “the interpretation given by the fact-builders of their interests and that of the people they enrol” (Latour 1987, 108). In other words, while translation could thus be intended as a process of mediation among actors, Latour is not interested in processes of interlinguistic transfer.

Hélène Buzelin has recently (2007) applied Latour's concepts to her own study of “the ‘making’ of various literary translations hosted by commercial publishing houses – from the negotiations pertaining to the purchase of the translation rights to the marketing of the finished product” (138). In so

doing, and proving Latour's idea of translation as a 'process in the making' and promoting a more process-oriented approach to the sociology of translation, Buzelin works with three different types of data to retrace the genesis of a literary translation: the discursive type (information collected directly from the actors involved in the translation project), the written material that testifies its act of becoming prior to the publication (different working versions of the translation and documents and correspondence related to its management), and the research notes taken throughout the process. An investigation of this type underlines the relevance of the process of selection of texts to be translated, and their promotion and, consequently, the influence of those who 'dominate' the market, as well as the translation and editing strictly speaking (shining some light on those who work behind the scenes).

In his recent book *The Conference of the Tongues*, Theo Hermans (2007) draws extensively on Niklas Luhmann's *social systems theory* in the development of a sociology of translation. Luhmann believes that modern society is constituted by a series of systems characterized by their functional differentiation. "These operationally closed, incommensurable systems [...] establish and reproduce themselves autopoetically – they are self-referential and self-organized" (Inghilleri 2005, 141).

What his principle of functional differentiation really entails is that systems lack overall integration and are free from the influence of individuals. Indeed, Luhmann emphasizes the autonomy of systems both from the environments they are found in and from the individuals (no longer actors or agents) found within them. For Luhmann, it is therefore necessary to turn our attention from the individual (the subject, the actor) to the operation of these systems, which together constitute society.

While Luhmann's views have occasionally been combined with aspects from ANT, unlike Latour, Luhmann's *systems theory* sees the individual as almost an observer; "the autonomous subject is replaced with the autonomous function system" (Inghilleri 2005: 140). Moreover, according to Luhmann, activities in a social system exist only under the form of communication, meaning that everything actors do is ruled by communication. In other words, actors cannot do anything but communicate and individuals are not social themselves, but it is the communication between them that makes them social. For this reason he defines social systems as systems that consist of communications.

Luhmann's contribution to translation studies within the sociological framework is further analyzed by Sergey Tyulenev in *Applying Luhmann to Translation Studies: Translation in Society* (2012). In his volume, Tyulenev demonstrates the applicability of Luhmann's *systems theory* to the field by, first, defining translation as a social system with its internal mechanisms, its function, its properties, etc., and then, looking at translation as a sub-system and its relationship with other systems.

To conclude, in the last two decades, sociological research in the field of translation studies has relied heavily on Bourdieu's *field theory* and, to a lesser extent, on Latour's *ANT* and on *Luhmann's system theory*. This has produced distinct – and sometimes divergent – sociological approaches to translation with different standpoints and agendas; all, however, agree on the premise that translation is an intrinsically social activity that is shaped by and, conversely, shapes the social milieu it is embedded in. This proposition is also the foundation of this research project.

6. Conclusions

The first chapter of this work set out to present the theoretical background against which my research is carried out: the review of the major contributions in the fields of migration studies and translation studies have allowed me to identify the main concepts and terminology that will be applied to the examination of the implications of reading and translating migrant literature in the following pages.

The magnitude of the migrant phenomenon worldwide has caused a surge of research on the effects mobility has had on world knowledge and cultural products. Some paths of investigation, however, still remain largely unrepresented – such is the case of translation studies. While the first investigations into migration from a translation studies perspective have started to surface, the existing commonalities between the two fields and respective practices have gone mostly unnoticed.

In their ever-evolving paths, both disciplines have moved away from concentrating on the end product of the two practices in order to give more attention to the processes and the role of their agents. Their distancing from the initial concerns on the tangibility (the 'economics') of both acts, as well as the coincidental development of cultural studies, have meant that the vocabulary linked to the two fields has also undergone a strong metaphorization³⁹, while their multi-disciplinarity has allowed the 'migration' of terminology between the two.

The disciplines of translation studies and migration studies start their intersecting path with a common object of study, which I defined as the mobility metaphor: a movement and a journey – of people, languages, and cultures – across borders. The terminology in both fields is deeply enrooted in

³⁹ As stated by Bassnett and Trivedi in their introduction to the *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice* volume: "In our age of (the valorization of) migrancy, exile and diaspora, the word 'translation' seems to have come full circle and reverted from its figurative literary meaning of an interlingual transaction to its etymological physical meaning of locational disjuncture; translation itself seems to have been translated back to its origins. As André Lefevere suggested, 'the time may have come to move beyond the word as such, to promote it to the realm of metaphor, so to speak, and leave it there' (Lefevere 1994, vii)" (1999,13).

the idea of space, and the duality of here and there (a place of arrival and departure) in(-between) which the subjects of these movements negotiate their selves and culture.

Furthermore, both fields have simultaneously welcomed sociological approaches that describe both migration and translation as inherently social activities, which are sources of social change, as well as being the result of social changes.

In line with these tendencies, the present work integrates the migrant perspective, as seen through the eyes (words) of migrants, into the study of translation, and vice versa, exploits the means of translation studies to give a new perspective on the narratives of migration, a common ground – and a potential common object of study – between these two social practices.

CHAPTER 2

ITALIAN MIGRANT WRITING:

A TILE WITHIN THE CANADIAN LITERARY MOSAIC

1. Introduction

The previous chapter pointed out the existence of a link between migration and translation: this connection between the two finds its exemplification in the mobility metaphor, which appreciates both practices as journeys, movements across borders. From among the different ways this mobility metaphor can be studied, two particular areas of investigation are of interest to me: firstly, migrant writing, a relatively new genre that derives from the increasing migratory movements worldwide. The second area of interest is literary translation: the activity that may represent a vehicle for these narratives to be disseminated beyond the linguistic borders they were produced in.

In the current chapter, I will introduce the specific case of Italian-Canadian writing: the literary works written by Italian migrants to Canada and their descendants; their narratives provide an emblematic case study for both the thematic and linguistic analysis of migrant discourse as a genre and the investigation of the role and effects of translation on this type of discourses⁴⁰.

In order to do so, I will start by retracing the roots and routes of the Italian-Canadian ethnic group: this will help me understand the background in which the cultural products of Italian migrants in Canada originated; specifically, I will look into the literary products created by Italian-Canadians and the continuity and/or discontinuity in their thematic and linguistic features.

The analysis of the predominant discourses in Italian-Canadian literature draws attention to one of the most widely-used *topoi* in the group: the theme of the *return*, which provides the ground for the translational analysis that will follow in the second half of this work.

2. A literary History of Italian Writing in Canada

In order to gain an insight into what it means to be Italian in Canada without resorting to statistics, historical, sociological and/or anthropological investigations, it is possible to tackle the issue from a literary perspective: artistic practices born out of contexts of mobility help us reassess migration beyond dates and figures. However, the issue of setting ‘borders’ to define Italian-Canadian literature is

⁴⁰ The latter aim is the core of the chapters that will follow.

far from being a straightforward operation. To start with, the origin of these writers is anything but homogeneous: some of these authors were born in Italy, some in Canada, some elsewhere. The same issue concerns their language of choice: some write in English, some opt for French, some Italian, and others choose their parents' dialects.

Nevertheless, what is common among those who share the label of Italian-Canadian writers is that “[d]ifference, or the awareness of being or contributing something different”, a consciousness of being part of (at least) two originally distinct communities that finally merge into one *hyphenated identity* and the willingness to write about the experience of being in between two cultures (D’Alfonso 1996, 31).

Acknowledging that Italian-Canadian literature is typically produced while on Canadian soil, works by Italian-Canadian writers have recently been accredited as a small and varied literary subsystem gathered under the comprehensive label of ethnic writing, belonging to the bigger family of Canadian literature: “Italian-Canadian literature, as a body of writing, illustrates many of the qualities of a varied ethnic literature in Canada” (Pivato 1985a, 31).

What distinguishes Italian-Canadian writers is their producing “a form of Canadian ethnic minority writing in binary contrast to Canadian ethnic majority writing, that is, British-Canadian writing in English Canada (or Quebec) and French-Canadian (Quebecois) writing in Quebec (and Canada)” (Padolsky 1996, 253), while also representing “the link between the ‘two solitudes’” (Salvatore 1999, 99). Consequently, these works come to occupy an *in-between* position, belonging to neither canonical (majority) Italian literature, nor to majority Canadian literature; in contrast, as Pasquale Verdicchio (1997) claims, they may be working along the margins of these more mainstream works and calling for recognition of their distinctiveness in their themes, style, and in their history.

The distinctiveness and non-inclusiveness of this group is common to the idea of *minor literature* described by Deleuze and Guattari, specifically in the following elements: the *deterritorialization of language* operated within many Italian-Canadian works involving a series of multiple tongues and dialects, the *political immediacy* of the claims regarding the immigrant condition and, lastly, the *collective assemblage of enunciation* related to the existence of groups and associations (Association of Italian Canadian Writers) that operate within and for the whole ethnic community.

There are countless ways in which the panorama of authors that compose Italian-Canadian literature can be presented, none of which is either more correct or useful than any other. In the present case, I opted for a historical perspective. The authors presented are arranged according to an imaginary timeline of generations that mirrors the different phases of Italian migration to Canada: from the early

settlers, to the first wave of migrants in the 19th and 20th centuries, the writers in between the wars, post-war authors, second generation writers and the new Italian migrant writers of XXI century alongside the third generation. The thematic and linguistic continuities and discontinuities highlighted between the different generations of Italian-Canadian writers delineate both the unique voice of each author, but also the shared circumstances under which the works were created and their discourses.

Collectively, as stated by Stellin (2006) we can observe the will, by writing, to create “a personal bridge which can join and unite the two shores of his or her experience, thus relieving angst and coherently merging old and new worlds, past and present, Italian background and Canadian experience” (iii). The shared value of these narratives can be found in the motivation to create a link between generations in order to ‘preserve’ a specific cultural heritage (that idea of *Italianness*⁴¹ often expressed in these narratives that has evolved throughout the decades).

Joseph Pivato, the academic who has worked intensively on acknowledging these writers, retraces a history of Italian-Canadian literature in his works: *Contrasts* (1985), *Echo* (1994) and *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing* (1998). However, these volumes do not cover the last two decades, which have seen a constant influx of new productions and, as we will see later, a new interest in this literary current abroad (hence, the increase in translations of these works starting from the late 1990s). Consequently, this chapter will also include the Italian-Canadian productions that have appeared since the 1990s in order to depict a complete (and up-to-date) picture of the group.

2.1. The First Phase: Italians in the Wilderness

Explorers, pioneers, missionary and sojourners compose the first group of writers of Italian origin in Canada. The small number of narratives of migration that were produced at this time – *exploration literature* and *pioneer memoirs*, mainly – differ greatly, due both to the temporal distance among them (the first phase covers over three centuries) and the different motivations that sent these few Italians to Canada. Nevertheless, all of them are associated by a strong autobiographical and personal component (at this point there is no feeling of writing collectively for a community, which has not yet been established) and the very detailed, almost chronicle-like, description of the emigration process: from the journey overseas, to the arrival, the first impressions and the settlement⁴². Often, these works were

⁴¹ The concept of *Italianness* is something, as argued by Jansen (1988), that many Italian migrants have developed and built in the country of arrival, and developed specifically during the first half of the twentieth century.

⁴² This literary structure, typical of the first Italian narratives in Canada, is reminiscent of the best-known work on the hardships of Canadian 1800s pioneer settlement life, *Roughing It in the Bush* by Susanna Moodie.

intended for those who remained at home; for this reason, many of them were written in Italian and delved into gaudy images of the new environment and the people who lived in the region, which were very different from that of the home country.

The roots of what is now called Italian-Canadian literature can be traced back as far as the letters and travel reports of the first Italian explorers on North American lands in the 15th century: the Jesuit missionary Francesco Giuseppe Bressani, the author of the *Breve Relatione d'alcune missioni de' PP. della Compagnia di Giesù nella Nuova Francia* (1653), is unanimously considered the progenitor of the group. This volume, written in Italian and intended for an Italian audience⁴³, is an account of the time he spent in New France⁴⁴ serving as a missionary: he depicts the lush North American wilderness in the colonial years, the sense of solitude in this vast land, and the encounter with the *Other* (the Native People the Jesuits were trying to convert). At this time, the sentiment of belonging to a specific nationality or ethnic group was less strong than the feeling of being part of a religious body.

The first phase marking the initial steps of Italian-Canadian writing – i.e. the writing of settlers describing the hardship of pioneer life in the new lands – corresponds to the first Italian wave of migration (1880-1920) into Canada. Among these literary pioneers is Antonio Gallenga, who wrote the two English-language volumes (published in London, UK) entitled *Episodes of My Second Life* (1884), the first of which includes a chapter on his year in Nova Scotia, where he worked as a translator and teacher of languages. Other writers, like Achilles Alexander Nobile, who wrote of politics in both Italian and English while in Canada in the second half of the 19th century, and Anna Moroni Parken, the author of the account of pioneering life in *Emigranti: Quattro anni al Canada* (1896/1907), were just seasonal visitors and sojourners to Canada and their narratives reflect their temporary status in the new continent.

Nevertheless, Moroni Parken's account is emblematic of the initial phases of Italian migration to Canada and its corresponding literature. Written in Italian, for Italians, upon return to Italy⁴⁵, *Emigranti* describes the daily life of a migrant in the Canadian wilderness. With child-like amazement and curiosity, Moroni Parken depicts a picture of the new landscape – which she often tries to compare to the one back home, its inhabitants and their mores. In her words we understand both the desire to inhabit the land and become part of it, but also nostalgia and the will to remember her origins. Anna

⁴³ The book, the only volume of the *Relations des Jésuites* in Italian (the rest being in Latin or French), was published in Macerata, Italy. The intention was, most probably, that of trying to convince fellow Italians to join in the missions to convert the Native People.

⁴⁴ From 1642 to 1651, when he returned to Italy.

⁴⁵ The work was published by the editor Solmi in Milan, Italy.

Moroni Parken was born and raised in England and moved to Italy only when she met and married a man from Northern Italy: “while I am English by birth, I am the wife and mother of Italians” (1907, 76; my translation)⁴⁶. Her English influence is evident both in terms of language use and type of settlement described and while she cherishes her *Italianità* (and that of her family), she is also proud of her English heritage.

Similarly, while her work demonstrates a good command of the Italian tongue even at a literary level (with a few rare occasions in which there are grammatical inconsistencies), it is not infrequent to find English words within the narration: references to Canadian nature – i.e. *backwoods* (11), *clearing* (11, 27), *huckleberries* (13), *cranberries* (31), *maple* (42), *black-flies* (62), etc. – or its people and their character – *self-reliance* (12), *bushman* (45), *nurse* (98), etc. These Anglicisms, which are usually translated or explained in Italian, represent a visible manifestation of her English roots.

The theme of nostalgia and the desire to return home – to which I will return at the end of the chapter – makes its very first appearance in Moroni Parken’s fictionalized account of a temporary migrant, one of the many sojourners that populated Canada at the end of the 19th century.

2.2. The Second Phase: Italian-Canadians at the Turn of the Century and in-between Wars

The second period coincides with the literary works produced between the beginning of the twentieth century and the two world conflicts, the subsequent halt in the Italian immigration to Canada, the birth of a sense of *italianità* created by the local fascist propaganda, and the internment of *enemy aliens*. We owe to Francesco Maria Gualtieri, an anti-Fascist poet whose works have mostly disappeared, a brief social history of Italians in Canada until the beginning of the 20th century: *We Italians: A Study in Italian Immigration in Canada* (1928).

At a time when narratives by Italians in Canada were scarce, Gualtieri relies on figures and data to sketch a social history of Italians in Canada until the 1920s: his, indeed, is not a work of fiction or literature, but rather a study and informative essay. His perspective is optimistic and patriotic, unaware of the events that will have followed: “we were the first to win the war and we won it with a battle and not with an armistice. But with this victory we also gave a peace to the world” (Gualtieri 1928, 69), Gualtieri proudly asserts. When approaching the migrant theme Gualtieri avows that “there is no doubt that the best policy of emigration in Canada has been adopted by the Italian Government”, which, in

⁴⁶ “[b]enchè inglese di nascita, sono moglie e madre di italiani.”

order to prevent the presence of unemployed Italians in Canada and elsewhere, issued dispositions to regulate the emigration only under the guarantee of employment and fair remuneration.

Another author who arrived in Canada at the turn of the century is Liborio Lattoni. He arrived in Montreal in 1908 (the biggest and most active centre of Italian immigration at the time), became minister in a Methodist church and had the role of helping convert the newly arrived communities of compatriots to Protestantism, often by giving Italian, English and French classes. Soon, he became famous within the Italian community of Montreal for his active involvement in society⁴⁷ as well as for his patriotic poetry in Italian. His first poems, whose themes echoed the greatness of Rome and Italy, were published in the weekly Italian-language anti-Fascist magazine of Montreal *Il Cittadino canadese*. However, his later poems turned to the recurrent themes of love for and belonging to both Italy and Canada, and the split identity of the migrant. In 2007, a volume containing the English translation of his poems by Italian-Canadian writer and scholar Filippo Salvatore entitled *Carmina Cordis* appeared in Montreal, fifty years after his death. Lattoni was rightly considered the major Italian language writer in Canada until the mid-1950s.

The following years saw the emergence of the most representative literary figure of those decades: Mario Duliani, the voice that highlighted the condition of Italian immigrants in Canada. The Istrian journalist and playwright arrived in Montreal in 1936, after having lived in Paris for about 30 years. Although he is celebrated for his work as a French language playwright⁴⁸, his best-known production is the ‘documentary novel’ *La ville sans femmes* (1945), which describes his 3-year internment – and that of the many other Italian-Canadians who allegedly sympathized with Fascism at the beginning of WWII – in Petawawa and Fredericton.

Despite its importance as historical testimony, the book only circulated within a small literary environment and remained unread by the many who could not speak French. In an attempt to get more attention – at least from his compatriots – Duliani decided to self-translate the work into Italian and published it in Montreal (the self-translation was in fact intended for other Italians in Canada who could not read French) the following year. The two texts offer linguistic and stylistic variations that cannot be entirely attributed to the intrinsic differences between the two languages, but rather to the act of rewriting that the author had conducted during the year that separates the two versions, such as in the

⁴⁷ Together with playwright Mario Duliani he founded the *Centro Culturale Italiano* in 1939, a cultural centre that had the scope of promoting Italian culture.

⁴⁸ In 1937, Duliani became the director of the French-language division of the English-language theatre company *Montreal Repertory Theatre*. Duliani is thought to have played a primary role in the birth and development of French-language theatre in Canada. Indeed, he translated Pirandello from the Italian into French. He was recognized for his commitment in the performing arts in 1961, when he was appointed member of *Le Conseil des Arts du Québec*.

incipit of the French and Italian versions:

Table 2 A comparison of the incipits of *La ville sans femmes* and *Città senza donne*

Les pages qu'on va lire ne sont, à proprement parler, ni un « journal » ni des « mémoires »; elles forment plutôt un ouvrage que l'on pourrait classer dans la catégorie des « reportages romancés ». Avec cette particularité, toutefois, qu'ici l'auteur a été lui-même acteur dans l'aventure [...] Voici donc un récit qu'on peut à juste titre qualifier de « vécu ». (Duliani 1945, 13)	Queste pagine non sono né un “giornale” né delle “memorie”. Esse formano piuttosto – per servirmi di una cattiva espressione francese alla moda – un “documentario romanzato”, cioè un documento umano vero, sulla realtà del quale la fantasia ha trapunto qualche ricamo. (Duliani 1946, 13)
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The novel is the result of an editing and artistic ‘re-elaboration’ of the notes taken during his internment: while Duliani’s content is *vero/vécu*, real and lived, his *fantasia* helped him shape the material in the form of a *reportage romancé*. As argued by Stellin (2006), Duliani can be aptly considered as a *scrittore-emigrante* (78): while sharing the same harsh living conditions of his fellow Italian internees, he observes and describes the facts with the expert eye of an ethnographer, an outsider. Duliani’s account remains a testimony to the conditions of the Italian ethnic group during War times.

It is only in 1994 that the book reaches the national audience, when Italian-Canadian writer Antonino Mazza translated it into English, working with both the French and the Italian versions as source texts. The English volume has an introductory essay by Mazza entitled ‘The War on the Home Front: a Duplicitous Legacy’, in which the writer-translator retraces the historical background in which the novel originated and warns the reader that “the publication in English translation of Mario Duliani’s *The City Without Women* could be a timely opportunity to reflect upon the impact that sustained ‘ethnic’ balkanization in Canada may already be having on the nation’s future” (Duliani, 1994, xvii).

As suggested by the title of Duliani’s work, one of the consequences of the internment of Italian-Canadian men during WWII, is to have amplified the social disruption and the disintegration of the family nucleus caused by migration at the turn of the century: “Notre petite ville, surgie dans la beauté, est surtout triste, enfin, parce que nous y sommes seuls. C’est la ville sans femmes” (1945: 55). Many immigrants to Canada left behind them their wives and family. The internment of Italian men (and of the other *enemy aliens*) made reunifications impossible or, in the case of family that had already been reunified, left women to carry the weight of the entire family. For these and other reasons the accounts on Italian women migrant life in Canada at the time were rare, if not non-existent⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ The volume *The Italian Immigrant Woman in North America* (1978) edited by Betty Boyd Caroli, Robert F. Harney and Lydio F. Tomasi contains precious information on the subject.

2.3. *Gli italiani in Canada: the Post-War Generation*

In 1947, Prime Minister Mackenzie King signed a peace treaty with Italy, and the ban on immigration from Italy was finally lifted: hundreds of thousands of Italians arrived in Canada as a result of the disastrous political and economic situation in Italy and Canada's new relatively open policy towards immigrants. In the decade between 1951 and 1961, an average of over 26,000 people came from Italy to Canada every year; in 1956 alone, for example, 30,000 Italians arrived in Canada, two thirds of whom were bound for Toronto. This wave, which according to the historian Bruno Ramirez made Italy "the second only to Great Britain as the source of Canadian immigration" (Ramirez 1989, 7), was aptly depicted and defined by the sociologist Clifford J. Jansen as the "postwar boom" (Jansen 1988, 15): by 1961, the total Italian population in Canada had climbed to 450,000 (Jansen 1988).

The third phase of Italian-Canadian writing matches the mass migration following the end of World War II and the development of a sense of community amongst Italians in the country. It is in the mid-1950s, in fact, that the first attempt at a complete history of Italians in Canada is published: Guglielmo Vangelisti's *Gli Italiani in Canada* (1958).

During the same period, the brief Italian-language social commentary *Non dateci lenticchie: esperienze, commenti, prospettive di vita Italo-Canadese* (1962) by Ottorino Bressan expresses the negativity and disappointment of Italians migrating to Canada. Bressan's generation had experienced the impact of 20-year long fascist rule, the deprivation of post-war Italy, and the disappointment in a social and economic situation in their homeland that was yet to change (in 1946 Italy would become a Republic and the economic boom would take place only a decade later). For this reason, while the productions of this group highlighted a different perspective often in terms of attitude towards fascism in comparison to the previous generation, their vision of their country – rural, poor and characterized by traditional values – did not differ from those who preceded them.

This period witnesses a preponderance of literary works written in Italian: the presence of large communities of compatriots in Canada meant that the newly arrived often made little effort to integrate linguistically, and authors chose to write in Italian – the only language they were proficient in. In those decades, Montreal became a hub for the post-war Italian writing community, having attracted a large number of Italian migrants. Many of these writers were *emigranti-scrittori* (Stellin 2006): people who turned to writing as a 'necessity', but had little or no preparation in this regard.

After WWII a number of women also started entering the country to join their husbands. It is in fact at this time that the works of the very first woman author of Italian origin who was not a temporary visitor to Canada, Elena Maccaferri Randaccio, appeared. Writing between the 1950s and the 1970s, Elena Maccaferri Randaccio – who also used the alternate pen-names of Elena Albani and E. MacRan – represented the link between the pioneer memoirs of the previous generation and post-war Italian-Canadian literature. Arriving in Canada at the end of the WWII, the writer approaches the migrant themes relevant to this period of time: migration to Canada as an Italian – a former ‘enemy’ of the country – without the support of an already established community, the difficulty of integrating without the proper linguistic tools, the culture clash, etc.

In 1958, Randaccio published in Bologna, Italy, *Canada mia seconda patria*, a work that recounts the events of WWII, under the pen-name Elena Albani. The year after, Mario Duliani wrote a book review of the volume, revealing the building of a network among these writers. Randaccio also published an English-language novel *The Sound of The Harp* (1976) and the fictional autobiography of an Italian migrant *Diario di una Emigrante* (1979), in Italian, under the pseudonym of E. MacRan. The latter was translated⁵⁰ into English under the title of *A Bench on Which to Rest: The Diary of an Emigrant*, twenty years later. Both of the Italian-language novels by Randaccio are centered on the experience of two young Italian women moving to Canada, a female point of view that had so far been missing within the group (if we exclude the Anglo-Italian Moroni Parken).

The same painful migrant experience is described by two important names of Italian-Canadian writing who rose to prominence in Montreal in the 1950s: Giose Rimanelli and Pietro Corsi. When the former arrived in Canada in 1954, the *scrittore-emigrante* Rimanelli had already published a novel in Italy⁵¹: *Tiro al piccione* (1953). He is mostly known for his partly-autobiographical/partly-fictional novel, *Biglietto di Terza*, published in Milan in 1958 when he repatriated to Italy and recounting the events taking place during his stay in Canada. The novel is an analysis of Canadian society (and the specific Italian community of Montreal) intended for Italians in Italy who were considering relocating to the North American country; hence its publication with the Italian publisher Mondadori. His is a clear and elegant Italian, dotted with English and *Italiane* words that aim to make the narration more ‘realistic’; the book is complemented and closed by an *Italiane* glossary, which explains the lingo of Italian-Canadians to those non-migrants who may not be familiar with it.

His friend Pietro Corsi (the two were from the same Molisan town, Casacalenda) moved to

⁵⁰ The book was translated by Maccaferri’s granddaughter, Maria Colfer Phillips.

⁵¹ In fact, he reminds us that “ero scrittore, e che un mio libro stava per essere stampato negli Stati Uniti”/ I was a writer and one of my books was about to be printed in the United States (1958, 66; my translation).

Montreal in 1959, where he published two long short stories in installments in the *Corriere Canadese*. The short stories were later included in the volume *La Giobba* (1982), which was translated and published in English by Guernica in 2000 under the title of *Winter in Montreal*. Like Rimanelli, Corsi aimed to let the voiceless people speak: in his two-part work *La Giobba*, he relates the hardship, humiliations and trauma of Italian immigrants in Post-War Canada: the impact of a new culture, work difficulties and – as the title suggests – the central role of Canadian winter that symbolizes “the sadness that grips the heart of any new arrived immigrant” (Corsi 2000, 120; translated by Antonio di Giacomantonio).

In the ‘Afterword’ of *Winter in Montreal*, fellow writer and friend Giose Rimanelli shares his view of the linguistic deracination experienced by the two authors:

The dilemma. Sorrow, rancour, shame. Then quietude. Life continues, it had taken a turn on the road. The turn is called *emigration*. At the start it’s called with another name: torture. A torture to think in one language and to try to write in another. The years pile up on each other, the mind reacts to commands but no longer out of instinct or out of habit to that instinct: you think in Italian and you write in Italian. You think in English and you write in English. There are always mistakes in writing whether in the former or the other language. And that depends, above all, on the fact that the writer cannot, must not err.

(Corsi 2000, 137)

Writing becomes for them a relocation: “a pitiless therapy” (138) for which “the writer identifies himself with the language in which he writes, not with the country in which he lives or on which he often writes” (idem).

Both Rimanelli and Corsi, however, lived in Canada for a few years; Corsi moved to California in 1969 and eventually made his return to Italy, while Rimanelli moved to the United States in 1960.

A new sense of community was being born in Canada in those years, and it offered a lively environment for the development of a multi-cultural (and multi-linguistic) artistic network, a community. Such was the case of Montreal, where many cultural events animated the city at the beginning of the 1970s⁵². Among them was the literary circle *Cenacolo Symposium*, consisting of a group of poets – all of which were born in Italy and had arrived in Canada between the end of the 1950s and the 1960s. The result of these gatherings was an audio-anthology with Italian-language works by Corrado Mastropasqua, Romano Perticarini, Umberto Taccola and Giovanni di Lullo.

Besides his poetry in Neapolitan – *Na Lacrema e na risa* (1969) – Mastropasqua is mostly known within the Italian-Canadian community for being the founder of an Italian theatre company in Montreal

⁵² Alongside the above-mentioned authors, some Italian-Canadian literary publications mention names of Quebecois poets of the 1970s and 1980s of whose production little information is, however, available. Such is the case of Luigi Di Vito and Augusto Tomasini.

and for his role as an actor on stage, in films and on television. Romano Perticarini's role is noteworthy for the publication of two volumes in bilingual edition, with English texts⁵³ (not self-translations) facing the original Italian: *Quelli della fionda - The Sling Shot Kids* (1981) and *Via Diaz* (1989).

Other writers that enlivened the Italian-Canadian literary scene of Montreal in those years are Tonino Caticchio, who wrote lyrics for songs and satirical sonnets in Roman dialect, Giuseppe Ierfino and his self-published, Italian-language migrant narratives:

Behind each migrant journey, there is a long and dramatic history that, in our opinion, instead of being described with the help of investigations and inquiries, might be best told by those who lived it, or by those who have experienced it.⁵⁴

(Ierfino 1992, 1; my translation)

Another important Italian-Canadian artistic community was that of Toronto-based novelists. Such is the case of Istrian born and raised Gianni Grohovaz. Like many Italian migrants in that period, he moved to Canada to work on the Canadian National Railroad (CNR). Despite his occupation as a manual worker, he wrote *La strada Bianca*: an autobiographical work about his first days in Canada that would be published posthumously in 1988. In 1954 he participated in the founding of the *Corriere Canadese*. His earliest poems, written in his local Fiume dialect, were gathered in the collection *Per ricordare le cose che ricordo. Poesie in dialetto fiuman* (1974), published in Toronto by editor Dufferin.

His whole production shows a deep attachment to his Italian identity, and even more specifically to his Istrian origins: in fact, he dedicated himself to preserving Italian and Fiuman dialect in his writings. His connection with his land of origin can also be found in his social commitment to the Italian community with the Multicultural History Society of Ontario and the Italian Immigrant Aid Society, as well as in his works for Italian publications such as *La Verità* of Montreal, the *Corriere Canadese* of Toronto, *Il Giornale di Toronto*, *Toronto Notte* and *Panorama*.

Another relevant post-war novelist who chose to pursue her writing career in Italian from Toronto is Italian-born Maria Ardizzi. Soon, she became widely known among the Italian-Canadian audience, including the English speakers, given that some of her work was translated into English and included in the anthologies *Italian Canadian Voices* (1984), *Pillars of Lace* (1998), *L'Altra storia* (1998) and *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing* (1998).

Her production remains one of the most symbolic examples of the migrant discourse pursued by the authors of that period. Her first novel, *Made in Italy* (1982) – for which she won the Ontario Arts Prize and which was translated into English by Anna Maria Castrilli under the same title by Toma Publishing

⁵³ *Via Diaz* was translated by Carlo Giacobbe, while *The Sling-shot Kids* was translated by Robert Testa Redy.

⁵⁴ “L'emigrante dietro il suo cammino ha una lunga e drammatica storia che, secondo noi, anziché essere descritta, dietro investigazioni ed inchieste, potrebbe meglio essere narrata da chi l'ha vissuta o da chi ne ha fatto esperienza”.

in the same year, is a journey into the condition of a migrant woman and her psyche. This volume gives start to her *Ciclo degli emigranti*: a trilogy dealing with immigration to Canada and the impossibility of adjusting to the North American way of life, nostalgia and the feeling of displacement. Ardizzi's first success was followed by another female perspective on the migrant theme: *Il Sapore Agro della Mia Terra* (1984), the second chapter of the migrant saga, introduces the idea of the necessary return to the native land, "un viaggio necessario" (1984, 232). The volume that virtually completes the migrant cycle, *La Buona America* (1987), insists on the theme of the return to Italy while changing the migrant perspective – this time, her protagonist is a man.

Many elements bond Ardizzi's vast production. The preference for the migrant subject stands central: on the one hand, she explores the thematic of nostalgia and the desire to return to an idealized home – which she introduces in her trilogy and continues in *Tra le Colline e di là dal Mare* (1990) – while also underlining the condition of women in migrant settings, which she reiterates in the unpublished Italian work, *Donne e Amanti*, published in Pasquale Verdicchio's English translation for Guernica with the title *Women and Lovers* (2000). Her attachment to the Italian language is evident. Even after decades in Canada, Ardizzi – who was a schoolteacher in Italy – still elects her native tongue for her works. Hers is an elegant and rich style that has evolved and become polished during her writing career, a language that differs from that of other Italian-Canadian authors of the time and, at times, clashes with the traditional image of the working class migrant characters she gives voice to.

Other accounts of the migrant experience are offered in the form of memoirs in the native language by authors of that period: Matilde Torres Gentile's autobiography *La Dottoressa di Cappadocia* (1982), Anello Castrucci and the autobiographical migrant story *I miei lontani pascoli: ricordi di un emigrante* (1984), Ermanno La Riccia and his collection of short stories *Terra mia: storie di emigrazione* (1984), Montreal-based writer Aldo Gioseffini and his memoir and political commentary *L'amarezza della sconfitta* (1989), and Ernesto Carbonelli's autobiographical verses in *La rava allu frisco*, written in the local dialect of his native town Supino.

2.4. *Roman Candles*, a Second Generation⁵⁵ of Migrant Writers, and the Desire to Revisit Italy

Starting from the mid-seventies and the mid-eighties, the fourth phase sees the birth of Italian-Canadian literature, as we know it today. This is a period in which, because of the bans on the sponsorship system, immigration from Italy decreases conspicuously, and a flux of return migration to Italy commences. Simultaneously, we observe the growth of a real literary corpus of English and French works, bringing to the fore a great number of Anglophone and Francophone Italian-Canadian voices. An important role in this transition can be ascribed to Pier Giorgio di Cicco.

Acting as a ‘founding father’ of the group, he collected and edited poetic material that was published under the title of *Roman Candles* (1978): the very first anthology of seventeen Italian-Canadian poets⁵⁶ that proved the existence of a common endeavor among writers of Italian origin in Canada. Di Cicco is clear about how he feels about the evolution of the Italian-Canadian ethnic group (and its literary representatives):

All the poets included have one sure thing in common—they are not emigrants. They were brought here by their families at an early age, and three were born in North America. They are in the fortunate and tragic position of having to live with two cultures.

(Di Cicco 1978a, 9)

He was indeed correct in affirming that there was a certain shared experience among these seventeen authors, which made them different from their predecessors: while most were not born in Canada, all of them grew up there, and did not live migration as a choice but as a condition imposed by someone else. Di Cicco firmly believes in these writers’ *Canadianness*, dismissing all viewpoints considering the children of émigrés as migrants themselves. His dismissal of the migrant element might be read as a consequence of the hardship he had to endure himself, as a child of Italian migrants in 1950s Canada. Di Cicco declared he had a hard time growing up in an immigrant household in Montreal; for that reason, he tried to reject his Italian roots – “It is the dream of America, ages ago, that I run from, hiding my head in the snow, pretending it never was⁵⁷” (1978a, 37) – until his very first trip

⁵⁵ At this time, an ‘in-between’ generation appears: individuals born in Italy who came to Canada at pre-adult age with their parents, but received most of their education (and spent all of their adult life) in Canada. This generation could be referred to as the *1.5 generation*: a term that is getting increasingly more popular in Migration Studies and was first coined by the Cuban-American sociologist Rubén G. Rumbaut to refer to those, like the cases here exposed, who migrate to a new country between the early age of six and twelve.

⁵⁶ The collection includes the following Anglophone authors: Filippo Salvatore, Len Gasparini, Caro Cantasano, Pier Giorgio di Cicco, Antonino Mazza, Antonio Iacovino, Ed Prato, Tony Pignataro, Mike Zizis, John Melfi, Joseph Ranallo, Vincenzo Albanese, Mary di Michele, Mary Melfi, Saro d’Agostino, Alexandre L. Amprimoz, Joseph Pivato.

⁵⁷ From the poem “Remembering Baltimore, Arezzo” in *Roman Candles* (1978).

back to the homeland in 1974.

His own return worked as an epiphany and convinced him to accept, rather than reject, his *italianità* even in writing, and exploit it to conquer a space in the Canadian literary landscape (Pivato 2011). In the following verses, taken from the poem *Nostalgia*, the author decides to embrace and deal with his own idea of *Italianness*:

Italia, far beyond that, always, Italia,
And the rooms of warmth, the landscape searing
Its edges at noon.
Under a few cold lilies, my father dreams
Cicadas in vallemaio, I am sure of it,
He left me that, and a poem that is only a
Dream of cicadas; the brown glove widens
On the dry December earth.
I am a little marvelous, with the sunken
Heart of exiles.

(1978a, 33)

As Di Cicco himself admitted, his first trip to Italy changed the way he felt about his Italian heritage, causing at once his poetic birth and his linguistic rediscovery: on that matter, it has been duly noted by Pivato (2011) how, while Di Cicco's production is entirely in English, his poems contain traces of the Italian language that have "an aesthetic function necessary for his type of poetry and for his individual voice" (53). Having long rejected his *Italianness*, Di Cicco finally reconciled with his heritage. The wound slowly recovered, and Italian words surfaced where no better English 'equivalent' could describe the meaning and/or a specific souvenir (because, indeed, there is no equivalent for it). Words become a souvenir of his Italian visit, mirroring his *nostalgia* for a lost land and language that he has finally reconnected with.

Di Cicco started his prolific writing career in 1975, but slowly moved away from the migrant discourse, and became a representative of the generation (and the ethnic group) to which he belongs. Pivato (2011) has collected a number of essays that attest to the thematic richness of Di Cicco's production: "[h]ere was a writer who was speaking for us, a forgotten generation of Italian kids who had grown up in Canada and did not know who we were. We also did not know what we were" (Pivato 2011, 42). His verses and his artistic commitment encouraged other writers to contribute to the diversification of Canadian national literature.

This is, in fact, the objective pursued by the 1978 collection *Roman Candles* and the seventeen poets included it. The volume depicts primarily the Anglophone Italian-Canadian writing panorama, even though some of the authors have subsequently experimented with multilingualism: Alexandre

Amprimoz – who has translated from/into English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and produced poetry in both English and French – and Filippo Salvatore, whose migrant experience is reflected in his trilingual poetry and self-translations where Italian, English and French face each other on the page. Linguistic experimentation, as claimed by Salvatore in an interview, is the migrant's way to deal with their multicultural condition:

It doesn't matter whether they live in Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton or Toronto, poets of Italian origin express their vision of the reality of Canada through the filter of their ancestral heritage. Basing their observations on the immigration theme, they build a bridge between both of their cultural dimensions.⁵⁸

(Caccia 1998, 113)

Among the seventeen poets of *Roman Candles* only two were women, both born in Italy and arrived in Canada in the mid-1950s: Mary di Michele and Mary Melfi. Di Michele's English poetry has been included in many anthologies, including *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* (1982) edited by Margaret Atwood. Alternating volumes of verses and novels, she explores typical Italian-Canadian topics: heritage and family dynamics, issues of gender and cultural identity. In her second novel, *Tenor of Love* (2005), she explores Italian culture through the fictional life-story of opera singer Enrico Caruso. Besides the comparison between Italian and North American heritages, the novel addresses the difficulties of translation.

On the one hand, the impossibility of confining Caruso's voice in written words – “they all tried, in language, to describe the qualities of his voice – how they all tried and failed with their superlatives to come close to the beauty” (2005, 71) – highlights the limitations of language and the complexity of *intersemiotic* translation; on the other, *interlingual* translation fails Caruso and his voice: “[w]hen he answered his host's few queries, the tenor's speech had been so heavily accented, his English some form of awkward translation, that the voice had faltered in speech in a way it never did in song” (220). The tenor's voice can only surrender to the higher power of translation. Indeed, it's Di Michele's voice that resonates in the whole novel, confessing her own difficulty in translating between her languages through the words of her characters: “I must translate from Italian, I cannot think in it. I must translate what I hear before I can speak. This makes me slow” (313). On the matter, in an interview with Joseph Pivato, the writer asserted: “I am not writing in the first language that I learned to speak, although I was educated in English”⁵⁹, stressing the relevance of her formative years in the Italian language.

⁵⁸ This is an excerpt of Fulvio Caccia's interview with Salvatore in which the latter stresses on the importance of the reality of the migratory experience as a thread that unites both Italian-American and Italian-Canadian artistic works (a theme that also appears in his own writings).

⁵⁹ <http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/77/89>

Like her colleague and compatriot Di Melfi, Italian-born Anglophone author Mary Melfi also started her career in poetry and later experimented with various genres and themes: from the female perspective on cultural alienation and identity crisis, to the voyage into family hi/story through a multilingual dialogue between mother and the daughter in her memoir *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009), to which I will return in the last chapter.

Thanks to the publication of *Roman Candles*, 1978 has been widely ratified as a major year in the development of Italian-Canadian literature. Coincidentally, this was also the year in which “the first English novel to deal with the experience of Italian immigrants in Canada” (Pivato 2003, 8) was published: *The Italians* by Frank Paci. In 1978, no Anglophone writer had yet written a novel about the experience of Italian migrants in Canada; there had been works in French (namely Duliani’s *La ville sans femme*) and in Italian (most of them), and some poetry in English (*Roman Candles*, for example).

Besides providing a depiction of the migrants’ life, the novel represented a sociological observation of the roles of each member within the traditional Italian family and its network: “she was neither Canadian nor Italian, but simply a member of a family which was part of something larger” (Paci 1978, 133). Because of its success, the novel was later translated into French and published by Guernica with the title *La Famille Gaetano* (1990). The ‘migrant family saga’ was continued with *Black Madonna* (1982), and *The Father* (1984): after having focused on the experience of Italians in Canada through the lens of an entire family (*The Italians*), Paci decided to shed light on the condition of Italian migrant women in *Black Madonna*, and then investigated the conflicts between fathers and sons within the migrant framework in *The Father*.

His works depict generational conflicts originated from the disruption (and uprooting) of traditional values embodied by the Italian parents and rejected by the younger generations of Italian-Canadians. As Paci asserted in an interview with C.D. Minni (1985):

It's simply *la via vecchia* (the old way) which can't understand *la via nuova* (the new way). Unskilled and uneducated parents who emigrate from as foreign a culture as the Italian (especially from the South) find it very difficult to understand or condone the behaviour of their children. It's not any more complex than that, when rendered abstractly. By the same token, the children don't understand the old ways. Let it be understood, however, that I'm speaking about the characters in my work — not about Italians in general.

(9)

Paci does not abandon the migrant discourse, but rather initiates a new series of works connected to each other: the *bildungsroman* centered on the character of Italian-Canadian Mark Trecroci (Paci’s *alter ego*). The first ‘installment’ *Black Blood* (1991) introduces the reader to the migrant Trecroci family and Mark’s childhood and is followed by *Under the Bridge* (1992), *Sex and Character* (1993),

The Rooming-House (1996), and *Italian Shoes*⁶⁰ (2002). In the fifth part of Trecroci's story, the protagonist makes his return journey to Italy as an adult to discover his own self (through his relatives, the land they inhabit and its language) and to find his own voice as a writer: "my words were connectors that rooted themselves in the soil of who I was" (136). The *buildungsroman* does not conclude with the return to the land of origin, but carries on in *Hard Edge* (2004), *Peace Tower* (2009), and *The Son* (2011).

While Paci did not write solely migration-centred works, the desire to come to terms with his Italian background is evident in all of his production, as admitted by the writer in an interview:

[T]here was a need to preserve the accomplishments of my parents, with the accent on "serve." I had the voice which they didn't have. It's this very sense of preserving that acts as a catharsis, because you're writing the story of your parents you're also coming to terms with your background and defining yourself in a historical context.

(Minni 1985, 6)

1978 is also the year Antonio D'Alfonso founded Guernica Editions in Montreal: the publishing house that played a key role in exposing and promoting those voices that were currently underrepresented in and not recognized by the dominant Canadian culture of the time, specifically the Italo-Quebécois writing community in which Guernica and D'Alfonso were immersed.

Soon, D'Alfonso became one of the most representative figures of Montreal's Italian-Canadian community of intellectuals of the time. Born in Montreal to Italian parents, he received a French and English education. With more than 30 literary works and film productions, his art shows eclecticism both in terms of themes and forms (from poetry, to novels, essays and films) and languages (the writer uses and self-translates alternatively French, English, Italian, Guglionese dialect and Spanish⁶¹).

His works show a deep concern with the motifs typical of migrant writing: the culture clash and the impossibility of fully being in-between two (or more) heritages. The migrant journey (be it physical or spiritual), history, language, family, space and the cathartic essence of the creative act as a means to solve inner fragmentation are some of the most recurrent subjects in D'Alfonso's writings, as exemplified by his famous poem *Babel*. Here, the double displacement, the negotiation between the multiple selves, languages, and places becomes evident, resulting in a journey through the linguistic schizophrenia of the migrant writer that epitomizes the search for a sense of home and belonging:

⁶⁰ Shoes as a symbol for Italian culture and heritage are also found in Darlene Madott's play *Mazilli's shoes*, in which the migrant protagonist returns after many years to his hometown to open a shoe shop.

⁶¹ Among his self-translations: the numerous versions of his prose and poetry collection *The Other Shore* (1986, 1988) and *L'autre rivage* (1987, 1999), *L'Amour Panique* (1987) and its English self-translation *Panick Love* (1992), the novel *Avril - ou l'anti-passion* (1990) and its English self-translation *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995), the essay *In Italics - In defence of Ethnicity* (1995) and its French version *En Italiques* (1998, 2000, 2005).

Nativo di Montréal
 élevé comme Québécois
 forced to learn the tongue of power
 vivì en México como alternativa
 figlio del sole e della campagna
 par les franc parleurs aimé
 finding thousands like me suffering
 me casé y divorcié en tierra fria
 nipote di Guglionesi
 parlant politique malgré moi
*steemed in the school of Old Aquinas*⁶²
 queriendo luchar con mis amigos latinos
 Dio where shall I be demain
 (trop vif) qué puedo saber yo
 spero che la terra be mine.⁶³

(D'Alfonso 1988, 57)

D'Alfonso is exemplary of a life in-between the two Canadian solitudes, having lived in a predominantly Anglophone environment within a predominantly Francophone city. His multi-faceted work is a mosaic of languages that exemplifies Gobard's *tetraglossic model*: his multilingual past is here retraced in English, French, Italian and Spanish.

The page becomes the place to tear down barriers, connecting past and present identities, languages and cultures; his search for self and home becomes necessary to bridge the different cultural heritages and realities embracing them all. For D'Alfonso, writing becomes a rite of passage, a journey of discovery and search for home and identity, and the seeming impossibility of finding one. Linguistically displaced, regardless of the language, D'Alfonso is never at home anywhere. His search for a place to call home is also exemplified by his work as a translator from French and Italian into English and French and his role as founder of Guernica Editions in 1978.

D'Alfonso's linguistic experimentation mirrors the linguistic mosaic that characterized the Italian-Canadian literary scene between the 1980 and 1990. While most poets write of their migrant experience in one of the two official languages of Canada – Ontarian Anglophones Len Gasparini and Joseph Maviglia, US born Italian-Canadian Anglophone George Amabile, Anglophone Montrealer Marco Fraticelli, Francophone Roman-born Sante Viselli, Anglophone and Luxembourg-born Liliane Welch, Italian-born Anglophones Carmen Laurenza Ziolkowski and Celestino de Iuliis – others,

⁶² In Italics in the original.

⁶³ Native of Montreal/Raised like a Quebecois/Forced to learn the tongue of power/I lived in Mexico as an alternative/Son of the sun and the countryside/Loved by the French speakers/Finding thousands like me suffering/I married and divorced in the cold land/Grandson of Guglionesi/Talking politics in spite of myself/Steeled in the school of Old Aquinas/Wanting to fight with my Latin friends/God where shall I be tomorrow/ (I'm too alive) what do I know/Hoping the land to be mine (My translation).

instead, opt for a multilingual production: Italian-born Lamberto Tassinari, one of the founders of the cultural magazine *Vice Versa*, writes both in Italian and French, while Sicilian Giovanni Costa publishes poems in bilingual or trilingual edition.

Multilingualism as a way to deal with the fragmentation of the migrant identity is at the core of Dorina Michelutti's⁶⁴ production. Her linguistic eclecticism involves her three mother tongues – Italian, English and the language of Friuli – and her volumes of poems *Loyalty to the Hunt* (1986) and *Ouroboros: The Book That Ate Me* (1990). Most of the poems contained in her collections are in English, some present an Italian and English or Friulan and English versions facing each other, others the three. In her verses, each language has a different role and appeal and expresses a different part of her personal history:

How amazingly naked English is in ideological places, how clumsy and ungenerous. Italian, on the other hand, is fleshy, luxurious, seductive, warm, welcoming of any strange new idea that enters its folds, making it instantly desirable, exotic, a gift: something else to believe in for a while. In comparison, English curtails; it is severe, abrupt, dismissive.

(1990, 99)

Friulan, for example, is selected to express homesickness and the constant search for a place to call home⁶⁵: “Tornarès a cjase par la puarte/I would come home by the door” (1990, 90).

In her much-quoted essay “Coming to Terms with the Mother Tongue” (1989), which soon became the linguistic manifesto of the Italian-Canadian group, Michelutti elaborates her relationship with language and languages. Despite her bilingual/trilingual production superficially appears as an act of self-translation, Michelutti dismisses the claim, explaining how her conflicting relationship with her three tongues lead to an impossibility of translating between them.

It was as if the languages had been amazingly attracted and yet unable to touch and penetrate [...] Feeling their exclusiveness, I could commit myself fully to neither. Translation seemed a puny effort in such a struggle; something always seemed betrayed, and I avoided it.

(Pivato 1998, 146)

Michelutti is the most outspoken of the many authors who rediscovers dialect as a literary device, becoming the representative of one the most important regional groups in Italian-Canadian literature, that of authors of Friulan descent: the dialect poems by Doris Vorano, Ermanno Bulfon, Rina del Nin Cralli, and Silvano Zamaro – the latter chose Italian to channel nostalgia for his region of origin. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s, dialect and Italian still seem to be the preferred writing languages of writers who migrated to Canada as adults, even at a time when an Anglophone and Francophone

⁶⁴ Many of her works were penned under the name of Dôre Michelut, after she legally changed her name to the Friulan form.

⁶⁵ It is interesting to notice the number of recurrences of the words *house* and *home*: the Friulan *cjase* and its plural *cjasis* appear seven times in the seven poems in Friulan.

literature of Italians in Canada had already been established.

On the other hand, those who came to Canada at an early age with their parents privileged the languages of their new adopted country. This is the case of Furlan-born Marisa De Franceschi (née De Monte): although English is the language she elected for her writing, Italian appears alongside it in her short stories and autobiographical novels as a tool to add color and realism to the narration of the migrant's cultural duality and the importance of the journey back as a revelatory experience. In an interview with Licia Canton, De Franceschi admits:

I went back to Italy for the first time in 1957 when I was still 10 years old. I then returned after graduating from University in 1968. I went to teach for a British Institute in Milan. After I married Paolo in 1970, he and I went back almost every year, sometimes even twice in a year. He and I have crossed the ocean a lot.⁶⁶

Two other relevant female figures of the Italian-Canadian mosaic that were brought to Canada by their parents as young girls have adopted English for their writing activity are Gianna Patriarca and Caterina Edwards. The two have more in common than just the preferred language; both authors adopt the female perspective to explore the migrant discourse: in Patriarca's poems and Edwards' novels what pre-migration women, migrant women, and post-migration women all have in common is their struggle to find a voice in the role assigned to them by the society they live in, and the feeling of being torn between two cultural and linguistic heritages.

[...] my life was split into seemingly inimical halves, not only between the time before and after, but through all my growing years: Italy in summer, Canada in winter. Italy was enclosure, cocooning, the comfort of a secure place among the cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents.

(Edwards 1993, 108)

Indeed, regardless of their country of birth, and whether they can remember the crossing, these 'new' Italian-Canadians (the sons and daughters of Italians who moved to Canada in the 1950s and 1960s) decide to pick up their pens and write about their experience as uprooted beings, as fragmented/hyphenated identities in one (or both) of the official languages of Canada. As seen above, most of them seem to prefer English over French for their works because many Italian immigrants believed in the necessity for their children to learn English as their first language, because it was considered the dominant language⁶⁷:

My father forces me to go to an English-language school. Sure, there is a school just a few blocks from the house, but it is French-speaking. 'It's no use arguing. My son is not going to a French-

⁶⁶ http://www.bibliosofia.net/files/marisa_de_franceschi_interview_with_licia.htm

⁶⁷ This theme is also expressed in Micone's play *Gens du Silence*. Torn between two host cultures (and languages), Antonio and Anna decide to send their son Marco to an English school because "il faut qu'ils apprennent à gagner", "[e]t ici, en Amérique, les Anglais sont gagnants partout" (Micone 1991, 23).

language school,' Father says in an Italian-tainted French. 'But why?' asks the doctor, my father's confidant. 'In a few years from now, Quebec will have a majority of French speaking people.' 'I'm quite aware of that, but America is English-speaking. I want my son to be able to speak *correttamente* the language of that majority.'

(D'Alfonso 1995, 59-60)

Nevertheless, an important Francophone writing community was active in Quebec, as witnessed by the collection *Sous le signe du Phénix: entretiens avec quinze créateurs italo-québécois* (1985). Along the above-mentioned Quebecois writers Filippo Salvatore, Marco Fraticelli, Mary Melfi, Antonio D'Alfonso and Lamberto Tassinari, who respond to the linguistic dilemma⁶⁸ by opting for an English or multilingual production, other authors respond to this divide with a strong assertion of their francophone identity: such is the case of Dominique de Pasquale⁶⁹, Mario Campo, *Vice Versa*'s editor Fulvio Caccia⁷⁰ and Marco Micone, one the most celebrated names in the Italo-Quebecois scene.

Micone was born in 1945 in Montelongo, in the Southern Italian region of Molise, and moved to Canada with his parents in 1958. His many works are inspired by political polemics – he would join the Parti Québécois in 1971 – and the immigrant issue: migrants in Canada, Micone claims, share the same fight as the Francophones in Quebec. Juxtaposing Montreal English, French, and Italian, Micone's work aims to give voice to the voiceless people, the ethnic minorities – in this specific case, in Quebec – alienated from the larger society and neglected by mainstream literature (and society). Theatre becomes, for Micone, the way to give voice to immigrants within Quebecois society, immigrants who have long been excluded (and silenced) by it (and by the larger Canadian society in general) and who still wish to integrate: "L'immigré est tiraillé entre l'impossibilité de rester tel qu'il était et la difficulté de devenir autre" (Micone 1992, 87-88)

The dramatic and painful experience of migrants in Quebec is depicted in the trilogy of plays *Gens du silence* (1982), *Addolorata* (1984), and *Déjà l'agonie* (1988), which have in common a scepticism towards the migrant's integration process and see silence as its most manifest result. Moreover, in 1989, Micone wrote the poem *Speak What*: a rewriting of the manifesto of linguistic resistance of Quebec, the poem *Speak White* by Michèle Lalonde, an act of condemnation of the oppressions undergone by all minorities. His analysis of the migrant condition continues in his collections of essays and narrative *Le figuier enchanté* (1992) and *Migrances* (2005). His writings have

⁶⁸ What language to choose between the languages of the homeland – Italian and/or dialect – and the official languages of Canada, English and/or French?

⁶⁹ De Pasquale is a representative of the third-generation Italian-Canadians, and for this reason he will be dealt with in the following section.

⁷⁰ Caccia includes in his work Paul Tana who, despite not being a writer as such, is an important figure for Italian-Québécois culture. He is a film director and writer, known for *Café Italia Montréal* (1985), *La sarrasine* (1992), and *La déroute* (1998), works that approach and analyze Québécois society from an Italian point of view.

a collective value, talking to/about all migrants, although they take inspiration from his personal life experience: “Je me sentais doublement marginalisé: comme Italien au Québec et comme élève dans une école en marge de la communauté francophone” (1992, 71), he avows. Micone’s success as a playwright is also paired with that as a translator into French of Italian plays by Goldoni and Pirandello.

Other voices of the multicultural Italo-Quebécois scene of the 1980s include: multilingual playwright Tony Nardi (who works in English, French and Calabrian dialect), Italian-born Francophone short-story writer and novelist Tiziana Beccarelli-Saad, Francophone poet and novelist Carole David, Francophone Furlan Bianca Zagolin, multilingual Lisa Carducci (who alternates between Italian, French and English), and Anglophone playwright Vittorio Rossi, who uses Calabrese dialect to make his dialogues more realistic.

If the 1980s as a decade saw the development of a distinct Italian-Canadian consciousness across Canada – some areas providing a more fertile terrain for literary productions than others, this period also marks a growth in the number of publications by essayists on the topic, indicating an increase in interest in/and size of the literary group. In 1984 the first edition of *Italian Canadian Voices* was published: a collection of prose and poetry supported by a federal government grant provided with the purpose of discovering “the ‘voices’ that describe for others the experience of immigration, up-rootedness, and settlement in a new environment very different from their familiar past (Di Giovanni 2006, 1). This anthology, a pioneering project in its representation of Italian-Canadian artists as a consistent body, is proof of the emerging of an awareness among them of their belonging to a group characterized by a specific ethnic identity.

This sentiment was reinforced by the first national conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW) in Vancouver in 1986, which also resulted in the publication of the volume *Writers in Transition* (1990) edited by the organizers C. Dino Minni – the author of the collection of short stories *Other Selves* (1985) and editor of the anthology *Ricordi: Things Remembered* (1989) – and Anna Foschi Ciampolini – short story writer and co-editor of three anthologies: *Emigrante* (1985), *Writers in Transition: The Proceedings of the First National Conference of Italian-Canadian Writers* (1990), and the recent *Strange Peregrinations: Italian-Canadian Literary Landscapes* (2007).

Among the theorists around the topic is Pasquale Verdicchio: he has published extensively, mostly in English, both fiction and scholarly works on nationalism, ethnic culture and minority writing, and post-emigrant writing in the North American framework. Verdicchio’s works of poetry consists mostly of poetry collections published between Canada and the United States (where he often resides) inspired by the ideas developed in his scholarly works, where he argues that: “the Italian Canadian

writer must write away from the source [...] we must not be enshrouded by our past, and nevertheless remain within its gravitational field” (1997, 70), to avoid being trapped in the *post-emigrant intellectual ghetto* in which many seem to be. This, for Verdicchio, does not mean rejecting the roots, but rather embracing them to re-write Canadian literature within the contexts of its migrant, minority and ethnic labels.

2.5. 1990s: The Maturity of a Group

1990 marks a ‘new era’ for Italian-Canadian literature, at a time when an important group of writers had been constituted and a consistent and multilingual body of works already existed. As noted, conscious of their existence and of a common intent, these writers grouped in the Association of Italian Canadian Writers and held their first national conference in Vancouver in 1986. 1990 is the year in which the proceedings of said meeting were published in a volume under the title *Writers in Transition* (1990), edited by the organizers C. Dino Minni and Anna Foschi Ciampolini. Minni pointed out that the conference, and the subsequent publication of the essays originating from it, was a testimony to the state of the art of the group. The author also emphasized the role of the conference as a coming-of-age experience; envisaging the future of the group for the decade to come Minni stated: “I think that those authors who wrote simply as a catharsis will cease to write; their inspiration will exhaust itself with the exhaustion of their raw material [...] Others, instead, have already made (or are in the process of making) the transition to something else” (1990, 9-10).

The ‘catharsis’ and ‘transition’ Minni referred to was the *topos* of immigration and the rediscovery of the roots that, up until that day, constituted the focus of many/most of Italian-Canadian works. In 1990 Minni predicted that the new decade would see a change in the Italian-Canadian motifs and a departure from the migrant theme; a prediction that, however, turned out not to be entirely corroborated.

In fact, throughout the entire decade the migrant discourse is still present in narratives by Italian-Canadians. In 1993, for instance, Frank Colantonio writes the migrant memoir *From the Ground Up: An Italian Immigrant’s Story* in English: an important testimony to the many Italian immigrants who came to Canada after WWII. His first-person account describes a life dedicated to his family, the community – he was a trade union activist – and to social justice. Colantonio’s Anglophone account is nevertheless conditioned by decades of Italian migrant works around similar experiences and by his having lived in Canada for almost 50 years at the time of writing. Only a year later, Anthony Buzzelli

wrote *The Immigrant's Prayer/La Preghiera dell'Immigrante* (1994): a narrative poem in two languages that addresses the sacrifices of the Italian immigrants who came to North America.

The Italian-Canadian literary scene of the 1990s is, however, dominated by the name that helped bring the whole group to the forefront at both national and international level: Nino Ricci. A second generation Italian-Canadian, Ricci was born in Leamington, Ontario, in 1959 to parents from Molise. Ricci's first work is the internationally known *Lives of the Saints* (1990), which has been published in seventeen countries and which gave birth to the trilogy of works around Vittorio Innocente, the son of Italian immigrants to Canada. The first chapter of this archetypal *bildungsroman* is set in an Italian village in 1960; the protagonist is 7 years old and lives with his mother and grandfather, the family is about to move to the new continent. The saga continues with *In a Glass House* (1993), set in Southern Ontario, dealing with Vittorio's post-migration life in the new continent. Taking the protagonist through childhood into adulthood, the second novel explores the immigrant experience and its cultural and psychological effects. The third part of the trilogy, *Where She Has Gone* (1997), sees the protagonist as an adult coming to terms with the past and the desire to rediscover his land of origin. In 2004, the whole trilogy was translated into Italian under the title of *La terra del ritorno* and adapted into an Italian-Canadian TV co-production.

In his later works, Ricci moves away from the migrant theme; however, despite this slow change in direction in terms of themes, what is common in Ricci's production is the clear self-referential nature of his work because, as one of his characters states in his recent *The Origin of Species*: "Don't ever forget your family. They're all you've got in the end, don't forget that" (Ricci 2008, 439).

Another influent voice in Italian-Canadian literature of the 1990s, whose production is based on the autobiographical element, is Joe Fiorito: while many of his books do not address migrant subjects directly, his family memoir *The Closer We Are to Dying* (1999) explores the theme of Italian-Canadianness in depth. I will return to Fiorito and his literary production in the last chapter.

Autobiographical works are also the preferred form of Canada-born novelist Penny Petrone. Her first two books are memoirs: *Breaking the Mould* (1995), later translated into Italian, and *Embracing Serafina* (2000). Both explore the migrant experience, providing an ethnographic⁷¹ and collective

⁷¹ In *Breaking the Mould* (1995), Petrone dedicates a chapter of her work to the linguistic features of the Italian-Canadian community: "Italo-Canadese was a special language – an amalgam of spoken dialect and working-class English that was developed by Italian immigrants in the New World [...] The new idiom was unique to the immigrant speech that was neither Italian nor English, and was as different from either language as any Italian dialect is different from standard Italian. Because each region in Italy had its own local dialect, there were many variations in the pronunciation of the idiom" (95). Besides describing its characteristics, Petrone provides the reader with a sampling of this idiom with a trilingual (English/Italiane/Italian) brief dictionary.

account of the life of Italians in Canada starting from her personal knowledge. Her first volume recounts “what it was like growing up in Port Arthur, as the daughter of Italian immigrants, pulled in one direction by my parents’ insistence on Old World traditions and in the opposite direction by a dominant society that was xenophobic and WASP” (2000, 7). In her second memoir, instead, she recounts all the travelling she did as an adult, looking for “the Serafina⁷² within the Penny” (8), her own “quest for my true identity, my long journey that enabled Penny to accept Serafina, so long silenced. To embrace my Italianness without shame, to embrace Serafina” (idem).

Besides Petrone’s autobiographical works, towards the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s there appears an increase in the voices of Italian-Canadian women: among the most relevant representatives are Connie Guzzo-McParland – the author of the nostalgic immigrant novella *The Girls of Piazza D’Amore* (2013), now President and Chief Administrator of Guernica Editions – and Licia Canton, the editor-in-chief of *Accenti* – a magazine dedicated to Italian-Canadian culture – and the author of the collection of short stories *Almond Wine and Fertility* (2008).

This strong female collective voice is also proven by the numerous collections dedicated to the women of Italian-Canadian literature. One example is the volume *Pillars of Lace* edited by Marisa De Franceschi, an anthology of the most important Italian-Canadian voices as of 1998. Besides the previously mentioned Ardizzi, Ziolkowski, Petrone, Welch, De Santis, Ciampolini, De Franceschi, Edwards, Di Michele, Zagolin, Patriarca, Melfi, Madott, and Beccarelli-Saad, in the collection we encounter Carole David, Fiorella De Luca Calce, Isabella Colalillo-Katz and Concetta Principe.

More recently, the collection *Mamma Mia! Good Italian Girls talk Back!* (2004) edited by Maria Coletta McLean symbolizes a form of resistance, a way of *talking back* to their families and the traditional social roles they are assigned, for first/second/third generation Italian-Canadian women such as Calabrian-born Rosanna Battigelli, whose stories use the Italian theme and language in a stereotypical way, depicting the intergenerational conflicts among Italian-Canadian women.

Similarly, the reading group ‘The (Not So) Nice Italian Girls and Friends’, was founded by Michelle Alfano and Giovanna Riccio with the purpose of subverting the stereotype of the ‘nice Italian girl’ and brings together various cultural groups with diverse viewpoints on topics like sexuality and gender roles. Their works have been published in magazines and anthologies and revisit the theme of Italianness and migration, while providing a second-generation perspective on it.

As attested, while the migrant topic is far from being exhausted, with the turn of the century authors tend to create a more complex and multifaceted migrant discourse: bilingual Italian-English

⁷² Serafina is the real first name of the writer, a name she had always rejected, just like she had rejected her ethnic identity.

novelist, short story writer, poet and playwright Michael Mirolla (also editor-in-chief of Guernica Editions), expresses the desires and contradictions of Canadian artists of Italian origins today by analyzing the fluidity of identity as a whole; former president of publisher Quattro Books and Sicilian-born author John Calabro contributes to the spreading of a different ethnic voice in his prose and poetry that deal with family, self, memory, violence and sexuality; playwright Frank Canino revisits in English and Italian a real crime story involving an Italian immigrant; Montreal poet Carmine Starnino, whose English verses position him between a dismissal of the migrant theme and an affirmation of his ethnic origins, adds a fresh voice to the Italian-Canadian panorama.

In the last decade of the twentieth century a new group of authors appears: they represent the latest wave of Italian migration to Canada. Unlike its predecessors, the latter group moves away from the migrant theme in an attempt to distinguish itself from the traditional idea of Italian-Canadian writing that has dominated the literary scene up to that day. Divided between Italy and Canada, Milanese Corrado Paina works as a poet both in English and Italian, switching between languages depending on his intended audience: in Canada he expresses his desire to ‘fit in’ by publishing in English, while his Italian language works are published in Italy to maintain a link with the homeland.

Other contemporary authors opt for Italian as their preferred language: Italian-born Carmine Coppola writes poetry in Italian, while his verses are accompanied by a facing English translation to highlight his ethnic difference, and thematically he refuses the traditional migrant theme.

2.6. Third Generation ‘Migrants’

Last, by the end of the 1980s the first voices of the grandchildren of those Italians who moved to Canada at the beginning of the century start to emerge. For this generation of writers, their ethnic roots are far away (both geographically, and in time) from the country they were born and live in. For many of them, the desire to rediscover their origins becomes a necessity. Indeed, from the 1990s, while some first (both new and older Italians) and second-generation migrant writers move away from the typical migrant discourse, other third-generation authors return to it, exploring in writing their nostalgic longing for a place and a time they have not inhabited.

Darlene Madott, for instance, first reconnects with the oral tradition of her grandparents with her collection of short stories *Bottled Roses* (1985), then explores the Italian-Canadian migrant experience in *Mazilli’s shoes* (1997), while in the most recent *Making Olives and other Family Secrets – Ripasso* (2014) she revisits (for a second time after the original 2008 volume) the land of her grandparents.

Similarly, Peter Oliva plunges back into his Italian roots in the Calabria region – his grandparents were one of the many Calabrian families that moved to Canada to work in the coalmines – in his *Drowning in Darkness* (1993): his first novel portrays the lives of Calabrian coal miners in the mountains of Alberta, exploring the economic and cultural motivations that pushed them to emigrate.

Journalist and writer Dominique De Pasquale, the grandson of Sicilians who arrived in Canada at the beginning of the XX century, is known for his French-language *théâtre engagé* and his involvement with the nationalist movement of Québec. While not specifically dealing with Italian-Canadianness, his reflections on society and the rebellion against the established structures “corresponded to the quest for identity pursued by all of us as a collectivity”; more specifically, he admits: “the people I put into my plays were acquaintances of mine and who were immigrants mainly or immigrants’ sons” (Caccia 1998, 176-177).

To conclude, it is worth mentioning the presence of other writers and editors that work on the topic at the turn of the century; they include: Delia De Santis and Venera Fazio, editors of the anthologies *Sweet Lemons: Writings with a Sicilian Accent* (2004), *Writing Beyond History* (2006), *Strange Peregrinations* (2007), and *Sweet Lemons 2: International Writings with a Sicilian Accent* (2010), William Anselmi – *Mediating Culture* (1994), *Elusive Margins* (1998), and *Happy Slaves* (2005) – and Elettra Bedon.

2.7. Conclusions: Generational Continuities and Discontinuities

Each and every migrant experience depicted by Italian-Canadian works differs not only in the time when and place where the journey took place, but also in the way it shapes the collective migrant discourse. The narratives introduced above present similarities, but also substantial differences, inasmuch as they stand for personal accounts of family histories and individual ways of dealing with the process of relocating and the feeling of *deracination* originating from it.

There is a direct correspondence between the waves of Italian immigration to Canada and the different clusters of works created by this ethnic group. However, their literary outcomes are also ascribable to different variables such as: the age at the time of migration (some of the writers arrived in Canada as children, while others as adults) as well as the epoch in which the move took place (migrants today may perceive the journey and the integration differently from the previous generations⁷³), the

⁷³ Often, thanks to today’s means of communication, migrants arrive at their destination having heard, read or seen information about the country that will host them; moreover, the networks of solidarity and socialisation in place, the

temporary or permanent nature of the move (some did not intend to stay in the new continent), the im/possibility of visits to the homeland (the theme of the return to an idealized Italy is common among them), the reasons for and the degree of choice in leaving the place of origin (some did not have any other choice and their narratives express the bitterness of having been forced to abandon the home country) and, last, the degree of difference between the country of departure and that of arrival (the shock of the arrival and the comparison between the two countries is also a very common element in these narratives). Collectively, nevertheless, these writers aim to bridge the past and present, the *here* (Canada) and the *there* (Canada).

Summarizing, the very first group of Italian-Canadians to be known as writers is composed by men and women who arrived in Canada only on a temporary or seasonal basis, as adults, and often with a relatively high level of education: they were journalists, teachers, men of the church. They write *exploration literature* to recount the experience of (temporary) emigration, often in Italian and addressing their compatriots in the homeland. Among them: Francesco Giuseppe Bressani in the 1600s, Liborio Lattoni and Anna Moroni Parken in the 1800s.

A stronger sense of *Italianità* becomes evident in the second phase of Italian writing in Canada, coincidental to the period in between the Wars, of which *Ville sans femmes/Città senza donne* (1945/1946) by Duliani is emblematic. In this phase, many writers, like Duliani himself, are *scrittori-emigranti* (Stellin 2006). The autobiographical component is strong and evident. The authors, in fact, engage their readers in a pact with which they offer a “*récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité*” (Lejeune 1975, 14). While often these works presented fictional elements, their accounts were mostly as close-to-the-truth as they could be, their aim being that of relating to fellow Italians in Canada their experience: they were the voice of a community, hence the choice of the Italian language but Canadian publishers.

After World War II, the removal of the ban on Italian immigration meant a steep increase in immigration from Italy and, thus, in the number of writers of Italian origin. The majority of works of that time recount the difficulties of adapting to the New World, the sense of alienation experienced by migrants, and the negative effects war had on the Italian community. Frequently, but not always⁷⁴, these writers were *emigranti-scrittori*: men and women who had little education and whose occupations

presence of conationals, and the possibility of constant ‘virtual’ contacts with and returns to the homeland help reducing the feeling of uprooting.

⁷⁴ Giose Rimanelli and Pietro Corsi both represent the case of *scrittori-emigranti*, two Italian migrants who had already published works of literature before moving to Canada.

in the native land were not in the literary field. Their writings echo the attachment to the oral traditions of the past generations – hence, the elevated occurrence of poets. Most of them write in Italian and share their sense of disappointment and their feelings of being discriminated for their ethnic origin with those who can understand them. Italian is intended

as a third pole, as the language that breaks the duality of Canada and represents all other languages and identities that are excluded from official communications [...] Italian is a provocation to declare that the best way to reach the others is to do it through language.⁷⁵

(Tassinari 1993, 10-11; my translation)

Some of these Italian-language works are published in Italy, in an attempt to communicate the reality of migration to the compatriots in Italy. It is interesting to notice, at this time, the appearance of *Italiense* (such as in the works of Corsi and Rimanelli): a language, an ethnic *koiné*, an *ethnolect* (Danesi 1985) spoken by the majority of immigrant in their daily lives, combining Italian and English or Italian and French – in such case, *italianese* is most commonly used (Villalta 2010), which “ties its speakers to a new Canadian reality, while at the same time allowing them to maintain a link to their Italian identity”. This *ethnic koiné*, which echoes a “‘hybrid ethnicity’—a kind of ‘Canadianized Italianicity’” (100), is

[...] essentially the language of origin which, through protracted contact with the culturally-dominant language (e.g. English), and through isolation from its natural psycho-communicative setting, has altered its lexical repertoire by borrowing and adapting words from the dominant language.

(Danesi 1987, 115)

The literary use of this ethnic *koiné* witnesses the voice of the Italian community in Canada.

Among the most illustrative migrant saga of this period is Maria Ardizzi’s trilogy *Il Ciclo degli emigranti*. Whether autobiographical (Grohovaz’s *La strada bianca*) or entirely fictional (Corsi’s *La giobba*), migration is no longer depicted as a personal experience, but rather as a collective experience, one that affects families, but also the entire post-war Italian community in Canada. The nostalgic element is strong; the desire to go back to the land of origin – a return to an idyllic place and time – starts appearing in these narratives. This longing for a return home is often due to the disappointment of migration, the obstacles and hardships migrants had to face in the new world, the difficulty in integrating and being constantly reminded of their otherness.

The late 1970s see the emergence of a new group of Italian-Canadian writers: the children of the first generation of immigrants, who were either born in Canada or arrived in Canada as children

⁷⁵ “L’italiano come terzo polo, come lingua che rompe la dualità in Canada e rappresenta tutte le altre lingue, identità, escluse dalla comunicazione ufficiale [...] L’italiano è una provocazione per dire che il modo migliore per raggiungere gli altri è di farlo attraverso la lingua”.

(*generation 1.5*), and received an education in the new country. Unlike the first Italian-Canadian writers who addressed the community of fellow Italian migrants (or Italians in Italy who were considering migration as an option to post-War Italy), the new generation wants to reach a wider audience and ensure they integrate in the Canadian literary circles.

For these reasons, and trying to avoid the stereotypes that circulated around the Italian community and its literature, most of them choose to address their Canadian readers in their languages, while others experiment and write in the three languages in order to testify to the impossibility of the ethnic writer to live in one language. However, they avoid *Italiane* – a language that was heard at home but considered inappropriate in writing by a generation of authors who was now acquainted with the works of canonical Italian literature – which is only contemplated to reproduce the typical conversations within Italian-Canadian families or neighbourhoods.

The study of Italian in school by the children and grandchildren of the first generation immigrants has also contributed to a standardization effect. As the offspring of the immigrants bring home an academic, literary form of Italian, the inevitable consequence is that of dialect leveling.

(Danesi 1985, 100)

This does not indicate a rejection of the linguistic heritage: standard Italian appears in the novels, poems, and theatre works in the form of occasional words or sentences. According to Pivato (2014), aesthetics – the attractive sound and the decorative style of the Italian language – is one of the main reasons for the inclusion of Italian in the works of second generation Italian-Canadian authors.

The linguistic and thematic levels of this group show a strong regionalism. Many works cherish a language or souvenirs of Italy that were brought with them by their parents; these linguistic and cultural elements were indeed Italian, but even more specifically local: the many regional food references found in Nino Ricci's works or Mary Melfi's recipes in *Italy Revisited*, Caterina Edwards's Venice memories, the many Friulan poets and their verses in dialect, etc.

Thematically, the migrant element is still present and it is developed in more elaborate terms and under the form of fictional accounts. The narratives produced by the so-called *Generation 1.5* stage inter-generational conflicts, the incompatibility between *la via vecchia* and *la via nuova*. For this reason, family becomes a central focus, representing the only tie with (an allegory of) the motherland: the strong motherly figure of Cristina in *Lives of the Saints* by Nino Ricci, the self-sacrificing Assunta Barone in *Black Madonna* by Frank Paci, the hot-tempered father Dusty in *The Closer We Are to Dying* by Joe Fiorito, and the beloved cousin Marco in *The Lion's Mouth* by Caterina Edwards, to name a few.

Moreover, many narratives explore the difficulty of accepting the preset gender roles (legacy of the Old World), such as in the award-winning feminist writings by Carole David, Bianca Zagolin, and

Tiziana Beccarelli-Saad's short stories. This period also sees coincidentally the emergence of a great number of female writers (di Michele, De Franceschi, Patriarca, Melfi, Edwards, etc.) and the increasing importance of female characters within Italian-Canadian narratives (Paci's works aptly question the traditional role of women in patriarchal Italian families).

This period sees the appearance of theatre as a literary form to explore the political aspects of the ethnic issue. Such is the case of Micone, Nardi, Rossi and De Pasquale (who demonstrate the liveliness of the Montrealese scene for Italian-Canadian literature) and their *théâtre engagé*: the stage becomes the place to give voice to the silenced migrants. This is also the case of poetry, the literary form in which the linguistic experimentation reaches its peak: from Micone's own French inflected by Anglicisms and Italianism (both at the level of lexis and syntax)⁷⁶, to the heterolingual poems and self-translations of D'Alfonso, Salvatore and Dore Michelut who portray the impossibility of the ethnic living and writing within the borders of one given language.

1986 represents a turning point: the foundation of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers brought the group to the forefront. At that point, the migrant experience has given rise to two different attitudes, and two related types of works: those who initially felt the need to come to terms with the migrant experience now often stopped writing, as if the 'mourning' process was the only reason for their art. Others, instead, while still considering writing as a 'catharsis', moved on to other topics or to different ways of approaching the theme. At this time, narratives explore discourses around the idea of community and belonging, family ties and values (the patriarchal role and the machismo often perpetuated by husbands), the intergenerational conflicts born from the rejection of traditional values and lifestyles, the questioning of one's own identity (perceived as fragmented between culture and heritages) and the stark contrast between the old and the new world.

The voices that represent the late Twentieth century Italian-Canadian literature are those of the second and third-generation Italian-Canadians. Some of them have little or no knowledge of Italian; for them, the study of this language (and often the first visit to the country of origin) has become a personal challenge connected to the voyage into the roots and the past. The same interest is the driving force behind their works of literature: writing is a way to explore ethnicity, as for Darlene Madott.

For most, the primary writing languages are English and/or French, languages they speak at home

⁷⁶ As Micone states in an interview with Fulvio Caccia apropos of language: "The quest for a level of language my characters would speak was a long and arduous one. The Quebecois of Italian origin don't have a language of their own yet [...] What I finally did was to opt for a popular level of language but not *joual* [...] I also wanted there to be an English and Italian presence in the dialogues in order to give a better idea of what the characters live through in their daily lives" (Caccia 1998, 191; translated by Daniel Sloate).

and in which they were educated. Moving away from first-person accounts of migration, the new generations meditate on the feeling of not belonging fully to any particular culture, while also exploring what makes their identity at once singular and plural.

Besides the first and second-generation writers who are still active, Italian-Canadian writing at the beginning of the new millennium sees the converging of, on the one hand, third-generation writers whose works emphasize their ethnic origin (especially in terms of themes chosen, among which the return to Italy is a standard feature) and, on the other, the newcomers (such as Santateresa and Starnino) who avoid the (traditional) migrant issues, while their *Italianness* still seeps through their verses, regardless of the language these are written in.

3. The Return

Revenir, depuis Ulysse jusqu'à Heidegger, c'est toujours rentrer à la maison, image de soi même, image de l'être qui ayant voyagé vers son propre langage, en vient à retrouver son propre silence [...] La passion du retour est la passion pour un commencement qui voudrait effacer la faute de l'exil, ce péché par lequel on a manqué ou fait défaut au pays.

(Nepveu 1995, 105)

Starting from the 1970s in Canada we bear witness to a double tendency: on the one hand, a sharp decline in Italian immigration due to the restrictions in the Canadian migration policy and, on the other, a certain return migration to Italy. 20% of migrants returned to Italy between 1916 and 1942 and only 10% between 1946 and 1971, but in the 1972-80 the percentage of return trips to Italy increased to a soaring 80% (Jansen 1988). Among these returnees, however, only some resettled in Italy permanently, while others only returned temporarily to revisit their land of origin.

Italian-Canadian literature of the time, which in the 1980s was in its most thriving period, did not fail to depict this *passion du retour* which, nevertheless, appeared even in the earliest *pioneer memoirs* of Italians in Canada. Despite its ubiquitous presence, the theme has been analyzed in detail only in two relatively brief articles by scholars Joseph Pivato and Pierre Nepveu, with reference to the Anglophone and Francophone Italian-Canadian writers, respectively. In his "The Return Journey in Italian-Canadian Literature" (1985), Pivato describes the journey to the ancestral home as an "obsession in the Italian-Canadian imagination" (170): the scholar understands this return as a journey to rediscover the self and to find a resolution for the conflict between Old and New World, which often results in the

disappointment of discovering that the Italy that was idealized no longer exists.

While underlining that the return journey is far from being exclusive to Italian-Canadian literature – or to the Italian authors in Quebec specifically analyzed in his essay “La Passion du retour: Écritures italiennes au Québec” (1996) – Pierre Nepveu interprets the return home as a passion that pushes the migrant to return to the ‘place’ where everything started, in an attempt to make amends. The return is seen as a decisive voyage inside the personal and emotional sphere, rather than a voyage in space: the return is a “retour à soi qui implique toujours un détour et un détournement”, a return to a pre-sinful state (Nepveu 1995, 106).

Susan Ireland (2004) has also highlighted the presence of this theme in writing by authors of Italian descent in Québec as part of a wider examination of the narratives of return by different ethnic groups in the Francophone province. While relying on both Pivato’s and Nepveu’s analyses, Ireland’s work differs in stressing the disenchantment of the Italian migrants’ homecoming: the impossibility to recover (return to) the Italy of their past.

All these viewpoints draw attention to (the negativity of) what precedes the journey: deracination, alienation, and displacement are common states of being among those migrant writers who seek a return to the land of origins. They confide in this journey to help them solve these conflicts; for this reason, in most cases the outcome is disappointing: having placed high hopes and aspirations in a place – not just a territory, but the cultural, familiar and emotional ties related to it – they have not seen in years (or have never seen, for second/third generations) the encounter with the promised land leads to the realization that their expectations were misplaced, aggravating their confusion. This illusory return appears in both the narratives of first and second-generation migrants regardless of the languages these are written in; at times, this fictional return corresponds to a real return of the writer him/herself to the land of origin, as explored below.

3.1. Homecomings in Italian-Canadian Literature

Between June 10 and 13, 2010, the thirteenth biennial conference of the Association of Italian Canadian writers was held in Atri, in the region Abruzzo. The title of the conference was “Writing Our Way Home”, in Italian “Il viaggio di ritorno”, highlighting that the time was ripe for these writers to reflect on the symbolism of travelling *Home*. First/second and third generation Italian-Canadian writers and scholars came together with the aim of exploring the journey home (whether real or only literary) in terms of its effects on the sense of belonging and the perception of home/homeland. *La passion du*

retour, which had been identified by scholars in the field, was now dealt with by the writers themselves. For some of them, the conference also became an occasion to revisit the land of their origin, safe in the knowledge that many would share this emotional journey.

Surprisingly, of the fifteen AICW conferences held to date (the next event will take place in the summer of 2016), only two took place in Italy: the first, at the Centre of Canadian Culture at the University of Udine in May 2004 entitled “Oltre la Storia/Beyond History/Au-delà de l’histoire” and the 2010 event discussed here. In the past 28 years, AICW conferences evolved from the initial concern on ‘what place do we occupy as an ethnic minority within multicultural Canada?’ to the necessity of going beyond/outside the Canadian borders to find a place on the world stage (starting from their country of origin, Italy). Moreover, these conferences, and in particular the latest editions, have underscored the social dynamics within the network, the presence and role of national and international agents that have contributed to the growing visibility of the group, inside and outside Canada.

In 2013, a volume containing the conference proceedings for the above event was published by Guernica bearing the same title of the conference. Featuring a wide range of topics⁷⁷, the work stresses how “‘writing home’ suggests the idea of articulating a dialogue between two cultures – those of Canada and Italy” (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 43). The opening section, entitled “Understanding Identity: Theoretical Frameworks” presents the conceptual framework and the key terms for the analysis of Italian-Canadian identity: from the way language is used as a rhetorical tool to *translate home* (Palusci), to the distinction between the notions of migration and exile and the metaphor of exodus that has been applied to migrants (Livorni), and the different ways selected Italian-Canadian works have written home (Zuccherò). The second section, which constitutes the core of the volume, is dedicated to the short stories and novel excerpts by authors of Italian origins, both Canadian and American: Darlene Madott, Nino Famà, Venera Fazio, Osvaldo Zappa, Maria Lisella, Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni, Linda Morra, Mike Dell’Acquila, Domenic Cusmano, John Calabro, Alberto Mario DeLogu, Pietri Corsi, Delia De Santis, Gil Fagiani, Frank Giorno, Marisa De Franceschi, Licia Canton and Michael Mirolla. The third section includes six essays representing as many different approaches to writing home: from mythopoiesis to interviews and translation. While the adherence to the theme is sometimes tenuous – and only few writers interpret the ‘way home’ as a ‘return to Italy’ – the collection bears witness to the state of the art of Italian-Canadian writing and its study. There is, indeed, a willingness to move away from the clichés associated to migrant writing and to support the thesis that the group is at home only when in motion.

⁷⁷ https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Assoc_of_ItalianCanadians_in_the_Arts/conversations/topics/2987

Table 3 Gianna Patriarca's *Returning* and her Italian self-translation *Ritornare*

We don't discuss the distance anymore Returning is now The other dream Not American at all Not Canadian or Italian It has lost its nationality. (Gianna Patriarca, <i>Returning</i>)	Non discutiamo più la distanza Ritornare adesso è L'altro sogno Niente affatto Americano Nè Canadese nè Italiano Ha perso la sua nazionalità (Gianna Patriarca, <i>Ritornare</i>)
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Chronologically, the first author to have conveyed a feeling of nostalgia, intended in its original Greek meaning of *nostos* 'return home' and *algos* 'pain', in her work is Anglo-Italian-Canadian Anna Moroni Parken in her account of pioneering life *Emigranti: Quattro anni al Canada* (1896). The work, which was published with an Italian publisher years after Moroni Parken's actual return to Italy, is the (fictionalized) memoir of the Moroni family and their four-year sojourn in Ontario. The initial curiosity and enthusiasm towards the new country and the anticipation for all that this pristine land may have in store them, is followed by the realization of the spatial and cultural distance between their old and new life as well as of the hardship and risks of rural life in the Canadian wilderness.

La passion du retour is ignited by the first souvenirs from home – “Yes, even from the distant Italy, the homeland of my husband and my children, gifts from my friends who never forgot us arrived”⁷⁸ (138-39; my translation), the first difficulties, and sickness. Nostalgia becomes a second illness, an invincible ‘pain of longing to return home’:

He was always sick, and nostalgia became for him like a second disease, so acute and painful that it had become invincible. Every evening he would say to our girls in a tearful voice: ‘Pray, pray to God that he help us return to Italy’ and he couldn’t talk, remember or wish anything but his Italy. ‘I want to die in my country’ was his incessant whine when he felt the worst⁷⁹.

(130; my translation)

The family starts thinking of leaving Canada: “I had gradually resigned myself to the thought of leaving Canada, indeed, to desire the return”⁸⁰(ibid). While the female protagonist seems nevertheless determined to make Canada her new home, her husband wishes to make a prompt journey back to Italy. Eventually, the whole family resigns itself to make their way back home. They first reach England, where she reconnects with her family and her own native land: “*Home sweet home, casa, dolce casa!* —

⁷⁸ “Sì, anche dalla lontana Italia, la patria di mio marito e dei miei figli, arrivarono doni delle mie amiche che non si scordarono mai di noi”.

⁷⁹ “Egli era sempre malato, e la nostalgia era in lui diventata una seconda malattia, così penosa e acuta da essere ormai, invincibile. Ogni sera egli diceva alle bambine con voce di pianto: 'Pregate, pregate Dio che ci faccia tornare in Italia' e non sapeva più parlare, ricordare e desiderare che la sua Italia. 'Voglio morire nel mio paese' era il suo incessante lamento quando più si sentiva male”.

⁸⁰ “Io avevo finito a poco a poco a rassegnarmi al pensiero d’abbandonare il Canada, anzi, a desiderare il ritorno”.

fra piaceri e palazzi — noi vaghiamo inutilmente – per umile che sia – non c'è luogo che somigli a casa nostra”⁸¹ (138).

A few weeks later, the Moronis reach Italy, where they are welcomed by the familiar sound of the Italian language, which becomes a powerful symbol of the reconciliation with the motherland: “Finally, here is Italy! How exciting it is, especially for my husband, to hear again the native dialect in Chiasso!”⁸² (139-140). Moroni Parken does not see the return as a defeat, but rather as the gratifying conclusion of a challenging chapter of her life.

A different perspective on the migrant's return home is offered by Elena Maccaferri Randaccio, in her *Diario di una Emigrante* (1979), published under the pseudonym of E. MacRan. Randaccio's work is by no means autobiographical; in fact, for the humble protagonist of the novel, Climene, migration is a way to escape the harshness of the life in Italy between the two World Wars – a situation Randaccio had witnessed but not experienced herself, since she came from a wealthy family. Climene never feels at home in Canada and, just like the male protagonist of Moroni Parken's work, her nostalgia is somatised: “In those ten years we thought of one thing: return to Italy. I held on to that thought like a sickness”⁸³ (1999, 82; translated by Maria Colfer Phillips). Ultimately, after 23 years, the protagonist is given the chance to heal and, together with her family, she returns to the native land. The reunion does not happen as imagined: confronted with a reality she fails to accept, she realizes she had idealized her home country during all those years. Her first return is unsuccessful; she thus decides to migrate, once again, to her adoptive homeland Canada.

At an old age, upon the death of her husband, she returns to Italy for a second time to find serenity. Soon, however, she realizes her self-deception: while she found her roots, her displacement continues. She seeks comfort in her compatriots without finding any; sympathy can only be found in the heart of other fellow migrants in Canada, the only people who have experienced the same pain:

In Canada all the immigrants understand and can read your heart because they have been through it and they know. What they don't know is how to return and relive their childhood, through their own people who have passed away, on their own land.⁸⁴

(1999, 115-116 translated by Maria Colfer Phillips)

In her words, we perceive her disappointment and bitterness for having believed in the possibility

⁸¹ These are lyrics of the traditional song from the 19th century ‘Home Sweet, Home’ translated into Italian: “Home, sweet home! Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, be it ever so humble, there's no place like home”.

⁸² “Finalmente, ecco l'Italia! Che emozione, soprattutto per mio marito, di riudire a Chiasso il nativo dialetto!”

⁸³ “In quei dieci anni avemmo un pensiero costante: tornare in Italia. Io, questo pensiero, lo tenevo dentro di me come una malattia” (MacRan 1979, 79).

⁸⁴ “In Canada tutti gli emigranti sanno vedere e ti leggono il cuore perché hanno provato e sanno. Quello che non sanno è ritornare e rivivere, ritornare bambini, tra la propria gente morta, sulla terra propria” (MacRan 1979: 111).

of a return to the origin (signifying here both childhood bliss and the land where her roots lay). In her enlightenment, we read the writer's own pessimism about the idea of a return to Italy, originating from her own experience. Maccaferri Randaccio wrote this novel in Italian and published it in Italy – under a pseudonym as “a deliberate means she employed to protect her privacy” (Pivato 1996, 228) – decades after her own migration to Canada. Her linguistic choice underlines her (like Moroni Parken's) separation from the receiving Canadian society and an attempt to write back to her own native country. As Pivato (1996) asserts, however:

for decades the practitioners of *Italianistica* had ignored her and her work, and now some of these people doubted her very existence. From the perspective of the Italian literary institution Randaccio did not exist. She was writing outside Italy and did not have any recognition either from the writers' groups or from the academy.

(228)

Unlike Moroni Parken, Maccaferri Randaccio never made her final return to Italy and she died in Montreal at the age of 67; since she managed to protect her privacy, it is difficult to ascertain whether the writer had ever made a journey back to the native land prior to her death.

Other times, the fictional return coincides with the actual return of the writer, such as in the case of Giose Rimanelli. He was a *scrittore-emigrante* whose first novel *Tiro al piccione* was written in 1945, published by the major Milan-based publishing house Mondadori in 1953, and later transposed into the homonymous film by director Giuliano Montaldo in 1961. In 1958 Rimanelli wrote *Biglietto di Terza*: a partly-autobiographical/partly-fictional novel, published in Milan after his repatriation, narrating his ten-month stay in Canada in the 1950s and the harsh reality of a great number of Italian migrants in Montreal and the Italian-Canadian community upon which they rely.

The book closes with his homecoming, because “in order to remain in this land, you must have broken all the bridges with the past, and behind you, on your distant shores, you must have no voice calling you. Otherwise, Canada could become your madness”⁸⁵ (1958, 219; my translation). Rimanelli interprets nostalgia as sickness, so incurable as to become madness; this sense of unease is caused by the ties with the homeland that keep pulling migrants back. Rimanelli's bonds with Italy were, indeed, too strong to allow him to remain serenely abroad and he decides to leave Canada and recount his painful experience in his native language to warn his compatriots about the dangers of migration.

Because of the harsh conditions Italian migrants had to live in during these years, post-war literature by Italians in Canada – mostly written in Italian – shows a strong attachment to the land of

⁸⁵ “Per restare in questa terra devi aver rotto i ponti col passato, e alle tue spalle, sulle tue rive lontane, non devi avere più nessuna voce che ti chiami. Diversamente il Canada potrebbe diventare la tua pazzia”.

origin, and a desire to come back to an romanticized condition prior to emigration. Such is also the case of Gianni Grohovaz, who preserved and conveyed in writing his deep attachment to the Italian land, specifically to the Istrian region – an affection that the poet shows in his use of Fiuman dialect. Grohovaz was born and raised in Fiume, a city in the Istrian region that after the end of WWII became part of Croatia causing many of its inhabitants to be persecuted and deported. For this reason, his poems resound with the echo of nostalgia for a lost home and a desire to return, as in the poem entitled *Quando me meto a scriver queste robe*:

Quando me meto a scriver queste robe
 Non lassario mai più
 Cascar la pena,
 Eco perché difizile xe ciuder
 Quest'umile pensiero a Fiume mia...
 Ritorneremo ancora nel Quarnero?
 Non xe soltanto una speranza magra
 Ma la certeza de chi crede sempre
 Che tuto quell che noi butemo in aria
 Deve tornar per forza su la tera.⁸⁶

(Pivato 1998, 34)

The myth of a return to Quarnero, his native land, clashes with the reality of the impossibility of a genuine homecoming. The places he knew and remembers from his youth have changed immensely: his city Fiume is now the Croatian Rijeka. The only alternative is a *ritorno col pensiero*, as the title of a poem suggests: a return to the hometown in one's thoughts or, in writing, in his case. Forever displaced from a city that no longer is what it used to be, "[o]nly through literature is a genuine return possible for the exiled writer" (Jin 2008, 21).

Among post-war authors who chose to pursue their writing career in Italian the myth of the return is the strongest. One could argue that the reason for this *passion du retour* is to be attributed to the fact that many of them initially left Italy temporarily. For Maria Ardizzi, the theme of the return is more than just an occasional occurrence but, rather, a fixation. In her first four works – *Made in Italy* (1982), *Il sapore agro della mia terra* (1984), *La buona America* (1987) and *Tra le colline e al di là del mare* (1990) – the protagonists Nora, Sara, Pietro and Anna, respectively, try to find the answer to their many questions in a return journey to their Abruzzese village. The homecoming is a moment of epiphany, an occasion to compare two temporal (the present and the past) and spatial dimensions (the *here* and the *there*) constantly present in the immigrant's mind, leading to the realization of the dichotomy between

⁸⁶ When I begin to write about these things/ I can no longer/put the pen down/ This is why it is difficult to stop/ This humble thought about my Fiume... Will we ever return to Quarnero?/ This is not just meager hope/ but the certainty of those who always believe/ That what we throw up in the air/ must come back down to the ground (My translation).

the reality and the idealization of their roots and cultural systems.

All of the characters leave their village behind, feeling hopeful and with an unrealistic image of the life waiting for them on the other shore, but never manage to feel at home in the new country. They entrust all their hopes to another journey: the Italian homecoming. Such is the case of Nora Moratti in *Made in Italy*⁸⁷, who had followed her husband Vanni to Canada “with the surprise and curiosity with which others had accepted it” and with a “conviction that every part of the world could be mine too and that elsewhere people would not be better or worse than those known to us” that “enabled me not to feel any sense of loss and detachment” (Ardizzi 1999, 29; translated by Anna Maria Castrilli).

When in Toronto, however, the protagonist is tormented by nostalgia for both her native village and a condition prior to migration. The tragic condition of the migrants is the impossibility of achieving a real return home: Vanni, Nora’s husband, dies while on his first trip to Italy, lonely and in the poverty of his home village, making Nora understand the illusion of ‘going back home’.

A similar perspective is offered in *Il Sapore Agro della Mia Terra* (1984), *La Buona America* (1987), and *Tra le Colline e di là dal Mare* (1990) in which the three protagonists – now boasting a rewarding career and financial stability in Canada – return to Italy as adults in a desire to return to the simplicity of their youth and to find a resolution to the conflicts caused by their feeling alienated (and often, as in the case of Pietro in *La buona America*, to show off their success and demonstrate that the sacrifices of migration eventually paid off). All the narratives, like in Ardizzi’s first novel in which she created a pattern for the works that followed, end with the protagonist’s second migration back to their new home and the resignation to accept their rootless condition.

The *passion du retour* that affects the protagonists of the novels by Italian-Canadian authors mirrors what was happening in the 1970s, when following the economic regrowth of Italy many emigrants took the opportunity to return home. Demographic statistics show that in the 1980s alone, more than 10,000 Italian ‘returnees’ fulfilled their dream of going home (Bagnell 1989).⁸⁸ The 1980s, thus, see a wave of returnees to Italy: both in fiction and in reality.

Among the migrants who returned to Italy at that time is Pier Giorgio Di Cicco (1978a), who asserts:

In 1974 I returned to Italy for the first time in twenty-odd years. I went, biased against a legacy that had made growing up in North America a difficult but not impossible chore (or so I thought). I went out of curiosity, and came back to Canada conscious of the fact that I had been a man

⁸⁷ The whole novel is a return journey the past: the 68-year old woman’s meditation on her immigration to Canada and her impossibility to adjust to the North American way of life.

⁸⁸ However, some of them were only visitors. By then, travelling between North America and Europe had become easier and cheaper, thanks to the introduction of non-stop air travel between the two continents in the 1960s.

without a country for most of my life.

(9)

The ‘founding father’ of Italian-Canadian literature admits having snubbed his heritage and his native country believing that they were the source of his feeling of inadequacy. Indeed, he believes that *generation 1.5* (and second generation) migrant writers like him “will find it harder to go back to Italy than their parents did” because “[t]hey belong and do not belong” (10). The tension that pervades Italian-Canadian works is a mirror of this duality: their desire to belong to the place they live in and yet, the longing for a return to the country of origin and to an idyllic state it symbolizes.

This is the case, for example, of the short poems in Friulan by Ermanno Bulfon *Un Friûl vivût in Canada* (1977): the hope and desire to reconstruct a Friulan culture in the heart of Canada, and the pain of leaving the idealized region of origin are strong in his verses, as the romanticized titles of his poems suggest: *La Mé Cjase* (My house), *Il Mé Païs* (my town), *Friûl di Primevere* (Friuli in Springtime), and *L'emigrant* (the emigrant).

Whether or not this idyllic state is achieved after the return to the ancestral homeland, this voyage has an effect on the migrant writer and his works. Di Cicco’s visit to Italy precedes the publication of his collections of poems; coincidentally, many of his early works deal with his feeling of alienation and being *The Man Without a Country* as the title of an earlier poem dedicated to Italy recalls:

I found you out by what I could not love;
Patched myself up with
What I hardly knew of you, Italia.

(“Man Without a Country” in *A Burning Patience* 1978b, 25)

As a result of the discovery of his land of origin, Di Cicco looks at poetry as a way to deal with his personal conflicts and to ask for forgiveness from a motherland that he, involuntarily, abandoned.

Italia bella; I return to you.
There is no question of lateness
For I was taken from you and cannot
Remember the parting.

(ibid.)

Words become a *memento d'Italia*, as the title of one of his poems suggests, and entire sections are dedicated to his Italian journey, such as in the collection *The Circular Dark* (1977), where he describes his (physical) reconnection to the Italian soil:

Italy, 1974 — nella campagna— couched between two hills
in the circular dark I lay in the summer cool.
Not two steps from the house
the stars were wincing like sun on wet shoals.
I heard the wind go down the garden

and fumble in the dark green and come back,
its hands in everything.
In far orchards I heard crickets measure out
the dark earth.
The landscape flowed from me,
spilled over where I touched it.
The earth was mine [...]

(34)

The epiphany caused by the return to the ancestral land of origin, is similarly recounted by Frank Paci in an interview with Minni (1985):

In 1972, twenty years after my family had emigrated, I went back to Italy – my first and only trip back so far. I didn't realize it at the time, but this trip was the catalyst that finally made me see that I had to come to terms with my Italian background before I could write about anything else.

(6)

The journey back to the native land triggers his artistic production: following this trip, Paci started working on his first novel, *The Italians*, the first English language novel to deal with the migrant experience of Italians in Canada, which would be published 6 years later. Despite having already written five novels before his first return trip to Italy, his attempts at publishing them proved unfruitful. He then felt that he had to start over again, not only as a writer but as a migrant.

It goes without saying that Canadians of Italian descent should look overseas to get a more complete sense of their identities. Everyone is a historical creature and must look for his identity in the events that have shaped him.

(7)

As a writer, thus, the homeland to which Paci returns symbolizes the muse, the source of inspiration for his artistic birth; as a human being, instead, the journey homeward (also, the past) represents the key to understanding his fragmented identity – the “emotional fabric of one's being” (8).

In *The Italians*, but also in other works such as *Black Madonna* or in *Italian Shoes*, fiction is inseparable from the writer's own experience. Indeed, as Pivato (2003) attests: “Frank Paci has spent a life time exploring these differences and writing about us, Canadians with diverse cultural backgrounds. His novels are testaments of this devotion to the art of fiction and the reality of life” (17).

In all of these novels, the younger generations (like the writer himself) return to the land of origin in order to reconcile *la via vecchia*, the past and its cultural and family ties, and *la via nuova*, represented by Canada and the present. Drawing from his own experience, Paci's novels portray the return as a voyage that may lead to a metaphorical rebirth that follows the death caused by exile.

The voyage, in other words, is the representation of the experience of the individuals in their movement towards another world. And it constitutes the cultural motivation which founds this reality. For on a symbolic level, emigration in rural societies is a variant or a version of the

passing away, of the journey of the deceased.

(Pitto 1996, 127)

The juxtaposition of death/exile and rebirth/return is portrayed in the myriad of emptied and wrecked villages of the childhood of many of these authors/characters. Micone's description of the village to which father and son return after so many years in *Déjà l'agonie* is a metaphor of the loss caused by migration: "Tu rêves, papa. Il n'y a personne ici. Je commence à croire que ce n'est même pas ton village!" (1988, 23). The village to which Aurora returns in Bianca Zagolin's *Une femme à la fenêtre* (1988) is but a ghost of what it used to be: "le village tout entier s'était transformé en un grand cimetière" (136). Likewise, in *Vers l'Amérique* (1988) Tiziana Beccarelli-Saad describes the return to the ancestral village of the protagonist Teresa as a journey back in time: "le temps, ici, n'a rien changé. Les visages à l'air vieux, comme avant. La maison paternelle est fermée. Tous les volets bien clos [...] Tout est en ruine" (11-12).

The centrality of the homecoming to Italian-Canadian migrant writing is, however, best exemplified by the works of Ontario-born Nino Ricci. He had the chance to return to his family's land of origin for the first time as a 12 year old, and in the 1980s he returned and spent one year as a student at the University of Florence. This is the trip that ignited the *passion du retour* described in his triptych of works: *Lives of the Saints* (1990), *In a Glass House* (1993) and *Where She Has Gone* (1997), the *bildungsroman* in three chapters centered on the protagonist Vittorio Innocente, the son of Italian immigrants to Canada. In the trilogy, nostalgia is the illness that affects most characters, like those migrants who leave their homeland and often never return.

In Valle del Sole the men had long been migrants, to the north, to Buenos Aires, to New York, every year weighing their options [...] with the promise of at least a yearly return, or to reckon on an absence of years or a lifetime, and cross the sea.

(Ricci 1990, 165)

This is the case of Vittorio's mother, who dies at sea on their way to Canada, leaving her journey uncompleted, and ruling out any chance for her to return to the land of birth, even after death (her body is thrown overboard and into the Atlantic). His father suffers a similar fate, dying on Canadian soil without having seen his native Italy since leaving it in search of a better future, years before. His *passion du retour* was the strongest:

[t]here was a palpable warmth that came through when my father spoke about Italy – he grew almost voluble then, almost expansive, a nostalgia I'd seldom seen in him, that didn't fit the image I'd somehow developed of his having left Italy coldly, without remorse.

(Ricci 1993, 287)

It will be Vittorio, the youngest of the family and the one migration was 'imposed' upon, to fulfil

the migrant's dream and embark on a journey to the land of origins. But while the return to *Valle del Sole* is finally accomplished, the reality of homecoming is far from idyllic: "I kept expecting some surge of memory to take me over but felt only the same disjunction, the sense that my memory was being not so much stirred as stripped away", Vittorio avows (Ricci 1997, 185).

The journey to the motherland leaves him with a sense of homelessness; he is now ready to close the circle: "[m]y second departure from Valle del Sole, twenty years after the first, felt more final," Vittorio says, "I was on my own again without destination or hopes, with no place left now to go home (Ricci 1997, 302). For him, the desire to return – the *passion du retour*, the myth of being able to resolve the inner conflicts and appease the disrupted relationships by visiting the place of origins proves unsuccessful. His return to Italy alienates him even further from his country of birth, leaving him looking for a place to call home.

In an interview with Alberto Lunati for the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* coinciding with the publication of the Italian translation of the trilogy, Nino Ricci defines his work as a return journey to the paradisiacal origins that, like for the protagonist, remains unfulfilled:

AL: "The dominant theme of your work is that of the journey, regarded as a search. A search that, even in the last pages of the trilogy, seems destined to be never-ending..."

NR: "A search that, I won't hide it, I love to compare to that of the lost paradise. For the migrant, that paradise is the country in which he/she arrives, the hope of being able to leave the past behind, but then, after decades, to discover that the same heaven is there, where his/her true origins are. Somehow, we all try to go back to what seems to be a kind of lost innocence. But this journey, this search, never ends ... "

AL: "Is there any hope of returning to this paradise, as suggested by the title of the trilogy?"

NR: "Through memory, writing, sometimes. [...] But there is no escape, no way you can go back and the search for paradise is a never ending one." (My translation)⁸⁹

Ricci also believes that a genuine return to the land of origin is only possible in literature.

Similarly, Genni Gunn explores the idea of the literary eye-opening return journey to the motherland in her *Solitaria* (2010): a novel about loss, abandonment, and search for identity, that allows Gunn to showcase her extensive knowledge of her native country, to which she has often

⁸⁹ AL: "Il tema dominante della sua opera è quello del viaggio, inteso come ricerca. Una ricerca che, anche nelle ultime pagine della trilogia, sembra destinata a non finire mai..."

NR: "Una ricerca che, non lo nascondo, amo paragonare a quella del paradiso perduto. Per l'emigrante, quel paradiso è il paese nel quale arriva, nella speranza di potersi lasciare alle spalle il passato, salvo poi, dopo decenni, scoprire che quello stesso paradiso si trova là dove sono le sue vere origini. E in qualche modo, noi tutti cerchiamo di ritornare a quella che ci sembra essere una sorta di innocenza perduta. Ma questo viaggio, questa ricerca, non ha mai fine..."

AL: "C'è una qualche speranza di ritornare a questo paradiso, come sembra suggerire lo stesso titolo della trilogia?"

NR: "Attraverso la memoria, la scrittura, talvolta. [...] Ma non c'è scampo, non si può in nessun modo tornare indietro e quella del paradiso è una ricerca senza fine..."

See: <http://www.fazieditore.it/Recensioni.aspx?libro=390#id2922>

travelled. The temporal and spatial journey into the homeland becomes a painful and unsettling experience. This is especially true for the protagonist, the second-generation Italian-Canadian David who finds himself uprooted and lost in the land of origin. For him, the homecoming embodies the rediscovery of the past and, consequently, the truth about one's own identity.

Indeed, in Gunn's novel, all migrant protagonists have to surrender to the impossibility of an authentic return home: the struggle of rediscovering a forgotten language (incommunicability is one of the issues that hinders a gratifying homecoming for many migrants) – "his tongue awkward around Italian words" (32), or a distant land – "[h]e has no sense of Italy as a motherland or fatherland, although he spent many summers here as a child" (27).

In the Foreword to her collection of travel essays/memoirs *Tracks*, Gunn emphasizes how, among her travels, the return to Italy holds a special significance:

To Italy, I travel often, because Italy, for me, is a search: a return to the echoes of childhood – both familiar and foreign – given that my parents, sister and I never lived together in a house in Italy. A search, perhaps, for a mythical *home* – that ghost town I populate with the memories of those who knew me then, their version of me more palpable than my version of myself. Each return leads me to a slightly altered place, a *fata morgana* of hilltop towns and cliffs toppling into the sea, of experiences distorted and magnified, unlike the ones fixed inside the snow-globe of memory. All/none of Italy is home.

(Gunn 2013, 10)

Mary Melfi's literary homecoming, *Italy Revisited*, both suggests the centrality of the return topic to her autobiographical work and supports Jin's theory of the genuine return through literature (Jin 2008). Relying on her mother's memories of life in Italy, Melfi takes an unconventional approach to the journey to the motherland, which becomes a journey through her family's hi/story. It is, first, through the words of her mother to her daughter that the reader comes to understand the significance of the homecoming for the migrant:

Cara, for years I longed to return home [...] Seventeen summers, seventeen winters, seventeen Christmases I dreamt, next year, I will return to my home [...] I went back in the summer of 1974 and witnessed the might of nature. A landslide had uprooted all our trees. Nothing left of our wooded area.

(Melfi 2009, 181)

The negativity of the mother's return is portrayed through her memories of the natural disasters that occurred in her region of origin, the death and desperation they caused to those who remained. The inquisitive daughter does not trust the truthfulness of her mother's memories and believes that she is trying to justify her decision to emigrate, and defines the returnees to Italy as "the lucky ones" because "they can communicate with their grandchildren", while her mother cannot (310). Language barriers are thus seen as a byproduct of migration that only a return home would be able to bridge.

Melfi, however, had a different experience during her own return to the ancestral homeland in 1977, to which she dedicates a chapter of her memoir (coincidentally, the one dedicated to the incommunicability caused by migration). Melfi recounts how the trip was a revelatory experience that changed her perception of her own identity: “[s]uddenly, it was okay to be Italian. All that shame of having grown up as a poor immigrant was erased” (315). The journey to the *bella Italia* is liberating because, in her words, it “renewed my faith in myself” (316). I will return to this in the last chapter.

The return is also central to many of D’Alfonso’s productions. His own personal return to the land of origin is not lived as a return to the past but as a way to abandon himself to a disruptive passion.

Retourner. Non pas en arrière. Mais comme on retourne à la terre. Cette action de questionnement. Une verdure de jour. Ou de nuit. Encore un retournement. Un détournement. Laisser la langue te prendre, une passion qui fait mal. Non la passion de l’amoureux. Une passion de vision. Pas la religieuse question de l’aller. Car, après tout, où peut-on aller? Une vision d’athée et sa passion. Une sacralité de l’ici.

(D’Alfonso 1987, 64)

For D’Alfonso the idea of return is not oriented towards any specific place (the references to Italy are nonetheless present and signify a strong attachment to the land of origin), or to time. His *passion du retour* – “Une passion. La passion du retour. Mais retourner à quoi? (65) – is rather a movement inside language and between languages (hence, his self-translations) to return to the real self. A return, for D’Alfonso and for many others, which is impossible and can only happen in writing.

A similar approach to the ‘genuine homecoming in literature’ is provided by third-generation Italian-Canadian Joe Fiorito and his family memoir *The Closer We Are to Dying* (1999). Despite the symbolic importance of Fiorito’s return to Italy, which is indeed mentioned in the work, the most important voyage remains the one inside the personal and emotional sphere, in order to come to terms with both the death of his father and his own *Italianness*.

The death of the protagonist’s father, Dusty, symbolizes the impossibility of him returning to the village of origin and of reconnecting with his own Italian roots. The writer and protagonist takes this trip in lieu of his father, who never had the means during his own lifetime.

When he first became ill, before there was an urgency about his illness, in the days when the notion of a clear and inevitable end seemed somehow indecent, I went to Italy. To my grandfather's village. To Ripabottoni on the hillside. I went with a vague notion: I thought it might be possible to see something that would help my father die. I knew he was curious about his father's birthplace; but he'd never had the money to travel. There might be some clue about us in Ripa, some answer to an unposed question.

(Fiorito 1999, 262-263)

Another case of return to the land of origin of a third-generation migrant is that proposed by

Darlene Madott in her *Mazilli's shoes* (1999). The screenplay is the story of Giovanni Mazilli, an Italian man in his forties working in a shoe-making factory in Toronto who finds himself unemployed after the plant closes unexpectedly after 23 years. His unemployment marks the beginning of his adventure: he decides to fulfill the dream of making a triumphant return to his town of origin:

Twenty-three years ago, I made a promise. It was on board the Michelangelo luxury liner. I was on my way to America with my bride [...] I promised my bride: We will live again in Italy. We will be rich with our work from Canada.

(Madott 1999, 24)

Despite the disapproval of his family, Giovanni decides to make his first trip home since moving to Canada. Shoes – which also appear in the title of the play – become symbolic of this return (like in *Italian Shoes* by Paci): Giovanni takes with him an old pair of black leather shoes, “a gift from my mother. She bought these shoes with money she didn’t have. I promised her someday I’d wear them back” (31). As a result of this first trip, he decides to buy a shoe store in his native town and bring his whole family back to Italy with him: “I bought a shoe store. We’re going home [...] To Italy” (45).

His return home is unsuccessful, and his wife Maria expresses the author’s own idea of a return to the native land after a lifetime spent abroad, making him (and other migrants with the same dream) understand the hopelessness of this project:

You couldn’t love Canada because you couldn’t get over Italy, and in your arrogance, you thought all you’d have to do is return to her and she would take you back again, as if nothing had happened. It’s too late.

(112)

While Giovanni’s personal return was unsuccessful, the only return possible is his son Francesco’s, who remains in Italy because he falls in love with an Italian girl. Giovanni’s ‘defeat’ is, however not absolute. He recognizes: “I leave my blood, something of myself, here in Italy” (118).

While many are disappointed by their first trip to the land of origin, the return not being as revelatory/satisfactory as they imagined it would be, it is important to point out the different perspectives the artists/characters gain on the role of the two countries involved. For instance, Melfi’s return makes her reconsider her idea of Italy and of her own identity as Italian: “This Italy, this museum of a country, this living masterpiece made me proud” (Melfi 2009, 315).

On this topic, Quebecois writer Mario Campo describes his first visit to Italy as “interesting. When I went to visit my grandfather I practiced my Italian which I hadn’t spoken since the age of eight. I also discovered the great importance of Italy in the art world: the Renaissance [...] Coming back here was upsetting. I realized I had never felt at home in Montreal, in Quebec or even in America on the whole” (Caccia 1998, 150).

Similarly, for Amprimoz, the return to his native Rome acquires a revelatory artistic dimension; the discovery of the city's architecture is the discovery of his own body, as in the completion of an aesthetic journey into his origins:

A sky where falcons fly and fall
Where lights change and die,
A sky where the sunrise, a sodden sunset,
Welcomes my Roman return.
Over there stands Castel Sant'Angelo.
Like the loose teeth of a tortured pope
The bricks are chattering with strident sounds of long ago,
Sometimes in the ancient air
The Parthian perfume of a gone life return
And in that balm I meet
The lovers who tailored my aching skull.
Sometimes in the weary water
The Thyrsus-like taste of a distant wine returns
And in that liquid I meet
The lovers who tailored my aching bones.
Over there dreams il Colosseo.
Like the trembling hands of Roman Emperors
The walls are sleeping, holy in their pagan nightmare.
A land where water sobs and suffers
Where seeds are stranded and rare,
A land where the sun saws secular stones
Welcomes my Roman return.

(Di Cicco 1978, 32-33)

Artistic rapture also characterizes the return to the city of Rome of poet George Amabile. He first mentions his return journey in the poem dedicated to the death of his dad, 'Generation Gap', in his first collection *Blood Ties*:

You⁹⁰ had socked away
Over thirty thousand dollars
In three banks.
My share went
Into family passage from New York to *Genoa*⁹¹.

(Amabile 1972, 54)

Once again, the son is in charge of fulfilling the migrant's dream of returning in lieu of his dead father, who could never afford to make the trip, acquiring thus an emotional value. The Eternal city reappears in many of his poems, a journey that clearly sparked contrasting feelings in him: on the one hand, similarly to Amprimoz, Amabile is pleasantly overwhelmed by the beauty of the city, its artistic

⁹⁰ He pays for his trip to Italy with the inheritance money after his father's death.

⁹¹ In Italics in the original work.

and historical heritage. Its magic works as a personal revelation:

Once, in Rome, I watched a Tintoretto
Sky collect above the Piazza di Spagna.
The fountain gathered overtones
Of dusk into gorgeous foam. My life
Completed itself and I was afraid.

(Amabile 2011, 114)

Soon, the rapture vanishes and the feeling of upheaval surprises him. His attitude towards his journey changes:

And I wonder, what did I hope
To discover
By living
In Rome until spring
Uproots us again? The sheer
Extravagance of it all overwhelms me,
Spending his money
In ways that would make him writhe
In the dirt.

(32)

He realizes the futility of his plan and he feels he has betrayed the memory of his father. The negativity that pervades this extravagant plan is also reflected on the image he now has of the city, which suddenly becomes “a city of dust” (40).

It is interesting to notice both Campo’s and Amprimoz’s astonishment at becoming aware of Italy’s artistic role. Prior to a return, many Italian-Canadian authors like them do not consider Italy for its cultural significance, but simply as the ancient and mostly agricultural soil that holds their roots. This preconception influences the viewpoint of most of Italian-Canadian artists, who perceive Canada not only as their current home, but also as the land that offered them a chance to express their artistic value that would have been otherwise neglected in Italy.

As seen, the return to the homeland is more than just an occasional appearance in the works of Italian-Canadian writers (regardless of the generation they belong to). The trajectory inscribed by this return is a painful experience: the past and the land are lost, unreachable, if not nonexistent.

However, the return to Italy, is not a negative experience for everyone. For Penny Petrone, for example, the journey to Italy is a revelatory experience: “Italy had been the destination and the journey itself, the place and the process acting together as a sort of double catalyst”, a place that allows her to come to terms with who she really is, and the *Italianness* she had long rejected, and to feel less of a stranger to herself (Petrone 2000, 35).

Her (many) return trips to Italy were revelatory, and helped her come to terms with her real self:

“I had visited Italy many times, each time learning more and more about my Italian heritage, each time feeling less a stranger [...] I felt at home [...] I knew who I was. And I was at peace. Suddenly, I understood that Penny and Serafina were not mutually exclusive identities. Italy had been the destination and the journey itself, the place and the process acting together as a sort of double catalyst” (Petrone 2000, 35).

Similarly, Carole David took a trip to her grandparents’ village on the occasion of the publication in Italy of the translation of one of her works. This return to Italy had such an influence on her writing persona that, following this trip, she published a collection of poems which symbolizes a return to her Italian origins: *Terra vecchia* (2005), a sort of *carnet de voyage* in three parts in which she notes down her feelings about her return to the old land.

The third part of this brief volume is entitled *Ritorno* and is introduced by a line by fellow poet Rimanelli: “Maintenant que tu es revenue, resteras-tu?” (53). In this section David explores the effects the return had on her: “À présent, je suis une fille du Nord/ Métissée/ Les yeux en amande” (62).

However, as explained by the poet herself in an interview in Italian for a literary magazine⁹², the return journey had a deeper significance for her:

A few months before my stay in Casacalenda, a friend had warned me that the “return” would change my life. And it did. The translation of my novel in Italian allowed me to be invited to the land my mother had rejected. It was a journey of discovery and emotions, from which *Terra Vecchia* was born: a short story in verses, which I thought was the most accurate way to express the relationship between the search for the self and the work itself. [...] A journey of search and encounter in which the waiting and anxiety, the certainty of the truth and the pain of discovery alternated [...] Afterwards, I was possessed by the desire to be reborn several times in my following works [...] That trip really changed my life. I, the daughter of the North, felt intimately *métissée*⁹³.

(2010, 21-22; my translation)

In an interview for the magazine *Aurora* with Joseph Pivato, novelist Mary di Michele⁹⁴ recounts a similar experience:

Aurora: You were six years old when you came to Canada in 1955. Have you ever made a return trip to Italy and if so what happened?

⁹² Interview of Carole David by Simonetta Pitari for Formafluens International Literary Magazine, retrieved from http://www.formafluens.net/formafluens.net_2010-03.pdf

⁹³ “Qualche mese prima del mio soggiorno a Casacalenda, un amico mi aveva avvertito che quel viaggio di “ritorno” avrebbe cambiato la mia vita. E così è stato. La traduzione del mio romanzo⁹³ in italiano, infatti, mi ha consentito di essere invitata nella terra rifiutata da mia madre. È stato un viaggio di scoperta e di emozioni, da cui è nato *Terra vecchia*, un racconto in poesia, che mi è sembrato la forma più esatta per esprimere il rapporto tra la ricerca di sé e l’opera. [...] Un viaggio della ricerca e dell’incontro in cui si sono alternate l’attesa e l’ansia, la certezza della verità e il dolore della scoperta [...] Dopo, sono stata posseduta dal desiderio di rinascere più volte nelle opere successive [...] Quel viaggio mi ha veramente cambiato la vita. Io, figlia del Nord, mi sono sentita intimamente *métissée*”.

⁹⁴ <http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/77/89>

Mary di Michele: I made my first trip back in 1972. I spent the summer there with my whole family. Because of my very intense and detailed childhood memories my body remembered things that I did not consciously remember. When we were in my mother's village I asked my mother about things that had changed and she would say, "How can you remember that?"

And, again:

Aurora: You have made several trips to Italy. One is reflected in the poem, "*Rilke Sentiero*," later called, "*La Benvenuta*." How have these trips affected your writing?

Mary di Michele: There's a myth of return, I'm thinking of that Greek hero (I can't recall the name) who to maintain strength must literally stay in touch with the earth. Hercules defeats him by keeping him suspended in the air. In returning to Italy I replenish something in myself, an essential source for feeling and writing. If I didn't return literally to the country and or to Italian themes periodically, would I become imaginatively depleted and die creatively? But I continue to be drawn back there, so I'm not prepared to find out just yet.

Most of these authors, as Di Michele asserts, are drawn back to their land of origin, and often choose to respond to this call in writing, a means through which they feel able to fully express themselves and resolve the tensions left unsettled by the actual journey.

3.2. Conclusions

The migrant journey is a journey towards a new land and a new beginning, a voyage that "can be seen as both the breaking away of the single subject from his/her spatial and cultural horizon and the prelude to a new life" (Pitto 1996, 125). The move to a new geographical and cultural environment distant from the familiarity of home causes a feeling of otherness and displacement, which are emblematic of the migrant condition. *Dépaysement* and nostalgia, recurrent in the migrant's consciousness, are products of the conflict between a foreign *here* (abroad) and a familiar *there* (home). The migrant's homesickness comes from the impossibility of severing the strong bond with the country of origin, which remains idealized in his/her imagination.

For many migrants, the desire to return – the *passion for returning*, as conceptualized by Pierre Nepveu (1995) – becomes a dream: the myth of being able to resolve the inner conflicts, to appease the disrupted relationships, by a visit to the place of origin. A homecoming, thus, remains the only solution for the migrant to come to terms with his/her guilt – "the guilt that is nostalgia" (Di Cicco 1986, 47) – of being the son/daughter who abandoned and disappointed the mother-land: "he is coming, and he is redeemed" (ibid.).

A number of first generation migrants do, eventually, embark on the return journey home.

Among those who revisit home, some leave their adoptive country disappointed, defeated, for not having found what they were looking for in the ‘promised land’, the idealized *El Dorado*. However, when migrants achieve their homecoming, reception back home is not always warm: something has changed, in themselves and in their motherland. This holds true also for second-generation migrants, for whom the return to the ancestral homeland – which they may or may not have visited before, but towards which they nonetheless feel a strong pull – is a journey into family history and cultural roots and a search for answers to their many questions. This return has a strong impact on their idea of *home* and often becomes a very dramatic and emotional experience.

In this regard, writers occupy a privileged position, having access to a double resolution: besides the physical return to the homeland – a journey that for some (as in the cases explored above) does actually take place and leaves their tensions unresolved – writing becomes a means to come to terms with their homesickness. Migrant works are often tainted with a feeling of nostalgia, and through the protagonist of their works authors try to retrace the journey to the motherland in search for answers, and reconciliation.

Below the surface of the text, its characters, plot and dialogues, rests an autobiographical element that interweaves personal history and fictional story, and that becomes manifest in the motive of the return journey recounted by the narrator/author. The return, in literature, symbolizes more than a trip to the land of origin, but also a restoration of all those ties that were originally cut off, culturally and sentimentally, because, as Pitto (1996) asserts: “[t]he culture of every human group always pays most dearly at home, in the place from which the emigration begins, for the disintegrating effects of the diaspora” (122).

In his study on migration narratives, scholar Paul White underlines the omnipresence of the return home, regardless of the ethnic group or period considered:

Amongst all the literatures of migration the highest proportion deals in some way with ideas of return, whether actualised or remaining imaginary. To return may be to go back but it may equally be to start again: to seek but also to lose. Return has both a temporal and a spatial dimension. For the individual returning to their ‘own’ past and place it is rarely fully satisfying: circumstances change, borders in all senses are altered, and identities change too.

(White 1995, 14)

Migrant authors rewrite their return home through the protagonists of their stories, depicting the *uprooting and deterritorialisation* felt by individuals of migrant origins, caught in between places and cultural heritages, in *la passion du retour* (Nepveu 1995) – the hopes and expectations preceding the journey, and the disillusion and the dejection caused by revisiting the homeland, a voyage intended to shed light on their roots and past.

These literary homecomings are often impeded by a significant divide: the gap between the author's writing language (his/her new adopted tongue) and the language of the homeland (the lost, ancestral, native tongue). This act of 'betrayal' towards the mother tongue – a necessity, in the case of second/third generation migrants born in the host country – distances and alienates them even more from their country of origin.

CHAPTER 3

A TRANSLATIONAL JOURNEY HOME: A STUDY OF ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS OF ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ITALIAN-CANADIAN WORKS

1. Introduction

In the beginning of this work, I underscored and argued for the connection between migration and translation as practices and cultural instances, as well as the commonality of scholarly approaches to the two, which can be summarized in the mobility metaphor: the idea that both activities are driven by, and participate in a *journey*, an interlingual and intercultural flow regulated by social/economic/artistic constraints.

In order to support my claim that this mobility metaphor is best exemplified by migrant writing, I have introduced a specific group of migrants and their literary works (my corpus): despite the singularity of each narrative, the journey across languages, cultures and places stands central in all of Italian-Canadian writing. Among these many journeys, one occupies a special place: the return journey to the ancestral motherland seems to be the main discourse in, and the driving force behind, many original migrant works by Italian-Canadians.

Having established the centrality of the journey for the migrant writing practice, in the present chapter, I will illustrate how the journey is also fundamental for the translational practices enacted within Italian-Canadian narratives. Asserting that these migrant works may represent cases of both linguistic and cultural translation, I will therefore show how translation *proper* into the language of origin (Italian) can be appreciated as a means for the migrant author to be 'translated back', or journey back to Italy.

In the pages that follow, I will exemplify how the latter claim – translation as a homecoming – is sustained by the *agents of translation* within the field of Italian-Canadian literature, by creating a discourse around the return of the migrant to initiate and support the translation and circulation of these translated works into the Italian literary market. This approach is inspired by social perspectives (Wolf 2007) on translation research that inform us about the motivations of the agents taking part in the decision process, the creation and publication of the translated work, as well as their position within the systems. Hence, the realization of the return journey is highly dependant on the intercession of said intermediaries in the translational process: actors that aid migrant authors to bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps that initially hindered the intended return and the successful integration back into the

ancestral land of origin.

Firstly, the idea of migrant writing as in itself a process of translation is informed by the concept of *cultural translation* (Asad 1986; Bhabha 1994). This translational act rests on and is motivated by the migrant's sense of longing and estrangement that can achieve gratification through the practice of 'writing back': a notion that was first introduced within the framework of Postcolonial Studies (Ashcroft et al. 1989; Tymoczko 2000; Bandia 2008) and supports the idea of the circularity of the translational act for migrant works. In other words, examining 'writing back' within the agenda of migrant literature means considering the power of translation in allowing a circular journey back (a back-migration) to the land of ancestral origin.

Additionally, in order to fully understand the relevance of translation as a process of 'writing back' it is necessary to embrace "a view of literature as a complex and dynamic system", and to take an "interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures" (Hermans 1985, 10-11). This implies understanding translation as a socially and culturally governed act of *rewriting* (Lefevere 1992) in which works of literature undergo manipulation for ideological and artistic aims (both personal and collective) that influence the receiving literary system as a whole.

Hence, the norms and constraints that regulate the rewriting are at least as important in establishing the reception and reputation of a work (or a group of works, such as migrant narratives) as the intrinsic value of the original literary text itself. Within this perspective, the rewriting of migrant literature could result in the establishment of a new canon and literary sub-system within the national literary macro-system, and entail the enrichment of literary offerings through the introduction of fresh voices, counteracting the tendency that leads national literatures into fossilization and impoverishment (Even-Zohar 1990).

To conclude, this analysis draws on the domain of *Descriptive Translation Studies* (DTS) by taking into account the socio-historical conditions that influence both the writer and the translator's activity, thereby offering an insight into the mechanisms that regulate the production and reception of such works. In order to better understand the effect and role of translation on the migrant discourse, it is important to bear in mind that no work is produced or exists in a vacuum: literature is a dynamic and intricate structure interrelated to other similarly structured bodies, among them culture, politics, and economics. Literary systems function and interrelate not only internally and between them, but also with other systems; translated literature as a system in its own right (whether we agree or disagree to

consider it independent from the literary system in which translations come into play) affects and is affected by the system of national literatures. For this reason, the investigation into the corpus of translated texts needs to include a general overview of the receiving literary system and its agents.

2. Translation Discourse in Italian-Canadians Narratives: Writing as Translating *Italianness*

In the pages that follow, I will illustrate how Italian-Canadian migrant writing can be understood in itself as a process of translation driven by the feeling of deracination and the linguistic displacement experienced by migrants and their descendants. Moving beyond the realm of the interlinguistic exchange, this translational process creates and defines a personal and collective nostalgic discourse.

While nobody would argue over the intrinsically linguistic nature of translation, the idea that the label translation encompasses forms of transfers that go beyond the textual type is still relegated to the realm of the metaphorical. The question of how translation is enacted in original⁹⁵ migrant literature calls for a re-examination of the very nature of the practice itself and prompts me into devising a conceptual framework that branches out into different directions.

First, and foremost, it is essential to appreciate translation as an “open concept” (Tymoczko 2005, 1085) and, consequently, translations studies as an open field, which results in difficulties of defining them within more traditional, given borders. Due to the wide-ranging nature of current translation studies research across many fields of investigation, the metaphorization of translation “aims at indicating the extension of the concept of translation, mapping some borders or boundaries or limits for the inquiry about translation, even if these borders do not form a closed figure” (1086). In other words, this entails applying various interpretive perspectives based on frameworks borrowed from other disciplines – such as the ones previously cited – to the concept of translation (Gentzler 2012; Simon 2006).

The framework adopted contemplates the idea of literature as “a form of migration in itself, as a journey of the mind and as an itinerary of discovery” (Ponzanesi and Merolla 2005, 5). The centrality of the journey – through cultures, languages, histories and stories – for any literature is more apparent in migrant literature, where texts are pervaded by the idea of a journey back, a return home, that is often incomplete (Jin 2008).

⁹⁵ *Original literature* is intended here as works originally written in the source language.

2.1. Writing as Translating: a Migrant Discourse around Mother Tongue(s)

Among the most relevant features of migrant narratives the relationship with the mother-language(s)/land(s) stands central. Agreeing with a double and, only partly, metaphorical interpretation of translation, this section explores how the case of Italian-Canadian literature confirms the idea that migrant writing implies both an act of intersemiotic⁹⁶ (Jakobson 1959) and cultural translation (Asad 1986; Bhabha 1994), as well as interlingual, textual translation.

Migrant narratives express a sense of being caught in between cultures and in between languages; in the particular case of Italian-Canadian migrant works the dualism of Canadian languages (French and English) makes space for a third language, Italian. The most evident indicators of translation are the migratory practices of either appropriating the language/s of the host country to express (translate) what was experienced and conceived in the native language in order to make oneself understood by the Other (the target audience), or transposing (translating) the reality and culture of the host country in the native tongue for the compatriots who live in the same host country or for those who remained in the country of origin: a translation of the *Other* for the *Other*. In other words, translation occurs both when Italian-Canadian authors translate their Italian migrant cultural identity into English or French for their Canadian audience, as well as when they translate Canadian culture into Italian for their fellow compatriots. The presence of translational acts in original migrant writing is recognizable by the traces of foreignness that linger in the target texts; these *traces of the Other* are the textual testimony of the interlinguistic and intercultural encounter that is at the basis of every migrant experience.

The latter instance of cultural translation is especially evident in the first group of writers of Italian origin in Canada, whose works in Italian were often intended as a travel journal to be read by those who remained at home. These narratives were meant to describe a new environment and culture – incredibly different from that of the home country – in the language of the motherland, which often did not possess the means to define some of these cultural and environmental elements: the writer's aim and task was, thus, that of translating the target (Canadian) country's culture for the source country's audience (the Italian) in the source country's language. Traces of the encounter with the Other in these narratives appear in the form of English words that describe the cultural and geographic foreignness of Canada.

Such is the case of Anna Moroni Parken's account of pioneering life *Emigranti: Quattro anni al Canada* (1896/1907). Her work translates the daily life of a migrant in the Canadian wilderness into

⁹⁶ Intended as the translation of non-linguistic message by means of linguistic signs.

Italian for the Italian audience by means of comparison with the target culture. The difficulties of translation between such different places and cultures compel the author to resort to English when referring to features of Canadianness that have no direct correspondent in the Italian language: *backwoods* (11), *clearing* (11, 27), *huckleberries* (13), *cranberries* (31), *black-flies* (62), *bushman* (45), etc. These Anglicisms, however, were habitually explained in Italian to inform her readers.

This kind of cultural translation is, however, not a practice exclusive only to the first pioneers. Other instances of this phenomenon can be found in the following generations of Italian-Canadian writing. Post-War narratives such as Giose Rimanelli's *Biglietto di Terza* (1958) and Ottorino Bressan's *Non dateci lenticchie: esperienze, commenti, prospettive di vita Italo-Canadese* (1962) are illustrative of this phenomenon. Both of these partly-autobiographical/partly-fictional novels, recounting the events taking place during their stay in Canada, translate Canadian society and its culture in writing for their intended target audience.

The translation of the receiving culture into the source language (that of the land of origin) brings to the forefront the representation of hybridity (Bhabha 1994) of both linguistic and cultural migrant identities. The use of Italian narrative voices dotted with English and *Italiane* words highlights the slow acculturation to the receiving environment and the formation of a *transnational* and *translational* culture as well as the difficulty of translating a cultural world distant from that of origin.

While the 1980s saw the emergence of a new generation of Italian-Canadian writers who adopted English as their main or only writing language⁹⁷, translation was still a common practice among Italoophone authors: Maria Ardizzi concealed her life experience under the fictional *Ciclo degli emigranti*, Matilde Torres Gentile and her autobiography *La Dottoressa di Cappadocia* (1982), Anello Castrucci's autobiographical migrant story *I miei lontani pascoli: ricordi di un emigrante* (1984), Ermanno La Riccia and his collection of short stories *Terra mia: storie di emigrazione* (1984), Montreal-based writer Aldo Gioseffini and his memoir and political commentary *L'amarezza della sconfitta* (1989), or Ernesto Carbonelli, who chose the local dialect of his native town Supino for his first collection of autobiographical verses *La rava allu frisco*. While translating Canadian life into Italian for their compatriots, they left foreign cultural markers as testimony of their transcultural experience.

Nevertheless, among migrant authors, the most manifest and widespread type of translation – at once cultural and linguistic – is the practice of appropriating the language of the receiving country to express (translate) what was first experienced and conceived in the native language in order to be

⁹⁷ Often, for them, English was the native tongue.

understood by the Other (the intended target audience of the ‘new’ country).

One of the most representative instances of this translational manifestation is Duliani’s *La ville sans femme* (1945). While the book was originally published in French and the Italian version that became available the following year is unanimously considered a self-translation, the work was the result of an editing and artistic ‘re-elaboration’ of the notes taken during his internment. This process involved a re-writing of the (Italian migrant) self in the language of the Other: what was narrated in the pages of his highly autobiographical work is the first person account of an episode that affected the Italian community in Canada as a whole. Duliani translates into (French) writing not only his own Italian identity and experience – originally conceived in his native language (Italian) – but those of an entire ethnic group, for which he acted as a spokesperson.

While the occurrence of translation, both in cultural and linguistic terms, is more evident in works written in English and French by authors whose native tongue is different from the language of the host country, such as Duliani, the role of cultural translation within the texts by *generation 1.5* and second generation migrant writers should not be overlooked. Indeed, even in those works written in one of the official languages of Canada by native speakers of said languages, *cultural translation* is omnipresent. Among the tools utilized by these generations of migrant/ethnic authors that suggest the presence of textual translation practices are the use of hybrid language, code-switching and/or self-translation: by alternating between the language of the target country (the land where they were born or raised) and the language of the ancestral land of origin, writers transpose (translate) the inner cultural and linguistic conflict experienced by all migrants.

Nevertheless, cultural translation – intended here as the reformulation and *explicitation* of cultural specificities for a new, ‘foreign’ audience, producing difference through language (Karpinski 2012, 7) – is enacted in migrant writing through a series of practices in which the traditional inter-linguistic idea of translation plays only a minimal part. This is to say that the reader, both informed or non-informed about the source culture the writer originates from, is able to perceive the presence of the *Other* on many levels: from the name of the characters, the cultural references (*realia* recurring in the categories of food and society), the many references to proverbs and songs (often translated into the receiving language), and even more evidently in the many Italian words that constellate the English and French text – an expedient defined by Loriggio as “the device of the stone” (1990, 39).⁹⁸ Some authors have gone as far as reproducing the Italian sentence structure in English and French (the latter language,

⁹⁸ However, Mary di Michele was the first person to use the stone image to describe the presence of Italian words in her English poems during the 1986 Vancouver conference when she observed that the “Italian words act like stones on the smooth English road” (Pivato 2002, 251).

being more similar in terms of syntax will less likely show evident signs of this practice). Texts are, in other words, accented.

As Pivato (2003) duly contends: Italian-Canadian Anglophone authors “are attempting to translate the Italian language of emotion, the lost language, into the English of their new culture without losing the authenticity of the original experience” (125). From their perspective, translation, just like writing, is an act of artistic creation⁹⁹.

Antonio D’Alfonso’s whole production embraces this idea of translation as a necessary creative practice for the migrant writer. Juggling between his many tongues, D’Alfonso blurs the border between writing and (self-)translating by using his works to bridge his different cultural heritages and identities. His partly autobiographical novel *Avril - ou l'anti-passion* (1990) and its English self-translation *Fabrizio’s Passion* (1995) not only expose the role of linguistic self-translation for multilingual Canadian authors – an issue that was analyzed in detail by Licia Canton in her 2008 article

2Fabrizio’s Confusion: The Risks and Pleasures of Revised Translation” – but also underline the cultural translation undergone by people of migrant origins – the translated men and women metaphorized by Rushdie:

Being Italian, I dream of changing myself into a Canadian. To be Italian is simply an aberration, something that is outdated, something to be ashamed of; whereas the Canadian is the hero I wish to emulate. It is by imitating my cousins that I will give myself a better future.

(D’Alfonso 1995, 61)

The protagonist’s strongest desire is to realize the self-translational process that would allow him to become fully Canadian, to acculturate. In order to fulfill his longing, practices of cultural translation and negotiation between identities take place within himself, and within the text: a migration/translation from the old Italian identity (that of his family) and the new Canadian one (one of his own): “My godfather is a Notte, just like my father, but a Canadian Notte. He represents for me that which I want to become” (idem).

D’Alfonso’s cultural hybridity and the role of translation are evident in the interference of the Italian language throughout the novel. The foreign element is used to project the reader into a journey through cultures and places. These traces are especially evident in the vocabulary related to the positioning of characters within the society they belong to: *Signor* (13), *signorine* (44), *tenente* (29), *latifondista* (39), *finocchio* (42), *Nonna* (49), *Nonno* (50), *mamma* (65), *famiglia* (111), and *padre* (125), which all appear numerous times throughout the text. Significant relevance within the novel is

⁹⁹ On the intersection between writing and translation, specifically in migrant and multilingual contexts, I refer here to what was presented in the first chapter.

also given to the ethnic element, represented both by the presence of untranslated Italian customs – *scopa* (20), *bocce* (53), *busta* (226), *tarantella* (235) – and, more stereotypically, the domain of cuisine and drinks: *lasagna in brodo* (110), *panini con prosciutto* (138), *polpette* (138), *brodo di pollo* (228), *insalata* (228), *gelato* (228), *pasta e fagioli* (228) and the misspelled word *bisteca* (228). Formulaic expressions and greetings such as *Dio mio* (60), *ah porca miseria* (60), *per favore* (139), *come stai* (149) *salve* (157), *per piacere* (205), *buona sera* (225) are also inserted in the novel to indicate the language the conversation originally took place in. It is interesting to notice that these are left in Italics to underline their foreignness.

A similar approach towards language and culture and their translation is followed by Caterina Edwards in her *The Lion's Mouth*. The novel, recounting both a story of a return to the land of origin and the difficulties of being a translated being, bears unambiguously autobiographical elements making the narration a process of self-discovery, as admitted by the same author:

We construct a self from the multiplicity of selves that we live. We make sense of ourselves in the process of creating our story. And paradoxically this self-filled project connects us to others. By making the private public the writer is less alone. We speak to a community and as part of a community.

(Pivato 2000, 9)

The narrator's (writer's) displacement generates inner tension, urging her to revisit the country of origin in order to rediscover its culture and language and to resolve it, as defended by Edwards herself:

I started to write of Italy and the Italian Canadian experience to find my place, to determine where I belonged. Yet I found I could not write myself into belonging. My split was only emphasised. Now I see that I will be ever obsessed with the split person: the Canadian in Rome, the Italian in Edmonton, immigrant and emigrant. I have found no physical place, but I have found another kind of place.

(Edwards 1986, 67)

The physical and metaphorical journey to the country of origin triggers her translational process, which becomes evident, first and foremost, in the narrative structure. The narrator Bianca is an Italian-Canadian girl who remembers and translates into writing both her first-person (pre)migrant past and her nostalgic return to Venice, the town of her childhood, as well as the third-person life story of her Venetian cousin Marco, her Italian alter-ego. The novel, analogously to the translation and migration processes, enacts a continuous cultural and linguistic border crossing between Italy and Canada, which reflects the narrator's (and the migrant's) desire to bridge the two different cultures, "[f]or my life was split into two seemingly inimical halves, not only between the time before and after, but through all my growing years: Italy in summer, Canada in winter" (Edwards 1993, 108).

The role of translation is evident also in the Prologue of the novel, in a letter received by the protagonist from her Italian aunt Elsa – which, to Bianca’s Canadian eyes appears “illegible”.

'Bianca, se sapessi, se sapessi,' if you knew, if you knew. 'Che disgrazia di Dio.' God's disgrace? I must be translating incorrectly, a disgrace from God. 'Barbara scossa'. Barbara has been shocked? Hit? Shaken? 'She saw what she shouldn't have seen and now she fears everything. Damned brigadists'.

(1993, 10)

And again:

Esaurimento nervoso, the words translated literally as an exhaustion of the nerves. How controlled and nineteenth century-ish it sounds.

(10)

These passages show both the linguistic and cultural gap between the protagonist’s two cultures and her desire to bridge it through translation, which appears a demanding task. Nevertheless, Bianca acts like an interpreter throughout the whole novel, fighting the ambiguity and misunderstandings linguistic differences create.

I have always thought that words were a medium. One understands, one thinks, one expresses this through and by language. But I have very little interest in language as simply language. If words for me are at all things, they are things to be wrestled with, to be forced into the proper order so that they approximate what I am interested in expressing.

(62)

Similarly, through Bianca’s words, the writer enacts a process of cultural mediation/translation: she translates and explains Italian culture (that of her origins) for her Canadian readers. This practice is identifiable, at a textual level, by the many Italian cultural elements that are translated for her intended Canadian audience. As highlighted in D’Alfonso’s novel, besides the Italian expressions inserted in the conversations that take place in that language (as in the above excerpts), the realms in which Italian is more present are food – *bovoli* (88), *granite di limone* (163), *scampi risotto* (168), *amaretti* (185) *caffè e latte* (193) – and Italian society and the social positioning of individuals within it: *assistente* (100), *Partito Comunista Italiano* (102), *bambinona* (107), etc. Even more important, especially from the narrative viewpoint, is the presence of Italian words that describe the topography of Venice: *campanile* (16), *vaporetto* (23), *calle* (28), *fondamento* (35), *piazzale* (51), *terrazza* (82), *campi* (102), *acqua alta* (135), etc. The Venetian maze comes to represent the intricacy of the narrator’s identity and her difficulty of feeling at home, both in Canada and Italy. This is reflected by the interweaving of the two languages, which invites her Canadian readership to her personal translational journey.

The novel, however, closes on the impossibility of translation, its incompleteness; the very last sentences of the novel, addressed to her Italian cousin Marco, recite: “Still. Still I cannot write it in

Italian. And you do not read English. I will never touch you at all” (Edwards 1993, 271). Feeling defeated, the writer/protagonist resigns herself to the impossibility of bridging the gap between her two identities.

The process of translating the self into a new environment is also central to two other works by Italian-Canadian authors. In both works, the same object – Italian shoes – is used to symbolize the presence of a cultural gap that separates the protagonists from their country of origin. *Mazilli Shoes* by Darlene Madott and Frank Paci’s *Italian Shoes* revolve around the quintessentially Italian concept of the *bella figura*: a principle ruling many aspects of life, for which making a good impression is equally a question of pride, respectability and fitting in with Italian society. Shoes, in both texts, become a tangible symbol that helps translate this complex cultural code for the Canadian readership.

Madott’s *Mazilli Shoes* (1999) recounts the story of Giovanni Mazilli, a hardworking Italian man who has always dreamt of returning to his native land as a successful entrepreneur and making a good impression, a *bella figura*, on his compatriots who decided to stay.

We were immigrants, below deck, but we had eyes. We could still see. From Naples to New York, we watched the rich people dance [...] I promised my bride: we will leave Italy. We will be rich with our work from Canada. I will bring you back on the Michelangelo luxury liner – only we, Marian and Giovanni, will be the ones to dance.”

(24-25)

The screenplay follows the return journey of Mazilli and his family to the land of origin – “It’s a natural law, the man’s Italian, they all gotta die in Italy” (53). After the shoe factory he works for in Toronto closes down, Giovanni starts planning on opening a shoe shop in Vasto, his town of birth, while concealing the tragic events that brought him back there, for the sake of the *bella figura*: “I want to turn this store into the finest in Vasto, nothing but the best. That’s why I arranged this meeting. I’m looking for exclusivity”, Giovanni claims (73).

However, Madott frequently underlines the cultural differences between the locals and the emigrants who, despite their attempts to fit in (thus, translating themselves back into their own idea of *Italianness*), are never fully accepted ‘back’. The writer remarks a stark contrast between the Italian-Canadians and the Italians: “Giovanni is an oddity. He lugs a heavy suitcase and carry-on-bag, is dressed in Canadian tourist’s clothing, but with the old Italian leather shoes [...] He is hobbled by the shoes” (31), while the shoe sales representative Giovanni deals with is “all style [...] a real prince” (72-73); upon his arrival in the town “Giovanni hangs out the window, waving and smiling like a passing dignitary” but – recognizing his foreignness – “townspeople wave back indulgently, as if to say: ‘Crazy tourist, let him have his fun’” (34). Locals fail to recognize Giovanni’s *Italianness*, as the cabdriver

earnestly tells him: “This is your problem – you’re an American trying to sell Italian shoes to Italians” (76), thus reinforcing Giovanni’s displacement.

Struggling to make a *bella figura* and fit in culturally and with his shoe business, eventually Giovanni has to surrender to the impossibility of his own translation back to Italy and ends up returning to Canada. His son Francesco, representing Giovanni’s lost rationality, helps him understand the reasons for his failure: “Your shoes are Italy. The teller in the bank who serves you last because you won’t give him two thousand lire, is Italy. You don’t know Italy. You don’t know yourself. You don’t even know why you came” (104).

The protagonist of Paci’s *Italian Shoes* (2002), Mark Trecroci, meets a similar fate. The Italian-Canadian young man returns to Italy, his country of birth, in search for his roots and identity and in order to appease his sense of displacement: “it was possible to cure myself by means of the very cause of my malady” (9). For Mark, starting this transition (his own translation) back to the land of birth is not easy because, he admits, “I’ve erased everything Italian in me” (9), starting from the language, which he struggles to grasp.

The linguistic struggle is especially painful for Trecroci (the writer’s alter ego), a writer looking for his own voice in his lost mother tongue: “I had transformed myself into a literary being, much more English than Italian” (14). His words resonate with the difficulty many migrant writers have to face when they desire to re-translate themselves in the native tongue.

The gap between the two cultural heritages of the protagonist is, once again, represented by a tangible object, the Italian shoes, and symbolizes the centrality of the social model of the *bella figura*:

“Your mother said you should buy good shoes,” zia said.
“To cut la bella figura,” Marcella added, smiling.
I looked at my scruffy shoes – and noticed all the Italians dressed in their finery.

(30)

Purchasing good Italian shoes is only the very first step to making a good impression on his compatriots and, therefore, towards his self-translational process that will allow him to integrate into his culture of origin, as explained to him by his Italian aunt:

“You have the good shoes,” she went on, indicating my prized possessions at the foot of the bed, and never once looking directly at me. “But you don’t want to make *la brutta figura*.”
“Does it matter much if I look bad, Marcella?”
“Sì, sì.”
“Perché, why?”
“Because... the people in Italy, they judge everything with the eye. You must please their eyes. You must be an entertainment for the eye.”

(48)

In order to fit in, he promises himself and his family “I will try to cut a *bella figura*” (73); soon, however, realizes the difficulty of his translation back, his foreignness to the country and its culture:

It was as if all the rich food, the wine, the endless Italian chatter, had suddenly constricted into a tight knot of desire for the more familiar. This wasn’t the real me, cutting the *bella figura* and being the centre of attention.

(65)

His attempt at translating his own self back to the Italian cultural standard – to acculturate and become fully Italian – seemingly fails, leading the protagonist to return to Canada. In actual fact, however, this return becomes the catalyst for his writing career, giving start to another translational act, that of transposing his Italian journey and Italian heritage into writing: “I had seen enough of Italy [...] In the next few years I would put away my Italian shoes and write about my father, my Babbo.” (186).

As seen, the translational process – metaphorically interpreted in its acceptance of *cultural translation* – is the core of the narrative structure of both texts. Nevertheless, this does not mean that translation in a purely linguistic perspective is neglected. Traces of translation practices conducted in both literary works are evident in the interference of Italian within the English text and the presence of dialogues that are reported by the characters in two languages.

As previously highlighted, Paci’s novel adheres to the migrant practice of signalling the presence of the ethnic/foreign/Other linguistic element within the text. Besides the many references to the *bella figura* (23, 30, 45, 54, 73, 88, 105, 127, 170) and its opposite *brutta figura* (48), most of the Italian interferences – which are usually explained or followed by an English translation – relate to the above-mentioned domains. This is the case of formulaic expressions and greetings: *permesso*, *prego*, *daverro* (misspelled) and *ciao* (10), *che bello* (18), *Dio mio* (20), *porca madosca* (22), *hai capito?* (37), *sei matto* (46), *hai ragione* (48), *per piacere* (60), *basta* (66), *grazie* (92), *che puzza* (135), *che peccato* (137), *mamma mia* (142), *buon appetito* (146), *perché?* (177), etc. Many other Italian words are correlated to the category of social positioning: *professore* (27, 31, 39, 42, 55, 62), *comunista* (33, 53), *patriarca* (37), *mezzadri* (38, 46), *dottore* (42), *scrittore* (46), *padroni/e* (53, 125), *artista* (65), and *paesan* (85). Two other important categories are Italian cuisine – *primo/secondo piatto* (40), *cena* (41), *dolci* (54), *grappa* (114), *pasta al forno*, *arrosto di vitello*, *patate arrosto* (120), and *melanzane* (131) – and the topography of Venice, such as in Edwards’ novel: *Canale Grande* (74), *fondamenta* (75), *rii* (76), *sestiere* (79), and *campanile* (97).

Mazilli Shoes (1999), instead, presents the reader with a different level of linguistic hybridity. Rather than simply adding the occasional Italian word to an English sentence to suggest the ethnic origin of the protagonist, Madott provides the reader with the Italian translation, in square brackets, of

some of the lines of the screenplay spoken by different characters. These translations are sparse in the scenes that take place in Canada, and often spoken by the mysterious and unidentified character of the philosopher. These free translations – often the Italian lines distance themselves from the source – represent a sort of social commentary, or aphorism:

THE PHILOSPHER

You can't go home again; you must go home again. Home is the place you escape from; home is the place to which you escape.

[Non puoi tornare; devi tornare... La tua terra è da dove sei scappato; la tua terra è il tuo rifugio.]

(Madott 1999, 21)

And again:

THE PHILOSPHER

Life is like a melon. When you open it, you don't know whether it's going to be sweet and ripe, or tasteless like a cucumber.

[La vita è come un melone. Può uscire rosso ma può uscire anche bianco.]

(118)

While the protagonists are in Italy, however, the presence of Italian becomes more visible. This is because the writer intends to create a sense of exoticism, and immerse the Canadian reader into the Italian environment. The translations demonstrate the writer's good command of the Italian language, especially the casual version of it, while also expressing her own view of the role of bilingual migrant individuals as interpreters, such as in the following dialogue:

TONY

There's a busload of American women arriving tomorrow.

[Domani arriverà un pullman pieno di turiste americane.]

ENIO

So what?

[E allora?]

TONY

So what? To get inside them, you've got to talk their language. You understand?

[E allora per poterle conquistare dovete parlare inglese, capisci?]

ERCOLE

What's he talking about?

[Ma cosa dice?]

TONY

I can teach you to say things in English that will make them yours. If you speak English, you can score big.

[Vi posso insegnare delle parole in inglese che le farà innamorare. Se parlate inglese, vi prometto grandi cose succederanno.]

(80-81)

Because of his *nomadic trajectory*¹⁰⁰, Tony (and the writer herself) holds a privileged relationship with language/s.

Similarly, in Micone's *Gens du Silence* (1991), Gino and Mario expose in unison the linguistic experience of living in a migrant multilingual environment: "Je parle le calabrais avec mes parents, le français avec ma soeur et ma blonde, l'anglais avec mes chums" (40). The linguistic Babel of these characters – and of the writers that they often represent – is, at once, the realization of the difficulty of existing and expressing the migrant self in one language and the creative power of (self-)translation.

Author Pasquale Verdicchio (1997) is sure of Italian-Canadian writers' role as (self-)translators when he asserts that "we are all, in a sense, multilingual and given to translation" and that "writing and translation are one and the same [...] writing, as a process of translation, does not recognize any source or target language, but tends to be an open ended field of possibilities" (111).

Italian-Canadian specialist Joseph Pivato has also noticed the importance of translation as a practice within Italian-Canadian texts:

Translation for Italian Canadians is not just a single act of transferring an Italian text into English or French, but the constant practice of code switching from one language to another in daily life and in creative work. It is a kind of translation as existence (Pivato, Echo). The effect of the translation and writing practices of many Italian-Canadian writers has been the avoidance of stereotyped immigrant literature and the creation of models for linguistic diversity and minority ethnic writing. Their practice and decisions about language and translation involve questions about the aesthetic values of the work, the social roles of the ethnic minority writer, and voices from the community, immigrant culture, and negative stereotypes. These writers are ever conscious of such questions as they approach each works. When they include Italian words in their English poems, add Italian expressions to their French plays, or reject the use of any Italianese in their writing, they testify to the limitations of translation.

(Pivato 2014, 197-198)

2.2. Conclusions

To conclude, while being intrinsically linked to the word as a means of expression, translation within Italian-Canadian writing moves beyond the idea of the interlinguistic exchange to embrace its power in building a migrant discourse, personally and as a community. As claimed by Pivato, the role of translation in Italian-Canadian works is not limited to practices of linguistic transfer of a text from a language into another, but also to the expression through writing of cultural ambivalence (of

¹⁰⁰ I am quoting here the title of a collection of poems (1990) by Pasquale Verdicchio in which language plays the fundamental role of unveiling the multiple possibilities nomadism offers to "an identity claimed by so many places/ one city yet all possible cities/ in fragments" (12).

individuals and of the community as a whole), linguistic hybridity and their exploitation in the arts.

Moreover, part of the process of cultural translation in the works of Italian-Canadians – besides the explication of the Other element (be it linguistic and/or cultural) to the Canadian readership – is also the translation into written form of the migrant experience in the form of the nostalgic trip back to the land of origin. While often the original migrant journey was not lived in the first person by the writers themselves, literature gives translated wo/men the possibility to both relive it and translate these memories into writing, as well as to ‘close the circle’ by also imagining and living in writing the return to the land of origin.

3. Translated ‘Back’: the Italian-Canadian Migrant Discourse Returns to the Land of Origin

The Italian-Canadian literary discourse supports the idea that the migrant’s sense of nostalgia can achieve gratification through the practice of ‘writing back’, thus attributing to translation the capacity of allowing a journey back to the land of ancestral origin. This section explores how and when a homecoming via translation occurred for some of the above authors.

As contended above, the most evident cases of translation processes enacted in literary works by authors of migrant background are the linguistic and extra-linguistic practices that fall under the label of *cultural translation*, as a consequence of the migrants’ displacement. Besides the negotiation of cultural and linguistic difference enacted at the textual level, one of the most notable contributions to the study of migration from a translational perspective is the metaphorical interpretation of migrant processes and their cultural products as translation acts: as explored in the first chapter, from Salman Rushdie to Ha Jin, theoretical speculations on the topic tend to consider the two as transnational and transcultural practices of border crossing, two almost-synonymous *forms of mobility* (Polezzi 2006).

This metaphorical interpretation of migration/mobility as translation (and vice versa, translation as migration/mobility) finds its way into the literature by authors of migrant origin through the thematic level. One of the most recurrent migrant discourses is the journey (home) as a migration/translation back to the place where their roots lay – a place that comes to represent in this translational act both the original source and the anticipated target.

In the collection of essays *Writing Our Way Home* prefaced by literary critic Elena Lamberti, Lamberti writes: “no matter how painful it was, the journey is the way between, both a necessity and a choice, the act which will change forever our way of being and of belonging” (Canton and Di Giovanni

2013, 17). Lamberti's understanding of the migrant journey is unarguably reminiscent of the translational process, which not only changes the nature of a text but also its literary belonging, in terms of it being carried across (with its cultural baggage) from a source to a target field.

In the same collection of essays, Oriana Palusci points out how the hardship of the journey is not only the uncertainty represented by the receiving environment, the unknown, but also the deracination from what is known and familiar: "the common denominator for all diasporic people is not only, as Naipaul would say, the enigma of arrival, but the trauma of departure, the leaving of one's home behind" (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 33).

Hence, the writers' *passion du retour* is the attempt to reach out to the homeland in order to return to an idea of lost familiarity. Within this framework, nostalgia and homesickness come to represent this struggle to 'write back home' and translate the self back to the origin(al), as also explained by Italian-Canadian scholar Jim Zuccherro: "'writing home' suggests the idea of articulating a dialogue between two cultures – those of Canada and Italy" and attempting to bridge the gap between their Italian heritage and the setting in which they now live, Canada (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 43). For him, "writing home becomes a way to reflect upon and work through the classic immigrant dilemma of belonging to two cultures, but existing in neither one comfortably" (44) and to deal with the ensuing feeling of displacement.

While each writer deals with this *dépaysement* differently, the most common way of writing home is that of staging a fictional return to the land left years before (or never seen), or narrating the nostalgic recollections of what was left behind, as in a fictional dialogue with the land of origin. Nevertheless, most of these literary attempts at writing home remain unheard by the 'motherland', as many of the migrant writers write in the language of the host country (the native land for many), which is different from that of the ancestral homeland. The communication gets interrupted, and this is where the role of translation becomes fundamental in the practice of writing back home and reconciling with the forgotten mother tongue.

For this reason, in this section I will explore further the connection between migrant writing and translation, by examining how *translation proper* (Jakobson) affects the *passion du retour*, offering writers of migrant origin another chance to complete the journey back to the origins via their translated work: in other words, translation as a homecoming.

3.1. Italian-Canadian Literature in Italy: a Journey Back via Translation

Among the over one hundred authors that fall under the label of Italian-Canadian literature, most of them writing in English or French from the second half of the twentieth century, just over twenty (a mere fifteen percent of the whole production) have made the journey back to Italy via translation into Italian. This said, however, the mere existence of these translations does not indicate a successful return, just like the physical return to Italy did not mean a successful reconciliation with it. While a genuine comeback of the returnees means a re-integration in the field of origin (the target literary market, in this case), many of these works were published in Italy without much acknowledgment from the reading public and soon disappeared from the booksellers' shelves (and even from their catalogues).

The section that follows is dedicated to a brief but comprehensive descriptive analysis of the field of Italian-Canadian migrant writing in Italy. It is not my aim, at this point of the research, to provide a qualitative examination of said translations; I aim to emphasize, firstly, the quantity and variety of texts that have made the journey across and, secondly, the agents involved in the translational process.

The analysis of the source literary field of Italian-Canadian literature in Canada conducted in the previous chapter has identified how, thanks to the contribution of publishing houses such as Guernica and of cultural institutions such as the AICW, some of these writers have gained access to a wider audience and popularity (some of them won national awards, e.g., Nino Ricci and Antonio D'Alfonso¹⁰¹). It is therefore important to investigate the similar contribution of agents that, correspondingly, may have helped in the diffusion of their works in their ancestral country of origin, Italy.

The research started with a bibliographical examination: scrutinizing the website of Italian publishers and online library catalogues. A *simple* search on the most utilized web engines allowed the first results to surface. Because of the difficulty in tracing some of these translations, I have often had to rely on previously published articles on the subject of Italian-Canadian literature to get a more complete picture.

¹⁰¹ In June, 2016 D'Alfonso will be awarded an honorary Doctor of Letter from Athabasca University "in recognition of his outstanding contributions, as an editor, translator, publisher and creative artist, to Canadian culture." See: <http://convocation.athabascau.ca/about/HRdocs.php>

Among the results were some Italian-Canadian works available in the Italian language, which were originally published in Italy for the intended Italian market. While these later made their way into Canada, sometimes via English/French translations (such is the case of Pietro Corsi's *La Giobba* later published in Canada as *Winter in Montreal* and Perticarini's *Quelli della Fionda* translated to English as *The sling-shot kids*), these could not be considered here for the simple reason that they were originally written in Italian (hence, they are not translation). Often, moreover, these works were the result of a return to Italy that had already happened at the time of writing.

While not expressly and actually intended for the Italian market, the first published and attested translation to Italian of a work by an Italian-Canadian is Mario Duliani's fictional memoir. One of the most representative figures of post-war Italian-Canadian literature¹⁰², the Istrian writer had originally written *La Ville Sans Femmes* in 1945. The following year, *Città senza donne* was published: the author's Italian self-translation. Duliani self-translated his work in order to preserve his story and make it available to a wider readership: the self-translation was probably intended for other fellow Italians who could not read French¹⁰³. Indeed, the Italophone community of Montreal – the city where the book was originally published – was thriving at the time. This was explicitly evident in the chapter “Gli Italiani d’America”, which appears in the Italian version but not in the French one. Creating the Italian text, as stated by Duliani himself, gave him the opportunity to reflect on the events that had happened.

I now hope and believe that my book, which was written with particular care and accuracy and of which I personally supervised the Italian version to which I have made many additions, will help to dispel any remaining doubts, and to clear up the past misconceptions.¹⁰⁴

(Duliani 1946, 24; my translation)

With the inclusion of this additional chapter, Duliani's self-translation addressed further the issues of international politics – especially the role of Italy in the War – and thus provided a justification for the change in perception of the image Italy and Italians had in Canada at the time, with the intention of helping restoring the relationship between the two countries.

Going back to the translational issue, this book did not represent a genuine return to the homeland, since the Italian self-translation was only available in Canada, distributed by Montreal publisher

¹⁰² In 1961, the writer was appointed as a member of the Conseil des Arts du Québec in recognition of his writing career; he was the first Italian to be ever chosen for this role.

¹⁰³ Duliani's commitment to his community of origin was strong. Following the end of his internment, Duliani returned to journalism and became director and editor of the Italian language newspaper *La Verità*, to which fellow Istrian Gianni Grohovaz also contributed.

¹⁰⁴ “Ora, io spero e credo che questo mio libro, scritto con il massimo scrupolo d’esattezza, e di cui ho curato personalmente la versione italiana, alla quale ho fatto molte aggiunte contribuirà a dissipare gli ultimi dubbi, ed a chiarire gli ultimi malintesi”.

Gustavo D'Errico¹⁰⁵. At first, despite the importance of Duliani's historical testament, the original text was only available to a small audience and remained unread by the many who couldn't read French or Italian. For the following five decades the book was mostly forgotten, until a series of events brought it to national attention.

In 1994, *La Ville sans femmes* was translated to English for Canada under the title *The City without Women: A Chronicle of Internment Life in Canada during the Second World War*, published by Mosaic Press with a Foreword by translator (and fellow Italian-Canadian author) Antonino Mazza. The English translation was conceived as a memento of the identity of the Italian-Canadian community, and their history, coincidental to the battle fought by the Congresso Nazionale degli Italo-Canadesi (the National Congress of Italian-Canadians) for the recognition of the mistake made towards those seven hundred innocent Italian *enemy aliens* that were interned during WWII.

On January 11, 1990 the president of the CNIC asked the federal government to recognize the mistake made, and compensate the internees when possible. On November 4 of that same year the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney made a public apology to Italian-Canadians at a luncheon of the CNIC held in Toronto.

During the same period, the Italian-Canadian literary group had raised interest nationally and internationally (Ricci's *Lives of the Saints* was published in 1990), and Italian scholarly fields slowly started paying attention to the Italian migrants abroad and their cultural products. For instance, on the occasion of the Convegno sulla Letteratura italiana dell'emigrazione: gli scrittori di lingua italiana nel mondo (the Conference on the Italian literature of emigration: Italian language writers in the world) held at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, in collaboration with the Agnelli Foundation, the relevance of Duliani's Italian self-translation *Città senza donne* was highlighted by two presentations, which were later included in the homonymous volume containing the conference proceedings¹⁰⁶ (1991).

Duliani's self-translation would remain out of the scope of this work if it were not for the fact that, in 2003, the Italian volume was reissued by the Italian publisher Cosmo Iannone under the series *I memoriali* (biographical memoirs). The choice of including Duliani's work in this specific series went against the writer's original intent: in the preface of both his French and Italian works, Duliani had

¹⁰⁵ Gustavo D'Errico was the secretary of the Casa d'Italian-Maison d'Italie in Montreal, an institution that aimed to sustain, promote and develop Italian-Canadian culture and artistic works.

¹⁰⁶ Maddalena Kuitunen, "Città senza donne di Mario Duliani." In *La letteratura dell'emigrazione. Gli scrittori di lingua italiana nel mondo*, edited by J.-J. Marchand, 509-515. Torino: La Fondazione G. Agnelli; Filippo Salvatore, "La quinta colonna inesistente: ovvero l'arresto e la prigionia degli 'italianesi'." In *La letteratura dell'emigrazione. Gli scrittori di lingua italiana nel mondo*, edited by J.-J. Marchand, 517-524. Torino: La Fondazione G. Agnelli; A. Franceschetti, "Aspetti e motivi degli scrittori italiani in Canada." In *La letteratura dell'emigrazione. Gli scrittori di lingua italiana nel mondo*, edited by J.-J. Marchand, 139-140, Torino: La Fondazione G. Agnelli.

specifically stated that the book should not be considered as a factual memoir, but rather as a re-elaboration and re-writing of his life during his internment in the form of a novel.

While the volume itself is a reprint of Duliani's own 1946 self-translation, the new Italian edition of the *reportage romancé* features an introduction by Filippo Salvatore, which was not present in the original self-translation and was intended specifically for the Italian audience to inform them of the events that took place in Canada during WWII.

Figure 1 Front covers of the two editions of Duliani's *Città senza donne*

	
Front cover of Duliani's self-translation published in Canada in 1946 by Gustavo D'Errico in Montreal.	Front cover of Duliani's self-translation published in Italy in 2003 by Cosmo Iannone. It presents a picture of the original volume in Italian.

The re-publication of Duliani's work was not an isolated incident, but rather a conscious choice of the publisher, which adheres to its scheme of interest in the “different aspects of migration, interpreted as privileged manifestation of globalization and as a laboratory of integration and interculturalism” (my translation)¹⁰⁷, which subsequently led to the translation of numerous other

¹⁰⁷ “Diversi aspetti delle migrazioni, intese come espressione privilegiata della mondializzazione e come laboratorio di integrazione e di interculturalità”. From the publisher's webpage: http://www.cosmoiannone.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=13. Last accessed May 2016.

works by Italian migrants abroad (among which Italian-Canadians).

As seen, the 1990s proved a fruitful decade for the development of an Italian-Canadian cultural identity and discourse, both in Canada and abroad, as proved by the following list of translations of Italian-Canadian works published in Italy up to this day.

3.1.1. Italian-Canadian Literature Translated in Italy: a Schematization

The table below presents a schematization of the translation flow of Italian-Canadian literature to the Italian literary field. Because this research work gives relevance to translation, the list of Italian-Canadian works was sorted according to the release date of the Italian volumes; by prioritizing the translated works, and by giving them a chronological order, it is possible to observe when a translation network between the two countries was established and developed.

The first column indicates the publishing date of the source text, the title and author of which are indicated in the second column where the publisher and the type of work¹⁰⁸ also appear. The second half of the table, symmetrically, reproduces the same information with regards to the translation.

Table 4 Italian-Canadian literature translated in Italy

1990	RICCI, Nino <i>Lives of the Saints</i> (Cormorant Books, ON) N	IACOBUCCI, Gabriella <i>Vite dei santi</i> (Monteleone)	1994
1988	ZAGOLIN, Bianca <i>Une femme à la fenêtre</i> (Robert Laffont, Paris) N	VOLTOLINA Kosseim, Concetta and ZAGOLIN, Bianca <i>Una donna alla finestra: in attesa della vita</i> (Edizioni del Noce)	1998
1992	MAZZA, Antonino <i>The Way I Remember It</i> (Guernica) P	PLEVANO, Rosamaria <i>La nostra casa è in un orecchio cosmico</i> (Monteleone)	1998
1997	COLANTONIO, Frank <i>From the Ground Up: An Italian Immigrant's Story</i> (Between the lines, TO) M	IACOBUCCI, Gabriella <i>Nei cantieri di Toronto: storia di un emigrante italiano</i> (Iannone)	2000
1999	FIORITO, Joe <i>The closer we are to dying</i> (McClelland & Stewart, TO) N	PAOLINI, P.F. <i>Le voci di mio padre</i> (Garzanti)	2000
1997	RICCI, Nino <i>Where She Has Gone</i> (McClelland & Stewart, TO) N	IACOBUCCI, Gabriella <i>Il fratello italiano</i> (Fazi Ed)	2000
1990	D'ALFONSO, Antonio <i>Avril ou l'anti-passion</i> (VLB, Montréal) N	LOMBARDO, Antonello <i>La passione di Fabrizio</i> (Iannone Ed.) ¹⁰⁹	2002

¹⁰⁸ In the table above M stands for the genre memoir, SS for short stories, N for novel, and P for poetry.

¹⁰⁹ *La Passione di Fabrizio* is the Italian translation of D'Alfonso's French novel *Avril ou L'anti-passion* (1990) and its English self-translation by the author *Frabrizio's Passion* (1995). The Italian translation by Antonello Lombardo also contains an introductory essay by Italian-Canadian scholar and writer Pasquale Verdicchio entitled *Un'investigazione sull'identità e sullo spaesamento*. Here, Verdicchio underlines the importance of migrant works such as D'Alfonso's, which have long been neglected by both the Italian publishing industry and scholarly circles; he notices how the Italian literature of migration has only been given attention when originally written in Italian (such are the cases of Italian writers De Amicis,

1991	MELFI, Mary <i>Infertility Rites</i> (Guernica) N	MANGIONE, Silvana <i>Riti di infertilità</i> (Iannone)	2002
1945	DULIANI, Mario <i>La ville sans femmes</i> (Editions Pascal, Montréal) M	DULIANI, Mario <i>La città senza donne</i> (Iannone)	2003 (1946)
1994	DAVID, Carole <i>Impala</i> (Les Herbes Rouges) N	MANGIONE, Silvana <i>Impala</i> (Iannone)	2003
2003	RICCI, NINO <i>Roots and Frontiers/ Radici e frontiere</i> (Tirrenia Stampatori) SS, E	CONCILIO, Carmen (Tr. And Ed.) <i>Roots and Frontiers/ Radici e frontiere</i> (Tirrenia Stampatori)	2003
1990	RICCI, Nino <i>Lives of the Saints</i> (Cormorant Books, ON)	IACOBUCCHI, Gabriella <i>La terra del ritorno</i> ¹¹⁰ (Fazi Ed)	2004
1993	In a Glass House (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto)		
1997	Where She Has Gone (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto)		
1993	GUNN, Genni <i>Mating in Captivity</i> (Quarry Pr) P	DONATI, Ada <i>Accoppiarsi in cattività</i> (Schifanoia)	2004
1992	MICONE, Marco <i>Le figuier enchanté</i> (Boréal, Montreal) T	MARCELLI, Marcella & MICONE, Marco <i>Il fico magico*</i> (Iannone)	2005
1995	PETRONE, Penny <i>Breaking the mould</i> (Guernica) M	PITTO, Cesare (and others?) <i>Il modello in frantumi</i> (Città Calabria) ¹¹¹	2005
2005	DI MICHELE, Mary <i>Tenor of Love</i> (Simon and Schuster, US) N	IACOBUCCHI, Gabriella <i>Canto d'Amore</i> (Cava de Tirreni)	2006
2002	PACI, F.G. <i>Italian Shoes</i> (Guernica) N	MANGIONE, Silvana <i>Scarpe italiane</i> (Iannone)	2007
1991	MIRROLLA, Michael <i>The Formal Logic of Emotion</i> (Nuage Ed, Montréal) SS	ELETTA, Bedon <i>La logica formale delle emozioni</i> (Edarc)	2009
1996	D'ALFONSO, Antonio <i>In Italics: In Defense of Ethnicity</i> (Guernica) E	MANGIONE, Silvana <i>In corsivo italico</i> (Iannone Ed)	2009
1997	PATRIARCA, Gianna <i>Italian Women and Other Tragedies</i> (Guernica) P	PATRIARCA, Gianna <i>Donne italiane e altre tragedie</i> (LyricalMyrical Press)	2009
2006	ZAGOLIN, Bianca <i>L'Année sauvage</i> (VLB, Montréal) N	TONINI, Rubina <i>Aspre stagioni. L'ineluttabile corso della vita</i> (Edizioni del Noce)	2011
1986	MINNI, Dino C. <i>Other Selves</i> (Guernica) SS	MASSULLO, Martina <i>Altri sé</i> (Macchiamara)	2012
2009	MELFI, Mary <i>Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother</i> (Guernica) M	FERRI, Laura <i>Ritorno in Italia, conversazioni con mia madre</i> (Iannone)	2012
2010	GUNN, Genni <i>Solitaria</i> (Signature Ed) N	MARTINI, Isabella <i>Solitaria</i> (Ed. Felici)	2013

Sciascia and Pavese). Lombardo's translation of D'Alfonso won the 2003 Premio Internazionale Emigrazione, an award established by the cultural association "The Voice of Emigration", which aims to keep the language and Italian culture in the world alive, in collaboration with the Region of Abruzzo (where D'Alfonso's family is originally from) and the Regional Committee of Emigrants of Abruzzo, and under the high patronage of the Ministry for Italians in the World.

¹¹⁰ The volume contains the translation of the three novels of the trilogy.

¹¹¹ The publisher is specialized in anthropology and the work was published under this framework. Matter-of-factly, the translator is a scholar in anthropology and also wrote the preface to the collection of poetry edited by Dore Michelut *A Furlan Harvest*.

2008	CANTON, Licia <i>Almond Wine and Fertility</i> (Longbridge Books, Montreal) SS	CANTON, Licia; Giulia De Gasperi, Gabriella Iacobucci, Filippo Mariano, Isabella Martini, Moira Mini, Tiziana Tampellini, and Marta Romanini <i>Vino alla mandorla e fertilità</i> (self-published)	2015
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Besides the works above presented and not included in the table – because not published as a volume per se – is Delia de Santis’ short story “Dinner for Three” published in *Pillar of Lace* (1998), translated to Italian under the title of “Pranzo per tre” by Iacobucci and issued in the Italian cultural magazine *Il Ponte* (2001).

Also relevant for the promotion and presence of Italian-Canadian writers in Italy is the publication of *L'altra storia: antologia della letteratura italo-canadese* (1998) edited by Francesco Loriggio and published by Monteleone. The anthology includes the literary production of 25 writers, whose works are presented alongside their Italian translation (translated by William Anselmi, Leonardo Buonomo, Stefano Collini, Enrico Petrangeli, Cristina Trevisan, in addition to Loriggio himself); the publication of the volume was financially supported by the Assessorato alla Cultura of the Regione Calabria (the cultural division of the local Calabrian government) and by the Canada Council for the Arts.

3.1.2. The Flow of Translations: Remarks

A quick analysis of the data in the table above shows that:

- Most of the works translated into Italian have English as their source language and only five works are Francophone works. Of the five Francophone works, one was originally distributed by a French publisher (Bianca Zagolin’s *Une femme à la fenêtre* was published by Paris-based editor Robert Laffont), and another was followed by its English self-translation by the same author (Antonio D’Alfonso’s *Avril ou l’anti-passion*) meaning that the Italian translator worked with two source texts by the same author. This information is in line with the hegemonic role English has been playing in the Italian literary market: according to the data of the UNESCO *Index Translationum*¹¹², in the 30-year period considered, Italian was the target language of 59,937 translated books, of

¹¹² The *Index Translationum*, created in 1932, is a database containing information on books translated and published in about one hundred of the UNESCO Member States between 1979 and 2009. Currently, the database contains more than 2.000.000 books of different disciplines: from literature, social and human sciences, to exact sciences, art, history, etc. This database allows a comparison of the translation activity (extracting information from translation as a product) worldwide providing information, for example, on the most translated authors, languages or the most active countries.

which ‘only’ 53,322 were intended for the Italian market¹¹³. In Italy, the most translated language is indeed English (28,923 books), distantly followed by French (9,994). The relevance of English in the Italian translational field is also confirmed by the AIE (Associazione Italiana Editori), the trade association for Italian publishers covering around 90% of the book market in Italy, which asserted that in 2013 most of the translations published have English as a source language (over 60%), followed by French and Spanish. The dominance of English in the choice of Italian-Canadian texts to be translated is, consequently, far from being exclusive to this literary body.

- Most of the translated texts were originally printed in Montreal by independent publishers, and more than one third of them by Guernica Editions. As seen in the previous chapter, Montreal was the first important cultural hub for Italian-Canadians and for discourses around ethnicity and multiculturalism, so the concentration of Montreal-based publications is not surprising. The role of Guernica in establishing and promoting an Italian-Canadian corpus has already been underlined.
- Similarly, most of the Italian translations were published by small to medium-sized publishers. In particular, the role of one actor stands out as exemplary: Iannone Editore. The Isernia-based publishing house, which distributed most of the translations, is indeed highly involved in the authors’ migration back to Italy. Moreover, while Isernia is not a city with a specific relevance for the translation or literary market, its connection to the Italian-Canadian group is more than fortuitous, and I will return to this later in the chapter.
- The only two Italian-Canadian works – Ricci’s third part of the trilogy *Where She Has Gone* and Fiorito’s *The Closer We Are to Dying* – distributed by the large Canadian publisher McClelland & Stewart, a subsidiary of the international book publishing group Random House, were analogously translated and distributed in Italian by two large publishers: Fazi Editore and Garzanti. This signals a direct correspondence between the prestige and symbolic capital of the actors involved in the publication of the original and translated texts in the source and target fields.
- Similarly, there appears to be a correspondence in the intents and discourses carried out by Canadian publisher Guernica and its Italian counterpart Iannone, a liaison that will be explored more in depth in the following pages.
- With regards to the historical aspect of the translation flow, the analysis shows that most of the translations were carried out after the year 2000, signalling an increasing interest in this specific literary group starting that year, which indicates that one or more events taking place during that time have ignited the establishment of a network between the two source and target fields. More

¹¹³ The remaining are intended for other Italophone literary markets, such as Switzerland.

precisely, all of the translated texts were published in Italy after 1990, the year of publication of the Italian-Canadian best-seller *Lives of the Saints* by Ricci. The success of this archetypal migrant novel in Canada helped spark some curiosity around the group at a national level, which consequently attracted ‘transnational’ agents, allowing the first translations of these works to be published. It is no coincidence that the very first work by an Italian-Canadian author to appear in Italy was indeed the translation of Ricci’s initial chapter of the trilogy.

- Five of the translated works are self-translations; three of which were carried out in cooperation with a translator: Marcella Marcelli’s translation of *Le figuier enchanté* was carried out under Marco Micone’s supervision¹¹⁴, author Gianna Patriarca was aided by her cousin Maria Grazia Nalli in the Italian self-translation of her poetry collection, and Licia Canton was aided by a group of Italian-Canadianists for the translation of her short stories.
- With regards to the translation agents, two names among those who penned the Italian volumes reappear several times: Silvana Mangione and Gabriella Iacobucci. The role of the two agents in the establishment of a translation flow and the conveyance of the original discourse around the return of the Italian-Canadian migrant to the ancestral homeland is anything but irrelevant. Indeed, the homecoming discourse can be similarly detected in the promotion and support the translated works received by canonical actors in the target literary field, as explored in the following pages.

In summary (and superficially), it is possible to observe a clear tendency in the Italian translations of works by Italian-Canadians: there seems to be a similarity between Canadian publishers and their Italian counterparts in terms of distribution. In other words, works published by the larger Canadian publishers were translated and distributed in Italian by larger publishers (and penned by prestigious translators), signalling a direct correspondence between the prestige and symbolic capital of the actors involved in the publication of the original and of the translated texts in the two fields.

However, a more in depth analysis – which follows in the next chapter – is needed in order to establish whether the type of distribution also affect the cultural discourse conveyed in them. In other words, if works published by large publishing houses lose their cultural specificity becoming part of a movement of transnational literature to appeal to the wider audience, while the publication of works

¹¹⁴ His work *Le figuier enchanté* (1992) was translated into Italian under the title *Il fico Magico* by Marcella Marcelli for Iannone in 2005. The cover of the volume, which bears the indication “Traduzione di Marcella Marcelli e Marco Micone” (translation by Marcella Marcelli and Marco Micone), clearly identifies the double-authorship of the translation. The volume contains the translation of the above mentioned *Figuier enchanté* and three comedies, rewritten/self-translated into Italian by the same author – the time-span between first French writing and ‘Italian self-translation’ (2004 and published the year after) is accountable for the re-writing differences. For the trajectory of Micone’s self-translations into Italian see Puccini (2013) and Foglia (2014).

curated by smaller publishers adheres to a *minoritizing* project of translating and promoting *other* voices that may attract a niche readership by emphasizing their regionalism (and in this specific case the linguistic hybridity of their local colour).

Literary minoritizing projects tend to suffer from a limited diffusion and reach smaller audiences, which usually results in modest profits, which respectively contributes to the little enthusiasm small publishers show in translating and distributing these non-commercial works. Larger publishers who are generally profit-oriented, on the other hand, lack interest in niche authors when their works are not considered as good investment. These basic and commercially-oriented assumptions depict the difficulty faced by the translation agents and networks when attempting to translate and publish works that do not adhere to the bestseller market logics.

This tendency was observed by Italian-based Norwegian translation studies scholar Siri Nergaard (2007) when analyzing the Italian literary market in regards to translation during the decade between 1990 and 2000. The period taken into account saw an increase in the translation of foreign titles (an overall increase of 37.5% during the decade), especially of books translated from English (an increase of 46.2%), while other languages (French, German and Spanish, respectively) remained rather stable in terms of incidence.

According to Nergaard (2007), the increase in the number of foreign works can be mostly credited to a bestseller policy: publishers choose works to be translated that have already proven successful in the international market. For the Norwegian scholar, moreover, these books are often conceived and ‘packaged’ in the first place as *transnational books*, intended for a global audience and therefore standardized in terms of style and images – such as in the case of the bestselling *Harry Potter* and *The Da Vinci Code* (32).

In support of her thesis, on the subject of *transnational books*, Nergaard mentions the case of the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy published by HarperCollins. In its preface, the Italian translator states that the work is

a product of that global English-language publishing industry that has its main centers in London and New York (and other branches in Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and India), and which plays a key role in the current circulation and success of postcolonial writing in the global market. The novel, consciously conceived for an international readership, is characterized by precise metadiscursive strategies that aim to domesticate the major linguistic and cultural challenges presented by the text or, conversely, respect its culture-specific otherness, nevertheless avoiding that this can be at the detriment of comprehensibility.

(Paganoni 2005, 137; my translation)¹¹⁵

While toying with the idea of offering cultural otherness to wide audiences, this type of work packages and publicizes a more approachable version of it. This *domestication* of otherness can happen both at the production end of the source text, as in the case described above, or at the target text end, with publishers often opting for *domesticated* translations in order to fit in with the expectations of the target culture (which has been used to attenuate foreignness).

Conversely, besides the increase in translations of *transnational literature* as a result of globalization, the scholar notices an opposite tendency: a slow increase in the translation of works from minor literatures, often published by smaller publishing houses such as the ones contemplated here. These texts, and their translations, represent and value linguistic and cultural differences and uniqueness by exhibiting an increasing openness and curiosity towards the Other.

Moving back to the translation flows of Italian-Canadian literature, from a chronological viewpoint, it is interesting to notice the concentration of translations published or reprinted – as in the case of Duliani's *City Without Women* – after the year 2000; as a matter of fact, only three titles were published before that year, regardless of the year they were originally written in. It is no coincidence that only a few years later, specifically on May 15-18, 2003, on the occasion of the *Fiera del Libro di Torino* (the Turin International Book Fair), Canada was the guest of honour. Among the many Canadian literary scholars and writers invited to this event (Yann Martel, Margaret Doody, Rohinton Mistry, Nancy Richler, Douglas Cooper, Gaétan Soucy are some of them) were also Italian-Canadian Nino Ricci, Joe Fiorito and Carole David Fioramore.

The sudden interest in Canada was due to the concurrent recent success of many translations of works by more canonical Canadian authors such as Michael Ondaatje and Alice Munro – most of her collections of short stories were published by Einaudi after the year 2001 – and Mordecai Richler, whose bestselling work *Barney's Version* was first published in Italian by the publisher Adelphi under the title of *La versione di Barney* in 1997 and is now in its 20th edition.

The presence of Italian-Canadian names at this Italian literary event, alongside the representatives of Canadian canonical authors, symbolizes at once the recognition of their belonging to the Canadian mosaic and the acknowledgement of their existence by the Italian literary field.

¹¹⁵ “Un prodotto di quell'editoria globalizzata in lingua inglese che ha i suoi centri principali a Londra e New York (e con sedi in Canada, Gran Bretagna, Australia, Nuova Zelanda e India) e che gioca un ruolo fondamentale nell'attuale diffusione e successo della scrittura postcoloniale sul mercato globale. Consapevolmente pensato per una readership internazionale, il romanzo è caratterizzato da precise strategie metadiscorsive tese ad addomesticare i principali ostacoli linguistici e culturali posti dal testo, oppure a rispettarne l'alterità culturospecifico evitando, però, che vada a scapito della comprensibilità.”

The increase in Italian translations of works by Italian-Canadians is concurrent to a rising interest in these works from scholarly and literary fields in Italy. This is ascribable to the commitment and cooperation of agents acting in both the source and target fields (Canada on the one hand, and Italy on the other) signalling the existence of a transnational network based on common intentions: the diffusion and promotion of these migrant voices in the country of their heritage.

I maintain here that, because one of the main discourses in Italian-Canadian migrant works is the journey home (signifying both a physical return to the ancestral motherland and to an idealized condition prior to migration), the publication in translation of works by Italian-Canadians in Italy can be interpreted as their *literary homecoming*. Both authors and translation agents recognize the symbolic value of the translational process, and how it shapes individual and group social identities.

For this reason, it is important to examine how the circulation of this specific type of symbolic goods outside of its place of origin occurs, and how the social and symbolic value of the homecoming underlies many of these translational processes. This means investigating in the ensemble of actors intervening at different stages in the translational process in order to understand how every phase is the product of a definite intention that affects the receiving culture.

3.1.3. The Subvention Network

The agents that are able to influence the translation flows do not operate in isolation; the translation network is composed by actors of both the field of departure and that of arrival and, together, they create the favourable conditions for the migration of literary works between said fields. Such is the case of the *subvention network* (Kung 2009) created by the Canada Council through the Translation Grants under the Writing and Publishing Program¹¹⁶ in order to promote the visibility of Canadian works internationally: formed by agents in both the source (Canada) and target (Italy) cultural fields, the network works towards the selection, translation and publication of Canadian literary works abroad. The existence of a subvention network such as the one mentioned above witnesses the intercultural

¹¹⁶ An example of documents regarding the translation grants and the program can be found at: <http://canadacouncil.ca/~media/files/research%20-%20en/profiles%20of%20canada%20council%20funding%20by%20artistic%20discipline/wpdiscprof0304.pdf>. Last accessed May 2016. Moreover, all the list of the translation projects assisted by the Canada Council are searcheable by language here: <http://canadacouncil.ca/council/resources/translation-program-listing>. . Last accessed May 2016.

nature of the translation activity, which is understood in this perspective as intercultural cooperative movement.

Of the twenty-five Italian-Canadian works published in Italy, the Canada Council subsidized sixteen translation projects, which are listed here below by the date in which the grant was received.

Table 5 Italian-Canadian translations subsidized by the Canada Council

1998	Edizioni del noce	Bianca Zagolin <i>Une femme à la fenêtre</i>	Éditions Robert Laffont	Concetta Voltolina
1999	Fazi Editore	Nino Ricci <i>Where She Has Gone</i>	McClelland and Stewart Inc.	Gabriella Iacobucci
2000	Garzanti Editore	Joe Fiorito <i>The Closer We Are to Dying</i>	McClelland & Stewart Inc.	Pier Francesco Paolini
2001	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Antonio D'Alfonso <i>Fabrizio's Passion</i>	Guernica Editions	Antonio Lombardi
2002	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Mary Melfi <i>Infertility Rites</i>	Guernica Editions	Silvana Mangione
2002	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Carole David <i>Impala</i>	Les herbes rouges	Silvana Mangione
2003	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Marco Micone <i>Trilogia</i>	VLB Éditeur Inc.	Marco Micone
2003	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Marco Micone <i>Le Figuier Enchanté</i>	Éditions du Boréal	Marcella Marcelli
2004	Schifanoia Editore	Genni Gunn <i>Mating In Captivity</i>	Quarry Press Inc.	Ada Donati
2004	Fazi Editore	Nino Ricci <i>In a Glass House</i>	Cormorant Books	Gabriella Iacobucci
2005	Cosmo Iannone Editore	F. G. Paci <i>Italian Shoes</i>	Guernica Editions	Silvana Mangione
2007	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Antonio D'Alfonso <i>In Italics</i>	Guernica Editions	Silvana Mangione
2009	Edarc Edizioni	Michael Mirolla <i>The Formal Logic of Emotion</i>	Nu-Age Editions	Elettra Bedon
2010	Edizioni del noce	Bianca Zagolin <i>L'année sauvage</i>	Groupe Ville- Marie Literature Inc.	Tonini Rubina
2011	Felici Editore Artigrafiche S.r.l.	Genni Gunn <i>Solitaria</i>	Signature Editions	Isabella Martini
2011	Cosmo Iannone Editore	Mary Melfi <i>Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother</i>	Guernica Editions	Laura Forconi Ferri

The above *subvention network* exemplifies the role of transnational “social and cultural agents actively participating in the production and reproduction of textual and discursive practices” (Inghilleri 2005, 126), while also reminding us that the agency of each of them needs the support of the others in order to express its full potential. In other words, while the capital of individual translation actors is paramount, in order to concretise the translation aims – in the current case, the effectiveness of the network is gauged on the actualization of the migrant’s literary homecoming – source and target field actors need to join forces and combine their agency and power.

4. The Intermediaries of the Journey Home: the Actors in the Italian Translational Field

Research works in the translation field adopting solely a comparative approach based on the parallel analysis of source and target texts have the aim of identifying the translation strategies adopted; however, these are only one part of the decision making process that starts with the selection of a text and ends with the distribution and promotion of the final product. Often, the translator who penned said final product is the only individual who is held accountable for the quality (or blamed for the lack) of the strategies adopted. This overlooks or neglects the relevant role played by the many agents partaking in the translational journey, and the many questions of power and ideology involved in it.

Translation, like migration, is a highly social activity shaped by decisions made and constraints dictated by multiple individuals and institutions. For this reason, in order to understand how the migrants' journey back to the ancestral land of origin via the translation of their narratives is carried out, and what happens when this occurs, in this chapter, I will look into the participants/mediators in the *translation* (intended in its accessory meaning of movement) of the translated text and how their actions affect the perception of the migrant discourse in the receiving cultural field.

The translation strategies adopted, consequently, will depend equally on the dominant discourse in force in the receiving literary field and on the individual textual intervention/manipulation by the agents of translation – in this specific case, for example, depending on whether or not they agree with the representation of the migrant discourse or with the role of translation as a homecoming. As previously noted, the idea of the return home is a dominant discourse in the works by Italian-Canadians; agents in both the source and receiving literary fields, namely translators and scholars of Italian-Canadian literature (this will be explained more in detail in the next sections) have also interpreted these works and their translation as a contribution towards the successful return home of the migrant.

Often, actually, the translations of Italian-Canadian works were initiated or encouraged by translators themselves, enthusiasts or experts in the field. The text selection and translation are mainly based on personal interest – such as a common ethnic/regional origin – or fall within a wider cultural project. Despite interest in a specific author or work, however, the initial selection and translation of a text needs to be followed up by contacting publishers, a process that can be both hard work and time-consuming (the larger the publisher, the greater the effort), unless stable relationships between these

agents already exist, such as the case of the intercultural network between Italy and Canada (via the connection between Cosmo Iannone and Guernica) seems to demonstrate.

4.1. The Italian-Canadian Network: a Focus on Translators

The translation of works by Italian-Canadians is inserted in the intricate network of relations between cultural agents and institutions on both shores. It is worth observing that the Italian actors' interest in the specific Italian-Canadian issue has been supported by the above-mentioned agreement with the Canada Council for the Arts, the institute promoting Canadian culture in the world. Specifically, of all the Italian recipients of the International Translation Grants under the Writing and Publishing Program, Cosmo Iannone, a small regional publisher, has taken the lion's share.

Amid the translation agents connected to Iannone is Gabriella Iacobucci: one of the most relevant actors in this specific network, and one who has often demonstrated her commitment towards the cause of the migrant's return. With five translations under her name¹¹⁷, Gabriella Iacobucci is one of the most prolific translators and advocates of Italian-Canadian works, especially when these originate from her own region of origin.

Born in Vinchiaturro, a town in the Molise region in Southern Italy, after her teaching career, Iacobucci decided to dedicate her time to the promotion of her native region, together with a group of fellow Molisan intellectuals. In 1992, they founded "Coordinamento dei Molisani nel Mondo", a Toronto-based group that aimed to create an international network of Molisans around the globe. During this time Iacobucci became interested in discovering and promoting writers of Molisan roots who live outside of Italy, and within the same framework, in 2005 she collaborated in the creation of the cultural association Molise d'Autore¹¹⁸, which organized several initiatives in order to promote the literary value of the region: meetings and book presentations with authors, public readings, and participation in conferences (in November 2000, Iacobucci took part in the Montreal conference of the AICW), literature festivals and events (in 2014, the Canadian Embassy in Rome invited the association for a meeting, showing their support for the creation of a network between Italy and Canada¹¹⁹).

Iacobucci took a special interest in Italian-Canadian writers with Molisan roots: Filippo Salvatore, Antonio D'Alfonso, Nino Ricci, Marco Micone, Mary Melfi, and Ermanno La Riccia. The discovery of

¹¹⁷ One of them is Ricci's trilogy *La terra del ritorno* which included the two volumes, previously published separately, *Vite dei Santi* and *Il Fratello Italiano*.

¹¹⁸ <http://molisedautore.blogspot.ca>. Last accessed March 2016.

¹¹⁹ <http://molisedautore.blogspot.ca/2014/01/molise-dautore-e-la-promozione-culturale.html>. Last accessed March 2016.

these writers ignited her desire to make them known to the Italian audience, hence her commitment as a translator. However, Iacobucci was new to this role. In an interview with Licia Canton (2002), she admits that her translation of Ricci's *Lives of the Saints* was her very first professional experience as a literary translator:

Initially I wanted to translate only a few excerpts to use in a radio series I was working on entitled *Molise d'Autore* [...] But when I leafed through the first few pages of the novel, I found something that belonged to me in them, so I decided to translate it all, to bring it back to what for me was 'its original language', Italian. Yes, because I was under a strange impression that the American language in which he described a reality that was so familiar to me was just an anomaly, a disguise. (My translation)¹²⁰

Working on the translation of works by Italian-Canadians into Italian, she came to appreciate the practice as a powerful tool that allows these Anglophone writers of Italian origin to return home through the language they used to speak (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 119). In fact, during her own translation of Ricci's *Trilogy*, Iacobucci felt as if the English language the novels were written in was an *anomaly*, a *disguise*, and her task was thus that of correcting this incongruity, bringing Ricci's words back to their original form, their original land (Canton 2002, 227).

Iacobucci has also admitted her role as initiator of the translation process of works by Italian-Canadians that were published by Cosmo Iannone Editore. She defines herself as a talent scout and confirms the existence of a receptive literary network that is willing to allow their return home. Specifically, talking about her translation of Colantonio's work she acknowledges:

When I translated the first few pages, I realized the value and originality of his biography, and I talked to a friend of mine who is the editor of a book series entitled *Notebooks on Migration* in a publishing house from Molise, Iannone (the series is dedicated to his grandparents, who were also migrants). (My translation)¹²¹

Iacobucci is clearly talking about Norberto Lombardi, who regularly contributes to Cosmo Iannone's editorial line, and who also participated to the thirteenth biennial conference of the Association of Italian Canadian writers in Italy entitled "Writing Our Way Home" in 2010, also attended by the same Iacobucci.

¹²⁰ Inizialmente volevo tradurre solo qualche brano da utilizzare in una serie radiofonica intitolata *Molise d'Autore* che stavo realizzando [...] Ma quando sfogliai le prime pagine del romanzo, e vi scoprii qualcosa che mi apparteneva, decisi di tradurlo tutto, di riportarlo a quella che per me era 'la sua lingua originaria', l'italiano. Sì, perché avevo la strana impressione che quella lingua americana in cui era descritta una realtà a me così familiare fosse solo un'anomalia, un travestimento. (Canton 2002: 227)

¹²¹ Quando poi ne tradussi le prime pagine, capii il valore e l'originalità di quel memoriale, e ne parlai a un mio amico che dirige una collana intitolata *Quaderni dell'Emigrazione per una casa editrice molisana*, la Iannone (la collana è dedicata ai nonni, che furono appunto degli emigranti). (Canton 2002, 227)

The cross-border network that has helped to support and export Italian-Canadian literature in Italy reaches beyond the two literary fields in Italy and Canada. This is because agents in a given field may also act as intermediaries in other literary systems. This is the case of Silvana Mangione, the Italian translator of Melfi's *Infertility Rites*, David's *Impala*, D'Alfonso's *In Italics* and Paci's *Italian Shoes*, all published by Cosmo Iannone Editore in the last 10 years. Mangione has been actively working for the Italian communities in North America for many years, and is the Deputy Secretary General of the General Council of Italians Abroad (CGIE) in New York as well as a collaborator of the Italian American Committee on Education – the IACE.

An Italian migrant in New York, Mangione has cooperated over the years with numerous institutional bodies and private associations in order to develop a valuable network between both local Italian organizations and institutions both in Italy and the United States, with the aim of promoting the Italian and Italian-American cultural heritage. In recognition of her involvement and commitment to the cause, she was recently appointed *Commendatore dell'Ordine al merito della Repubblica Italiana*¹²² (Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic), one of the highest ranking honours of the Republic awarded for the merits in the fields of literature, the arts, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic and humanitarian activities.

Mangione has also been a major actor in the circulation of narratives of return. Besides translating the works by the above-mentioned Italian-Canadian authors, she also translated a selection of short stories by Italian-American scholar and writer Fred Gardaphé, published in 2010 under the title *Importato dall'Italia* (tr.: imported from Italy) by L'Idea Press in its series "Scrittori Italiani all'Esterò" (tr.: Italian writers abroad)¹²³. The publication of *Importato dall'Italia* was also supported by a transnational cultural body: in September 2009, the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago hosted an event to publicize the volume.

Mangione is also the Editorial Director for said publisher, which was "founded on the premise of serving a share of the public so far ignored or neglected both by the editorial elite and the large publishers who aim their books at the Italian-American community" while also providing "'informazione di ritorno', that is of bringing back to Italy the information about the Italians in America". With this aim in mind, L'Idea Publications' editorial line includes the "publication of

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<http://www.quirinale.it/elementi/Onorificenze.aspx?pag=1&qIdOnorificenza=60&cognome=&nome=&daAnno=1800&aAnno=2014&luogoNascita=&testo=&ordinamento=2>. Last accessed May 2016.

¹²³ Ideapress is also responsible for the Italian-American online publication L'Idea Magazine <http://www.lideamagazine.com/idea-press>. Last accessed May 2016.

Italian-American authors in translation, available in Italy but also distributed to the American public, and of Italian authors in translation” and, more recently, “Italian-American authors published in English in order to introduce these deserving writers to a large audience”.¹²⁴

The Italian-American editorial line directed by Mangione expressly pursues the aim of celebrating Italian otherness and committing to the discourse of the return home. Mangione’s confidence in the transnational relevance of Italian-Canadian and Italian-American literary discourses matches her commitment to the homecoming cause: whether in the United States or Canada, Mangione believes that the hyphenated-Italian discourse is oriented towards a common idea of a return to the origin.

These return journeys via translation are usually facilitated and supported by existing double bonds between the source and target literary fields. The network of relations between significant individuals and institutions of both Canadian and Italian cultural fields is shaped by and, conversely, shapes the combined *social capital* – the collection of resources connected to the membership in the network – and each agent’s own prestige or social honour, the *symbolic capital*.

This is, for instance, the case of Italian-Canadian author Genni Gunn, who is also an agent operating in the Canadian literary translation field. Gunn translated into English the poetry collections by Italian poet Dacia Maraini *Devour Me Too* (1987), a finalist for the John Glassco Translation Prize, and *Travelling in the Gait of a Fox* (1992), a finalist for the Premio Internazionale Diego Valeri for Literary Translation. Profiting from Gunn’s symbolic capital acquired through the translation of Maraini’s works, the Italian publisher advertised Gunn’s return to Italy via translation (in 2013 her novel *Solitaria* was translated into Italian) by stressing the author’s agency within the Italian literary system and her alliance with a local contemporary canonical author: “The Canadian translator of Dacia Maraini is out to conquer the Italian publishing market!”¹²⁵ The network of relations in place between the two cultural fields is made even more explicit on the back cover of the Italian edition, where the same poet Dacia Maraini confirms the value of translation as a return to the origins:

Finally, Vito, Piera, Sandro and the whole Santoro family find again their own language in the first Italian translation of *Solitaria*. In a crescendo of dramatic tension, the fragments of their past disarrange and recombine constantly and, eventually, reveal the many nuances of the impossible truth of their lives’ fresco¹²⁶.

¹²⁴ <http://www.lideamagazine.com/idea-publications>. Last accessed May 2016.

¹²⁵ “La traduttrice canadese di Dacia Maraini, alla conquista del mercato editoriale italiano!” See:

<http://www.feliceditore.it/index.php?pagina=prodotti&idElemento=1110&mode=6>. Last accessed March 2016.

¹²⁶ “Finalmente Vito, Piera, Sandro e tutta la famiglia Santoro ritrovano la loro lingua nella prima traduzione italiana di *Solitaria*. In un crescendo di tensione drammatica, i frammenti del loro passato si scompigliano e si ricombinano di continuo per rivelare solo alla fine, nelle sue molteplici sfumature, la verità impossibile dell’affresco delle loro vite”.

(Gunn 2013; my translation)

The symbolic connection between Maraini and Gunn lies beyond Gunn's two translations of Maraini's collections of poems and Maraini's pledge on the back cover of Gunn's work, and extends to their migrant life stories. Maraini herself had experienced exile, having spent seven years of her childhood in Japan, two of which in a Japanese concentration camp, returning to Italy only after the end of World War II. Her nostalgic memoir *Bagheria* (1993) recounts her personal journey to Bagheria, her own homecoming to the native Sicilian town.

It was in 1947 that I saw Bagheria for the first time. I arrived from Palermo where I had come in the boat from Naples, and before that in another boat, an ocean liner, from Tokyo. Two years of war, two years in a concentration camp: crossing oceans strewn with mines [...] On the quayside we got into a carriage that would take us to Bagheria. We loaded it with all our belongings, which were in fact quite meagre, because we had come from Japan, without either money or possessions, stripped bare, with nothing on our backs except the clothes handed out by the American military.

(Maraini translated by Kitto and Spottiswood 2013, 1-2)

Maraini's words are reminiscent of many works by Italian-Canadians who experienced migration and the strong desire to return to the land of origin.

Among other translators that have endorsed the return of Italian-Canadian authors to the homeland many are scholars: Carmen Concilio (also a translator of J.M. Coetzee), Elettra Bedon, Isabella Martini, Concetta Voltolina (who currently resides in Québec), Rosamaria Plevano (an Italian-Canadianist who wrote a thesis on poet Antonino Mazza), Giulia de Gasperi (the Vice-President of the AICW), and Laura Forconi Ferri. For many, as in the case of Gabriella Iacobucci, the translation of Italian-Canadian works is the very first work in the translatorial/literary field, meaning that the translated work is consequently invested with little social and/or symbolic capital.

4.2. The Italian-Canadian Network: a Focus on Publishers

As far as the translators' capital and visibility are concerned, it is interesting to observe that only a few publishers have openly credited translators for their work. Because translators receive less acknowledgement for their endeavour, their authorship as translators is questioned and the very nature of the translated work is obscured, inducing readers to believe that the translated work was actually originally written in Italian.

Contrarily to this tendency to not include the translator's name on the front page of the book – possibly believing that the Italian-sounding name of the authors and the absence of the translators'

names will help gain a readership hostile to translations – Iannone and Marlin Editore print translators’ names on the front cover (in both cases under the title), as shown in the two covers presented below.

Figure 2 Covers of two Italian-Canadian works translated into Italian

	
Cover of a translated volume published Iannone Editore. Under the title is the caption “Traduzione di” followed by the translator’s name.	Cover of a translated volume published by Merlin, under the title appears the caption “Traduzione di” followed by the translator’s name.

While playing a major role in the consecration of authors who get translated, translation has also the power to affect its agents – i.e. publishing houses – and their capital. Prestigious publishers, holders of significant literary capital, can legitimize the authors they translate and publish; conversely, publishing houses that do not own significant capital may accumulate more by translating celebrated works (Serry 2002). For publishers, foreign (migrant) works are symbolic goods: they become a way of accumulating symbolic capital, especially when said cultural agents are new or peripheral within the literary field they play in, or when the translated work they publish has gained considerable recognition abroad.

4.2.1. Cosmo Iannone Editore

Among the agents interacting within the network created by the translation flows of Italian-Canadian literature to Italy, one has come to occupy a central role in the return journey of said authors:

the Italian publisher Cosmo Iannone, a small publishing house¹²⁷ that was constituted in the mid 1980s in Isernia, Molise. As noted above, while Molise is not a region with a specific relevance for the translation or literary markets, this is the area many Italian-Canadian authors or their families originally came from. Regionalism, in fact, played an important part in Cosmo Iannone's initial steps in the publishing field, shaping their engagement and allegiance even today.

Viewed here as an interest for a specific region or area of a country, regionalism is far from being irrelevant in the domain of literature: in the case of Iannone, it has shaped the entire agenda and editorial line of a publishing house that is now oriented towards "the knowledge of the Southern territory (of Italy) and the attention to folklore" (my translation)¹²⁸, as clearly stated by the publisher itself. While seemingly conflicting with the current agenda of the internationalized publishing industry to open up to other voices from the outside, regionalism creates a space of resistance against homogenization that supports the 'local Other', even more so when the local is presently residing abroad.

Similarly, regionalism is also behind the building and supporting of migrant networks worldwide: regionalism shapes global migrant movements, creating international networks that encourage and support migrants in the countries of arrival on the basis of a common local root, which often influences the cultural productions of these groups¹²⁹.

The depiction of the many faces and voices of regionalism – with a special eye to its southern expressions – represents one of the main objectives of Iannone Editore and occupies the core of the publisher's catalogue. Besides and coincidental to the interest in the local aspects of culture, their catalogue shows an interest in the migrant discourse, offering four distinct sections dedicated to it. The preference for this type of literature makes it possible to pinpoint the publisher's logic behind importing many Italian-Canadian works.

Iannone's editorial line dedicated to the migrant theme reads as follows:

- *Quaderni sulle migrazioni* (tr.: Notebooks on Migration) is a series directed by Norberto Lombardi, which currently comprises 31 volumes and collects studies that investigate the complexity of the migration phenomenon. Works in this collection depict the moment of departure but also the construction and development of migrant communities upon arrival in the host countries. Among

¹²⁷ Their catalogue currently comprises around 300 volumes.

¹²⁸ "La conoscenza del territorio del Mezzogiorno e verso l'attenzione per il mondo delle tradizioni popolari". From the publisher's website: http://www.cosmoiannone.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=13. Last accessed May 2016.

¹²⁹ This is the case of the many regional organizations of Italian migrants abroad, such as the *Famee Furlane*, an association of Italian migrants from the Friuli region involved with all aspects of community life.

the works published in this line are D'Alfonso's series of essays *In Italics: In Defense of Ethnicity*, originally published in Canada by Guernica in 1996 and translated to Italian by Silvana Mangione under the title of *In Corsivo Italico* in 2009, and Frank Colantonio's *From the Ground Up: An Italian Immigrant's Story* (1993) translated by Iacobucci under the title *Nei cantieri di Toronto: storia di un emigrante italiano* (2000). *Quaderni sulle migrazioni* also includes two other works by an Italian-Canadian who returned home and continued his writing activity in Italian: Pietro Corsi's *Halifax* and *L'ambasciatore di Don Bosco*.

- *I Memoriali* is a small series, which comprises 5 works, collecting personal biographies and collective memoirs. Duliani's *Città senza donne* (2003) was published under this category.
- *Reti*, as the name of the series suggests, is a collection of works witnessing the existence of transnational literary networks. Directed by Lombardi, and originally conceived as a series of works by writers of Italian origin abroad (the hyphenated Italians), it has gradually started accommodating literature by authors of the host countries (Canada, for instance) in order to symbolize the integration of migrants and the subsequent creation of international bonds between the two countries thanks to migration (and translation). Numerous Italian-Canadians appear among the 19 works published under *Reti*, especially in translation: *Italian Shoes* by Frank Paci (2002) in its 2007 Italian translation by Silvana Mangione entitled *Scarpe italiane*, Melfi's *Infertility Rites* (1991) also translated by Silvana Mangione under the title of *Riti di Infertilità* (2002), *Ritorno in Italia, conversazioni con mia madre* (2012), the recent Italian translation of Melfi's *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009) by Laura Ferri, Marcella Marcelli's translation of Micone's *Le figuier enchanté* (1992) entitled *Il fico Magico*, *Impala* (1994) by Carol David translated by Silvana Mangione in 2003, and *La Passione di Fabrizio* (2002), the translation of the French novel *Avril ou L'anti-passion* (1990) and its English self-translation by the same author *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995). Besides these translations, *Reti* includes three works by Giose Rimaneli, all originally written in Italian or in the dialect of his region of origin, Molise: *Famiglia – Memoria di emigrazione* (2000), *Gioco d'amore/Amore del gioco* (2002) and *Il viaggio* (2003).
- Lastly, *Kumacreola* is curated by Armando Gnisci, a scholar of comparative and transcultural literature. The series, which currently comprises 23 works, hosts essays and fiction, with an eye to contemporary migration and postcolonial and intercultural studies. This series is specifically dedicated to the integration of immigrants, the new Italians, into the Italian literary field.

Starting from the 1990s, Cosmo Iannone has contributed to the appearance of many works by Italian-Canadians in the Italian literary field, making the most of the social and cultural capital

collected within migrant literature by Italians abroad. Despite it being a small publisher, Cosmo Iannone plays an important role in promoting otherness and thus offering a literary alternative to canonical/established literature, serving a niche market in the Italian literary field. By including Italian-Canadian authors in a group that is composed of Italian regional authors as well as Italian immigrants, the publisher's mission is now "no longer that of welcoming the foreigner within a system that obliterates him but of promoting the togetherness of those foreigners that we all recognize ourselves to be" (Kristeva 1991, 2-3; translated by Leon S. Roudiez).

4.2.1.1. *Letteratura italiana della migrazione: a Parallel Between Immigrant and Emigrant Hyphenated Italians*

Besides his role as editor at Cosmo Iannone, Armando Gnisci has been working specifically with literature written in Italian by immigrants in Italy¹³⁰, and firmly believes that these works should be incorporated in the definition of Italian literature and, more specifically, in the *letteratura italiana della migrazione*: they belong to it because they were originally written in Italian¹³¹ and show the migrant's commitment to address and integrate with the indigenous population. However, as Gnisci (2003) specifies, these authors occupy a new zone of Italian literature, characterized by specific thematic elements and special conditions under which the writing occurs, which allows me to draw a parallel with the Italian-Canadian group. Similarly, works in Canada that do not adhere to the canon, such as writings by migrants or their descendants, are often confined to a distinct literary subsystem often labelled as *ethnic* (or minority).

Having been excluded by the canon, specifically for engaging in themes and circumstances that depict a different idea of *Italianness*, literature by Italian immigrants leads us to question the position of works produced by Italian nationals abroad within the Italian literary field. It often appears that literature by hyphenated Italians (such as Italian-Canadians) is also considered as part of the *letteratura italiana della migrazione* sub-system: a variegated literary system that knows no geographical border nor linguistic boundary but whose works are bonded by their not belonging to the canon, being the result of centripetal and centrifugal migration movements that have either as source or target centre

¹³⁰ Such as Brazilian born Marcia Theophilo and Christiana de Caldas Brito, Albanian-born Ron Kubati, Italian-born of Somali origin Igiaba Scego and Uxax Cristina Ali Farah, Egyptian-born Ingy Mubiayi Kakese and Cameroon-born Ndjock Ngana Yogo Ndjock.

¹³¹ Similarly, works by Italian-Canadians (or other hyphenated Canadians) written in one of the two official languages of Canada and produced while on/for the Canadian territory are, for this reason, considered as part of the multicultural Canadian literary field.

Italy, the place where the concept of *italianità* is undoubtedly grounded.

According to Gnisci, the voices of hyphenated Italians have been neglected, just like those of Italian immigrant writers have been for a long time, despite the fact that they represent part of Italian heritage and history: “to always and institutionally forget them, dare I say, is a real crime of civil and historical consciousness of Italians” (My translation) ¹³².

This is also confirmed by Joseph Pivato when, talking about the role of Italian-Canadian writer Elena Maccaferri Randaccio within the Italian literary field, he asserts that:

for decades the practitioners of *Italianistica* had ignored her and her work, and now some of these people doubted her very existence. From the perspective of the Italian literary institution Randaccio did not exist. She was writing outside Italy and did not have any recognition either from the writers' groups or from the academy.

(Pivato 1996, 228)

Too often, indeed, the migrant past of Italy has been neglected or forgotten. Such carelessness towards the many Italian migrants abroad and their cultural products is also confirmed by little interest shown by Italian scholarship in the question; at the time of writing, Gnisci could count only a handful of scholars working on literature by Italians abroad, some of whom were actually operating from abroad, and only some attention was given from the adjoining domains of anthropology and sociology.

Committed to the cause of promoting a new idea of *Italianness*, Gnisci and Cosmo Iannone have often been present at the *Salone del Libro* of Turin, one of the most important literary fairs of Italy, as well as other influential expositions in the literary field. On these occasions the publisher, presenting its latest productions, has reaffirmed an interest in the issues of migration, ethnicity and interculturality.

Whereas Cosmo Iannone has undoubtedly played a major role in the circulation of works by Italians living abroad, while also promoting the discourse of a return home of the migrant in the target literary field¹³³, none of the works it has published has yet attained the status of bestseller or reached the notoriety of some of the works available under the publishing house Fazi, which offers a different position in terms of involvement in the return of Italian-Canadian literature to its ancestral homeland.

¹³² “Dimenticarli sempre e istituzionalmente, oserei dire, è un vero e proprio delitto della coscienza storica e civile italiana” (2003: 80).

¹³³ In this case, the migrants' return to the home literary field can be interpreted as welcoming them into the new canon of Italian literature.

4.2.2. Fazi Editore

Fazi Editore¹³⁴ is a large publisher founded in Rome in 1994 by Elido Fazi, who had previously worked in the editorial field for *The Economist* in the United Kingdom. In 1995, the same Elido Fazi translated *The Fall of Hyperion* by John Keats into Italian, one of the very first works to be published by the newly born publishing house, which at the time only distributed fifteen works a year. Soon however, the prominence (and size) of the publisher, which was mainly interested in the literary classics of both poetry and fiction, changed when its presence was acknowledged by the Italian literary field thanks to the translation into Italian of some of the previously unpublished novels by John Fante: *1933 Was a Bad Year* and *West of Rome*.

Following the success of Fante's works, translations of foreign fiction (as well as essays) became one of the pivotal points in the publishing house's editorial line. Some of the publisher's best-seller translations over the years include: Gore Vidal, Robert McLiam Wilson, Paula Fox, Stephenie Meyer, Elizabeth Strout, Michel Onfray, Boris Pahor, Cesarina Vighy, and others. Among Fazi's many translated works, the name of one the most celebrated Italian-Canadian authors stands out: Nino Ricci.

4.2.2.1. The Case of Nino Ricci's Trilogy

Ricci's work is emblematic of the migrant return journey, especially within the Italian-Canadian framework; for this reason it represents an exception in the editorial line of a publisher that does not expressly focus on migration, or otherness more broadly. The Italian translation of the first volume of his trilogy *Lives of the Saints* (1990) was originally published by the small printing house Monteleone Editore in 1994 with the title *Vite dei santi* under the initiative of translator Gabriella Iacobucci¹³⁵, and with no support from the Canada Council (while the following volumes received grants for their translation). Monteleone Editore, however, failed to distribute *Vite dei santi* properly (Canton 2002, 230) and, for this reason, in February 2000, Iacobucci's translation of the third and final volume of the trilogy, *Where She Has Gone* (1997), was endorsed to Fazi Editore. The trilogy was finally completed¹³⁶ and distributed in a whole volume in 2004 by Fazi under the significant title *La Terra del Ritorno* (tr.: The Land of the Return, while the titles of each chapter were "Vite dei santi", "La casa di

¹³⁴ All the information about the publisher contained in this section were retrieved on the company's website: <http://www.fazieditore.it/ChiSiamo.aspx>

¹³⁵ I will return shortly to her commitment to promote Italian-Canadian authors, especially from the Molise region.

¹³⁶ Until that day the second volume, *In a Glass House* had not been translated into Italian.

vetro” and “Il fratello italiano”).

The publication of the translation of the entire *bildungsroman* centered on the protagonist Vittorio Innocente followed the launch of the homonymous Italian-Canadian televised miniseries based on the trilogy. This was doubtless an attempt to exploit the distribution of said onscreen production¹³⁷ and promote a work that had previously received little attention; indeed, at the time the series was televised in Italy only the first and last volumes of the trilogy had been distributed in Italy, and with little success (Baldo 2011). The Italian title – the same as the TV series – stresses and reframes the novel and its translation as a homecoming¹³⁸ of both the protagonist Vittorio Innocente and the novelist Nino Ricci. Despite it being an evident and underlying *topos* in the trilogy, Ricci had not made this element explicit in the title of the three original works.

The support that the televised product and the agents belonging to the transnational cultural network – the mini-series featured international film star Sophia Loren, who surely had a major role in publicizing it – provided for the translation of the novels shows how the *translational field*, with the processes taking place within it, is a complex structure of continuous interaction with numerous other agents inside and outside of it.

It is important to understand how the various agents respond to the demands of the cultural arena to appreciate the translator’s interaction with the surrounding environment and the *translational habitus* (Simeoni 1998), the “internalized position of the translator in his field of practice” (12), the translation strategies adopted, the involvement of other agents of translation, and the demands of said field on editors, illustrators, critics, etc., and how these shape the final product and its discourse.

4.2.2.1.1. Agents of Translation: Roles and Influences

Besides the intervention of out-of-field agents (such as actors in the film industry) in the production and diffusion of the Italian translation of *Lives of the Saints*, *agents of translation* proper have also contributed to the discourse of homecoming. Italian translator Gabriella Iacobucci, who

¹³⁷ The mini-series based on the best-selling, award-winning trilogy by Italian-Canadian author Nino Ricci Italian-Canadian was a co-production between Capri Films (Canada) and Mediatrade (Italy) in association with CTV Network and was directed by Jerry Ciccoritti, himself a second-generation Italian-Canadian. Baldo (2008, 2011, 2013) has worked extensively on the Italian translation of Ricci’s trilogy and its screen adaptation.

¹³⁸ A similar procedure was carried out in the translation into Italian of Mary Melfi’s *Italy Revisited* (2009), purposely renamed *Ritorno in Italia* (2012). The memoir in the form of a mother and daughter duologue, a journey in time, and in the memory and roots of the writer, becomes in its Italian translation a return to the place of origin, Italy.

worked on the translation of a number of Italian-Canadian works besides Ricci's novels¹³⁹, also perceives translation as a means to allow Ricci to write back to his country of origin in the original language¹⁴⁰: "I decided to translate it all, to bring it back to what for me was 'its original language', Italian" (Canton 2002, 227; my translation).

Moreover, the discourse of a return to the land of origin is also visually supported by Fazi through the choice of a specific paratext to accompany the Italian translation of the complete trilogy.

Figure 3 Covers of the Ricci's translated volumes

Cover of <i>Vite dei santi</i> , translation of <i>Lives of the Saints</i> , published by Monteleone (1994).	Cover of <i>Il fratello italiano</i> , translation of <i>Where She Has Gone</i> , published by Fazi Editore (2000).	Cover of <i>La terra del ritorno</i> , volume containing the complete trilogy, published by Fazi Editore (2004).

In fact, in the last and collective translated volume Fazi decided to re-insert the trilogy into the migrant discourse it originally belonged to: while the first two covers, published by Monteleone and Fazi respectively, feature abstract images that do not frame the narrative into any specific genre, the front cover of the Italian trilogy depicts a young boy – probably a migrant – on a boat, reminiscent of

¹³⁹ Among her translation of Italian-Canadian works are: Frank Colantonio's *Nei cantieri di Toronto* (2000), published by Molisan publisher Cosmo Iannone Editore and Mary Di Michele's *Canto d'amore* (2004), published by Marlin Editore. Iacobucci is also the founder of Molise d'Autore, an association that aims to promote authors of Molisan roots, like Ricci.

¹⁴⁰ This concept was reiterated by Iacobucci in a talk she gave at the University of Bologna on April 20, 2011 entitled "Translating Otherness: from Italy to Canada and Return," in which she explored the idea of translation (from English into Italian) as return to the land of origin for first and second-generation Italian-Canadian authors such as the above-mentioned Ricci, Colantonio and di Michele.

the protagonist Vittorio and his journey to Canada.

Fazi Editore's decision to (re-)distribute the translation of the book and to readdress the migrant discourse in 2004 was influenced by the several prizes Ricci had won in his native Canada, including the Governor General's Award for Fiction for *Lives of the Saints* in 1990, and coincided with an increasing interest in the topic of migration¹⁴¹ as witnessed by the winner of the previous year's Strega literary prize: Mazzucco's migrant novel *Vita*¹⁴².

The film adaptation of Ricci's trilogy contributed to the promotion of the Italian translation by Fazi that followed, and to the notoriety of the author and his work in his own *terra del ritorno*. Following the publicity around the two events that allowed Ricci's translation home, a series of cultural events were organized and dedicated to the author and his homecoming. One example is the 2007 Literary Festival consecrated to John Fante in the Abruzzo region, to which Ricci was invited as a representative of Italian-Canadian Anglophone literature together with Mary di Michele, and the 2011 cultural event entitled "Nino Ricci incontra La Terra del Ritorno" (literally: Nino Ricci meets the land of the return) organized by the association Terra Osca in Villacanale, in the Molise region.

To summarize, as seen in the case of Ricci's trilogy, while publishers do not often commit explicitly to the migrant cause, the distribution of such works is often inserted into a discourse of the return of the migrant as conducted by translation actors of the receiving field: from a translator's firm belief in and adherence to the idea of translation as repatriation, to the overt reference to a homecoming in titles and paratexts of the translations, as well as cultural (and extra-literary) events in which authors are praised as successful returnees, the role of these agents is paramount.

4.3. One Less Intermediary: Self-Translation Offers a Different Type of Homecoming

The desire for a homecoming has proved impossible to realize for many migrant writers, who are left with a sense of disillusionment for not having found a way to be re-integrated into their ancestral land of origin. Much like any migrant needs the support of many agents upon arrival in the host country

¹⁴¹ Moreover, Italian citizens abroad were granted the right to vote starting 2001, allowing Italian migrants to participate in an Italian political referendum for the first time in 2003, and later on in several elections.

¹⁴² *Vita* is a fictional biography of Mazzucco's grandfather; the novel is set in the early XX century New York and deals with the mass Italian emigration to the United States. In Italy, the novel brought to the forefront of the literary field a matter that had long been denied by Italian society as a whole, trying to fill that gap in the historical Italian collective consciousness to which I referred earlier. *Vita*, however, represents an exceptional case within the migrant framework analyzed here: first and foremost, the novel was originally written in Italian; moreover, while blending fiction and autobiography, the story is recounted by the granddaughter of the protagonist from the source country, to which her family finally returned.

to help them adjust to the new environment and face the hardship this could represent, repatriation can prove just as difficult. The longer the migrant has been away from their home country, the more difficult the assimilation will be. The cultural gap grows deeper and deeper in time while both migrants and their country transform.

In the case of first-generation Italian migrant writers, we witness either a prompt repatriation (such as in the case of Rimanelli and Corsi) or a decision to permanently remain on Canadian soil, which often leads to rare visits to the homeland later in life. This, obviously, reflects on the language chosen for their literary works: while in the first case, authors use their native language throughout their production (underlining the provisional nature of their Canadian experience and their desire not to integrate, at least from a literary viewpoint), the latter group makes an effort to assimilate to the receiving culture by adopting its languages – the cultural and linguistic transition is often made more readily when they arrive in Canada at a young age (as is the case of *Generation 1.5* writers Genni Gunn or Pasquale Verdicchio).

In the case of those first-generation migrants who assimilated linguistically and culturally to the new country and those who were born in Canada to Italian parents (the second generation), or their descendants (the third generation), English and French became the main – if not only – literary languages. Often, even those who possessed a (near) native proficiency in the language of the old country did not possess the literary tools to produce works of artistic value. For this reason, while there is no physical obstacle to impede their return (they could still be able to visit Italy anytime and have everyday conversations with the locals), the linguistic and cultural divide hinders the migrant's successful return as an artist to the land of origin.

An exception is presented by those authors who, thanks to their linguistic abilities, undertake self-translation: “the act of translating one's own writings into another language” (Grutman 2009, 257). The motives behind self-translation (or *rewriting*) are both multiple and subjective, and are today a topic of growing interest. Susan Bassnett (2013) unfolds some of the reasons for which authors decide to self-translate: the desire to find a real poetic voice, the search for an identity, the necessity to widen the reading audience and the political aim of promoting a minority language.

Surely, the capacity to produce written works worthy of literary credit in the language of the country of origin is an effective way of making one's return to it without the intercession of a third party, the translator. Among the few Italian-Canadian authors who have made a literary return to Italy,

four have done so through self-translation¹⁴³: Duliani with his *Città senza donne* (1946), Bianca Zagolin with her *Una donna alla finestra: in attesa della vita* (1998) – self-translated in collaboration with Concetta Voltolina Kosseim, Gianna Patriarca *Donne italiane e altre tragedie* (2009), with the help of Maria Grazia Nalli, and Licia Canton's *Vino alla mandorla e fertilità* (2015), self-published and self-translated with the help of a group of scholars and students. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that most of these self-translations are the result of collaborative work, and only one of them was conducted by the author alone: Mario Duliani's. This possibly suggests that only the Istrian writer possessed the linguistic skills and confidence to accomplish a return home via self-translation (as Patriarca's assertion that will follow below clearly indicates).

While the details of the self-translation process and product do not pertain to the present dissertation, in that they do not testify to the number and relevance of the many other agents that participate in the 'typical' translational return home (especially since the name penning both the source text and its translation is the same), the particularity of their repatriation is that this journey is carried out through translation, nevertheless. In other words, in all cases the Italian self-translations follow the source English or French text; while the desire to recount the story of their life is first translated into the language of the country they now live in, the realization of a possible return can only be carried out through the translational act.

From this perspective, the fact that they do not need an intermediary (the translator) can be seen as a privileged position, an authority over and agency in two texts that is available to neither monolingual writers nor literary translators. The double agency and authority rest entirely on their role as both writers and translators, which correspondingly relies on their special relationship with language(s).

The self-translator's real freedom, then, would reside in this unique possibility of carving out a niche, a possibility that stems largely from her doubly privileged status as an author(ity) and as an authorized agent.

(Grutman and Van Bolderen 2014, 324)

¹⁴³ Six Italian-Canadians epitomize the phenomenon of self-translation, but some of them have either self translated between French and English alternatively, or have conceived their self-translation for the Canadian market field: Mario Duliani (who self-translates from French to Italian), Dôre Michelut, Gianna Patriarca and Licia Canton (alternating between Italian, regional dialects and English, so that it is difficult to identify the directionality of the translation flows), Marco Micone and his tripartite self-translation (from French to Italian, and back into French), Antonio D'Alfonso and his bidirectional English-French self-translations. These cases form part of the wider self-translation practice that is recurrent in multicultural Canada.

Their twofold role as authorizing and authorized agent is, however, far from unproblematic: the writing/translating process originates from and struggles with the need to reconcile the multiple selves and to feel at home in one's own language(s), as a result of their cultural and linguistic displacement.

In Duliani's case, for instance, self-translation mirrors and fights the double deracination and dislocation lived by the author: first, the linguistic one, experienced by all migrants (in his case involving Italian and French) and, secondly, the physical one, related not only to his migration to France and then Canada, but his forced move into the camp. The real agency expressed with his self-translation, more than a simple return to the homeland, is the act of liberation from a double confinement/isolation.

Bianca Zagolin's self-translation of *Une femme à la fenêtre*, instead, does see the intervention of an external agent that allows Zagolin's text to make its way home. Her 1988 French novel was translated into Italian only in 1998 in a joint effort of Zagolin and a fellow Italian teacher from Vanier College in Montreal: Concetta Voltolina Kosseim. The small publisher Del Noce inserted this self-translation in the collection *Letteratura dell'altra Italia* (tr.: Literature of the Other Italy), which until then included only works by Italian authors abroad that were originally written in Italian.

Patriarca self-translated *Donne italiane e Altre tragedie* to Italian with the help of Maria Grazia Nalli, and published the volume in 2009 with the small Toronto-based publisher LyricalMyrical Press. The choice of a local Canadian publishing house indicates that the verses in Italian were likely to be intended for an audience of fellow Italian-Canadians. In fact, as the writer herself confesses: “[o]ne of the people who read my translation [...] said that it didn't meet the standards of proper Italian, and that it needed a lot of work, because the Italians would ‘laugh me out of the country’ with my translation” (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 156-157).

On the difficulties encountered by most migrant writers in bridging the linguistic divide, she states: “I have Grade 3 Italian, so I found it challenging and fun to translate my own work but it was not easy” (156). Despite the complexity of the translational process, a complexity that is partly due to the foreignness of the lost mothertongue – “Italian is not my language anymore” (161), the translation of her work into Italian represents for Patriarca a way to return to the home country, a “passport back” (160), and a way to pacify her inner tensions, “a validation that I belonged somewhere” (161).

Patriarca was not new to self-translation, as shown in her sixth book of poetry, *My Etruscan Face* (2007), where she self-translated an entire poem. In the bilingual *Sono ciociara /I am ciociara* all her migrant discomfort of being caught in-between cultures and languages resonates in (and is doubled by) her two languages: the Ciociaro dialect and English.

Table 6 Gianna Patriarca's *Sono ciociara* and her Italian self-translation *I am ciociara*

[...] I legge le parole che tu si scritt E mi sent tant abbandunaya Perchè sacce Ca tu si uluto bene A na terra, a ne paese Si cunusciuto na storia Incence i me la So inventata E pure stu dialetto Mezz stuort e sturdit Me fa capi La mia cundanna (Patriarca 2007, 24)	[...] I read the words you write and Feel abandoned one more time Because I know you loved a land A town You have a history I keep inventing mine Even this half drunk And broken dialect I write reminds me How condemned I am (Patriarca 2007, 25)
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The latest case of self-translation is offered by Licia Canton, who was aided by a group of Italian-Canadianists in the translation of her short stories contained in the source volume *Almond Wine and Fertility* (2008) and self-published in Italy under the title of *Vino alla mandorla e fertilità* (2015), her very first book to be published in the land of her birth.

To conclude, the advantages of self-translation lie in the fact that this provides the migrant author with a more direct experience of the homecoming process and gives more visibility to the agent of translation and to the creativity of the translational process itself. Whereas, usually, the translator is deemed invisible, displaced by the author who is universally considered as the most important. The problem with translation is that it is still widely considered as a 'second-best' literary activity, in which creativity is a gift and a liberty allowed only to the original author, a preconception that self-translators – thanks to their privileged position – try to dismantle.

5. Conclusions

What emerges from the attention given to the topic by scholars and writers is the need to move the debate around Italian-Canadian literature beyond national and linguistic borders of Canada. Having established themselves or carved out a niche role within the big multicultural and multilingual mosaic of Canadian Literature, these authors now realize the necessity of making their voices heard elsewhere and, expressly, in the land of their origin. Inasmuch as the migrant discourse offered by many of them is universal and shared and understood by many regardless of their ethnic origin, their narratives present linguistic and thematic features that indicate that the 'place' their voices wish to reach is that of

their ancestral home: Italy.

The allegiance to the motherland is evident in both their work and in some of the interviews they have given, and so is the frustration of not being able to fully return. This has two main reasons: on the one hand, it is impossible to find the idealized place that no longer exists and, on the other, the difficulties created by the cultural and linguistic divide between these authors and the ancestral land of origin cannot be bridged. Their need to find a different way to make a homecoming becomes a priority.

The homecoming of the migrant is a recurrent literary *topos* that has been readily recognized and endorsed by the agents of the source fields who understood its appeal in terms of exoticism; in fact, in the case of Italian-Canadian works, both scholars and publishers have started framing these narratives within the discourse around the migrant's return. While for some, the first physical journey home was the creative force that inspired their work, for many, the *passion du retour* remains incomplete, unsatisfied, because it stays secluded in the fictional world. This is where the role of translation and its agents can be most appreciated in facilitating the return.

The above analysis of the (limited) translation field of Italian-Canadian literature in Italy had the purpose of shifting the attention towards those who have contributed to the return home of the migrant. Within the framework of the sociological approaches to Translation Studies, whose main aim is to encourage a perspective on translation that encompasses its human and social aspects, this investigation first and foremost supports the visibility and the effective agency of the translator, and then highlights how every translator belonging to a cultural and literary field is actually embedded in a complex network of transnational relations, a glue that holds the original text and its translation together.

Analyzing textual and paratextual elements proves fundamental, since these elements constitute the backbone of every translation product; however, we shall not dwell only on the idea of translation as a product, but consider it a migration-like process, therefore taking into consideration all the extra-textual elements that come into play – “statements made by translators, editors, publishers, and other persons involved in or connected with the activity, critical appraisals of individual translations, or the activity of a translator or ‘school’ of translators” (Toury 1995, 65).

Translation – like migration – is dependant on and connected to the social and cultural institutions in both the source and the target field (for instance, the Centro di Cultura Canadese and the International Centre for Migrant Literatures at the University of Udine¹⁴⁴, and the Centro Siena-

¹⁴⁴ More information regarding the Centro di Cultura Canadese can be found at the website: <http://ccc.uniud.it>. The university of Udine has been a relevant hub for studies on Italian-Canadian literature in the past decade; here research in the field is conducted both at the Centro di Cultura Canadese and at the Centre for Migrant Literatures. The Centro di Cultura Canadese research institute, which has established an ongoing collaboration with the AICW, has had the fundamental role

Toronto at the University of Siena have been playing a key role in the cultural and academic promotion of these voices in Italy)¹⁴⁵: they influence the choice of the texts, their production and distribution and, more or less indirectly, the translation strategies that will eventually shape the discourses produced by the text and their effects on the target audience.

The influence of all actors in a successful return of the migrant via translation is all but marginal. For instance, the translator's symbolic capital, the prestige and social recognition built after years of a career in the field and the critical acclaim received for their work, what is often referred to as reputation, can influence the reception of the work their name is associated with. Frequently, in the case of a niche market such as that of Italian-Canadian literature, these translations are assigned to less prestigious pens. This is because these works are often considered 'risky' in terms of economic returns, and publishers feel less confident in investing in them.

There is a correlation between the size and prestige of the publishing house and the status and reputation of the translator chosen for the translations (see the case of Garzanti and the choice of award winner translator Pier Francesco Paolini for Fiorito's work, to which I will turn in the next chapter). The success of the book in translation depends on a wealth of factors, among which the agency and status of all actors play a role. Their agency in allowing a successful return is visible in every decision taken regarding the translation process: from the choice of the work to be translated, to the translator assigned for the task and the translation strategies adopted, ending with the circulation of the final product, such as the publisher's allotment of funds for an adequate promotion of the final work. Consequently, if by its simple existence a translation offers a chance of a homecoming for the migrant writer, its actual success in this regard is dependant, firstly, on the quality of the literary work and its appeal for the target audience and, only subsequently, on the many choices that constitute the translational process, as explored in the following chapter.

of giving support and promoting Italian-Canadian literature in Italy. It was founded in 1998 and it is now directed by Anna Pia De Luca. The Centre for Migrant Literatures at the University of Udine was founded in 2008 and is directed by Silvana Serafin; it was the first research institute in Italy to have studied Italian migrant literatures in the world. Moreover, it distributes *Oltreoceano*: an annual literary and cultural journal in which several articles on Italian-Canadian literature have appeared.

¹⁴⁵ www.sienatoronto.unisi.it. I will return to the relevance of this research institute in the following pages.

CHAPTER 4

THE RETURN IN/OF THE FICTIONALIZED MEMOIR: A TRANSLATIONAL ANALYSIS

1. Introduction: the Autobiographical Migrant Discourse as Case Study

To travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility.

(Chambers 1994, 5)

As contended by Chambers (1994), the fluidity of identities and the uncertainty of itineraries is what characterizes migrancy, setting this type of movement in a space apart from conventional travel. This hypothesis is validated by the research on Italian-Canadian narratives conducted so far, which documented and described the fragmentation of the self, the feeling of not-belonging, the lack of language, and the continuous search for a place to call home experienced by these migrants, for which the “promise of a homecoming” – the desire to complete a life (hi)story and domesticating the detour – is a chimera. Many literary works by Italian-Canadians focus on the protagonists/narrators’ realization of the unfeasibility of said return: the (re)assimilation into Italian society and culture is far from being accomplished and the reconciliation with the forgotten mother tongue is also problematic, for these are further away than imagined.

While the impossibility to return to a state (be it physical, mental or linguistic) that existed prior to migration characterizes the often anti-climatic concluding remarks of many of these works (such as in the case of Madott’s *Mazilli’s shoes*, in which the protagonist realizes the impossibility of returning to the native land), I have hypothesized that the trip back to the point of departure – the ancestral land of origin – may be completed by means of translation. In this sense, translation (intended here both as the translator’s endeavour and its result, the target text) may help overcome the linguistic and cultural gaps writers themselves fail to bridge, so that the authors and their work can journey back to the homeland.

While the audience envisioned for many of these Anglophone and Francophone works is, undoubtedly, the Canadian public – the choice of the writing language indicates which segment of the Canadian population the author is originally addressing – an attentive analysis of these narratives’ discourses, however, suggests the unexpressed presence of another intended audience: the country of origin. Many Canadian writers of Italian origin reach out to the homeland that was left behind as a way to deal with their own nostalgia and feelings of displacement. As conjectured by Italian-Canadian scholar Jim Zuccherò: “‘writing home’ suggests the idea of articulating a dialogue between two cultures.” He continues, “writing home becomes a way to reflect upon and work through the classic immigrant dilemma of belonging to two cultures, but existing in neither one comfortably” (Canton and Di Giovanni 2013, 43-44).

Evidently, many of these attempts to *write back home* remain unheard by readers in Italy as long as the divide between the author’s writing language and the homeland’s language remains in place. Most of the authors in the group – especially of the later generations – write in their first (often the only) literary language, that of the country they live in, and have little to no knowledge of the Italian language. The communication between the writer of migrant origin and his/her ancestral land has been interrupted, and the return journey remains forcedly incomplete. In fact, while their migrant discourse of otherness and nostalgia can be conveyed in their source language through a wide array of literary devices (imageries, code-switching, code-mixing, etc.), these authors are somewhat limited when it comes to using literature to reconnect with their ancestral motherland: translation, from this perspective, can help them overcome linguistic incomprehensibility and bridge the linguistic divide.

The research conducted so far has shown that the Italian-Canadian literary panorama is composed of a few hundred works written in one of the two official languages of the country and distributed by both small and major publishing houses; however, the availability of these works in the Italian language for the Italian literary field is quite limited: twenty-five works by Italian-Canadians (Ricci’s works have been considered here as 3 individual volumes) have been translated into Italian for the Italian literary field¹⁴⁶. This figure hardly provides a comprehensive panorama of the Italian-Canadian group: both in terms of quantity – only nineteen authors made their return to the land of origin – or of source languages that are represented – only five works have been translated from French, while English continues to be the dominant source language.

Most of the works translated – as well as most of the original works produced by the literary

¹⁴⁶ At the time this thesis was written. The number does not include the works contained in the previously-mentioned anthology *L'altra storia* (1998), because the translations included were not published as individual volumes, but collectively.

group studied here – contain highly autobiographical elements, whether explicitly acknowledged or not. Below the surface of the text rests an autobiographical element that interweaves personal history and fictional story, becoming more manifest in the theme of the return journey. This autobiographical element is important from a translational perspective, since it represents one of the major elements to understand the migrant discourse.

This element presents two main implications for translation: one reflecting on its purpose, and the other on the very nature of the work translated. On the one hand, the translation of genuine autobiographies (such is the case of Colantonio's *From the Ground Up: An Italian Immigrant's Story* and Petrone's *Breaking the Mould*) fits into the agenda of disseminating a testimony that is thought to have some relevance for the target audience, a first person narration of migration. Secondly, translation affects the highly intimate nature of these narratives: the 'I', in most cases, the same name on the front cover, is the person who not only narrates the events, but also experienced them; the translator, thus, is confronted with the difficult task of identifying with the "elusive I" (Brierley 2000). Here, the position of the translator and, therefore, the controversial border between writing and translating cited in the first chapter, becomes even more elusive. As stated by Canadian literary translator Jane Brierley:

Translating autobiographical works, or parts of works that reveal themselves as deeply intimate, puts literary translators in a special position. They have a double responsibility. Not only do they need to know what is being said in the superficial sense, they need to be especially sensitive to underlying currents, to the writer's unavowed aims or preoccupations, and to the influences that surrounded him or her at the time of writing.

(Brierley 2000, 105)

For works by migrant authors with strong autobiographical components, translators need to be aware of the "underlying currents", or discourses, leading towards the land of ancestral origin. By recognizing the homesickness element and the narrative of return underlying – more or less explicitly – many of these works, the translator commits to helping the *elusive I* with "the unavowed aim" of making a homecoming. Because of the particular agency that translators of autobiographical works display when they participate in re-writing the author's subjectivity, this chapter illustrates how the migrant discourse of homecoming present in two works with a highly autobiographical element migrates back to the land of origin with the participation of other agents.

The choice of autobiographical works for the last part of this analysis is deliberate: I have established that the Italian-Canadian migrant discourse is strongly shaped by the nostalgic element – a common *passion du retour* – and that translation is, for many, the only way to reconnect to their cultural and linguistic heritage. The role of translators as agents of the return is thus evident: they become middlemen who allow the author to complete the return home via their (the translator's)

authorial voice; their position and agency in this journey home becomes even more relevant and delicate in works with a highly autobiographical nature.

In order to examine how translation shapes the migrant homecoming discourse, two representative works are presented here: Mary Melfi's *Italy Revisited* (2009) and Joe Fiorito's *The Closer We Are To Dying* (1999), partly-fictional memoirs that were translated into Italian in the past two decades. Through a thorough analysis of the two source texts – the role of translation and the nostalgic element within them – and of the Italian target texts, I show how in a certain few cases translation can indeed be a way for the migrant author to return *home*. If a homecoming has proven unsatisfactory or impossible in real life, authors might have a second chance in literature, supported by linguistic and cultural mediators, the agents of translation.

Choosing only two works among the works by Italian-Canadian authors that have appeared in the Italian literary market in translation was a controversial task. While it would have been easier to use Ricci's translated trilogy to support my hypothesis, both because it symbolizes the archetypal migrant saga and because the translation represents a successful case of homecoming, I decided not to proceed in that direction for these same reasons; moreover, Ricci's work has already been thoroughly analyzed within a translation studies framework by scholar Michela Baldo (2008, 2011, 2013).

Secondly, I opted to not undertake an analysis of self-translations – or translations which the author contributed to (Duliani, Micone, Zagolin, Patriarca, and Canton) – because of the contentious issue of the position/role of the translator/author, their agency in the whole process of production of the target text and, of course, their privileged and simultaneously conflicted relationship with their *other* mother-tongue, a topic which deserves further analysis elsewhere.

After these first two criteria, I was left with 16 works (only three of which were originally written in French) by 13 authors. Because of personal predilection and expertise, as well as it being one of the preferred literary forms within the group, I chose novels, leaving aside all works of poetry, theatre, essays, or short stories: this left me with a choice of 11 works. Among those, I decided to focus my attention on works that present a strong autobiographical component – for the reasons specified above, and because, in them, the characters' *passion du retour* mostly coincides with that of the writers.

Roy Pascal (1960) and Philippe Lejeune (1989) have both worked towards a strict definition of the autobiographical literary form. Autobiography, according to Pascal (1960), “involves the reconstruction of the movement of a life, or part of a life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Its centre of interest is the self, not the outside world, though necessarily the outside world must appear so that, in give and take with it, the personality finds its peculiar shape” (9). Lejeune, similarly,

sees this genre as a “retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality” (Lejeune 1989: 193).

In brief, in order for a work of prose to be considered autobiographical, there must be a case of identity between the author, the narrator and the protagonist of the facts narrated; moreover, the events should focus on the development of the self, the *movement of a life*. This definition evidently coincides with the most predominant feature in migrant narratives: the development and movement of the self.

Among the works selected, four adhere to the above definitions: Colantonio’s *From the Ground Up: An Italian Immigrant’s Story* (1997), Fiorito’s *The Closer We Are To Dying* (1999), Petrone’s *Breaking the Mould* (1995) and Melfi’s *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009). Fiorito’s memoir was published by the McClelland & Stewart, Petrone and Melfi by Guernica, while Colantonio was published by the independent publisher Between the Lines, specializing in non-fiction. Indeed, Colantonio’s testimony is the one in which the fictional element is levelled out, the volume becoming a report (almost an essay) of his own migration to Canada; for this reason, I decided not to take this work into analysis, opting for works that still favour literariness over factuality, in other words, works that were written with the aim of entertaining rather than simply informing the reader.

This left me with three works, two of which are very similar under many aspects: Petrone and Melfi are both women of Italian descent (the former a second generation, the latter a *generation 1.5* writer) who chose memoirs as a way of recounting what it is to grow up in an Italian environment abroad and deal with vicarious experiences of migration. Both books are divided into thematic chapters of life in Canada from an Italian perspective: the food, the neighbourhoods, religion, traditional festivities, and so forth. Petrone’s work is part of a wider autobiographical project, later concluded by a second-volume that was never translated into Italian. For this reason, and because of the strong thematic element of the return contained in Melfi’s book (starting from its title), I opted for an examination of the latter.

Nevertheless, in order to provide a wider panorama on both the Italian-Canadian autobiographical element in narrative and the discourse of the return presented in these narratives, I needed a second perspective. This was offered by Fiorito’s work, which provides the readers with a third generation Italian-Canadian experience of the return to the ancestral homeland.

Besides the obvious biographical element and the strong migrant topic that pervade both works, Melfi’s and Fiorito’s books have in common the ‘return’ to the pivotal parental figure, which also represents the ancestral land of origin: in Melfi’s *Italy Revisited* her co-protagonist is her mother(land),

while in Fiorito's *The Closer We Are to Dying*, it is the father(land). The conflicted relationship between writer/protagonist and their parents/co-protagonists comes to symbolize the conflicted relationship the narrators have with their mother/fatherland, with which they seek understanding and reconciliation.

In order to proceed to the investigation of how the return to the ancestral homeland was conducted, and whether this homecoming proved successful, I will start by analyzing the relevance of two constitutive elements of the migrant discourse: the *topoi* of nostalgia and the desire to return home (hindered by the linguistic barrier), and the role of (cultural and linguistic) translation within the writing process. Having investigated how these two components are developed in the source texts I will then continue with a translational analysis that exposes how these were represented in the target texts.

To conclude, and in concord with the approach presented in the previous chapter, I will emphasize the role and agency of the actors that contributed to the return of the authors and their literary work to their land of ancestral origin. Such agency is, undoubtedly, also mirrored in the translation strategies (textual¹⁴⁷ and paratextual) adopted, which will also be highlighted in the analysis that follows.

In other words, in this closing chapter, I will explore how the migrant discourse of homecoming is represented by the two contemporary authors in their source texts – *The Closer We Are to Dying* (1999) and *Italy Revisited* (2009) – through linguistic devices, cultural references and paratextual elements and how these have been ‘migrated’ (the choice of the passive form implies the incapability of self-translating) in the target texts, and under which circumstances this migration took place.

2. From *Italy Revisited* to *Ritorno in Italia*: Melfi's Hybrid Discourse from Source to Target Text

In this section, I will introduce the first of my two case studies: *Italy Revisited* by Mary Melfi. A short biographical introduction of the author is presented in order to understand how the migrant

¹⁴⁷ In this regard, and only for the linguistic analysis of the translation product, I will adopt the exhaustive terminology of translation techniques as presented by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002). According to the two scholars a translation method indicates “the way a particular translation process is carried out in terms of the translator's objective” (507), that is the aim of the text as a whole; this method “affects the way micro-units of the text are translated” (508), in other words the techniques. They classify and list said techniques as follows: *adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition and variation* (511). According to the aim of the translation, a translator will opt for one (or many) specific method(s) in order to achieve it. The scholars' classification is based on (and amplifies) Vinay and Darbelnet's pioneer work *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958).

element is embedded in her life story and, consequently, how this has shaped her literary production and, more specifically, *Italy Revisited*. Then, I will look into how the elements of the migrant discourse highlighted in the previous chapters are developed in this autobiographical work: nostalgia and the *passion du retour*, and how cultural and linguistic translation intervenes in the writing process. After having investigated how the migrant discourse develops in the source texts I will then continue with a translational analysis that exposes how said migrant discourse travels into the Italian target text.

2.1. About Mary Melfi

Mary Melfi was born in 1951 in Casacalenda, a small Italian town just south of Rome, where she spent the first few years of her life. The writer moved to Montreal with her parents at the age of six, in 1957.

I was made in Italy
By slaves and slave owners.
I am made up in Canada by choice.

(“Censor: “Hurry Madame”” in Di Cicco 1978a, 63)

Being born in Italy but having spent her formative years in Canada, she can be considered as a *Generation 1.5* writer whose production is strongly influenced by the migrant experience and the discourse of the return to the land of origin. Her writing career followed her studies in English Literature: since completing her degree in 1977, Melfi has published fifteen books of poetry, theatre and prose, the first of which was published in 1976. Her poetry collections are: *The Dance, the Cage and the Horse* (1976), *A Queen Is Holding a Mummified Cat* (1982), *A Bride in Three Acts* (1983), *A Dialogue with Masks* (1985), *The O Canada Poems* (1986), and *A Season in Beware* (1989).

In her first novel, *Infertility Rites*, published by Guernica Editions in 1991¹⁴⁸, Melfi introduces the problematic of growing up as an Italian in Canada. In this novel, she specifically works with the cultural alienation and the identity crisis of Italian-Canadian women: her protagonist Nina DiFiore is battling infertility and the double morals imposed on her by her ethnic origin: while she was raised and lives in the new continent, Nina is, in fact, “still controlled by her old country’s well-documented sociological expectations (in ascending order: from girl to woman, woman to wife, wife to mother)” (Melfi 1991, 155). These same issues will resurface in her latest novel/memoir, analyzed here.

After examining her own origins in these earlier works, Melfi moves away from ethnic writing

¹⁴⁸ The novel was later translated into French by Jocelyne Doray and published in 1999 by Balzac-Le Griot editeur in Montreal under the title *Les Rites de l'infertilité*, as well as to Italian by Susanna Mangione under the title *Riti di infertilità* for Cosmo Iannone Editore in 2002.

and experiments with topics and genres; in fact, she publishes a children's fantasy book, *Ubu, the Witch Who Would be Rich* in 1994, followed two years later by the play *Sex Therapy: a black comedy in 12 scenes* (1996). In 1998 she edits the biography of Montreal painter Nicola Palazzo *Painting Moments, Art, AIDS and Nick Palazzo*: a work that comprises a series of essays, interviews, and excerpts from diaries. Soon after, Melfi returns to poetry with two following publications: *Stages, Selected Poems* (1998) and *Office Politics* (1999).

In her latest works, Melfi revisits the Italian-Canadian theme: such is the case of the collection *Foreplay: Followed by My Italian Wife* (2008) – two full-length plays published in one volume in 2008, linked by the themes of family, relationships, and the exploration of ethnic culture and how this influences the protagonists – and her memoir *Italy Revisited: Conversations with My Mother* (2009), which I will soon examine.

With regards to her latest works, Melfi has recently asserted:

Both, my play, *My Italian Wife*, and my memoirs, *Italy Revisited: Conversations with my Mother*, were challenging to write but fun too, as they helped me understand the complexities of Italian culture — not the one defined by Da Vinci or Verdi but the one defined by Southern Italian farmers. For those like my parents who lived in the Southern Italian countryside prior to World War II, life had more to do with figuring out how to survive, than how to compose arias or paint pretty pictures. Still, despite their difficulties, they not only managed to come up with the bare necessities, they also managed to incorporate joy in their everyday lives — a major feat for poor people. Italians are not a sour lot — perhaps that's why North Americans started to imitate some of their customs (e.g., drink wine with their meals). Italians insist that life is beautiful, *la vita e bella*, not because it is devoid of sorrow, but because sorrow has an antidote. It could be joy. It could be compassion. It could be forgiveness. For Italians if there is a problem there is a solution (Maybe that's why over 50 million Italians immigrated, rather than whining about their condition, they simply left the country of their birth for greener pastures). Southern Italian farmers in the 1930s didn't write self-help books (most were illiterate), but they knew how to help each other, and help themselves. Essentially, they knew how to cope with life's difficulties. They tried to pass this knowledge — street smarts you might call it — to their kids, but many of us (including Rita Romano, in *My Italian Wife*) dismissed them as *cafone*, country bumpkins, and did not listen to their sage advice.¹⁴⁹

Melfi dedicates her recent work to giving voice to those Italians who were previously deprived of it and to exploring the complexities of the Italian immigrant culture. Melfi's prolific body of works – spanning over two decades, different genres and themes – was recently analyzed by a group of scholars, and the resulting investigations were edited and published by William Anselmi for Guernica in the work entitled *Mary Melfi: Essays on Her Works* (2007). The essays contained in the volume engage

¹⁴⁹ Excerpt from an interview by the literary foundation Open Book Toronto readable at http://www.openbooktoronto.com/news/writing_with_mary_melfi. Last accessed March 2016.

with Melfi's most distinguishing literary tools, namely: irony, displacement, the ubiquity of graphic parentheses, and the questioning of gender roles, class and ethnicity.

2.2. About *Italy Revisited*: the Source Text for the Canadian Literary Market

I bought a *Little Big Book of Memories*. It comes with questions you can ask your mother about her childhood, and provides spaces for the answers. Never mind the questions in this book don't relate to my mother's life. I am determined to fill in the blanks.

(Melfi 2009, 10-11)

Mary Melfi's latest book – the one examined here – is *Italy Revisited, Conversation with My Mother*: a memoir¹⁵⁰, or a double memoir (that of the writer herself and her mother), in which the author sets out on a journey through time and space to uncover how her family's *Italianness* influenced her upbringing and her becoming a writer in Canada, a topic that she fully explores on an intimate and confidential level for the very first time.

In order to complement the volume published by Guernica in 2009, and to provide the reader with a visual (and mixed-media) experience of the literary journey offered in her memoir, Melfi created a website with the same title in which she sought to “document Italians’ cultural heritage by creating an extensive photo archive of the day to day life of farmers and townspeople living in Italy at the turn of the 20th century”¹⁵¹. From the personal memoir contained in her book, to the group testimony gathered in the visual evidence of her Italian readers’ families prior to 1969, Melfi’s project *Italy Revisited* aims to become a collective memory of, and a journey to, a bygone past and its heritage.

Melfi’s memoir – the novel *Italy Revisited* – frames and completes her vision and mission of migrant writing as *self-definition*: Melfi herself discloses that “[w]riting gives me the illusion that I have control as I create my own reality. Writing for the displaced person becomes a place to go home to, a country where the natives are friendly” (Anselmi 2007, 30). Melfi’s memoir thus serves a double purpose: through writing, the author finds her sense of familiarity, and by writing about her land of origin she allows herself to feel completely at home. In fact, Melfi admits she had been struggling with defining herself according to her ethnic origin: in her view, agreeing with an ethnic definition implies accepting being minoritized and marginalized while, conversely, rejecting such a label would mean a

¹⁵⁰ The genre label *memoir* is presented on the front of the original language volume, next to the name of the publishing house Guernica.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.italyrevisited.org>. Last accessed May 2016.

total loss of her own reference group (32). The writer does not hide her complex relationship with ethnicity when she claims: “I felt divided, not at home in either culture” (Melfi 2009, 304) and, again, “I never knew from one day to another if I were a hyphenated Italian-Canadian, at ease in both cultures, or a lost soul, roaming the streets, in search of this woman that answered to my name” (309).

Her desire to understand more about (to revisit) her past is further developed in *Italy Revisited*, in which this autobiographical journey takes the unconventional form of a heated exchange between mother(land) and daughter throughout 71 chapters composing a dialogue between two generations. The the novel/memoir is built upon this premise:

Suddenly the past matters. Suddenly there is too much grey hair. In my thoughts. I turn to my mother for help.

“What can I tell you, *figlia mia*?” she says. “I have no memories, *porca miseria*.”

I turn on the tape recorder and insist she tell me what it was like growing up in Southern Italy.

(Melfi 2009, 9)

Reluctantly, Melfi’s mother starts sharing with her daughter her memories of her homeland, while the daughter fails to believe what her mother is willing to reveal, suspecting that these memories might be corrupted: “my mom thinks nostalgia makes everything clean and pretty; it magically dresses up the Southern Italian hills with wild flowers. Nostalgia also works better than RAID, it’s a real bug killer. An effective pesticide. Use too much and it’s poisonous. It kills more than bugs. It kills the truth” (17). The daughter blames her mother’s strong homesickness for her delusional attitude: “perhaps in order to justify her decision to emigrate, she doesn’t want to remember the beautiful mountain vistas, the splendid Italian summers spent sitting outdoors in the front yard, an impromptu living room, chatting with neighbours, stringing beans, crocheting, enjoying the good country air” (13).

Little by little, her land of origin is offered to the attentive listener and witness, the writer herself, who diligently notes everything down in her *Little Big Book of Memories*, which will later become the novel published in Canada by Guernica. The memoir, composed of 71 thematic chapters, is effectively a two-voice dialogue in which the character explores Italy, the idea of *Italianness*, and what it means to be Italian abroad through the memories of the mother’s Italian childhood.

The sequence of conversations takes place over the course of just over a week, a time that corresponds to the Christian liturgical period of the Holy Week. While the novel is not a religious work *per se*, religion and God are present throughout the memoir, whose structure follows metaphorically the spiritual rebirth of the author: the first section of the book is entitled *Palm Sunday* and contains the first 33 chapters/conversations between mother and daughter in which the protagonist enters the cultural old world of Italy (and her mother’s); the narrative then skips to *Holy Thursday*, made up of seven chapters,

and continues through the four chapters of *Good Friday* (the emblematic chapters of Calvary, dealing with natural disasters, the justice system, Fascism and family secrets), *Holy Saturday* (sixteen chapters), *Easter Sunday* (three chapters) and finishes with the eight conclusive chapters that occur on *Easter Monday*. This said, the structure of the book is far from paralleling the rituals of the Holy Week, and topics treated often do not seem to follow any specific reasoning, if not that of the spontaneous journey into the memory of her mother.

Besides the imaginary voyage to the land of origin through its customs, traditions, and language¹⁵², the return is called forth in its more literal meaning when Melfi recounts her own Italian trip; the second last chapter is aptly entitled *Return Trips*.

Throughout this literary journey, it would appear that the writer is not addressing anyone in particular, if not herself. Her words help her come to terms with her Italian identity and with the home country itself. For Melfi considers Italy as her homeland: “[w]hen the crazy sounds of Montreal, a city that never sleeps, are too much for me, I drink in the memory of *mio paese*, my home town, Casacalenda, and relax” (14), she claims in the second chapter fittingly entitled *Nostalgia*.

While Mary Melfi’s writing as a whole, and in *Italy Revisited*, approaches a wealth of themes – from conventional gender roles and class structure in traditional societies, to religion, economy and family – for the purpose of the present work, I will focus on two elements upon which the migrant discourse is based: the many acts of translation and the theme of the return trips to the motherland.

2.2.1. “All my life I have had to translate”: the Role of Translation in Melfi’s Narrative

As the title of the memoir suggests, Melfi’s work is constructed around the idea of a desired and actual return to the land of her birth, Italy; this return is interpreted by the writer herself as a way to understand her cultural and ethnic identity and, ultimately, reconcile with her origins. The route to understanding, nevertheless, is a strenuous path that leads to a real knowledge of Italy: structurally, each of the 71 thematic chapters dedicated to different aspects of Italian culture portrays Melfi’s impossibility of fully appreciating her land of origin, despite her mother’s tales and her own visits to Italy as a tourist. Like her mother contends: “*Figlia mia*, you can’t see well. You don’t need a new pair of glasses. You need a new set of eyes.” (Melfi 2009, 32)

¹⁵² The linguistic element is a central constituent and metaphor of the whole work, especially in the words spoken by the writer’s mother, tape-recorded by her daughter, who often acts as an interpreter between her and the reader.

However, seeing does not always entail understanding, for there is a greater obstacle than needing “a new set of eyes”: language. One of the major impediments to a successful return home of the migrant (writer) is often the linguistic divide between the language of the country of origin and the one they speak and write daily. As the writer contends: “[l]anguage barriers can be as thick as any man-made wall” (312-313); the linguistic element becomes more than an accessory constituent of the narration and the discourse around the return, and it adds up to the struggle of failing to understand her heritage. The linguistic gap between Melfi and Italy mirrors the linguistic divide between her and her mother, as indicated in the following excerpts:

I am ready to write down everything. Not word for word. I speak English, she, Italian. (11)

“It just goes to show you how quickly the second generation assimilated into the dominant culture,” I say, but in English, which is as good as saying nothing as my mother does not understand the language. (66)

“O cara, how can you be Italian and not know your name day? At heart, we’re strangers. You ask me questions, I answer in Italian, and you write them down in English in your *Memory Book*. Something is lost in the translation [...]” (94)

A picture is supposedly worth a thousand words. If you’re the child of an immigrant and can’t understand your mother tongue, it’s worth a thousand times a thousand. (96)

“We don’t speak Italian ‘cause we can’t. English comes more naturally to us. We don’t mean to exclude you, it’s just that we don’t have the Italian vocabulary to carry on a conversation. We did our schooling in English – remember?” (297)

The writer is aware of the power of language as a tool, that “can be used to bridge distances, or widen them” (314), and with this in mind she sets out on the translational journey towards a reconciliation with her mother(-tongue/land). Translation is central to Melfi’s narrative, both as a tool for self-(re)definition and as a communicative linguistic device. After all, the entire book is based on the premise that “translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in *every* act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning, be it in the widest semiotic sense or in more specifically verbal exchanges”, since in Melfi’s dialogue with her mother(-land/tongue) “[t]o understand is to decipher”, and therefore “[t]o hear significance is to translate” (Steiner 1998, xii). More specifically, in Melfi’s autobiographical work we witness the realization of two distinct translational processes: *cultural translation* and *linguistic translation*, or *translation proper* (Jakobson 1959).

Cultural translation is the backbone of a narrative that, while still utilizing language as a vehicle, takes place in the dialogue between the two distinct cultural spaces (the self and the Other) of mother and daughter. The explication, interpreting and negotiation of cultural elements (both Italian and Canadian) is a two-way process that helps Melfi understand her mother(land) culture, and assists her mother in comprehending her daughter's (Canadian) culture:

"You don't understand," says my mother. You never lived on a farm."

"Then help me understand," I tell her. I want to know the nitty-gritty of farm life. If I can picture her as a little girl, maybe then I can offer the little girl in me some food for thought and help her grow up. Then I can look after myself, confident it's ok to grow old. So I look for my roots, dig up my mother's memories. I want to find my connection with the Almighty Past, the main Power Source. If I find it, I might, just might, feel less disconnected.

(Melfi 2009, 10)

While, undoubtedly, the process of explication of Italian cultural elements is also intended for the Canadian audience, it is clear – as in the above excerpt, but also from the very personal nature of Melfi's autobiographical work – that this process is mostly actuated in order for the protagonist to come to terms with, and bridge the gap between, her own double ethnicity.

"I became assimilated," I admit. "For a long time I thought I had said yes to North American pop culture; yes to the English language. I thought I had chosen to love it, as I loved the moon and the sun, but sadly the choice had never been mine [...]"

(297)

The process of *cultural translation* enacted throughout the 71 thematic chapters of the book appears more manifest in the rendition of Italian traditional cuisine, customs and mores. *Cultural translation* is strictly intertwined with *linguistic translation*, which is also enacted by the narrator. This time, the scope of translation proper, seems to be addressed to the non-Italian reader/character, who may not be familiar with the language of her mother(land).

All my life I have had to translate. It's not just a question of switching from one language to another, but interpreting facial expressions, gestures, lies.

(11)

In recounting her experience as an Italian-Canadian child and teenager, the writer emphasizes how she always had to act as a translator, switching between the language spoken at home – the mother tongue she was brought up in is Italian (mostly in its regional variety from Molise) – and the language of education and socialization, English. Little by little, she assimilates to the Anglophone culture and her knowledge of her childhood language regresses. Still, she travels back and forth between the two. In fact, while she now speaks English with her Italian parents – "Every time the younger generation switches from Italian to English, it's as if you had shoved a gun in our face", her mum reproaches her (297) – she has to act as an interpreter between her Italophone parents and her Anglophone husband:

“She tells me this in Italian, and of course, I don’t repeat what she said to my husband. I am more of a go-between than a translator. I tell my husband what he wants to hear, and my mother, what she wants to hear” (76).

Linguistically speaking, the reader is struck by the abundance of Italian words and phrases in the novel – sometimes the writer decides to provide a translation for them, sometimes not – which are, however, signalled as foreign by the italicization. This is part of her effort to familiarize and reconcile with her mother(tongue). Certainly, one of the impediments to a successful return is the realization of the limitations of the linguistic tools, as in Melfi’s case, whose use of Italian is far from standard, or grammatically or orthographically correct, as explored below.

What follows is a table representing the use of Italian as a (self-)translational act aiming at re-appropriating the forgotten language. This list excludes words and phrases that have now entered the English language, and which are therefore commonly used in it (i.e. pasta, pizza, biscotti, etc.), as well as the titles of the chapters¹⁵³. As said, most importantly, these elements’ foreignness is highlighted by the use of italicization throughout the text. The spelling and grammar mistakes have not been corrected for the purpose of representation of the author’s specific *idiolect*¹⁵⁴, intended here as the “linguistic system of an individual speaker – one’s personal dialect” (Crystal 2008, 235).

Despite it being regionally influenced, Melfi’s linguistic variety should not be considered a *dialect*. Linguistics traditionally defines dialects as language varieties that are discernible from other varieties according to their set of regional speech features, as well as other distinctive factors, such as social class or other divisions of society. Dialects are shared by a community (be it because of their belonging to the same geographical region or class) and are not varieties belonging to specific individuals; an idiolect, on the other hand, refers to the linguistic imprint of an individual: the features of speech that translate the person’s life experiences and upbringing. Indeed, Melfi’s language is a result of both her geographical origins (elements of dialect and standard Italian are used side by side to emphasize her ethnic origin) and the family and social environment she grew up in.

It is relevant to underline that many of the Italian expressions found in the English text are spoken by the mother of the protagonist (*figlia mia*, my daughter, and *cara mia*, my dear, are such

¹⁵³ *Nostalgia, Masseria, Pasta e fagiole* [sic], *La festa del maiale, la festa dei morti, Il malocchio, I pomodori, La bella figura, La festa dei nomi, Buono natale* [sic], *Scopa, Passeggiata, La festa del vino, La famiglia, Pasta fatta in casa, Arrivederci Roma, Il pane di Pasqua, La cicoria, La lingua inglese, Puttana, Biscotti*.

¹⁵⁴ There is not one standard definition of *idiolect*, but rather various and varied attempts at circumscribing the many linguistic factors that influence this language variety. For example, Lyons (1981) argues that “[e]ach idiolect will differ from every other, certainly in vocabulary and pronunciation and perhaps also, to a smaller degree, in grammar. Furthermore, one’s idiolect is not fixed once and for all at the end of what we normally think of as the period of language-acquisition: it is subject to modification and extension right through life” (27).

examples). Despite the autobiographical nature of the material contained in the work, it is not unreasonable to presume that this was a premeditated (stylistic) choice of the writer, and that some of these conversations (or, at least, their form) are fictional – as chapter 69 “An Imagined Conversation with My Mother” confirms. In the construction of the novel, and the dialogues contained in it, the writer takes a distance from the protagonist and remodels facts and conversations in order to fit her artistic purpose. In other words, while we have no certainty that the dialogues between mother and daughter had the form and content reproduced in the book, we may assume that the writer opted to geographically connote the text for one main reason: remind both the reader and herself of her Italian legacy. These conversations express Melfi’s desire to reconnect and reacquaint herself with the Italian language and culture that she grew up in, but then neglected.

Melfi articulates her own cultural hybridity through translation, which becomes evident in the interference of the Italian language throughout the novel, which she also (re-)translates to English for the Anglophone reader (the translation either precedes or follows the Italian). The most common type of (self-)translation technique – from her mothertongue (the source) to English (the target language) – adopted is *adaptation*, intended to introduce information regarding the source language word/expression by means of paraphrasing and explication.

Table 7: Use of Italian in Melfi’s *Italy Revisited*

Figlia mia (9, 32, 35, 73, 76, 110, 116, 134, 145, 167, 168, 190, 194, 196, 197, 211, 214, 219, 223, 228, 243, 244, 247, 250, 275, 289, 297, 298, 302, 312, 314, 315, 317, 321, 326, 331)	No translation is provided.
Porca miseria (9, 62, 65, 125, 181)	No translation is provided.
Una signora (9)	The explicative paraphrase “an important lady” (9) precedes.
La miseria (9, 50, 51, 97, 127, 182, 260, 269, 301, 315, 316)	Not translated.
Masseria (10, 19, 19, 22, 36, 58, 107, 134, 137, 162, 169, 170, 180, 182, 199, 204, 225, 242, 245, 319, 320)	In this case, the generalizing translation, “the farm” (10), follows.
Cara/Cara mia (10, 11, 27, 41, 49, 51, 84, 93, 98, 106, 140, 162, 168, 197, 199, 232, 238, 239, 247, 268, 296, 297, 303)	No translation is provided.
Il campanile (11)	The translation “a clock tower” precedes.
Mio paese (14, 99)	The translations “my home town” or “my town” (99) follow.
Il monico (15)	“There were bedwarmers; the most popular, il <i>monico</i> , looked like an old-style iron” (15). This is a case of amplification and description.

Una brutta figura (18, 20, 24, 54, 87, 169, 171, 206, 242, 307)/ la bella figura (85, 87)	The expression has no cultural equivalent in the English language, therefore the writer opts for more generalizing translations “a bad impression” following (18)/ “a good appearance” (85), which follow the Italian one.
Una grotta (18)	The amplifying translation “a natural cave” precedes.
Il pane cotte (31)	No translation is provided.
Pane assutee, vita longa (31)	The literal translation of this local proverb “Dry bread, long life” follows.
Il pane inglese (31)	Another case of amplification where the description “pre-sliced American-style white bread” follows the source term.
I pomodori (33, 79)	The translation “a tomato”, follows.
Una pomodora (33)	No translation is provided.
Lupini (33, 170)	The generalizing translation “beans” (33) precedes the Italian word.
Brocciale (34, 35)	This is another case of <i>amplification</i> (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002), where the descriptive element “stuffed rolled veal” (34), follows in brackets.
In voltini (34)	No translation is provided.
Pasta e fagioli (34)	The translation “pasta and beans”, follows.
Vermicelli alle vongole (34)	No translation is provided.
Festa del maiale (36)	The literal translation “the feast day of the pig”, follows.
Cafone (37, 64, 228, 240, 328)	The writer provides a more generalizing translation “simpleton”, which follows the Italian word.
Mamma mia (38, 79, 86, 114, 173, 181, 273)	No translation is provided.
The Inglesi (39, 41, 135, 150, 228, 269, 278, 290)/Inglese (293)	No translation is provided.
La Fiera di San Carlo (40)	No translation is provided.
Olio d’oliva (47)	No translation is provided.
Mille lire/lira (49, 57, 75, 89, 90, 132, 167, 261, 282, 283)	No translation is provided.
La festa dei morti (50)	The literal translation “The Feast Day of the Dead” follows.
Questo vale per le anime del purgatorio (50)	The literal translation “This is for the souls in purgatory”, follows.
I contadini (56, 153, 162, 239, 253, 280, 281, 286, 328)	No translation is provided.
Lutto (56, 59)	Another case of <i>amplification</i> where the description “mourning clothes” follows.
Sposare Dio (58)	The literal translation “marry God”, preceding
Crepa (61)	This is a case of <i>adaptation</i> (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002), where the culturally equivalent “kick the bucket” follows.

Mala aria (61)	The literal translation “Bad air” follows.
L’aglio (65)	The translation “garlic”, follows.
Malocchio (67,68, 70, 71, 72, 77)	The translation “evil eye” follows.
Corno (68, 71)	The translation “an ox horn” follows.
Dio te benedica (69)	The translation “May God bless you” follows.
I maghi (74)	The translation “sorcerers” follows.
Fatturare (74)	The translation “charming” follows.
Bocce (83, 125, 128, 129)	No translation is provided.
La terra vecchia (83)	The translation “the old country” follows.
In mia casa, io, comando (84)	The translation “In my house I rule” follows.
Capellera (85, 87)	This is a case of <i>variation</i> (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002): the translation “hair-comber”, which follows, introduces a change in social and geographical dialect.
Tupe (85, 86)	The translation “a bun” follows.
Dio Mio (87)	No translation is provided.
Un mezzo di mezzetto di grano (89)	The translation “half a bushel of wheat” follows.
La festa dei nomi (94, 95)	The translation “name day” follows.
Uno bicchierino (94, 172)	The translation “a shot of alcohol” follows-
Auguri (94)	The translation “congratulations” follows.
Uno paesano (99)/ paesana (198, 203, 269, 311)	The descriptive translation “a fellow countryman or kin” follows.
Uno foreestero (99)	The translation “a foreigner” follows.
Una puttana (104, 301, 302)/ puttane (132)	The translations “a whore”(104)/”whores” (132) follow.
Va bene (111)	The translation “everything’s fine” follows.
U cascio (114)	This is a case of <i>variation</i> : the translation “cheese”, which follows, introduces a change in social and geographical dialect.
Meciucco (115)	This is a case of <i>variation</i> : the translation “fresh cheese”, which follows, introduces a change in social and geographical dialect.
Buono Natale (120)	The translation “Merry Christmas” follows.
Salute (120)	No translation is provided.
Zampagnari (120)	The translation “Zampogna players” follows.
Qualche cosa (120, 327)	The translation “a little something” follows.
Frutti di mare (121)	No translation is provided.
Presperio (121)	The generalizing translation “pageant” precedes. The <i>presepio</i> (misspelled in the source text) is a nativity scene.
Morsella (122)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “Italian eggnog”, follows. I will return to this in the following section.
Caragnoli (122)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “deep fried sweet pastries” precedes.
La befana (123)	No translation is provided.

Pallone (128)	The translation “soccer” precedes.
Carte napoletane (130)	No translation is provided.
Bastone/danari/spade/coppe (130)	The translation “clubs/money/swords/cups” follows.
Scopa/Tre sette/Morra/tombola (131, 171)	No translation is provided.
La passeggiata (134, 135)	The translation “a nice stroll” follows.
I poveri contadini (134)	No translation is provided.
Piazza (134, 226)	No translation is provided.
Biscotti con sale (147, 148)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “Italian-style pretzels” precedes.
Mammina (148)/mamma (238, 258)	No translation is provided.
Salute (154)	No translation is provided.
Fiadoni (155, 172, 173)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “cheese-filled pastries” precedes.
Sia fatta la volonta di Dio (163)	The translation “My God’s will be done” follows.
I macaroni San Giuseppe (164)/patigine/scarpelle (165)	No translation is provided.
La visita dei morti (170, 171)	The literal translation “visit for the dead” follows.
La cosa nostra (174)	No translation is provided.
Casa nostra (174)	No translation is provided.
Professoro/professoressa (175)	No translation is provided.
Omertà (175)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “code of silence” (175) follows.
Un compare/compari/una commare (177, 178)	This is a case of <i>variation</i> : the translation “a godfather/godparents/a godmother”, which follows, introduces a change in social and geographical dialect.
Il capo (177, 305)	No translation is provided.
Feudista (183, 184)	The descriptive translation “Large property owner” follows in brackets.
L’aria è pura (192)	No translation is provided.
I ricetelli (196)	The descriptive translation “the little ears” follows.
Quella cosa (197)	The translation “that thing” precedes.
Finocchio (199)	This is a case of <i>variation</i> : the translation “gay men”/ “a vegetable”, which follows, introduces a change in social and geographical dialect.
Biancaria (207)	The translations “bed sheets and pillowcases” and “whites” follow.
Buono giorno (209)	The translation “good morning” follows.
Sempre unite (209)	The translation “always united” follows.
Pasta con il uova (212)	The translation “pasta made with eggs” follows.
Pasta e fagiolle (213)	No translation is provided.
La doctrina (218)	The descriptive translation “the church’s prayers” follows.
Atto della Solemne Promessa di Celebrate il Matrimonio (218)	The literal translation “a solemn promise to marry” precedes.

Figlia mia dio sia benedetta (221)	The translation “Daughter of mine, may God bless you” follows.
Spazzi (222)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the explicative “A traditional wedding cake” precedes.
Bonboniere (222)	The translation “hostess gifts” follows.
Uscire fuori (223)	The literal translation “coming out party” follows.
Ostie (232, 326)	The translation “hosts” follows.
Brodo del parto (234)	The literal translation “childbirth soup” follows.
Freto/souro di latto (234)	The literal translation “brothers or sisters by milk” follows.
Francese/i (244, 290)	No translation is provided.
Uno cristiano (246)	The translation “A Christian” follows.
Atto di richiamo (249)	The translation “immigration paper” follows in brackets.
Culi di vache (250)	The literal translation “the ass hole of a cow” follows.
Controllo di visita (254)	The translation “medical certificates” precedes. This is a case of substitution, in which the medical visit is substituted with the certificate issued.
Signora (254)	No translation is provided.
Doctore (269)	This is a case of <i>particularization</i> (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002): “the family doctor”, which precedes, substitutes the more generic <i>doctor</i> .
Il primo corso (270, 280)	No translation is provided.
Pepperoni arrosto (270)	No translation is provided.
Lasagna in brodo (281)	No translation is provided.
Pasquette aspinantu (284)	No translation is provided.
Fiadone di ricotta/di formaggio (284)	This is a case of <i>amplification</i> , where the descriptive “cheese-filled pastries” precedes. “home-made cheese-stuffed pastry”, preceding
Pane di Pasqua (284, 285)	The translation “Easter Bread” follows.
Capa tosta (290)	The literal translation “Hard head” follows.
La cicoria (291)	The translation “Dandelion greens” follows.
Madonna (291, 297, 317)	No translation is provided.
Grazie dio (292)	The translation “Thanks be to God” follows.
Il formage per perché (293)	No translation is provided.
Papa (295)	The translation “Father” precedes.
Pazze (305)	The translation “Crazy” follows.
Pronto (315)	No translation is provided.
Bella Italia (316)	No translation is provided.
Taralli con sale (326)	No translation is provided.

From an analysis of the language usage within the novel, we observe that some thematic spheres are more likely to be translated to Italian than others. Like in the case of D’Alfonso’s and Edwards’ novels presented in the previous chapter, the foreign cultural marker – Loriggio’s “device of

the stone” (1990, 39) – is used to take the reader on a journey through the cultures and places of Italy; these traces are particularly evident in the spheres of food (from *frutti di mare* to *cicoria*) and position of individuals in society (*figlia*, *signora*, *paesano*, *puttana*, *feudista*¹⁵⁵, etc.). Also relevant are the words that describe the local topography, like *masseria* and *grotta*, and folklore (*La festa del maiale*, *la festa dei morti*, *La bella figura*, *La festa dei nomi*, and so on).

This interweaving of the languages, which invites the Canadian readership to her personal translational journey to her land of origin, is one of the most challenging elements that concerns the homecoming of the migrant writer via translation: when it comes to *translation proper*, the target language (Italian) is also the source language (the writer’s mother tongue).

Another issue related to the presence of the target language in the source text is the incorrectness of the latter in the source text, as seen above. Are these inaccuracies and deflections from the norm to be considered purely mistakes, and should the translator correct them? Should they be kept as they are in the source text because they represent the writer’s idiolect? To these and other translational issues I will return in the following pages when I compare the source text to its 2012 translation to Italian published by Cosmo Iannone.

2.2.2. ‘Return Trips’ in Melfi’s Narrative

The Italian-Canadian recurrent theme of a return to the land where the roots lie, be it realized or only imagined and represented in writing, is also dealt with in Melfi’s novel/memoir, as suggested by the title *Italy Revisited*, and reinforced by the translated book title *Ritorno in Italia*: this decision to revisit Italy in person and in writing is motivated by her desire to rediscover her own self.

Her mother’s tales accompany both Melfi and the reader to Italian small town life in the 1950s. Her words recount a life of hardship and poverty; *la miseria* is one of the most recurrent Italian words in the novel: “It wasn’t as you imagine [...] we lived in stone huts; whole families slept in the same room” (14), her mother avows. “No matter how hard we worked, we were always walking behind *culi di vacche*, the ass hole of a cow. We were always in debt” (250), her father reminds his daughter when she does not seem to understand why it was necessary to leave a country that Mary Melfi has always

¹⁵⁵ This is one of the examples in which Melfi’s use of Italian deflects from the norm. According to her own translation in the text (please, see table above) *feudista* is a large property owner; however, as attested by Treccani (<http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/feudista/>) the word refers to a “Giurista specializzato in diritto feudale”, a legal expert in the field of feudal law. What Melfi refers to here is commonly known in Italian with *feudatario*, although the word itself is used mostly in historical contexts.

admired (and wished to return to). “It couldn’t be as bad as you remember”, Melfi says sceptically (13).

The narrative structure is based on the intergenerational conflict and two contrasting versions of a place: while her parents’ depiction of Italy may appear harsh and bitter at times, influenced by the condition the country was in after the end of the war, their daughter’s view of the country is affected by her nostalgia for a place she has never deeply known, but only imagined. The daughter fails to believe the negative depiction of life in Italy before emigration – “You’re looking for beautiful memories, but I only have sad ones. I just don’t want to remember”, declares her mother (13). The daughter is sure that this is just a justification for their impossibility to return to their beloved homeland. While, indeed, Melfi’s mother did return to Italy (but only for a brief and disappointing visit seventeen years later, as Melfi recounts in the chapter entitled *Natural Disasters*), the writer’s parents never moved back to their land of origin, as they had hoped they would: “I told my mother the move was temporary; [...] I told her I would soon return, but the ticket wasn’t for a round trip”, confesses Melfi’s mother (256).

Later in the book, after listening to her mother’s life stories, the writer grows more understanding and sympathetic as she realizes that “[e]migration is an emotional battlefield, and my mother is one of its many causalities” (257). For this reason, in order to ‘avenge’ her mother and her memories of the homeland, as well as to make her own memories of Italy, she decides to set out on a visit to her country of birth. The return, which is recounted in the penultimate chapter of the volume, also has the therapeutic effect of ‘forcing’ the author to come to terms with her own fragmented identity because “I never knew from one day to another if I were a hyphenated Italian-Canadian, at ease in both cultures, or a lost soul, roaming the streets, in search of this woman that answered to my name” (309).

While, for most immigrants, the trip to Canada was a one-way journey – “[o]thers had left and hadn’t returned for years and years. Many a man came home in a ‘box’” (318), explains the writer’s mother – many Italian expatriates started making their way back to Italy in the 1970s and, for some, the return was permanent. The returnees are “the lucky ones”, the writer contends, because now “they can communicate with their grandchildren” (310); once again, Melfi insists on the relevance of language in the construction of intergenerational relationships.

For others, however, the return was just temporary; Canadian tourists flocked to the peninsula “eager to experience first-hand the country’s charm, its history, its museums, its people” (315). Among them are many Italian-Canadians, some of whom were born and raised in Canada, and went to Italy to re-discover their own roots, like Melfi herself: “Italy recalls its sons and daughters back to its borders. The country is an emotional magnet for my mother’s generation as well as my own” (315), the writer

claims.

Melfi's first return to the land of her birth in 1977 is an epiphany: "[s]uddenly, it was ok to be Italian. All that shame of having grown up as a poor immigrant was erased. All that shame of having grown up as a second-class citizen, of having been looked down on for being Italian suddenly went away" (315). Immediately, in awe of this "living masterpiece" (315), she becomes proud of her heritage, an image which conflicts with the way her mother had always described the homeland – *la miseria*.

Nevertheless, the first time she travels to Italy, the protagonist barely visits the town of her birth– "I spent a day and half in Casacalenda; I walked through it like I were sleepwalking. I didn't see the significance" (320); as a young woman she is not interested in the rural roots her mother had often told her about, all Melfi cares for is a proof of Italy as a cultural hub, to regain her self-esteem. "I want my pride back", she demands and, instead, she wanders through the major tourist sites, among their cultural icons, and "lifted up, dazzled" she was "born again" (316).

The places she visits during her trip to Italy are as far removed from her rural birthplace as are the cultures that daughter and mother, respectively, represent. Melfi's mother, aware of this contrast, blames her daughter for not having tried to reconnect with her real origins rather than chasing a past that did not belong to her.

You were young and stupid. You expect my forgiveness, but I'm not ready to give it. If only you had shown some interest in your grandparents' residence, as that of the Pope's. If you had taken photos of every corner of your grandparents' house, you wouldn't now be asking me to describe it.

(319)

And so we witness two contradictory but related ideas of return: on the one hand, as a young woman, Melfi returns to Italy mostly for her own self-gratification, in order to feel proud of the artistic and cultural history the country represents. In a way, this first return is effective, and she undergoes her first rebirth; little by little (as confirmed by some of the conversations with her mother contained in the novel), however, she realizes the futility of this return – more a holiday, than a homecoming – and seeks her mother's assistance to reconnect to the roots that are lost, now that her grandparents are dead.

By presenting the reader with this account of her family history, the memoir can thus be considered as a way for the writer to ask her mother(land) for forgiveness, while still seeking a recognition of the artistic value of her heritage, which she is now perpetuating with her writing.

2.3. About *Ritorno in Italia*: the Target Text for the Italian Literary Market

Through a confrontational mother-daughter dialogue, Melfi's memoir depicts the writer's struggle to come to terms and define herself as an Italian-Canadian. I have maintained that one of the main devices used to convey the struggle of self-definition for the hybrid self is that of translation; this is what has led me to argue that the migrant text is in itself a form of (linguistic and cultural) translation.

Now, what happens to a text that is pervaded by the presence of an-Other culture when this gets translated into, and for, that Other culture? In other words, what happens to an Italian-Canadian text written in English when this is translated into Italian for the Italian literary market? More specifically, when approaching the translational analysis of *Italy Revisited*, one question should therefore come forth: how is the migrant narrative transposed in the target text? Are the cultural-linguistic elements that portray the longing for a homecoming in the source text presented and relevant in the target work? In other words, what happens to Melfi's memoir when it is translated back in to the motherland/tongue?

Far from being a qualitative judgment on the Italian translation of *Italy Revisited*, the present section intends to uncover if and how specific elements in the source text by Melfi are preserved or otherwise transformed in the production of the translation (the target text). More specifically, I will look into how the foreign cultural marker – the presence of Italian, symbolizing the presence of a *source* language/culture (*source* is intended here as 'of origin') – is conveyed in the text written in that *source* language for that *source* culture (here, becoming *target* language and culture). Moreover, in order to analyze the return of the migrant text to the motherland/tongue, I will analyze the extra-linguistic elements that participate in this journey back to the source (language/culture).

2.3.1. The Publisher and the Translation of Paratext

As seen in the previous chapter, there exists a *subvention network* (Kung 2009), created by the Canada Council through the Translation Grants under the Writing and Publishing Program, which aims to promote the visibility of Canadian works abroad; among the Italian recipients of the International Translation Grants, Cosmo Iannone has been the most successful – at least as far as the translation of Italian-Canadian works are concerned. Starting from the early 2000s, in fact, Cosmo Iannone has been increasingly supporting works by Italian-Canadians such as Antonio d'Alfonso, Carole David, Marco Micone, Frank Paci, and Mary Melfi.

Without reiterating all the information around the publisher presented before, it will suffice to remind the reader that Cosmo Iannone Editore is a small publishing house characterized by its interest in regionalism, featuring an editorial line which is oriented towards the Southern territory of Italy (with an eye to the Molise region, where the publisher was originally founded) and to migration; at least two series are, indeed, dedicated to the topic, aptly entitled *Quaderni sulle migrazioni* and *Reti*.

Melfi's *Ritorno in Italia, conversazioni con mia madre* (2012) was published in the latter collection of works, fitting the publisher's interest both in the migrant topic and in the literature of Molise, the region where Melfi was born. It should be underlined, moreover, that Melfi's memoir was not the first work by the author to be translated and published by Cosmo Iannone. Ten years earlier, Melfi's *Infertility Rites* (1991) had become available to the Italian readership under the title of *Riti di Infertilità* (2002) in the same collection, thanks to the translation by Silvana Mangione.

The relevance of all major translation actors in the reader's perception of the final source text should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that, when facing a translated text, most readers will ignore the presence of external actors that may have taken part in the production of the text, and often overlook the fact that the translation is not the actual source text. For this reason, an analysis of a translated text should uncover the multiple strata of decisions (choices) and uses (manipulations) that concern every aspect of the book production. In line with this idea of exposing the decision-making 'layers', I will proceed to the discovery of said processes starting from the outer layer: the cover and the paratext. The examination of the paratext surrounding the translated texts as *transaction zone*¹⁵⁶ (Genette 1997) can shed light on the mechanisms under which this travel home takes place.

As asserted by translation studies scholar Valerie Pellatt (2013), the relevance of this extra-textual element should not be misjudged, as "paratext is the text that surrounds and supports the core text, like layers of packaging that initially protect and gradually reveal the essence of the packaged item" (1). Paratext is far from being limited to the book cover, but encompasses prefaces, forewords, introductions, footnotes, endnotes, and an afterword, and it includes non-verbal and non-written

¹⁵⁶ According to Genette, paratext is "ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs, et plus généralement au public". He further adds that the paratext is a figurative *seuil* "qui offre à tout un chacun la possibilité d'entrer, ou de rebrousser chemin. "Zone indécise" entre le dedans et le dehors, elle-même sans limite rigoureuse, ni vers l'intérieur (le texte) ni vers l'extérieur (le discours du monde sur le texte), lisière ou, comme disait Philippe Lejeune, « frange du texte imprimé qui commande toute la lecture ». Cette frange, en effet, toujours porteuse d'un commentaire auctorial, ou plus ou moins légitimé par l'auteur, constitue, entre texte et hors-texte, une zone non seulement de transition, mais de transaction : lieu privilégié d'une pragmatique et d'une stratégie, d'une action sur le public au service, bien ou mal compris et accompli, d'un meilleur accueil du texte et d'une lecture plus pertinente – plus pertinente, s'entend, aux yeux de l'auteur et de ses alliés." (Genette 1987, 7-8).

material that “is a powerful shaper of reactions and attitudes” (idem).

Given Iannone’s specific interest in regionalism and migration (and the regionalism of migration), it is relevant to examine how this migrant element is reflected in the paratext of the translated product, the element most controlled by the publisher, which may in turn influence the images conveyed by the text. According to Genette (1997) the paratext, the *threshold* of a text, carries four main functions: it designates or identifies, it describes, it connotes and it tempts (93). Through translation, thus, the manipulation of paratext implies the manipulation of the above-mentioned functions according to specific goals pursued by the agents of translation – in the present case, the publisher Cosmo Iannone. In other words, paratextual elements can be used in translation to reflect specific discourses directed towards the target literary system (which can be compliant to, or different from, that of the source); in the cases analyzed here, such discourse could be that of the return to the land of origin.

In regard to *Ritorno in Italia*, it should be noticed, firstly, that the cover of Melfi’s novel is in keeping with the editorial style adopted for all covers in that particular book series; this is to say that, as shown in the examples below, all the volumes published under the *Reti* collection feature a cover retaining similar design and layout – regardless of whether the books are translations or Italian works.

Figure 4: Examples of Italian-Canadian works’ covers published in Iannone’s *Reti* collection



While each of the volumes above features a different picture and a different colour (besides the specificities of titles, names of authors and translators), the simple layout chosen by the publisher leaves little space to (graphic) manipulation for specific purposes. Nevertheless, in an interview with Michela Baldo (2013), it was confirmed by the Cosmo Iannone Editore’s publishing director Rosanna

Carnevale that, for these translations, the publisher expressly opts for using different covers than those used by Guernica to present the source texts. This conveys a specific message to their readers; it reinforces the idea that the translation serves a purpose intended by the target publisher itself, while it may not necessarily maintain the source text's original scope.

As far as the paratext that surrounds and supports the translation of Melfi's *Italy Revisited* is concerned, the cover of the volume features the recognizable graphics of Cosmo Iannone Editore's books: a double and colourful structure that frames the picture chosen to represent the volume; above it, the name of the editorial line *Reti* and, below it, the author's name, the title and the name of the translator preceded by the caption "traduzione di" (translation by). As previously noted, in fact, Cosmo Iannone – together with Marlin Editore – is one of the two Italian publishers of Italian-Canadian volumes that openly and visibly credits translators for their work.

Figure 5 The cover of *Ritorno in Italia* and its photo

	
Cover of Melfi's <i>Italy Revisited</i> translated volume published by Iannone Editore. Under the title is the caption "Traduzione di" followed by the translator's name.	Photo on the cover of the Italian translation and on Melfi's website www.italyrevisited.com. Last accessed May 2016.

The book under discussion features a red and orange layout and a black and white picture of a group of adults surrounding a donkey mounted by a little boy and a little girl. The photo was shot on a stone staircase of what presumably is an Italian village; from the clothing worn by the subjects in the picture, it would appear that the picture was taken in a rural village in the 1950s or 1960s in the South of Italy. The same photo also features in Melfi's above-mentioned website home page.

As evident from a quick visual comparison of the source text cover and the target text cover

(below), besides the obvious layout differences (the colours and fonts chosen by Guernica, in Canada, and Cosmo Iannone, in Italy), the front covers of the two volumes differ in the subjects depicted in the photos; moreover, the source text's front cover clearly frames Melfi's work into the *Memoir* genre – underneath the subtitle of the work the notice “memoir/Guernica Editions” appear, while there is no indication of the genre on the target text cover (nor anywhere else in the Italian volume).

Figure 6 Covers of the English source text and the Italian target text



While the cover of the translation (2012) portrays a group of people in what looks like a Southern Italian village, the source text's sepia-toned photo depicts Melfi's mother as a young woman. According to Baldo (2013), it was Melfi's decision to replace it because of the sad expression on her mother's face on the source text cover. While the source text and paratext insist on the idea of revisiting Italy through the conversations with the writer's mother, thus underlining the mother-daughter relationship and framing the work as a family memoir, the target text is inserted in the discourse around the return of the migrant to a land of origin. In sum, according to the visual information provided on the two front covers, while both feature black and white pictures implying the necessity to revisit a past time, in the original work the figure of the mother is emphasized, while the translated volume stresses the idea of the return to Italy.

Indeed, the idea of homecoming conveyed by the translated volume is that of a return to a past

that no longer exists, a place that has changed since the time of emigration¹⁵⁷; this idea is in line with the image of Italy depicted throughout the novel by the protagonist's mother – “Italy is a wealthy country now, but when I was growing up there I didn't know anything except *la miseria*, poverty” (2009, 9).

The signs of authorship are manifest and maintained in both source and target paratext: Melfi's name appears in big fonts on both covers, just above the title of her work, and on both spines; the status of the target book as a translation can be easily recognized by the presence of the translator's name on the front cover of the target text, just below the title: “Traduzione di Laura Ferri”. This clearly indicates that the authorship of literary translators is taken into account, recognized and respected by the Italian publisher, a common practice for Cosmo Iannone Editore.

While translators are generally mentioned somewhere in target volumes, usually in the copyright page, in the Italian publishing industry it is still not a common practice to find their name on the front cover (even when their name is a prestigious one, as in the second case study). Disregarding the translator implies neglecting the status of the translator as author. The invisibility of the translator's authorship is furthermore supported by the belief that the quality of a translation will leave readers under the impression that they are reading a text that was originally written in the target language.

Another relevant paratextual element is the title of the work, probably one of its most noticeable features, since it is one of the first elements to catch the eye of a potential reader. The translation of a title is far from being an innocuous activity, but one that potentially contributes to the success/failure of a literary work. In the case at hand, the translation frames the narrative contained in the volume within a specific discourse: that of the Italian-Canadian migrant's return to Italy. While in the source text *Italy Revisited*, the homecoming is indeed a motive upon which the work is built, the title purposely eludes a direct and explicit reference to the return, opting for the past participle ‘revisited’: to visit a place again after a period of time, but also to consider/think of something again from a different perspective. Melfi's revisit serves the second purpose, and the means that offer a different perspective are those offered by the subtitle of her work: the *Conversations with My Mother*.

The title of the Italian translation, instead, opts for a clear and direct reference to the homecoming. As happened around a decade before to the Italian translation of Ricci's trilogy (*La terra del ritorno*), the Italian title of Melfi's memoir *Ritorno in Italia* leaves no doubt about the journey back to the migrant's land of origin contained in the volume. This deliberate choice to emphasize the narrative of the return is accentuated by the nostalgic picture of Italy and fits the current discourse

¹⁵⁷ As seen in the previous chapters, this is a recurrent motive in the original works by many Italian-Canadians.

around the migrant's homecoming that has recently surged in the Italian-Canadian literary scene.

The conclusive element of the paratext is the back cover, which for both the source text and its translation feature a blurb and a short author biography. While there is a vague mention of the immigrant theme in it, the source text's blurb defines the volume as an "unconventional approach to autobiographical writing" and values the work for being a testimony to a "vanished world" and to the tumultuous relationships between mothers and daughters (Melfi 2009). In the target volume's blurb, instead, the migrant theme is central: the translation presents and highlights the writer's desire to rediscover her roots and metaphorizes this rediscovery as a reconciliation with her past, inserting the memoir into the migrant framework, in agreement with the editorial line *Reti* in which Melfi's work is published.

While the *Guernica* volume, presuming that its readers know her already, only spends a couple of lines introducing the writer, who "has written over a dozen books of poetry, fiction, and stories for children" and now "lives in Montreal" (Melfi 2009), Cosmo Iannone presents a brief biography of Melfi and mentions the earlier volume, *Riti di Infertilità*, published by the same editor.

Moving beyond the cover, the copyright pages of both source and target texts advise the reader that both volumes were printed and published with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, and both present the names of the respective editors. The target volume additionally presents the original title, as well as its publisher's name *Guernica*, the date and place of publication of the source text.

To conclude the comparative analysis of the paratextual elements as they appear in the source text and its translation, it is worth highlighting two interrelated features that play a major role in the reader experience: the editorial note and the footnotes. Following the table of contents and preceding the actual body text of the translated volume is the *Nota Editoriale*, a short note addressed to the target reader that states: "the terms in italics, which in the original text are in Italian, are retained in the translation"¹⁵⁸ (Melfi 2012, 8; my translation).

In the source text, Melfi's constant use of the Italian language is both a reminder of the writer's hyphenated origin and an invitation to the reader to partake in her journey to her motherland. The *foreignizing* effect the use of (italicized) Italian has on the English source text reader – what Cronin (2013) would describe as "lexical exoticism" (195) – is not comparable when read by Italophone readers. Surely, the translatability (or otherwise) of this foreignness is a mixed blessing in this type of work, and the above editorial note acts as an explanatory device that allows the translator and the other agents of translation (specifically, the editor) to give the reader a brief insight into the decision-making

¹⁵⁸ "I termini corsivi, in italiano nel testo originale, sono conservati nella traduzione."

involved in the translation process.

The choice was made to preserve the Italian words used by the author in the original English text and to underscore their foreignness to the socio-cultural and linguistic context of origin (the English Canadian) by using italics. I will return to this in more detail in the following section, examining what happens to the above-listed Italian words and expressions in the source text once they are translated into the target text.

In brief, thanks to the paratext, the reader of Melfi's translated text is informed about the author's history, the strong bond between the author and Italy, and the relevance of the migrant element in it.

2.3.2. The Translator

The evolution of translation studies, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century, has taught us that a complex grid of elements comes into play in the production of a translated text: moving beyond the purely linguistic analyses of translated texts, a comprehensive investigation into the translation of literature now contemplates culturally and sociologically relevant elements as well.

Having previously hoped and pleaded for better visibility of the actors that make it possible for migrant writers to return to the ancestral land of origin, I will myself start the translational analysis of Melfi's memoir into Italian by introducing one of the most relevant agents in this homecoming: its translator Laura Ferri.

It shall be noted that the published Italian volume of *Ritorno in Italia* presents no biography of, or introduction to, the translator Laura Ferri, although her name clearly appears on the cover of the book underneath the title of the work. Interestingly, Ferri's short biographical sketch appears among the authors presented on the source publisher's – Guernica Editions – website¹⁵⁹: "Laura Ferri is cultural coordinator for the Siena-Toronto Centre in Siena, Italy. Recently she translated *Childhood* by André Alexis". While she is one of the actors committed to the sustenance of the Italian-Canadian network that promotes the translation of works by Italian-Canadian authors, the Canadian publisher is keen to specify that her work as a translator is not limited to Melfi's memoir, or to the Italian-Canadian group specifically. Indeed, examining the Laura Ferri's list of publications, the following translations by the Italian-Canadianist emerge:

- Stephen Crane, *Racconti del West (Western Stories)* (1992);

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.guernicaeditions.com/author/75>. Last accessed March 2016.

- Jessie L. Weston, *Indagine sul Santo Graal* (1994);
- Raymond Souster, “Lagoons, Hanlan's Point” in *Parole sull'Acqua: poesie dal Canada anglofono e francofono* (1996);
- *La Grande Carestia: privazione e anelito al ritrovamento. Pagine da Away di Jane Urquhart* (1997), translation and review;
- John Moss, *Enduring Dreams. An Exploration of the Arctic Landscape* (1997), review and translation;
- Al Purdy, “In Etruscan Tombs”, in *Rivista di Studi Canadesi* (1998);
- Stephen Crane, “Billie Atkins va a Omaha” in *Linea d'Ombra* (1998);
- Al Purdy, *Pronuncia i Nomi/Say the Names* (1999);
- Margaret Atwood, *Giochi di Specchi/Tricks with Mirrors* (2000);
- Andr  Alexis, *Infanzia* (2002);
- Anne Michaels, “Memoriam” in *Oltre La Persecuzione, Donne, ebraismo, memoria* (2004);
- S. Lillian Kremer, “Memorie di Donne” in *Oltre La Persecuzione, Donne, ebraismo, memoria*, (2004);
- Ron Smith, “Tre Poesie” in *Rivista di Studi Canadesi* (2003);
- Jane Urquhart, *Qualche altro giardino* (2007);
- Margaret Avison, *Concrete and Wild Carrots* (2008);
- Jane Urquhart, *Sotto la neve*, (2009);
- Jane Urquhart, *Klara* (2009), for Cosmo Iannone Editore;
- Mary Melfi, *Ritorno in Italia – Conversazioni con mia madre* (2012), for Cosmo Iannone Editore;
- Carl Sandburg, *Poesia di Chicago* (2012).

The list of literary translations carried out by Ferri shows her particular interest in Canadian literature, and her commitment to the cause of making it known to the Italian readership. Besides her role as a translator, and within the framework of her work as a university lecturer at the University of Siena, she has been editing the translations of Canadian short stories and poetry completed by the students of the Master in Literary Translation and Editing.

Further confirmation of her commitment to consolidating Italian-Canadian scholarly and literary links is her role as director of the Centro Siena-Toronto, an association whose aim is – as stated in its constitution – to “engage in the promotion of Canadian culture in educational and cultural institutions, both local and national, through the connection with the Canadian Embassy and the Italian

Association for Canadian Studies as well as the promotion of cultural heritage of the city of Siena in Canada.” (My translation)¹⁶⁰

As the coordinator of the Siena-Toronto centre, Laura Ferri has helped make the existing research network between the Italian and Canadian literary circles more visible. For this reason, Laura Ferri was invited by the Association of Italian-Canadian Writers as Keynote Lecturer for the XX Anniversary Conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers in Vancouver (2006) and, in 2007, she attended the 19th Biennial Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States held in Toronto with a presentation¹⁶¹ entitled *How Some Canadian Writers Travel to Italy: Translating Toronto to Siena*, which was later published in the XXI volume of the journal *Italian-Canadiana*.

Besides having translated works that were originally published by Guernica Editions – a publisher that played a pivotal role in the promotion and dissemination of Italian-Canadian voices in Canada – Ferri also edited a volume about Jane Urquhart entitled *Jane Urquhart: Essays on Her Works* (2005), for the same publisher.¹⁶²

When the translation of Mary Melfi’s memoir *Ritorno in Italia* (2012) appeared, Ferri had already shown considerable interest in the diversity of the Canadian literary landscape, and had already entered the Italian-Canadian network supported by one of its major actors, Guernica Editions. Her work on Melfi’s novel was her first real involvement with the Italian-Canadian literary group *per se* and, more specifically, her first role as an agent making possible the return of these authors to the ancestral land of origin. This first endeavour was followed by a more recent collaboration as editor for the group translation (and, partly, self-translation) of Licia Canton’s *Almond Wine and Fertility* (2008), self-published by the author in 2015 under the title *Vino alla mandorla e fertilità*¹⁶³.

As of today, *Ritorno in Italia* is the second (and latest) collaboration with the Italian publisher Cosmo Iannone, following the 2009 publication of *Klara*, her translation of Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers*, also included in Iannone’s series *Reti*.

Laura Ferri holds the position of Adjunct Professor at Woodsworth College of the University of

¹⁶⁰ “Si adopera inoltre nella promozione della cultura canadese nelle istituzioni scolastiche e culturali cittadine e nazionali, anche attraverso il collegamento con l’Ambasciata del Canada e con l’Associazione Italiana di Studi Canadesi oltre che della promozione del patrimonio culturale della città di Siena in Canada”. Retrived from: <http://www.sienatoronto.unisi.it/statuto/statuto.asp>. . Last accessed May 2016.

¹⁶¹ The presentation deals with Canadian authors who have visited and written works about the city of Siena.

¹⁶² http://www.sienatoronto.unisi.it/biblioteca/LF_Publications.pdf. . Last accessed May 2016.

¹⁶³ The collection of short stories was translated by Licia Canton – the author herself – together with some recurrent names in the field of Italian-Canadian studies: Giulia De Gasperi (the Vice-President of the AICW), Gabriella Iacobucci, Filippo Mariano (the translator of Canadian poet Don McKay), Isabella Martini, Moira Mini and Tiziana Tampellini (both Ferri’s students of the Master in Translation at the University of Siena), and Marta Romanini (also of the University of Siena).

Toronto.

2.3.3. The Translated Text

The most explicative aspect of the paratext of Melfi's translation is the overt reference to the return, presented in the Italian title. The desire to return, while implicitly suggested, is emblematically and visually embodied by the presence of recurrent Italian words and expressions in the English source text; this linguistic hybridity reveals the writers' attempt to reconcile with the forgotten mother tongue.

In the paratext, Cosmo Iannone has highlighted the decision to preserve this hybridity in the target text. Let us see what happens to these Italian expressions in the source text when they 'migrate back' into Italian. For this purpose, I will reproduce the table used in the previous section containing the foreign cultural markers as they appeared in the source text (on the left) and provide their Italian rendition as it appeared in the target text (on the right).

Table 8 Use of Italian in Melfi's *Italy Revisited* and its rendition in *Ritorno in Italia*

Figlia mia (2009, 9, etc)	Kept in italics.
Porca miseria (9, etc)	Kept in italics.
Una signora (9)	Italicization was removed.
La miseria (9, etc)	Kept in italics.
Masseria (10, etc)	In the source text, <i>la masseria</i> was followed by the translation "on the farm" (2009, 10). In the target text, the latter expression becomes "in campagna" (2012,11) meaning in the <i>countryside</i> .
Cara/Cara mia (10, etc)	Kept in italics.
Il campanile (11)	Kept in italics.
Mio paese (14, 99)	Kept in italics. Moreover, "my home town", which followed " <i>mio paese</i> " (2009, 99) in the source text becomes "il mio paese natale" (2012, 17), my native town, in the translation. The target text stresses the idea that the author and protagonist is a native of Casacalenda.
Il monico (15)	While the word is kept in italics, the translator corrects its spelling; in the target text, it reads as "il monaco" (2012, 19).
Una brutta figura (18, etc)/ la bella figura (etc)	In the source text, the expression <i>una brutta figura</i> is followed by the English definition "a bad impression" (2009, 18). In Italian, the translator decides to retain part of this definition and reiterate the concept by translating it in the following way: "una cattiva opinione" (2012, 21), a bad opinion. In the original text, <i>la bella figura</i> was followed by an explanation in brackets: "a good appearance" (2009, 85); in the target text the definition is eliminated since the concept related to this expression is known to Italian readers. As pledged, however, the expression remains in italics (2012, 83).
Una grotta (18)	Italicization was removed.
Il pane cotte (31)	Kept in italics.

Pane assutee, vita longa (31)	As in the source text, the target text provides a translation for this proverb into Standard Italian: “pane secco, vita lunga” (2012, 32). The vernacular proverb is specific to the Molise and Abruzzo regions ¹⁶⁴ .
Il pane inglese (31)	Kept in italics.
I pomodori (33)	Kept in italics.
Una pomodora (33)	The spelling was corrected according to the Italian norm: “un pomodoro” (2012, 35).
Lupini (33, etc)	Kept in italics.
Brocciale (34, etc)	The word in the source text is adapted to the vernacular spelling “bracciole” (2012, 35) although the correct Standard Italian spelling is <i>bracirole</i> .
In voltini (34)	The spelling was corrected according to the Italian norm: “involtini” (2012, 36).
Pasta e fagioli (34, etc)	The spelling was corrected according to the Italian norm: “Pasta e fagioli” (36). In the source text the translation “pasta and beans” followed the Italian; in the target text, the definition is kept and translated into Italian, creating a rather redundant string of words: “pasta e fagioli, la pasta con i fagioli” (2012, 36).
Vermicelli alle vongole (34)	Kept in italics.
Festa del maiale (36)	As in the above case of <i>pasta e fagioli</i> , in the source text, <i>festa del maiale</i> was followed by the translation “the feast day of the pig”. The Italian text, once again quite redundantly, reads as follow: “ <i>la festa del maiale, è il giorno della festa del maiale</i> ” (2012, 37).
Cafone (37, etc)	The word is kept in italics. Where the source text employed the explanatory English word “simpleton”, the Italian text uses “semplicioni” (2012, 38); this additional information is not necessary for the comprehension of the term, which is widespread in the Italian language.
Mamma mia (38, etc)	Kept in italics.
The Inglesi (39, etc)/Inglese (293)	Kept in italics.
La Fiera di San Carlo (40)	Kept in italics.
Olio d’oliva (47)	Italicization was removed.
Mille lire/lira (49, etc)	Kept in italics.
La festa dei morti (50)	Kept in italics.
Questo vale per le anime del purgatorio (50)	Kept in italics.
I contadini (56)	The Italian expression contained in the source text becomes “le contadine” (2012, 55), in the target text. The noun and its article have been adjusted to the feminine form, since in the passage the author is clearly referring to countrywomen.

¹⁶⁴ A list of proverbs of these regions can be found in the book *Proverbi & Modi di Dire - Abruzzo–Molise* (2011) published by Simoncelli Editore.

Lutto (56, 59)	In the target text, the source text descriptive translation <i>mourning clothes</i> , which followed the Italian noun <i>lutto</i> , becomes “vestirsi di nero” (2012, 55) – to dress in black – the typical mourning clothing practice. The target Italian thus presents a reiteration of the concept, when it reads “portare il lutto, vestirsi di nero” (2012, 55).
Sposare Dio (58)	While the source text presented the English expression “marry God”, which preceded the Italian <i>sposare Dio</i> , the target text uses “unirsi a Dio” (2012, 57), to reunite with God. Again, the text presents a reiteration of the same concept.
Crepa (61)	The English expression to “kick the bucket”, used in the source text to render the Italian <i>crepa</i> , is rendered in the target text with another equivalent Italian expression “tirar le cuoia” (2012, 59).
Mala aria (61)	Kept in italics.
Porca miseria (62, etc)	Kept in italics.
L’aglio (65)	Kept in italics.
Malocchio (67, etc)	Kept in italics.
Corno (68, 71)	In the source text, the Italian word was followed by the translation “an ox horn”. This is also kept and translated into Italian with “corno di bue” (2012, 68), creating the redundant string of words “un corno, un corno di bue” (68).
Dio te benedica (69)	Kept in italics.
I maghi (74)	Besides the source text <i>maghi</i> , in the Italian translated text, the translator decides to add “le fattucchiere” (2012, 73) to include female sorceresses.
Fatturare (74)	Kept in italics.
Bocce (83, 125, 128, 129)	Kept in italics.
La terra vecchia (83)	While Melfi had chosen to translate <i>la terra vecchia</i> with “the old country” in her source text, Ferri decides to back-translate the English expression with “il vecchio paese” (2012, 81), which now reads, in the target text, side by side with the original Italian expression.
In mia casa, io, comando (84)	The sentence, as reported in the source text, contains mistakes both in its syntax and spelling. It should read “in casa mia, comando io”. The translator decides to keep the first sentence as it was in the original text – probably attributing the above mistakes to the writer’s uneducated father (the character pronouncing it) – adding the correct sentence right after it. (2012, 81)
Capellera (85, 87)	The word is kept in italics but, because this is not a word in Standard Italian, the translator adds next to it “la pettinatrice” (2012, 83), the <i>hair comber</i> present in the source text.
Tupe (85, etc)	The word was corrected according to the Italian spelling: “tupé” (2012, 13).
Dio Mio (87)	Kept in italics.
Un mezzo di mezzetto di grano (89)	The sentence was corrected according to the Italian syntax: “un mezzo mezzetto di grano” (2012, 86).
La festa dei nomi (94, etc)	Because the expression <i>festa dei nomi</i> is not an idiomatic phrase in the Italian language, the translator – just like the author had done with the explanatory “name day” that followed the expression in the source text

	– adds its correct Italian equivalent “onomastico” (2012, 92).
Uno biccierino (94, etc)	The expression is corrected according to Italian spelling “un bicchierino” (2012, 92).
Auguri (94)	Kept in italics.
Uno paesano/paesana (99, etc)	Kept in italics.
Uno foreestero (99)	While, in the translated text, the article preceding the word is corrected according to the rules of Italian grammar – which require the substitution of <i>uno</i> for <i>un</i> – the word itself should read <i>forestiero</i> , but it is left unchanged (2012, 97).
Una puttana/puttane (104, etc.)	Kept in italics.
Va bene (111)	Kept in italics.
U cascio (114)	The vernacular word is adjusted to “u casciu” (2012,113), probably based on the more correct dialect variety of the area the writer is originally from.
Meciucco (115)	Kept in italics.
Buono Natale (120)	The expression is adjusted according to the correct Italian spelling “Buon Natale” (2012, 119).
Salute (120)	Kept in italics.
Zampagnari (120)	The spelling is adjusted to the correct form “zampognari” (2012, 119).
Qualche cosa (120, 327)	Kept in italics.
Frutti di mare (121)	Kept in italics.
Presperio (121)	The spelling is adjusted to the correct form “presepio” and italicization is removed (2012, 120).
Morsella (122)	The word is removed from the Italian target text. In fact, the word does not exist in Italian, but from the source text – “ <i>morsela</i> (Italian eggnog)” (2009, 122) – it would appear that the writer is referring to the typical creamy dessert <i>zabaione</i> , which is often prepared adding Marsala wine. It is exactly from the assonance with the Marsala wine name that the word used by the author could have derived.
Caragnoli (122)	Kept in italics.
La befana (123)	Kept in italics.
Pallone (128)	Kept in italics.
Carte napoletane (130)	Kept in italics.
Bastone/danari/spade/coppe (130)	The target text presents the adjusted spelling for “bastoni” to follow the Italian rule of pluralization (2012, 129).
Scopa/ Tre sette/ Morra/ tombola (131, 171)	Kept in italics.
La passeggiata (134, etc)	Kept in italics.
I poveri contadini (134)	Kept in italics.
Piazza (134, etc)	Italicization is removed.
Biscotti con sale (147, etc)	Kept in italics.
Mammina/ mamma (148, etc)	Kept in italics.
Salute (154)	Italicization is removed.
Fiadoni (155, etc)	Kept in italics.

Sia fatta la volonta di Dio (163)	The ST sentence is kept in italics, the word “volontà” is adjusted as per correct Italian spelling (2012, 165).
I macaroni San Giuseppe (164)/ patigine/ scarpelle (165)	Kept in italics.
La visita dei morti (170, 171)	Kept in italics.
La cosa nostra (174)	Kept in italics.
Casa nostra (174)	Kept in italics.
Professoro/professoressa (175)	Kept in italics.
Omertà (175)	Kept in italics.
Un compare/ compari/ una commare (177, etc)	Kept in italics.
Il capo (177, etc)	Kept in italics.
Feudista (183, 184)	Kept in italics.
L’aria è pura (192)	Kept in italics.
I ricetelli (196)	Kept in italics. The word is vernacular and an Italian translation is provided: “le orecchie giovani” (2012, 197), young ears.
Quella cosa (197)	Kept in italics.
Finocchio (199)	In the target text, italicization is removed, but the English word <i>gay</i> is added in brackets and in italics.
Biancaria (207)	The word is replaced by the correctly spelled “biancheria” (2012, 207).
Buono giorno (209)	In the TT, the spelling was corrected: “buongiorno” (2012, 210).
Sempre unite (209)	The expression is changed into “sempre uniti” (2012, 210). The writer had originally (inadvertently?) used the feminine form, while the sentence, meaning <i>always united</i> , refers to a couple, which in Italian requires the use of the masculine form.
Pasta con il uova (212)	In the TT, the spelling was corrected: “pasta con le uova” (2012, 212).
La doctrina (218)	The ST spelling was corrected: “la dottrina” (2012, 216).
Atto della Solemne Promessa di Celebrate il Matrimonio (218)	The expression is adjusted according to the correct spelling of the words “solenne”, solemn, and “celebrare”, to celebrate (2012, 217).
Figlia mia dio sia benedetta (221)	The expression is adjusted according to the correct spelling: “Figlia mia dio sia benedetto” (2012, 221).
Spazzi (222)	Kept in italics.
Bonboniere (222)	The word is adjusted according to the correct spelling “bomboniere” (2012, 221).
Uscire fuori (223)	In the TT, the expression is kept in italics and the English expression “coming out” follows in italics, since <i>uscire fuori</i> is not idiomatic to the Italian language (2012, 223).
Ostie (232, etc)	Kept in italics.
Brodo del parto (234)	Kept in italics.
Freto/souro di latto (234)	The expressions are kept in italics, the word <i>latto</i> is substituted with its correctly spelled <i>latte</i> , milk (2012, 234).
Francese/i (244, etc)	Italicization is removed.
Uno cristiano (246)	The expression is kept in italics, but the article is adjusted according to

	rules of Italian grammar: “un cristiano” (2012, 245).
Atto di richiamo (249)	Kept in italics.
Culi di vache (250)	The expression is kept in italics, but it is adjusted according to the correct spelling: “Culi di vacche” (2012, 248).
Controllo di visita (254)	The expression is kept in italics, but it is adjusted according to the correct syntax: “visita di controllo” (2012, 252).
Doctore (269)	The spelling is incorrect, however, it was decided to keep it as it appeared in the ST. The scene described takes place in Canada, and it was probably thought that this was the way people would have referred to the family doctor.
Il primo corso (270, 280)	The expression is kept even though it does not exist in Standard Italian.
Peperoni arrosto (270)	The expression is kept in italics, but it is adjusted according to the correct spelling: “peperoni arrosto” (2012, 268).
Lasagna in brodo (282)	The dish was changed into “taglierini in brodo” (2012, 279); <i>lasagna in brodo</i> is, in fact, not an Italian dish.
Pasquette aspinantu (284)	Kept in italics. The word is vernacular, not Standard Italian.
Fiadone di ricotta/ di formaggio (284)	Kept in italics.
Pane di Pasqua (284, 285)	Kept in italics.
Capa tosta (290)	Kept in italics.
La cicoria (291)	Kept in italics.
Madonna (291, etc)	Kept in italics.
Grazie dio (292)	Kept in italics.
Il formage per perché (293)	The phrase – which makes no sense to an Italian speaker – is changed into “il formage per piacere” (2012, 289); this is still not correct in Italian, but it is meant to reproduce the attempt of someone who does not speak fluent Italian.
Papa (295)	Italicization was removed and the spelling was corrected: “papà” (2012, 290).
Pazze (305)	The word is kept in italics, but is changed into the singular form “pazza” (2012, 300) in agreement with the context.
Pronto (315)	Kept in italics.
Bella Italia (316)	Kept in italics.
Taralli con sale (326)	Kept in italics.

As anticipated in the Editorial Note preceding the text itself, and as proven by the above cases, the translator (and the editor) largely preserved and italicized the Italian words and expressions originally found in the source text. These signify the presence of a different voice and subjectivity (the Italian one), other than the one dominant in the text. In most cases, this pledge was fulfilled: most of these words were kept in italics in the target text, since this was the only way to signal their foreignness to the discursive condition (the author’s way of being and writing, in other words). In a few cases, however, italicization was removed due to the popularity of the words in both languages: *signora*, *olio d’oliva*, *piazza*, *salute* (intended here as the exclamation used for toasting).

As previously seen, many of the Italian words that appear in *Italy Revisited* are geographically localized: expressions such as “pane assutee, vita longa” or “freto/souro di latto” do not belong to the Standard Italian variety of language, but rather to the regional variety of Molise. This vernacular flavour is thus preserved and respected in the target text, one of the few elements that restore the hybrid character of Melfi’s idiolect in translation (and one of the elements that make it even more valuable/appealing for Cosmo Iannone, a publisher interested in regionalism).

Many of the grammar and spelling mistakes made by the author (and/or editor of the volume) have been corrected. While this is in line with the necessity of making the text readable for the Italian audience, it normalizes Melfi’s narrative voice: in the Italian translation, Melfi speaks and writes impeccable Italian, which conceals both her mistakes and her struggle with a mother tongue she wishes to (but cannot) master.

Ultimately, italicization is an effort to preserve the foreign cultural space, the author’s refusal to assimilate completely, and the only way to indicate this is to graphically mark these words. Surely, this graphic device does not have the same effect on the source and target text readers, since in the latter case, the dominant language of the text (the target one) and that of these foreign words is the same.

In order to compensate for the loss of linguistic richness (hybridity) and to suggest that Melfi’s discourse cannot be considered fully indigenous to either of the two linguistic and cultural systems, the translator decides to insert – whenever possible – some words in English. From its status of source (familiar) language, in Melfi’s translated text, English becomes target language (the Other’s) language: the dialogue between languages and cultures is reversed, and the language of departure, English, is used to create that sense of hybridity produced by the author in the source text by the use of Italian.

In other words, the occasional English words scattered throughout the Italian text – often underlined by italicization – are a reminder, for the Italian reader, that the author belongs, first and foremost, to the Canadian cultural system. Anglo-Saxon cultural markers that appeared in the source text and have no Italian correspondent are preserved in the translation, and complemented with

footnotes that explain their relevance for the Canadian culture. Such is the case of *eggnog*¹⁶⁵ (120), *Humpty Dumpty*¹⁶⁶ and *YMCA*¹⁶⁷ (128), *Chef Boyardee*¹⁶⁸ (213), and *marshmallow*¹⁶⁹ (322).

As an example of so-called “cultural untranslatability” (Catford 1965), though they could be translated – especially if one admits the acceptability of finding a cultural-specific item in the target language – these English words describing cultural elements of the Anglo-Saxon world sporadically appear in order not to diminish the presence of, or obliterate, the source cultural system – just like the author did when using Italian in the source text.

The intertwining of language identities (and the inversion of source and target in terms of linguistic viewpoints) is visible and emblematic in one of the initial chapters of the book dedicated to one of the most culturally specific elements in the whole narrative: food.

As if trying to deliver to us the delicate balance between expression and perception for the hyphenated individual, Melfi proclaims: “Language also affects taste” (2009, 33), directed to her mother. The encounter between her two worlds moves beyond the linguistic medium and overflows into the realm of cultural universals, as in the following passage: “Close your eyes and say *i pomodori*. And then tomato,” I tell her, adding, “For an Italian a tomato doesn’t have the rich, red flavour of *una pomodora* [sic]” (2009, 33).

The daughter tries to explain to her mother how language shapes the perception of the world, in other words the theory of *linguistic determinism* – for which it is understood that our way of thinking is determined by language, and translation is therefore to be considered impossible since it operates between different conceptual structures. This is one of the main discourses in the novel, since Melfi is a firm believer in the impossibility of translation (between the two cultural and linguistic worlds of hyphenated identities). In order to illustrate the limitations of translation, in the above sentences, the writer juxtaposes the words *pomodoro* (in the text, quoted above, the word is misspelled) and *tomato*, maintaining that the two do not convey the same mental associations. In Melfi’s source text, Italian

¹⁶⁵ In an approach typical of cultural translation, *eggnog* is considered in the source text as the equivalent of the Italian *morsella*, which as seen above is a vernacular (most probably Italian-Canadian) name for *zabaione*. As for *eggnog* inserted in the target text, the translator advise the reader that this alcoholic drink (whose ingredients are milk, eggs, liquor, nutmeg and other spices) also known as *lait de poule* among the Francophone speakers, is typically served during the Christmas holidays in Great Britain, the United States, Canada and Luxembourg. (Melfi 2012, 120)

¹⁶⁶ *Humpty Dumpty* – “Growing up I felt like Humpty Dumpty: breakable, fragile, delicate”, the author claims in the source text (2009, 129) – is described by the translator as a character in an English nursery rhyme, also known because of its appearance in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*. (Melfi 2012, 128)

¹⁶⁷ The translator explains that the acronym YMCA stands for Young Men Christian Association, an international organization especially widespread in Anglo-Saxon countries. (Melfi 2012, 128)

¹⁶⁸ Defined in the footnote as brand of canned pasta initially produced by Italian immigrant Ettore Boiardi in the United States, in 1928. (Melfi 2012, 213)

¹⁶⁹ Described as a soft, sugary confection. (Melfi 2012, 322)

plays the role of the outsider, signalling the hybridity of the author's heritage. The Italian word comes to be identified with the idea of exoticism, while the equivalent English word is simply a non-descriptive term.

When it comes to translation, however, the target text cannot exploit the same strategy, Italian being the target – hence, not exotic or foreign to the reader. English needs to be employed to have the same effect on the Italian readership, such as in the translation of the excerpt above: “Chiudi gli occhi e di *i pomodori*. E poi ‘tomato’”, le dico e continuo “per un italiano un ‘tomato’ non ha la ricca sanguigna fragranza di *un pomodoro*” (2012, 35).

While italicization is kept for the Italian words *pomodoro/pomodori* to signal the author's original intent, the English word *tomato* – now playing the role of the exotic cultural marker – is emphasized by the use of single inverted commas. Here, the effect on the reader is reversed: while *tomato* is the word conducive to exoticism, *pomodoro* channels the familiarity of a known taste.

The change of perspectives is also clear a few pages later, when the mother and daughter exchange moves on to the topic of Italian migration in the chapter entitled *Gypsies*. “Immigration turned Italians into gypsies” (Melfi 2009, 42), the author claims; here she is clearly assuming the North American viewpoint since the prefix *im-* indicates the move ‘into’ a place (Canada). This viewpoint is inverted in the Italian translation, which reads “L’emigrazione trasformò gli italiani in zingari” (2012, 43), where the *e-* of *emigration* designates the move ‘out of, away from’ a place (Italy).

This inversion is repeated a few pages after, where the author explains to her mother that “[i]n the 1950s Europe's poor could improve their lives by immigrating to North America” (2009, 44); once again, by opting for the gerund *immigrating* she positions herself on the New Continent. In translation, *emigrando* (emigrating) was preferred, meaning that Melfi's perspective is moved again to the Old Continent: “[n]egli scorsi anni cinquanta, i poveri dell’Europa potevano migliorare le loro condizioni di vita emigrando in Nord America” (2012, 45); by reading this sentence, indeed, the Italian reader will have the impression that the protagonist shares an Italian perspective.

The migrant topic returns towards the end of the book, in the fifty-sixth chapter entitled *Immigration Papers*, which starts as follows: “For Europeans who crossed the Atlantic in the 1950s [...]” (2009, 249). While the title of the chapter *Documenti di immigrazione* (2012, 247) maintains the same perspective (i.e. *immigration* remains *immigrazione*), the opening sentence, once again, offers an inversion of viewpoint, and the *immigrants* of the above sentence become *emigrants*: “Per gli emigranti europei che attraversarono l’Atlantico [...]” (247). Similarly, later in the book, the narrator in the

source text says “Italians came to this country” (2009, 290), while in the Italian text is more specific and adds the word *emigrants* to Italians: “gli emigranti italiani vennero in questo paese” (2012, 287).

While, surely, the translator is not suggesting that the conversations between mother and daughter took place in Italy, the change in viewpoint will allow the reader to perceive a sense of familiarity in the perspective; the narrator is brought closer to the Italian reader and moved away from the lives and choices of those emigrants who left Italy (the Italian-Canadians, in this case).

The distinction between Italians in Italy and Italians in Canada is further reinforced by the linguistic issue, as explained by the author:

Our relatives from Italy see us living in big houses and are impressed, but when we speak, they look down on us. They call what we speak, *Italianità* – part English, part Italian. We say *carro* for car, *giobba* for job, *bizine* for business, and *garibiche* for garbage can.

(Melfi 2009, 311)

What the narrator/writer is referring to in this passage is the hybrid language now widely recognized/able as *Italiense* (Clivio 1976). However, it is worth highlighting that another variety of hybrid language has been identified by Canadian scholars in the field: *italianese* (Villalta 2010). While similar, the two diverge mostly in regard to the territory where they have developed: the former is born in the encounter between the English and the Italian languages in Anglophone Canada, while the latter derives from the mingling of French, English and Italian in Québec.

The word used by Melfi, *Italianità*, is misguidedly thought by the author to be the term used by Italians to refer to this hybrid language variety; *italianità* is indeed an Italian word, but it refers to the collection of qualities denoting Italian culture and ethnicity, known in English as *Italianness*. In the Italian target text, the language variety erroneously labelled by Melfi is aptly translated with the latter term – *italianese* (2012, 305) – rather than the more common *italiense*; this is because the author and her mother, as mentioned widely in the book, live in Montreal. With regards to the rendition of the above paragraph, the Italian text, identifies the foreignness of both the *italiense* variety and English by retaining italicization for the former and single inverted commas for the latter, a device that was previously used with the English word *tomato* emphasized by the use of single inverted commas to signify its use as a cultural marker.

Another noticeable linguistic element contributing to Melfi’s specific idiolect in Italian is the use of rather archaic words in the Italian translation. This is seen in the rendition of the English sentence “I turn on my tape recorder” (2009, 11), which in Italian becomes “accendo il magnetofono” (2012, 13). More widely known as *registratore a nastro* or *registratore a cassette*, or simply with the less specific *registratore* (recorder) – depending on the type of recording media used – the tape

recorder is rendered in the Italian text with its commercial (and rather obsolete) name *magnetofono*, a calque of the English word *magnetophone*.¹⁷⁰ A similar approach is chosen when translating the sentence “I sharpen my pencil” (2009, 12), rendered as “tempero il lapis” (2012), in which the word *lapis* is preferred to the more common *matita*. This is, perhaps, to reinforce the stylistic discourse of foreignness: the linguistic shift here happens on the axis of time rather than place.

2.4. *Italy Revisited Translated: Conclusions*

In sum, the translational choices highlighted show a willingness to maintain Melfi’s original migrant discourse, symbolized by the journey and negotiation between the two cultures and worlds of the protagonist, expressed by the dialogue between the daughter and her writing language (English) and the mother and the mother tongues (Italian and dialect from Casacalenda).

The paratext of the target volume, together with its title, reinforces and frames the narratives within the idea of a desired return to the origins, a place and time far from the present conditions. Where, in the source text, the author had originally inserted Italian or regional words to signal her attempt to reconcile with the mother(-land/tongue), the target text uses italicization, or occasionally inserts English (*compensation* becomes a reminder that the facts narrated happened elsewhere) and archaic words which indicate Melfi’s position in-between two temporal, cultural and linguistic systems.

Indeed, these translational choices can be read as an approach to render Melfi’s variegated idiolect, a language variety that results from her feeling of being divided between Canada and Italy, the present and the past. With regards to her difficulty in being a hyphenated identity, Melfi states: “I felt divided, not at home in either culture” (2009, 304), the expression ‘not at home in either culture’ – which reinforces the idea of homesickness permeating the text – becomes ‘ill at ease in both cultures’ in the Italian translation, which reads: “mi sono sentita divisa, a disagio in entrambe le culture” (2012, 299). The writer’s search for a place to call home in Italian becomes a search for a place to feel at ease.

The reader perceives a sense of normalization in the migration from the source text to the translation: the linguistic hybridity – preserved as much as possible, and suggested by the role of English as cultural marker – is nevertheless noticeably standardized for the purpose of a better readability (the grammar and spelling mistakes present in the source text are mostly removed), and the narrator is subtly brought closer to the Italian reader thanks to a (vaguely perceptible) shift in

¹⁷⁰ The Grande Dizionario Hoepli Italiano (2015) defines the etymology as follows: “‘Nome commerciale ®; comp. di *magneto-* + *-fono*, sul modello dell’ingl. *magnetophone*”.

viewpoints (i.e. *immigrant* vs. *emigrant*). Lexical standardization and viewpoint changes result in greater conformity to the Italian target culture, implying that, through the words of the translator, the author reconciles with the motherland under the guise of a book that seems to have been written in Italian, even though Iannone and the migration-oriented Reti collection remind us that this was not the case.

3. From *The Closer We Are to Dying* to *Le voci di mio padre*: Fiorito's Family Hi-Story Travels Back

The following section is dedicated to the second case study: *The Closer We Are to Dying* by Joe Fiorito. I will start by introducing this third generation Italian-Canadian author and analyzing to which extent the migrant element plays a role in his literary production and, more specifically, in the most autobiographical of his works. The constitutive elements of the migrant discourse presented in Fiorito's family memoir will be further analyzed: the *passion du retour* and the ensuing journey, the cultural and linguistic translation processes and how they shape the writing process. Eventually, I will proceed with a translational analysis that exposes how Fiorito's migrant discourse travels into the Italian target text.

3.1. About Joe Fiorito

Joe Fiorito was born in 1948 in Fort William, Ontario, to Italian parents, and was raised in Northern Ontario. After a variety of occupations, he became a journalist in the 1980s and, since then, he has worked for CBC Radio in Iqaluit, the Montreal Gazette, the National Post and The Globe and Mail.

His first two books – *Comfort Me With Apples* (1994) and *Tango on the Main* (1996) – are collections of essays that were originally published as weekly columns in the Montreal Gazette and do not address the subject of Italian-Canadians; the latter won the National Newspaper Award, a prize awarded for the best work in a Canadian newspaper.

It was not until 1999, however, that Fiorito decided to explore in depth his Italian heritage: with *The Closer We Are to Dying*, Fiorito finally addresses the migrant theme through the eyes and voice of his dying father, and the stories he tells to his son during his last twenty-one days of life. The work was received positively by both the critics and the readership, and was later translated into Italian and German.

Among his most recent works are Toronto Book Award winner *The Song Beneath The Ice* (2002)

– the story of a Toronto-based writer (the author himself, perhaps) who has to solve the mystery behind the disappearance of his concert pianist friend – and *Union Station: Love, Madness, Sex and Survival on the Streets of New Toronto* (2006) – a tribute to his home city, Toronto. He continues on the same subject with his 2015 work (published by Guernica Editions) *Rust Is a Form of Fire*: part prose and part poetry, the work is the result of the writer’s observations gathered over 18 hours spent, during three days, observing the city from one of its most central intersections.

All his latest works distance themselves from the migrant theme and deal with quintessentially Canadian content and with the idea of locality. A different idea of locality is presented in the family memoir that will be analyzed in the following pages: *The Closer We Are to Dying*.

3.2. About *The Closer We Are to Dying*: the Family Memoir for the Canadian Literary Market

I wanted to know about Ripa. My grandfather had died before I was born; he couldn't tell me. My uncles were born in Canada; they weren't much interested in anything that happened before them. But I thought if I listened closely, I might learn what made them what they were, and what made me the way I am, as if my roots lay in their deracination.

(Fiorito 1999, 158)

Joe Fiorito’s 1999 best-selling family memoir *The Closer We Are To Dying* relates the grieving process over his father’s death in the form of 28 confessional chapters that cover the last twenty-one days of life of Dusty Fiorito, the child of an Italian couple who migrated to Canada in 1890. The book opens with an inscription to the memory of the writer’s father (20 November 1917 - 2 June 1996), reminding the reader of the factual nature of the work they are about to read. On the same page, Joe Fiorito attests that the book could not have been written without the help of his mother and the rest of his family, who helped him reconstruct the puzzle of his family history.

Like Melfi’s family memoir, Fiorito’s first-person narrative relies on the process of intersemiotic translation: the transcription of oral material (the product of their parents’ memory) into written form. These translated memories form the thematic sections – another similarity with Melfi’s work – of the novel, which starts with a chapter entitled *Home*. Here, Fiorito (1999) describes the familiar landscape of Fort Williams – the place that he considers home – and the memories of his childhood inspired by the place: “I lie in bed and listen to the bells at the level crossing. I can almost

hear the low voices of my parents. My father tells a story; his voice is sweet, my mother leads him on” (2).

His return to the childhood home – “the old house is filled with the invisible embers of memory” (10) – from the West coast of Canada where he lives occurs after the protagonist receives a phone call from his mother, who informs him about the deterioration of his father’s health:

My mother merely said hello; it was all she had to say. I understood at once that my father was about to die. There had been no warning; none was needed. He’d been ill for some time [...] She said he had a few weeks to live, perhaps only a few days.

(7-8)

Knowing that the time left with father is now limited, the protagonist decides to return home to see him, a homecoming that is not easy for a man who lives, as he admits, the life of an *exile*: “It’s always been difficult for me to go back. I feel as if I am entering the half-light of remembered deaths [...] For a time, it seemed that I only returned home for funerals” (9).

Melfi’s and Fiorito’s memoirs share the confrontational nature of the relationship with their parent, a conflict that needs closure before the two writers can finally find balance and reconnect with the past: “[w]hile there was no unfinished business between my father and me – we’d come to terms with each other long ago – there was now this one thing left to do” (9).

Fiorito’s return, around which the whole novel is built and to which I will return in the following pages, allows the reader to slowly discover the life story of Dusty and the Fiorito family, in detail. During the first night at the hospital, for example, the writer introduces the reader to his father, a popular musician in the area:

Everybody knew his name. For fifty years he played the trombone, the banjo, and the stand-up bass in bars and meeting halls and little dance joints: self-taught swing and blues and Dixieland tunes in trios, quartets, quintets [...] He was not ours. He belonged to the crowd.

(17)

Despite his popularity (the writer avows that Dusty was not a particularly talented artist, but he had flair), the family was destitute. The father was rarely home, and when he returned, he was often drunk: “apart from rage, drink was his defining weakness” (20). Charming man when outside, violent when at home, Fiorito starts to uncover his aversion for the man.

Story by story, chapter by chapter, the reader starts understanding that the roots of Fiorito’s family lie elsewhere than Canada:

There’s supposed to be a big house in the old country, Casa Silvaggio. Maybe it isn’t there, maybe it didn’t exist, maybe it’s called some other name now, doesn’t matter. Silvaggio would have been a big man.

(34)

In the following chapter (the Third Night), Fiorito recounts the story of how his family arrived in Canada; this is where the migrant element first makes its appearance in Fiorito's literary production. It all starts with his great-uncle Joe Silvaggio killing a man in his hometown Ripabottoni, "in the high hills of Molise" (38), a place where everyone knows everyone, where everybody is related and is known by a *soprannome*, a nickname.

Joe Silvaggio hurries home, packs his belongings, says goodbye to his parents and leaves Ripabottoni to board a ship together with his wife Filomena and her brother Matteo – Fiorito's grandfather: "Silvaggio unharnesses the fastest of his horses. He leaves the wagons where they are – no time to think, no need to ask any questions. There are no questions. There is an answer. Canada" (42).

During the Fourth Night, Fiorito expands the story of his family upon their arrival in Canada in the early 1890s: "it is the story of who I am, and where I am from" (43). They establish themselves in Northern Ontario by clearing homesteads in South Gilles Township:

It's a simple deal, too sweet to be true: no matter who you are or where you are from or how you got here, this infant government of Canada will give you 160 acres of land and seven years to clear a field and put up a house and a barn. Do that, and you've earned title to the land.

(45)

Fiorito's grandfather, Matteo, marries Angela Maria Delvecchio, a girl he meets in Canada and who is from the same village, Ripabottoni. The Silvaggio and Fiorito families are both numerous: "[t]he Fioritos are the last branch of a large family. They have no land, no wealth; they have nothing but native wit and the value of their labour at a time when labour is cheap" (143). Hardworking people, they live and work side by side, prosper in the new country, a place so different from where they are from:

[...] this is not Ripa, where the land is dear because it's scarce. Where land is often rented for generations, let out for so long that the man who owns it must buy it back if he wants to use it himself. That's what's wrong with this place: there's so much land it has no value.

(53)

The first elements of nostalgia start surfacing through the words of Fiorito's relatives translated into written form by the author. At this point in the novel, the narrator has just started exploring his Italian heritage and what it means to be of Italian origin in Canada and has not yet expressed any desire or interest to return to the ancestral homeland.

Conversely, the first-person narrator confesses to the reader that he "grew up believing there was a mark on me" (78). The presence of this perceived stigma is connected to his being Italian and what *Italianness* represents for him, because of his family. This mark derives from the knowledge of

the crime committed by his great-uncle Joe Silvaggio: “murder is surely the reason my grandfather sought the Northern Ontario bush when most of the other Italians who left Ripabottoni in the late 1800s settled in Montreal, or Hamilton, or Spokane” (195).

Moreover, he discovers another secret at his parents’ house: in a drawer, he finds an old newspaper reporting the murder of a man named Delvecchio in Spokane, Washington; the man had been killed by a man called Joe Delio. Fiorito realizes there might be a connection between his family and the man who was murdered, since his grandmother was herself a Delvecchio and the two men involved in the story were both originally from Ripabottoni.

In the words of the newspaper article he unearths “the stain of murder and the stigma of race” (85), in the words of the reporter he recognizes “the not-so-subtle language of the time”, while they imply that “most of these god-damn dagos can speak English when they want to, but when it comes to protecting their own, they clam right up” (82).

Despite these stains in his past, he is still curious to reconstruct his Italian past and identity, “I wonder how much Italian there is in me; probably none”, although, he admits “a more important marker is this: as far back as I can remember, no one but another Italian has ever been able to say ‘Fiorito’” (156). As in Melfi’s novel, language plays an important role in the perception of the ethnic identity, and I will return to this in more detail in the following pages.

Besides the linguistic element (or, at least, the linguistic heritage represented by the Italian surname), the divide between his family and Canada is also represented by the customs and traditions, the legacy of the Italian culture:

There was a complexity which I didn’t understand and couldn’t explain myself when I was growing up: my playground pals were English and Irish and Slovak, all-Canadian kids; I was one of the gang, but I wasn’t. I didn’t know how to belong.

(259)

Here the writer juxtaposes elements of typical Canadian households (like his friends’) – cupboards filled with tins of lunch meat and mayonnaise, and mothers and fathers that looked like the ones on TV – with those of the Italian families he knows: barrels of wine and salami in the basement, shelves of tomatoes in jars, etc. Soon, however, he also realizes that he does not fully represent the stereotypical Italian: “I was not-a-wop in the presence of some, almost-a-wop in the presence of others; mostly I was a small-town kid with a name no one knew how to pronounce” (260). Joe Fiorito, however, has no doubt; while his *Italianness* is debatable, his father’s (and his grandfather’s) are not: “when it came to Italy, I was one more generation removed than he was. Italy was a myth” (idem).

To make this myth more realistic, and to pay homage to his father's memories, he decides to make a return trip to the ancestral land, this event occupies the chapter relating the Seventeenth Night.

3.2.1. Returning as a Way of "Paying Homage"

Besides meaning the end of a conflicting father-son relationship, Dusty's death also comes to symbolize the impossibility of the migrant's real return to the native village of Ripabottoni, a return¹⁷¹ trip that the writer/son takes in lieu of the dying co-protagonist/father (who never had the means to). Because the migrant will never be able to physically return to his village of origin, the bearer of his memories will need to take the journey in his place.

When he first became ill, before there was an urgency about his illness, in the days when the notion of a clear and inevitable end seemed somehow indecent, I went to Italy. To my grandfather's village. To Ripabottoni on the hillside. I went with a vague notion: I thought it might be possible to see something that would help my father die. I knew he was curious about his father's birthplace; but he'd never had the money to travel. There might be some clue about us in Ripa, some answer to an unposed question.

(Fiorito 1999, 262-263)

Fiorito's entire memoir is a voyage into the personal and emotional sphere of a man and his family memories (rather than only a voyage towards an idealized place); however, one of the concluding chapters of the novel sees one of the protagonists – Joe Fiorito himself – embarking on a real journey towards the Old Continent, with the aim of coming to terms with both the death of his father and his own *Italianness*. The physical voyage to Italy is the ideal completion of the journey back to the roots that had been initiated with the stories told by his father on his deathbed.

I asked for the old stories often as a boy. I wanted to know who I was, who my father was, and where my family had come from. I needed clues. These old stories were the foundation on which the family had been built, they were the very material of which each of us – my father, my uncles, my cousins – were made.

(70)

While the stories told by his father might have been questionable since "a patina of confusion dulled certain details" (70), these are the only way for the author to understand his own identity. Like Melfi, Fiorito has to trust his parental recollections to build his own personal (ethnic) history; soon, however, these are no longer enough: "I sought indirect ways to learn more" (71). The journey, both the allegorical narrative voyage and the less figurative trip to the land where his relatives came from, is one of these indirect ways to learn more about his roots and his identity.

¹⁷¹ The role of the return in Fiorito's memoir will be presented in the next section.

He sets out on this eye-opening journey with his wife, driving the length of Italy heading for Campobasso, a town in Southern Italy, where the Fiorito family was originally from. There, the writer starts his nostalgic journey: “I was paying homage to the presence of my grandfather, to his scent in the air, to this dirt, to these trees he would have had to pass when he came along the road to Campobasso for the religious festivals, or for high mass in the cathedral” (264).

From Campobasso, where he gets acquainted with the people and customs of the region, they proceed towards the little town of Ripabottoni – “a place too small for maps” (261) – on the only road that connects the two places. The slow drive up the mountain gives him time to reconnect with the landscape that his grandfather and his ancestors knew well: the village is mostly deserted, the houses are derelict and falling off the cliff and into the valley below.¹⁷² In those mostly deserted high hills of Molise he senses the presence of his great-uncle Joe Silvaggio.

The reconciliation with his past starts when he realizes that the element that, as a young man, had represented an obstacle to his full Canadianness – his Italian surname Fiorito – in Molise, is a symbol of familiarity:

“The name Fiorito, so rare and the source of so many problems at home, was so common here it might as well have been Smith.”
(267)

“Who are you? What are you doing here?”
“I think I may have relatives in this village.”
“Ah! Fiorito!”

She smiled broadly; my name was no impediment here, it was a ticket of entry.
(266)

Indeed, his name identifies him as being part of the community he is visiting for the very first time. Evidence around the little town helps him acknowledge the familiarity of these places: “there on the yellow pages were the spidery names of the old Fioritos: Vittorio, Giuseppe, Matteo, Vito, Filomena” (266). Soon, he retraces the whole family tree up to his grandfather’s father Giusepp’ Antonio; however, the traces of his more immediate family (his grandparents and great-uncle) are scarce:

¹⁷² Fiorito’s visit to the village of origin is reminiscent of the feelings experienced by the protagonists of other Italian-Canadian writers and the symbolism these visits entail. As seen in the second chapter, emptied and wrecked villages of their childhood are central to many works by Italian-Canadians: in Micone’s *Déjà l’agonie*, the village to which father and son return after many years is a metaphor of the loss caused by migration, while the village to which Aurora returns in Bianca Zagolin’s *Une femme à la fenêtre* (1988) is compared to a cemetery. Similarly, in *Vers l’Amérique* (1988) Tiziana Beccarelli-Saad describes the return to the ancestral village of the protagonist Teresa as a journey back to a time that does not exist anymore: “Tout est en ruine” (11-12).

There was space on the pages of the record books for a date and the notion “emigrato” beside the names of those who had left. The records clerk was curious. Beside the names of Joe Silvaggio, Filomena Fiorito, and Matteo Fiorito there was nothing. No date. Nothing.

(269)

The reason for the absence of information regarding their departure is due to the circumstances under which their emigration occurred: Silvaggio had killed a man and they had to disappear from Ripabottoni as soon as they could, runaways, without letting anyone know where they had gone or if they were ever to return. In fact, they never did. Most of them died abroad without ever returning to the village of origin, just like Joe Fiorito’s father. For this reason, the return to the land of his origin, for the writer and protagonist, is a way of “paying homage to the presence of my grandfather. There were missing pieces and inexplicable facts” (264), as he maintains.

While his trip to Italy is not revelatory – “not exactly answers, but close enough” (269) – it helped him get closure and understand who he is and where his roots lie. Closer to his *Italianness* than ever before, however, even in Italy he feels like an impostor, a non-Italian visitor. During a cordial exchange with a local policeman, Fiorito cannot stop feeling that the man is judging him, and he imagines that the policeman is thinking: “I understand that you have a name which some may feel is an important one around here, but you are not from here” (275), while, however, the officer never actually says those words. Despite this visit, Fiorito fails to feel comfortable in, and familiarized with, the Italian culture (or, at least, with the Italian culture in Italy). He does not feel accepted or integrated, but only as a foreign tourist.

The many souvenirs he receives from the local inhabitants to take to Canada and show his father only confirm his status as an outsider; these souvenirs, however, will be stolen days later when the couple is in France, and Dusty will have to rely on his son’s own storytelling abilities: “I sat with him and began to tell the story-teller my story of the trip” (277).

Before his Italian journey, Joe Fiorito had asked his father Dusty and his uncles for information about Ripabottoni. The men all confessed they knew little about it, and they were not interested in knowing more because “they were born here; the past is past, it didn’t concern them” (72). Upon his return from Italy, however, nostalgia overtakes Dusty, who becomes eager to hear about his son’s adventures.

At the end of the novel traditional roles are reversed: the son acquires the position of his father becoming the storyteller himself. The translation into writing of his trip and his voyage through family memories becomes an act of paying homage to his father and all of those, like him, who died abroad

without ever seeing their native lands again: “[h]e no longer exists, but he has as much immortality as any of us gets; he exists in memory” (320).

In Fiorito’s memoir, nostalgia is not a sentiment that belongs to the young protagonist himself, but rather a feeling of collective reminiscence, a chance for the older characters who cannot have a voice anymore, and to whom this work is dedicated, to express their longing for the homeland: “[w]hen Matteo is by himself, away from Angela and the children, his mind wanders, and sometimes he feels as if he were back in Ripa” (52).

3.2.2. Translating as a Way of Bridging Cultures

As the grand-child of a man who moved from Italy to Canada at the end of the nineteenth century, Joe Fiorito can be considered a third generation migrant writer. This is a generation for whom migration is something they have heard about from their older relatives; the country they live in is the place they belong to, and the process of acculturation (translation) should be complete.

Through the pages of his family memoir, nevertheless, Fiorito portrays a different perspective on being a third-generation Italian migrant in Canada. While he surely considers Canada as his home country and English as his native language, he had always felt the presence of a culture Other than the Canadian one, a culture that had strongly influenced his upbringing in Northern Ontario.

I shall start by noting that, while still playing a fundamental role in the construction of Fiorito’s migrant narrative, in *The Closer We Are to Dying* the presence of translation does not appear as evident or as straightforward as in Melfi’s *Italy Revisited*. *The Closer We Are To Dying*, however, shares with the novel presented in the previous section the role of the narrator (the writer him/herself) as interpreter of the stories told by the parent: the narrators interpret (and re-write) their parent’s story to fit their (migrant) narrative intent, bridging the gap between reader and the protagonists of said accounts, and the reader has no other choice but to believe that these accounts are truthful (or partly so).

He is telling me to remember. He is telling me not to forget. These are not the same things. He doesn’t have the strength to tell the story of his uncle Joe. Not tonight. He knows he doesn’t have enough breath, or enough time. But he knows that I have heard it often enough that a reminder is all I need. It is the story of how my family came to Canada.

(Fiorito 1999, 42)

He knew the structure of the family narrative, and whenever he told me what he knew, he laid it out the same way every time [...] As I grew up, I imagined the details of the stories for myself.

(71)

While trusting his father's narratives – the stories were repeated over the years – the writer takes the artistic license to modify details in order to suit his readership. It is worth remembering, indeed, that the audiences of his father's stories (the oral text) and Fiorito's novel (the written text) differ greatly: the former is an informative yet entertaining oral narrative for his Italian-Canadian son, who certainly has a degree of background knowledge, unlike the wider Canadian readership, for whom the latter is written.

Because of the different audiences these texts are conceived for, the construction of the migrant discourse is based on linguistic and cultural practices of translation: different strategies for different audiences. More specifically, *cultural translation* pervades Fiorito's entire work: translation takes place in the two-way dialogue between the distinct cultural spaces (the self and the Other) of (grand-)father and son. In Fiorito's novel, we witness the explication, interpreting and negotiation of Italian cultural elements as both a process to help him understand the father(land), and assist the reader in comprehending this culture.

Indeed, while many readers may be familiar with the Italian culture thanks to the large presence of Italian communities of migrants in the country (namely, the Italian-Canadian sub-culture), what they are less familiar with is the Italian culture as it exists (or existed) on the Italian territory. The return trips to the land of ancestral origin help the individual of migrant origin understand and bridge the gap between the (Italian) culture in the home country (Canada) and that of the source country – a gap similar to the one that exists between the old generations and the newer generations.

As a Canadian teenager, in fact, Joe Fiorito's idea of Italy was translated into the popular icons of the time:

In the movies, in the pretty-boy weakness of Sal Mineo; in the cleverness and cruelty of all mobsters, real and imagined; in the wide hips of Anna Magnani, the lips of Monica Vitti, the breasts of Sophia Loren. It was there on the radio: Perry Como, Louis Prima, Dean Martin's moon hitting our eye. Tony Bennett didn't sound Italian but all you had to do was look at him to know who he was.

(261)

As an adult, however, his images of Italy are less glossy, and are influenced by the family environment. This is the case of the descriptions of physical and character traits Fiorito provides as attempts at translating a different idea of *Italianness* for a Canadian readership: “[a]ll the girls, Silvaggio and Fiorito alike, are pretty and vivacious. All the boys are rock-hard and handsome, with flashing white smiles” (46), “gold chains hanging from the pockets of their vests. Thickly curled moustaches. Faces set hard with defiance and pride [...] the women in their quaint black hats and old-country dresses, waists clinched, with gold crosses around their necks and children on their laps” (72).

The Fioritos and the Silvaggios become the representatives of the many thousands of energetic, hopeful and proud men and women of Italy that sailed for Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, as an artist, Fiorito subtly takes pride in his land of origin's cultural heritage, which he occasionally uses to convey a different idea of *Italianness*:

For a few moments, he and Dusty are two cultured men, the descendants of Dante and Michelangelo, blown adrift and marooned in a frozen land, drinking caffè corretto, staring out the window at the snow.

(242)

The exploitation of these images and icons to define *Italianness* for his Canadian audience has another outcome: despite the migrants' desire to integrate, to speak English, to feel and be part of Canada, the desire to remain rooted to their origins (signalled by the use of the Italian language) is still present. His grandfather Matteo had, indeed, already realized that the hardest part of migration was not leaving per se – something that he and his brother-in-law did quickly and without regrets, but rather adjusting to the new reality: translating themselves into the new cultural and social environment.

“Spring is coming soon,” he said aloud; he said “*Primavera*” to himself. This is Canada, be Canadian. *Una via nuova*. A new way. *Una vita nuova*. A new life. Speak English to the boy. But as he drives he speaks the language of the old country.

(46)

In order to express and explain the reasons behind the nostalgia and the difficulties of acculturation, the narrator often compares the Canadian and Italian cultures: “[t]hese are not the high hills of Ripabottoni. Here, no one builds houses with stone” (47), and “the deer around this place are not like the deer in the hills around Ripa; they are bigger, they taste stronger. Everything is bigger here; bigger, stronger, wilder” (49).

At first, the transition from the land of origin to the new continent seems a challenging process that puts the migrant in the position of constantly comparing the place of departure with that of arrival and, often, finding more fondness for the former (because of familiarity) than for the latter¹⁷³. As time passes, however, the migrant gets more and more integrated in the receiving environment, the process of acculturation is almost complete, and they start seeing the receiving environment as *home*: “this is not Ripabottoni. Here a man can have a job, and he can expect his children to live” (154).

The result of this transition becomes evident in the words of the Fioritos: while all present a comparison between source and target places/cultures, initially migrant individuals show a stronger attachment to the place of origin, a bias, which makes the adjustment to the new setting difficult;

¹⁷³ Figuratively speaking, this is reminiscent of what is experienced by those who get acquainted with a book in its original language and, subsequently, read it in translation. Regardless of the quality of the latter, they will have stronger feelings towards the former, and they will often claim the superiority of the original.

however, when the translation into the country of arrival has been completed, migrants start feeling more at home in the new country, and can see the motives that pushed them out of their native land in the first place.

While not holding the same value as in Melfi's work, the role of language in the process of acculturation of the different generations of migrants is subtly restated in Fiorito's novel:

My aunts and uncles practised a kind of *omertà* while I grew up. They'd never been to Italy, didn't want to talk about the old days, had never seen their father's village in the hills of Molise, had lost their language.

(105)

Using the word 'lost', Fiorito admits the estrangement of the second and third generations who, have not only neglected the place of origin of their family, but also rarely cherished their linguistic heritage. Frequently, the younger generations uncover the desire to revive this heritage and revisit the old country and its language, such as in the case at hand.

The translation back to the source, however, is not an easy process. In the chapter recounting Fiorito's visit to Italy, the reader perceives the protagonist's linguistic struggle to blend in with the locals. As discussed, the difficulty in bridging the linguistic gap between country of birth and country of ancestral origin is one of the elements that prevent a real return (and acculturation) of the writer of migrant origin. Following his visit to the land of origin, and wishing to translate this journey into writing, Fiorito uses linguistic hybridity as a (self-)translational device to re-appropriate the forgotten language. While not *presenting* a degree of hybridity comparable to Melfi's work, Fiorito's text is characterized by the presence of the Italian language and of the regional variety of Molise, as spoken by his father and his older relatives: "[h]e'd tell her stories, and he'd sing the old songs: *"Ay compa're, I voi sonare, i chi sona u mandolina. E coma chi sona u mandolina, a-plink, a-plink, u mandolin', a-tippity, tippity, ta"* (Fiorito 1999, 9).

The incursion of Italian symbolizes the presence of the foreign element, and is signalled by italicization. While Joe Fiorito does speak Italian, the use of this language is restricted to story-telling purposes, or to express something that cannot be described in English, in which case he acts like a cultural translator for the reader.

Below, I will expose the presence of the foreign cultural marker, in a table, as it is presented in Fiorito's novel. For each element, I will provide its translation on the right hand side.

Table 9 Use of Italian in Fiorito's *The Closer We Are to Dying*

Sotto voce (21)	Quietly, under his breath
Casa Silvaggio (34)	Silvaggio's House
Ciao, ciao (39)	Bye, bye

Padrone (39, 143, 144)	Landowner, boss
Sopranome ¹⁷⁴ (39, 267)	Nickname
Contadini (39)	Peasants
Grappa (39)	Alcoholic drink
Stronzo (40)	Vulgar, jerk
Quaglia, figlio di quaglia (40)	Quail, son of a quail – not idiomatic
Serpente (41)	Snake
Carabiniere/i (42)	Type of Italian policeman with civil and military duties
Ragazz' (46)	Boy/Young man
Primavera (46)	Spring
Una via nuova (46)	A new way
Una vita nuova (46)	A new life
Zio (49)	Uncle
Dio grazie (50)	Thank God
Porco dio (52)	Profanity, God (is a) pig/filthy
Dio gatto (52)	Profanity, God (is a) cat
Stupido (52)	Stupid
Italianitta ¹⁷⁵ (61)	Italianness
Madonna (81)	Used here as an exclamation
Signora (81)	Madame (Mrs.)
Morto, morta (154)	Dead (masculine and feminine)
Fiadone (156)	Baked ricotta cake
Dio mio! (176)	My God!
Caffè corretto	Coffee with some liquor
Va bene (244)	It's ok
Salut' (264)	Cheers
Si, si (265)	Yes, yes
Emigrato (269)	Emigrant/Emigrated
Serpenti (270)	Snakes

In addition to the standard use of italicization to highlight the foreignness of Italian terms, it should be noted that the highest presence of Italian words occurs in those sections that depict scenes that take place in Italy. This is the case of the above listed examples from pages 39 to 42, which describe the circumstances under which Silvaggio and the Fioritos leave Italy for Canada following manslaughter.

Conversely, it is interesting to notice the peculiar choice made by Fiorito of opting for all-English in two series of exchanges with a local woman and a police agent in Ripabottoni. Regardless of whether the conversation actually took place in real life, the writer acts as a translator for the Canadian

¹⁷⁴ In the book, the Italian word for nickname is misspelled, it should read *soprannome*.

¹⁷⁵ Another misspelled word, this should be *italianità*, Italianness.

reader, and decides to avoid any intervention of Italian in reporting dialogues that obviously took place in that language:

The village was deserted, save for an old lady in black carrying a shopping basket. I was polite. She glared at me suspiciously. The conversation went on like this, roughly:
“Excuse me, signora, can you tell me where can I park the car?”
“What business do you have here?”
“Can I park the car over there by the church?”
“Who are you? What are you doing here?”
“I think I may have relatives in this village.”
“What’s your name?”
“Fiorito.”
“Ah, Fiorito!”

(266)

Besides the use of the appellation *Signora*, the conversation bears no trace of Italian, which would be the language in which this exchange took place (it is unlikely that the “old lady in black” would have spoken any English); yet, even the syntax bears no resemblance to Italian.

The same phenomenon occurs a few pages later, when the writer does specify that the conversation took place in Italian:

We had gone to the police station [...] Susan was eager to practise her Italian; she had a good ear, a quick tongue, and she is not self-conscious. She spoke up eagerly. ‘We are staying at Il Sogno.’ [...] ‘No. You could not possibly be staying there.’

(272-273)

Here, both Susan’s (his wife) words and those of the police officer bear no lexical trace, nor any particular syntactical structure evocative of the Italian language, meaning that translation (applying *domesticating* strategies) occurs in the migration from Italian (the language in which the conversation took place) to English (the language of the readership).

To sum up, in *The Closer We Are To Dying* the idea of translation includes a series of different processes that take different routes: through linguistic and cultural devices Fiorito translates the concept of *Italianness* for his Canadian audience, elucidating what it meant to be Italian in Italy and in Canada at the turn of the twentieth century, as well as what it meant growing up as an Italian-Canadian in small-town Northern Ontario.

In enacting translation, he also works in two different directions: on the one hand, he *foreignizes* his work by juxtaposing Italian and English, using linguistic hybridity to signify and make visible the migrant discourse; on the other hand, he *domesticates* when he translates into English conversations that took place in Italian. The two expedients appear in different physical and temporal settings: the use

of Italian mostly occurs in past conversations with his relatives in Italy, while translation into English of Italian conversations refers to his most recent personal experience in Italy.

It is reasonable to interpret this divergence in approaches as a result of the writer's feeling of inadequacy following his Italian journey; the realization of the difference between older and newer generations of Italians leads to a certain difficulty in recognizing the real essence of *Italianness*. In the older generations, in the way they spoke and behaved, he had always recognized the emblems of *Italianness*: "My uncles sang, they made wine, they cooked when they were in the mood; and although they were not often in the mood, they cooked well enough by instinct" (156).

However, he seems to fall in-between. Doubtful about his own identity, he starts wondering whether what he had always believed to be representing *Italianness* is, indeed, Italian at all:

I used to wonder how Italian they were. I wonder how much Italian there is in me; probably none [...] I can't sing or play a mandolin, but I make Fiadone at Easter. I was raised to eat dried hot peppers on eggs fried in olive oil for breakfast. I have a taste for spaghetti made a certain way, with a handful of oregano, a bay leaf, and little hot chilis. These things mark me.

(156)

As a young man, there was a complexity to his being that Joe Fiorito could not understand; while he conformed to the idea of *Canadianness* he felt different from his friends. While he was familiar with the Italian aspects surrounding him, which influenced the way he grew up, he could never fully identify as Italian because "when it came to Italy, I was one more generation removed" (261). The only tangible marker of his *Italianness* – one he takes much pride and comfort in – is his name: "I never gave in to the mangling of my last name" (157). His name is the most concrete proof of his being Italian; contrary to many, he did not compromise and agree to have it changed in order to better assimilate to other Canadians (he symbolically refused a *domesticating translation*).

Because he does not have any other physical evidence or any living testimony to link him directly to Italy (his grandfather, his last direct link to the old country, died before he was born), he has to rely on his father's stories.

From a narrative (and symbolic) point of view, his visit to Italy marks the point where the translational process takes the contrary direction. Oddly, the Italian scenes are deprived of local colour and the conversations bear no trace of the Italian language. While in Canada, he had often longed for reconciliation with Italy, its language and culture; when finally in his context of origin, he realizes the futility of his effort. Reversing course, Fiorito now reaches out to the familiarity of Canada and becomes an interpreter for the Anglophone reader, translating both the cultural and linguistic elements of his trip into something more familiar for them.

The result is a detached viewpoint on the whole Italian experience, giving the informed reader the impression of Fiorito's surrender to the incapability of feeling fully Italian in Italy.

3.3. About *Le voci di mio padre*: the Italian translation of Fiorito's Family Memoir

After Joe Fiorito's first eye-opening trip to his grandfather's town Ripabottoni, the translation of his novel – and the support it has received by both the Canadian literary world and the Italian agents – allowed this writer to fulfil the migrant's dream (that of his grandparents and many others like them who left Italy to never return) of making a triumphant (second) homecoming. Similarly to the translational analysis conducted on Melfi's work, this section examines the linguistic and extralinguistic elements that participate in the journey back to Italy via translation, and how Fiorito's migrant discourse has been carried across in the target text.

3.3.1. The Publisher and the Translation of Paratext

Fiorito's migrant saga *The Closer We Are to Dying* was published in Canada by McClelland & Stewart (now owned by Random House of Canada) in 1999 and soon became a national best-seller. In the year 2000, it was translated into Italian under the title of *Le voci di mio padre* by award-winning translator Pier Francesco Paolini, and published by one of Italy's largest publishing houses, Garzanti. *Le voci di mio padre* first appeared in Garzanti's series Narratori Moderni (Modern Narrators). The book was reprinted two years later, and came out in March 2002 with the same publisher under the series Elefanti – Narrativa.

Founded in 1879 by the Treves brothers in Milan, the original Treves publishing house was sold in 1936 to Aldo Garzanti, who gave it its current name. The group kept on growing until it became one of the major publishers in Italy. Garzanti now prides itself on being “the publishing house of the Nobel Prize winners Kenzaburo Oe and Octavio Paz, and of many distinguished authors both in fiction and non-fiction”¹⁷⁶.

Unlike Cosmo Iannone, Garzanti does not have a specific interest in regionalism or migrant narratives; on the contrary, its prestigious catalogue of well-known Italian and translated foreign authors, distributed over 50 different series, appeals to wider audiences. The Grandi Libri series, for example, is dedicated exclusively to classics, both in translation and in Italian – all complete with

¹⁷⁶ http://www.garzantilibri.it/articoli_main.php?sezione=English. Last accessed March 2016.

bibliographies and critical apparatus – with a catalogue of over 600 titles. Besides the classics, Garzanti has published extensively in the genre of poetry, history and philosophical essays. Among the authors published by Garzanti is also George Steiner: the Italian translation of *After Babel*, *Dopo Babele*, together with other essays by the author, appeared with this prestigious publisher.

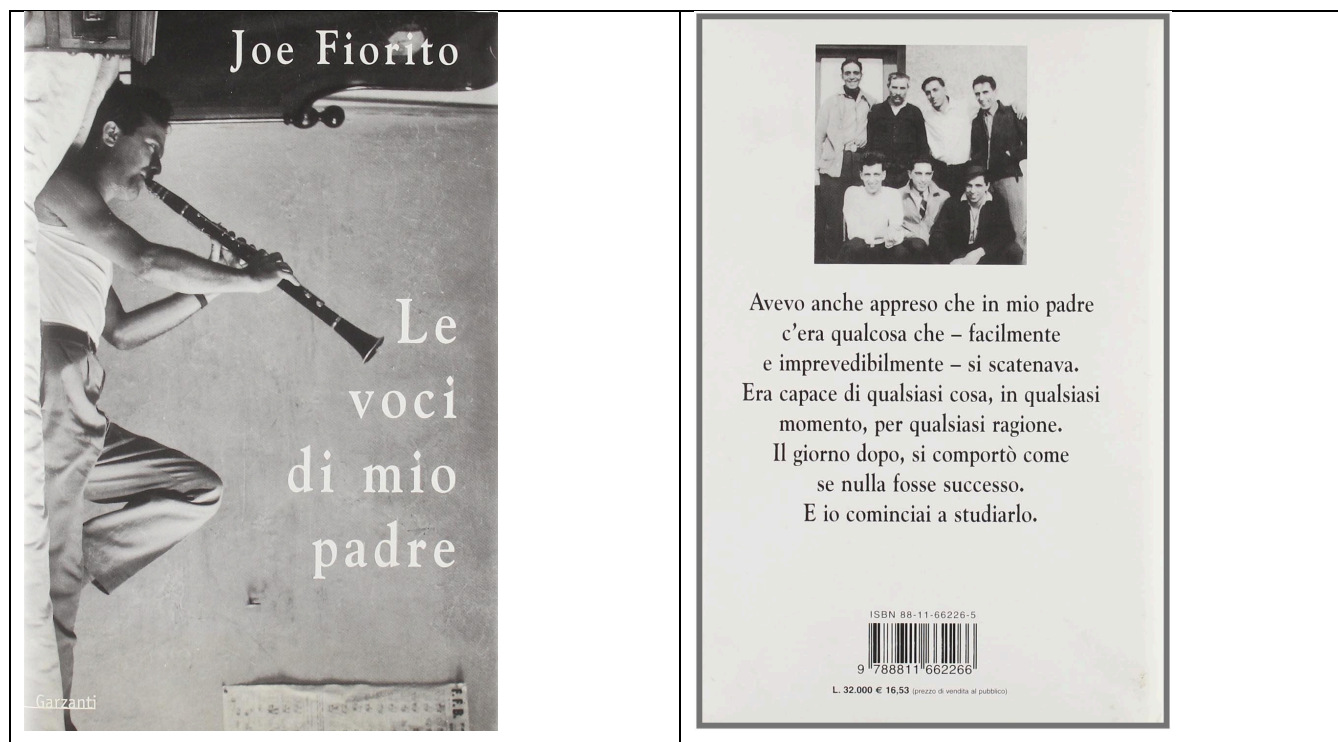
Fiorito's novel is thus included in that program of creating a transnational catalogue that seems to be the agenda of many of the larger publishing houses.

Returning to the specifics of Fiorito's work, and in particular to its paratextual elements, it can be noticed that, despite the different series in which the two volumes appeared, the two front covers presented below depict the same scene: a man lying on a bed playing his clarinet (the picture is tilted on its side, causing the man to look like he is standing up, leaning against a wall).

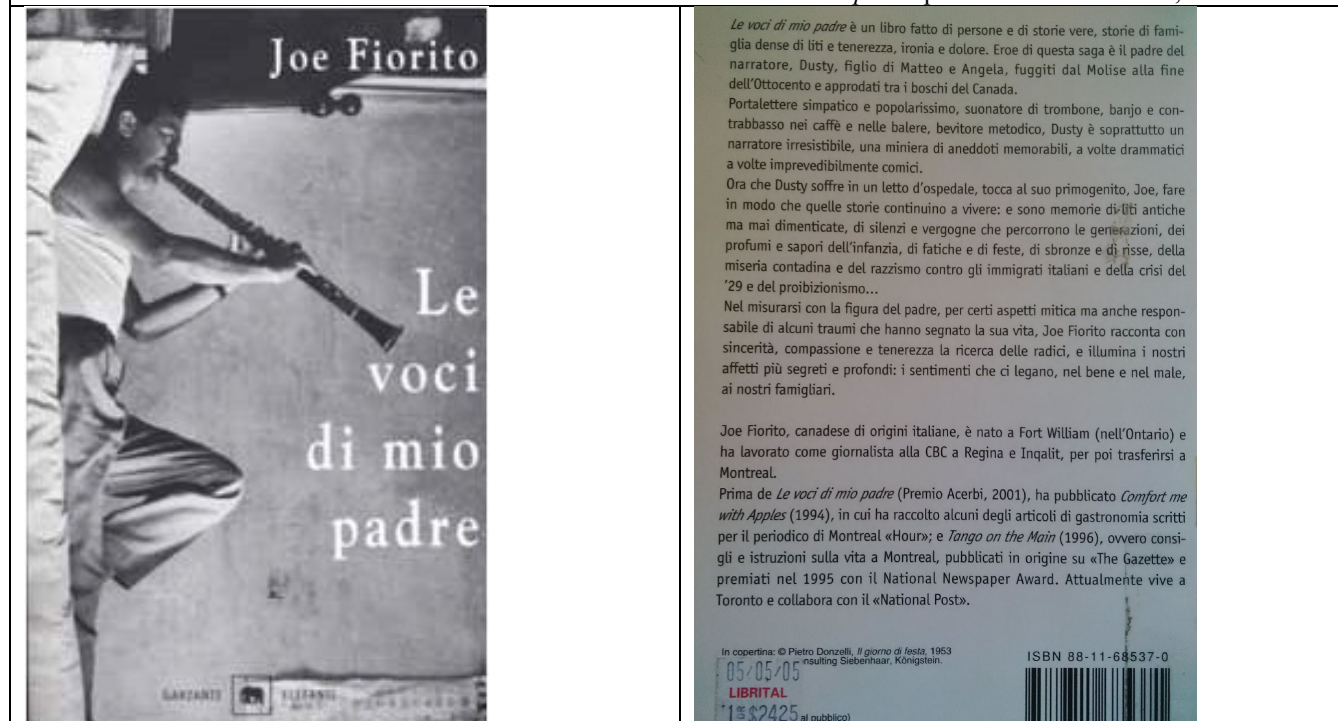
Entitled "Delta del Po, Un giorno di festa" (tr.: Delta of the Po river delta, a holiday), this is a 1954 picture by Pietro Donzelli (1915-1998), one of the most important photographers in documenting post-War Italy. While the photo provides little information about the circumstances under which it was taken – and surely has no direct reference to the migrant theme – it is an allusion to the protagonist of the memoir, Dusty, the Italian-Canadian trombone player. Although the picture is set in a different area of Italy from that of Dusty's family and depicts a man playing a different instrument, the musical element central to the character is, nevertheless, preserved.

In order to understand Garzanti's choice, it is essential to compare the front cover of the Italian edition to the source volumes'. As a matter of fact, over the course of two years, *The Closer We Are to Dying* has been re-published in several different English language editions, all carrying a different front cover, as seen below.

Figure 7 Covers of Garzanti's *Le voci di mio padre*

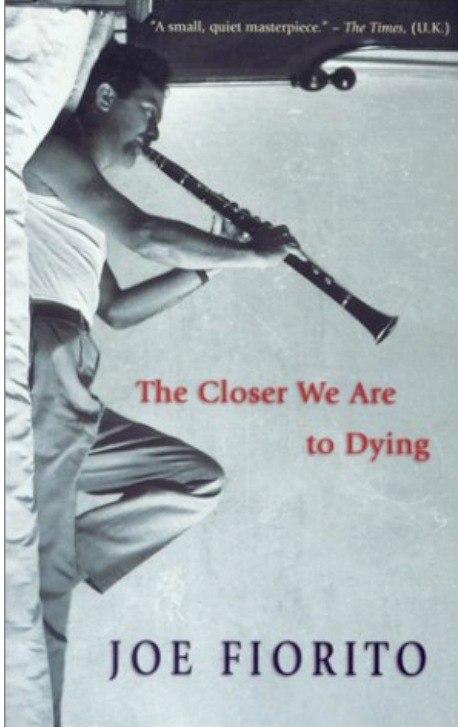
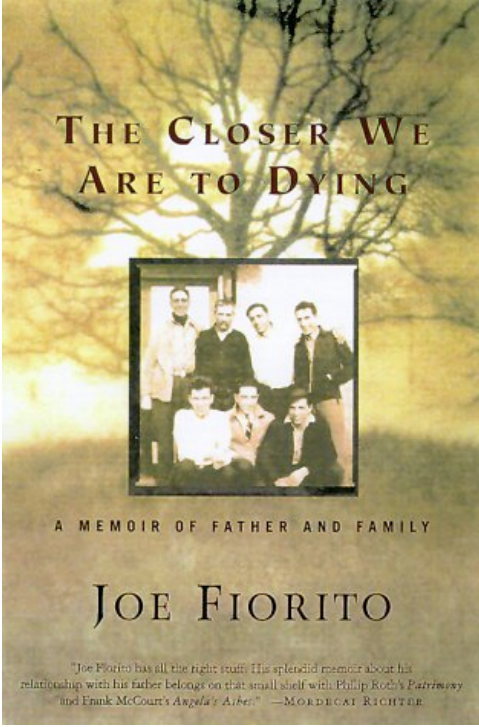
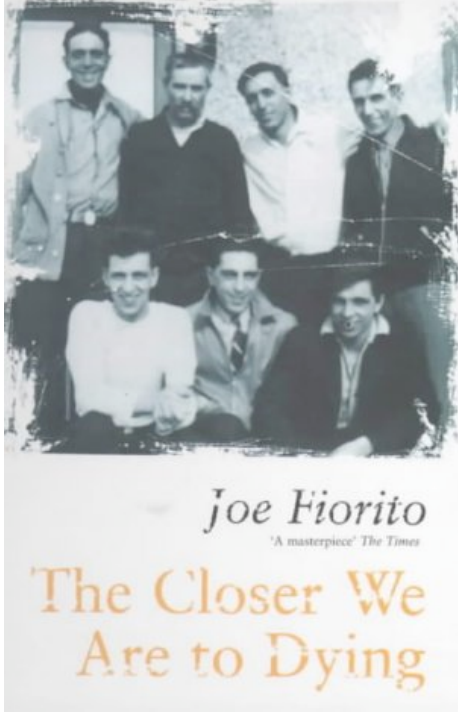
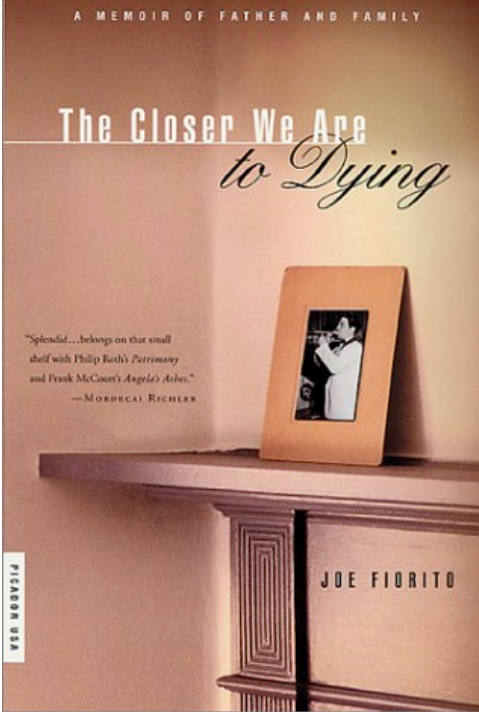


Front and back cover of the first Garzanti hardcover edition of *Le voci di mio padre* published in November, 2000.



Front and back cover of the Garzanti paperback edition of *Le voci di mio padre* published in March, 2002.

Figure 8 Covers of different English language editions of *The Closer We Are to Dying*

	
McClelland & Stewart; Hardcover (1999) and Paperback (Sept. 1 2000) editions	Picador; First Edition (US) (June 3 2000)
	
Bloomsbury; UK edition (April, 2001)	Picador; Paperback Edition (June 1, 2001)

As seen, the cover of both the hardcover and paperback editions in this country feature the photograph by Pietro Donzelli. Garzanti evidently maintained the choice made by the Canadian publisher of the source text: to avoid the reference to the migrant theme for the front cover.

In the United States and in the United Kingdom, publishers opted for different pictures for their volumes: the first Picador Edition and the first Bloomsbury Edition both feature the photo of Fiorito's family that was present on both the back covers of the Canadian and Italian editions (Dusty, the protagonist, is the man in the bottom right corner); the Picador 2001 paperback edition, instead, features a picture of a mantelpiece on which stands a photo of a man playing a trombone – the reference to the protagonist Dusty is, here, made even more visually direct.

It is moreover interesting to notice how the Picador editions for the United States feature on the front cover a quote by Quebecois writer Mordecai Richler – “Splendid ... belongs on that small shelf with Philip Roth's *Patrimony* and Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*”, a comment that was only presented on the back cover of the Canadian edition. This and other reviews by literary magazines and newspapers were not reproduced on the Italian editions of the volume.

The paratext of both the first (2000) and second (2002) Italian editions informs the reader that the publication of the translation received the financial support of both the Canada Council for the Arts and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; this financial support was also acknowledged on the source volume. This type of subvention network has been fundamental in the promotion and of these works both in Canada and Italy.

3.3.2. The Translator and the Creation of a Support Network

It has been previously noted how a network of subsidies such as the one established with the creation of the Translation Grants under the Writing and Publishing Program of the Canada Council has allowed some of the works by Italian-Canadian authors to travel back to the country of ancestral origin. While some works have proven more successful than others – reaching a wider readership than others – these grants have given authors the possibility to be re-voiced in the ancestral mother tongue.

It should be clear that, besides the institution initiating the creation of this network of subsidies, a fundamental role in the re-voicing of these voices is played by their translators. As it was previously mentioned, there exists a correlation between the prestige of a publisher and the status and reputation of the translator chosen for the translations; consequently, the success of translations and their distribution depends on a variety of factors, among which the status of all actors, including the translators.

If a book's double edition by a major publisher and numerous articles and events dedicated to it are any indication of success, we can assert that the fate of Fiorito in Italy is to be considered rather positive. First and foremost, Garzanti's endorsement of Fiorito's family memoir is witnessed by the decision to assign the translation for the Italian literary market to award-winning translator Pier Francesco Paolini. This said, while Laura Ferri's name appeared on the cover of Melfi's volume, Pier Francesco Paolini's name does not appear on the cover of *Le voci di mio padre*, thus confirming the publisher's convention of presenting the translator's name only on the verso of the title page.

Pier Francesco Paolini was born in Senigallia, in the central Italian region of Marche, in 1928, and died in Rome in 2015¹⁷⁷. He is mostly known for his translations, although he also penned several novels, works of poetry and literary essays¹⁷⁸. His novels include¹⁷⁹: *Relazioni irregolari* (Feltrinelli 1969), *L'atto delle tenebre* (Bompiani 1979), *Il peccato immortale* (Bompiani 1983), *Disguidi del destino* (Bompiani 1991), *Il gatto guercio* (Newton Compton 1993), *I sette peccati mortali a cavallo* (Ass. Edizioni Empiria 2003) and *La paurosa simmetria* (Sistema Editoriale SE.NO 2003). Among his theatre works are: *I misteri della carne* (ed. Lubrina 1990) and *Incroci di parole* (published in the magazine "Inchiostri" in 2000).

In his long career of over four decades, Paolini penned over two hundred translations, including works by: Francis Scott Fitzgerald (*The Beautiful and Damned*), Charles Dickens (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*), John Irving (*The Cider House Rules*), Truman Capote (Capote's 1957 profile of Marlon Brando *The Duke in His Domain*), Virginia Woolf (*Mrs Dalloway*), Philip Roth (*The Great American Novel*), and Nadine Gordimer (*Occasion for Loving*). Moreover, he published an anthology of poetry translations entitled *La vacanza del tranviere* (Edimond 2000).

Paolini's translation activity is characterized by a wealth of popular and canonical 20th century Anglophone authors. Besides working with Garzanti, Paolini's translations were published by other major Italian publishing groups, such as Feltrinelli and Bompiani. His long-time collaboration with some of the most influential and prestigious publishers in Italy allowed Paolini to gain visibility and recognisability in the field; Paolini is unusually known more for his activity as a translator than for his contribution to the Italian literary market as an author.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.senigallianotizie.it/1327371898/e-morto-il-traduttore-di-classici-pier-francesco-paolini-era-nato-a-senigallia>

¹⁷⁸ His fame as a translator, compared to his activity as a writer, represents an exceptional case in the field; as exposed in the first chapter, the two activities are granted different statuses and, usually, the translation activity is given less prestige.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.spirali.it/autore/24212/pier-francesco-paolini>. Last accessed May 2016.

Unlike other Italian-Canadian authors who have been translated for the Italian market¹⁸⁰, Fiorito was given the advantage of being published by a prestigious, high-quality publisher – the reputation of the publisher may be read as an implicit indication of the artistic worth of the product (or, else, its being lucrative) – and of being re-voiced by one of the most prolific Italian translators¹⁸¹.

Supported by both the fame of the publisher's name inscribed on the cover and by the (implicit¹⁸²) guarantee of the quality of its translation, Fiorito's family memoir is introduced into the Italian literary market as work by a promising, new novelist. This initial support by the agents of translation is further reinforced by a series of events that followed the first publication of the novel by Garzanti.

Upon the book release, Fiorito was interviewed by one of the most relevant Italian newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera*: the article¹⁸³, published on November 21, 2000, was entitled “Dal Canada al Molise, in cerca delle voci perdute” (the title, *From Canada to Molise, in search of the lost voices*, refers to the voices present in the Italian title of Fiorito's translated volume). While stating that Fiorito tried to detach himself from the migrant topic prevailing in the Italian-Canadian literary circle he is connected to by ethnicity, the story narrated by the author is not only that of his father, but that of all of us and of all our ancestors. Without resorting to the stereotypical migrant trope, the writer admits that the writing practice helped him revisit his roots and his place of origin:

I went there in 1994, two years before my father's death [...] Since I was five, that town, Ripabottoni, had been part of my life and had become a myth. Through his memories, during the days and nights that preceded his death, this place became familiar to me, and I finally understood what it meant to have roots.¹⁸⁴

Fiorito informs the interviewer, and the Italian readers, that Canada is a land that has welcomed many migrant families; as a matter of fact, in cities like Hamilton or Toronto the population of Italian origin is as high as 25%. Besides having the aim of introducing a previously unknown writer to the Italian literary market and, of course, promoting his work, the interview informs the reader about the novel's socio-historical background.

¹⁸⁰ Please, refer to the previous chapter for the list of translated works and the publishers and translators who worked on these volumes.

¹⁸¹ Surely, this privilege derived from the success Fiorito's novel also received in Canada.

¹⁸² Here, I used the word ‘implicit’ to indicate that the reader of the target text does not have a direct indication of the work being a translation, since its status is concealed until the verso of the title page, where said publisher states “Traduzione dall'inglese di Pier Francesco Paolini”.

¹⁸³ See: http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2000/novembre/21/Dal_Canada_Molise_cerca_delle_co_0_0011218409.shtml

¹⁸⁴ “Ci andai nel ‘94, due anni prima che mio padre morisse [...] Da quando avevo cinque anni quel paese, Ripabottoni, ha cominciato a far parte della mia vita, si è fatto mito. Nei giorni e nelle notti che precedettero la morte di mio padre, attraverso i suoi ricordi mi diventò familiare e seppi cosa significa avere radici”.

On November 23, 2000, in order to celebrate the publication of his novel, Fiorito was invited to present and read his book in the framework of a lecture series at the Centro Siena-Toronto, of which Laura Ferri is the director and coordinator.¹⁸⁵ The event, aptly entitled “The Merging of Cultures”, was organized in collaboration with both Garzanti Editore and the Canadian Embassy in Rome.

A year later, in November 2001, the translated novel won the ninth edition of the literary prize Giuseppe Acerbi, a yearly prize that pays homage to literatures and cultures of the world: during the ninth ceremony edition, which was entirely dedicated to Canadian culture and literature, Joe Fiorito’s memoir and Anne Michaels’s *Fugitive Pieces* were awarded the literary prize.¹⁸⁶

Thanks to the success of his novel, both at home and abroad, Fiorito had the occasion to re-visit the country of his ancestors as a man of letters: in 2003, he was invited to the Turin International Book Fair (alongside Nino Ricci, who presented the translation of his trilogy, *La terra del ritorno*). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the 2003 *Fiera del Libro di Torino* – which featured Canada and its mosaic – became an event that represented a symbolic bridge between Italy and Canada, and their literary and cultural heritages.

In March 2009, Fiorito was invited as keynote speaker of a series of cultural and scholarly events to present to his Italian readership *The Song Beneath the Ice* (in its original language, not in translation), a psychological thriller set in Northern Canada, which won the Toronto Book Award in 2003. On March 16, the writer was invited to the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Udine, and on March 18 to the Faculty of Cultural Heritage and Preservation Studies of the same university; on March 19 he presented his novel at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Bologna and on the 24th of the same month at La Sapienza University in Rome. On March 23, he attended an event at the Centro Siena-Toronto di Siena entitled *Terre Polari: ricerca, storia e narrazioni* (tr.: Polar lands: research, history and narratives) where he presented excerpts from the above-mentioned book and the images of the Canadian North depicted in it.

His presence at academic and artistic events in Italy was a direct result of the 2000 translation of his novel, so far his only publication to be translated into Italian. These events are doubtless a result of the book’s publication in Italy, and a way to promote and give visibility to an author and his literary work which were previously unknown to the Italian readership.

In a letter to translator and fellow Molisan Gabriella Iacobucci regarding the publication of his novel in Italy, Joe Fiorito understands translation as the ability to close a circle and inform readers in

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.sienatoronto.unisi.it/eventi/2000/23-11-00.htm>

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.premioacerbi.com/edizioni.htm>. . Last accessed March 2016.

the motherland about the fate of its emigrants. In other words, translation allows the migrant's (hi)story to return home.

Cara Gabriella,
tell your students I am delighted they read my book. Their lives might perhaps be like mine, if their grandparents or great-grandparents had come to Canada 120 years ago. We are all part of the same journey. The most pleasing thing for me, as a result of the book, has been to tell readers in Molise - and in the other parts of Italy – what happened to a few people who left.
In some ways, it completes a circle.¹⁸⁷

In the launch of and support for Fiorito's translated work, two different approaches were brought into play. The publisher Garzanti inserted Fiorito and his work into the framework of a group of contemporary transnational authors, overlooking both his origins and the migrant legacy, while other actors in the Italian literary environment felt the need to reaffirm Fiorito's *Italianness* and interpret this translation as a return home of the (third generation) migrant. As I discuss below, these two contrasting tendencies reappear in the decision-making processes leading to the translated text *Le voci di mio padre*.

3.3.3. The Translated Body Text

Language(s) and translation play a fundamental role in narratives by authors of migrant origin, and Fiorito's prose is no exception. While substantially less pervasive, if compared to Melfi's linguistic concoction, hybridity is subtly exploited by Joe Fiorito to portray the idea of the heterogeneous cultural and linguistic heritage of the translated self.

The linguistic relevance of the foreign element in Fiorito's narrative can be noted in his refusal to compromise hybridity by providing a translation for the Italian words inserted in the source text as Melfi had done, offering an English equivalent for most of the Italian words or expression she used in her memoir. Fiorito decides to leave the traces of Italian without an English correspondent, trusting that the readability of his text will not be jeopardized by the *device of the stone*, the occasional foreign element but, on the contrary, his memoir will be enriched by this presence.

Italian (or, more specifically, the regional dialect of Molise) makes its first appearance in the first chapter, in the words of a song Dusty sings to his old aunt Tree:

He'd tell her stories, and he'd sing the old songs: "*Ay compa're, i voi sonare, i chi sona u mandolina. E coma chi sona u mandolina, a-plink, a-plink, u mandolin', a-tippity, tippity, ta.*"
(Fiorito 1999, 9)

¹⁸⁷See: <http://molisedautore.blogspot.ca/2011/12/isernia-biblioteche-aperte-joe-fiorito.html>. Last accessed March 2016.

Fiorito provides no translation or explanation regarding the meaning of the song, or its language, but only an indication that this is an old song. In the translated text, the verses of the song are reproduced practically unchanged. A new, informative, component is, however, inserted: two lines that were not present in the source text introduce the song in the target text:

Le raccontava storie, storielle, le cantava le vecchie canzoni, in un misto di semi-obliato dialetto e inglese, che in bocca sua suonava pressapoco così: “*Ay compa’re, i voi sonare, i chi sona u mandolina. E coma chi sona u mandolina, a-plink, a-plink, u mandolin’, a-tippity, tippity, ta.*”
(Fiorito 2000, 15)

The lines “[...] in un misto di semi-obliato dialetto e inglese, che in bocca sua suonava pressapoco così” (tr.: in a combination of semi-forgotten dialect and English, which in his mouth sounded something like this) have been added during the translational process to clarify and justify the nature of the protagonists’ language. The source text passage has been manipulated, details have been added to explicate the source text and provide cultural background for the Italian receiving audience.

While the source text gave no extra information regarding the lines sung by Dusty or the language(s) these were in, the additional target text sentence signals a tendency towards *explication* and *amplification*, intended as the process of making the implicit explicit by adding information that was not available in the ST. In this regard, the use of the attribute *semi-obliato*, referring to Dusty (in)capacity of speaking the dialect of his ancestors is illustrative: in these initial pages of the source text, the author has yet to make any reference to the ethnic background of the characters and he has given no information regarding the language(s) the protagonists speak, while the target text immediately underscores Dusty’s non-*Italianness*. This tendency towards amplification occurs frequently in the translated text, especially to introduce English elements and explain them to the Italian target reader.

This becomes evident in the table presented above and reproduced below, containing the traces of Italian in Fiorito’s source text; I will now investigate if and how these have been preserved in the target text, and if and how their presence has been signalled. It shall be added here that, while italicization is often used to signify the presence of the foreign element, this device is not introduced anywhere in the paratext (as had occurred in Melfi’s novel).

Table 10 Use of Italian in Fiorito’s *The Closer We Are to Dying* and its rendition in *Le voci di mio padre*

Sotto voce (1999, 21)	The expression is kept but italicization is removed. Moreover, in the target text it is spelled <i>sottovoce</i> as per Italian spelling (2000, 27).
Casa Silvaggio (34)	The expression becomes more specific: “casato Silvaggio” (2000, 40) besides indicating the house the Silvaggio family lives in, also implies the whole lineage, the family.
Ciao, ciao (39)	“Ciao, ciao” becomes “Va’ là, va’ là!” (2000, 44). In Italian, this colloquial

	expression denotes scepticism and sarcasm. ¹⁸⁸ In the source text, “Ciao, ciao” (1999, 39) was pronounced by Fiorito’s great-uncle Joe Silvaggio; the actual value and meaning of this seemingly innocuous salutation can be understood by the indication that precedes it: “Silvaggio waves dismissively” (1999, 39). Said line disappears in the target text, and its meaning is synthesized by the target text expression, which comes to substitute the more neutral <i>ciao, ciao</i> .
Padrone (39, 143, 144)	Italicization is removed.
Sopranome (39, 267)	Kept without italicization and corrected as per Italian spelling. The paragraph that contains this Italian word has been heavily modified in translation. I will return to this in the following paragraphs.
Contadini (39)	Italicization is removed.
Grappa (39)	Italicization is removed.
Stronzo (40)	Kept in italics, however, no indication is given to the reader that the word was only in Italian in the original text.
Quaglia, figlio di quaglia (40)	The expression, not idiomatic in Italian, is italicized and followed by a footnote that explains that this was originally in Italian in the source text.
Serpente (41)	The generic term <i>serpente</i> , snake, is substituted here with the more specific <i>biscia</i> , grass snake. This is a case of <i>particularization</i> (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002), where a more precise term (one of the most common snakes in Italy) is used instead of the one indicated in the source text.
Carabiniere/i (42)	Kept in Italian, italicization is removed.
Ragazz’ (46)	Kept in italics. In the source text, the narrator specifies that the speaker is “dropping the final <i>o</i> , in the manner of Molise” (1999, 46); while, the regional indication is also kept in the target text “alla molisana” (2000, 53), the translator rightly believes that there is no need to remind the Italian reader that the word <i>ragazz</i> is missing its final vowel.
Primavera (46)	Removed as in the Italian translation it would sound redundant. In the source text, the Italian word was preceded by its English equivalent.
Una via nuova (46)	To respect the linguistic hybridity created in the source text, the target text decides to highlight the Italian expression in italics, like in the source text, and maintain its English translation, “a new life” (2000, 53) – which was also present in the source text – in order to oppose it to the Italian one.
Una vita nuova (46)	To respect the linguistic hybridity created in the source text, the target text decides to highlight the Italian expression in italics, like in the source text, and maintain its English translation, “a new life” (2000, 53) – which was also present in the source text – in order to oppose it to the Italian one.
Zio (49)	Italicization is added in the target text, as to signify that the word was in Italian in the source text.
Dio grazie (50)	The source text expression, meaning <i>thank God</i> , is changed into “sta grazia di dio” (2000, 57), as to signify <i>this is a gift from God</i> .
Porco dio (52)	Italicization is kept in the target text.

¹⁸⁸ The Grande Dizionario Hoepli Italiano (2015) defines it as follows: “Con valore rafforzativo o enfatico, in esclamazioni, esortazioni, espressioni di comando, di rimprovero, di disappunto” (tr.: It has an intensifying or emphatic value, it is used in exclamations, exhortations, expressions of command, reproach, and disappointment).

Dio gatto (52)	Italicization is kept in the target text.
Stupido (52)	Kept in the target text, no italicization.
Italianitta (61)	As seen, the word was misspelled in the source text. In the target text, the spelling of the word is corrected, and now reads “italianità” (2000, 69).
Signora (81)	The term is changed for a more generic “la donna” (2000, 92), the woman.
Madonna (81)	Kept in Italian with no italicization.
Morto, morta (154)	The line is completely removed from the target text. It shall be noted that these Italian words, in the source text, were the closing line of a paragraph and no direct correlation with what preceded or followed. This might explain the choice made of removing them from the target text.
Fiadone (156)	Kept in Italian with no italicization.
Dio mio! (176)	Italicization is kept in the target text.
Caffè corretto (243)	Kept in Italian with no italicization.
Va bene (244)	Italicization is kept in the target text, the expression is followed by the indication “soggiunse in italiano” (2000, 247), ‘he added in Italian’, which was not present in the source text.
Salut’ (264)	Italicization is kept in the target text.
Si, si (265)	Italicization is removed.
Emigrato (269)	Kept in Italian but italicization is removed.
Serpenti (270)	Snakes, <i>serpenti</i> , are once again at the centre of a translation shift: in this case, these reptiles are substituted with another species of reptiles: the green lizards, “ramarri verdi” (2000, 274). The substitution is, indeed, correct, as demonstrated by what follows in the source text. Fiorito, matter-of-factly, adds: “One of the lizards skitters over Susan’s sandal” (1999, 271). This indicates that Fiorito had mistakenly used the Italian word for snakes, <i>serpenti</i> , whereas he indicated another reptile, <i>ramarri</i> .

As seen above, the translator occasionally manipulates the source text in order to explain or elucidate elements specific to the cultural or linguistic environment of Italian-Canadians the source text is embedded in, which are deemed unfamiliar or incomprehensible for the general target reader.

It is interesting to notice that various types of shifts that occurred in the translation process also concern the linguistic elements that were originally in Italian (an *intralingual translation* of sorts). Italian words appropriated by Fiorito – used in the English source text in order to convey the cultural and linguistic hybridity in which the narration occurs – are either re-inserted in the Italian translation without any indication of their initial foreignness to the English source text (*padrone*, *contadini*, etc.), eliminated (for instance the line *morto, morta*), or ultimately altered and substituted when they are not perceived (by the translator) to be coherent and/or consistent with the linguistic environment that precedes and follows.

In the target text, alterations often occur following reverse routes, as in the cases below:

- *Particularization*: when the source text element is translated by a target language hyponym, therefore making the target text more specific than the original (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002). Such is the case of the *casa* (ST)/*casato* (TT) and *serpente* (ST)/*biscia* (TT) couples. In both cases, the first term is as correct and acceptable as the latter. The substitution, however, is ascribable to the translator's aim of creating a translated text that is linguistically more specific than the source text.
- *Generalization*: a more general or neutral term is used, such as in the case of *donna* (TT) instead of *signora* (ST) because deemed more suitable in that context (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002).
- *Substitution*: the ST combination of paralinguistic and linguistic element – such as in the above example: “Silvaggio waves dismissively. ‘Ciao Ciao’” (1999, 39) – is replaced by “Va’ là, va’ là!” (2000, 44), a linguistic element that summarizes the two (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002).
- *Variation*: as in the couple *Dio grazie* (ST)/‘*sta grazia di dio* (TT), the source text expression is changed in the target text into another Italian expression having similar, yet different, meaning – as explained the table above (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002).

Among the other translational techniques present in *Le voci di mio padre* to be noted here, one of the most relevant is *compensation*, utilized to introduce a stylistic effect that is specific to the source text – in this case, the linguistic hybridity deriving from life in migrant contexts – elsewhere in the target text (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002).

Often, the target text is dotted with English words and phrases that have an acceptable equivalent word/phrase in the Italian language. In this case, the translator has preserved the source text foreign element trying to compensate for the loss incurred when the text's hybridity is mitigated through translation: whereas Italian represented the foreign element for the English reader, this does not hold true for the reader of the target text; consequently, the translator devised a method to depict this linguistic foreignness in the Italian text and preserve a certain, but different, degree of hybridity in the target text.

A list of English expressions preserved in the Italian text do not have a literal equivalent in the target language; nevertheless, some correspondence in the target language culture could have been found by means of *adaptation*. The ST line “Jesus wept!” (Fiorito 1999, 3) has been kept in English in the target text and, beside it, the translator decided to add the calque “Gesù pianse” (Fiorito 2000, 9). Moreover, in a footnote, the translator explains that said interjection is very common in the Anglophone world: “*Jesus wept for the sins of the world* – Gesù pianse per i peccati del mondo. È un'espressione citatissima nei paesi di lingua inglese. [N.d.T.]” (idem). While Paolini could have

adapted the expression – thus, replacing this source text cultural element with a target culture counterpart – he decides to preserve it for the sake of local flavour.

A similar case occurs later in the same chapter, where the source text reads: “[...] we make plans to divide the day into a twenty-four-hour death watch at the hospital. I take the graveyard shift” (1999, 11). The excerpt is reproduced in Italian as follows: “[...] stabiliamo i turni di veglia al capezzale del morente, notte e giorno all’ospedale. Io mi riserbo il turno di notte, che in inglese americano è detto *graveyard shift*, turno del cimitero” (2000, 17). For lack of an equivalent, the English *graveyard shift* is maintained; its foreignness is indicated by italicization and the literal calque that follows “turno del cimitero”. Moreover, the translator accompanies the expression with the explanation “il turno di notte” (tr.: the night shift) and with the indication that this is specific to the North American variety of English, “in inglese americano è detto”. A similar occurrence is presented later in the book when the translator decides to preserve the English expression *hay-ride*, and provide a definition and a calque for it – “gita, o scarrozzata, sul fieno” (tr.: a carriage ride on the hay) (2000, 74) – in the footnotes. By maintaining these elements of local flavour, Paolini is enacting the above-mentioned *compensation*.

In other instances, Paolini opts for *borrowing*: an English word is preserved where the Italian language has an equally acceptable correspondent, purely to cultivate a *foreignizing* effect. Most are, nonetheless, accompanied by their Italian equivalent: this is the case of the word *junkie* (1999: 33) that, while not known in Italian is also kept in the target text, and the translation “tossicomane” is provided (2000, 38), *reefer* accompanied by its Italian equivalent “spinello” (128), *waterboy* and “acquaio” (146), and *bootlegger* defined as “chi contrabbandava, o distillava clandestinamente alcolici” (tr.: those who smuggled or illegally distilled alcohol) (172). Others, instead, are so well embedded in the receiving culture that they do not need a translation: *yachtsmen* (130), *mister* (130) and *chewing-gum* (187).

In other cases, the target culture does not have a corresponding element that reflects that of the source culture. Such is the case of a noun describing an environment specific to some regions of the world: *bush* – kept in the target text and accompanied by the generalizing translation “boscaglia”¹⁸⁹ (2000, 53), and *garter snakes* for which Paolini provides both a literal translation “serpenti chiamati ‘giarrettiera’” (tr.: snakes called ‘garter’) (287) and a physical description, “bisce dal dorso striato” (tr.: grass snakes with a striped back) (idem). These both fully represent instances of cultural markers, as seen in the second chapter regarding pioneer literature in Canada. Other elements proper to the North

¹⁸⁹ The Italian generalizing translation has recently become widely accepted as equivalent for this culture specific term.

American cultural world are the words *dagos* and *wops*: the former is kept in the target text, for lack of an equivalent, and the target reader is provided with an indication in squared brackets that this is a derogatory term used for Italians: “spregiativo di italiano” (2000, 93). The latter is accompanied by the Neapolitan word upon which English created the calque, *guappo* (2000: 95); in a footnote, Paolini explains that *wop* is a derogatory term for Italian, like *dago* – which, however, was initially used to refer to Spanish people. Other instances are represented by words for which no translation can be provided, hence the need to “replace a term or expression with a description of its form or/and function” (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002, 510): *oxford* is defined in brackets as “scarpe basse coi lacci, di foggia inglese” (tr.: English style flat shoes with laces) (Fiorito 2000, 244), while *cream soda* as “bibita alla vaniglia” (tr.: vanilla drink) (246).

In the target text, one encounters examples of *variation*, in the sense of change in regional varieties, as in the example that follows. Fiorito introduces the reader to Joe Delio, “the king of the Italian colony [...] a padrone” (1999, 79); the source text reader understands that the character described is a *mafioso* – the word *padrone* is often used in the English language to define a mafia boss. The Italian text, instead, opts for the term *mammasantissima*, a regional term – specific to the Southern regions of Italy – that the *Grande Dizionario Hoepli Italiano* (2015) defines as a “boss della mafia, della camorra o di simili organizzazioni criminali” (a boss of the Mafia, the Camorra or similar criminal organizations).

Another method of *compensation* adopted by Paolini is the insertion of English lines, as spoken by the protagonists in the original language. “*It’s okay, Pops* – va tutto bene, papà” (2000, 63), Joe Fiorito reassures his father in the target text. The foreignness of the expression to the Italian reader is doubly underlined by italicization. Similar instances are represented by the intrusion of English as in the exclamations “*God damn it* (85) – italicized in all instances and translated as “maledizione” (2000, 167) and “dannazione di dio” (223) – and “*help yourself*” (91), preceded by its Italian equivalent “serviti pure” (idem).

Last, but not least, English is preserved in expressions – namely nicknames – expressly created for the story. Corrigan is the monsignor of Saint Agnes church where the Fiorito family usually attends mass; the priest is known by the local community as Two-Gun Corrigan because of “his shoot-from-the-hip, shoot-from-the-lip sermons” (1999, 89). The uniqueness of this nickname lies in both its sound (the rhyme) and meaning (the wordplay), making it difficult to reproduce both elements in the target language. Paolini opted for maintaining the English nickname and provide an Italian *calque* for it – “Corrigan Due-Pistole” – and its relative description, as in the source text. On the one hand, within the

body text Paolini provides a (non literal) equivalent expression to the *shoot-from-the-hip, shoot-from-the-lip* ST line: the target text line “le sparava grosse” (tr.: he used to shoot big) (2000, 101) uses an Italian idiom to both explain Corrigan’s tendency to exaggerate, and preserve the reference to shooting. On the other, he decides to include the entire ST sentence (in English) in which the nickname was presented in the footnotes, while also providing a literal translation of it so as to compensate for the loss caused by the Italian rendition. A similar case occurs in one of the closing chapters of the book, in which Joe Fiorito explains that his father Dusty used to work with a band of *spaghetti-job musicians*. Paolini decides to maintain the English definition, while also adding an entire sentence – which was not present in the source text – to explain it: “uno ‘spaghetti job’ era un ingaggio per suonare a un banchetto di oriundi italiani” (tr.: a ‘spaghetti job’ was an engagement to play at an Italian banquet) (2000, 311).

While this *amplification* and *compensation* often occur in the target text, inversely, the deletion of source elements or entire paragraphs is also to be noted, as in the example that follows.

In the third chapter, Fiorito introduces to the reader the story of how his family decided to move to Canada. The narrator imagines and reports what his great-uncle Silvaggio must have thought when he encountered his wife in Ripabottoni:

She is a Fiorito; rare in this village, a Fiorito without a *sopranome*. She is neither a Pelicino, little bird, nor Cimone, tree stump, nor Cocciolongo, longhead, nor Seraphina, angel. Her branch of the family has withered away; the risk of intermarriage is too small to be important.

(Fiorito 1999, 39)

As explained by Fiorito later in the narration¹⁹⁰, everyone in Ripabottoni has a *soprannome*, which helps members of the society recognize whether they are related or not. Joe Silvaggio is surprised to discover that his wife does not have one, since her family is too small for them to risk marrying someone who is related to them by blood. Here, the man lists a series of Ripabottoni’s common *soprannomi*, in their local dialect: Pelicino, Cimone, Cocciolongo, and Seraphina, together with their translation.

Surprisingly, the Italian target text omits the whole paragraph.

Mia moglie è una Fiorito. Filomena Fiorito, mia prima cugina. I Fiorito non hanno un soprannome – cosa rara da queste parti. È una stirpe ormai mezz’isterilita. Se non fosse per il sangue dei Silvaggio.

(Fiorito 2000, 45)

Comparing the two paragraphs in the source and target texts, noticeable differences can be remarked. I will provide my own (rather literal) translation of the Italian rendition, for reference, in

¹⁹⁰ See the paragraph quoted at the end of this section.

order to understand where the two texts diverge: “My wife is a Fiorito. Filomena Fiorito, my first cousin. The Fioritos don’t have a nickname – a rare occurrence around here. It is now a half-barren breed. Except for the Silvaggio bloodline”.

First and foremost, the target text specifies the family connection (first cousins) between Silvaggio and his wife (as well as her first name), which at this point of the narration are unknown to the reader of the source text. Moreover, the following line claims that the whole Fiorito clan does not have a *soprannome*, and that this clan is getting smaller and smaller. The narrator of the source text, however, stated something noticeably different: Silvaggio’s wife’s Fiorito family did not have a *soprannome*, while the rest of the Fiorito family was so big that they all had to have one (in his trip to Ripabottoni the writer has a difficulty finding his relatives because of the large number of Fioritos there). The entire reference to the most common nicknames in Ripabottoni is consequently eliminated.

It is interesting to notice, nevertheless, that this reference returns in the chapter describing the author’s visit to Ripabottoni. Here, some of the *soprannomi* return, and the translation does not fail to report them. The attentive reader will notice the contradiction with what was previously stated in the target text (I refer to the above paragraph) and what follows:

Mi ero reso conto che sarebbe stato impossibile apprendere con chi fossimo imparentati senza conoscere il *soprannome* di mio nonno, cioè quell nome “sussidiario” conferito alle varie diramazioni di un clan numeroso allo scopo di rintracciare o rapporti di parentela ed evitare i matrimoni fra consanguinei. Mio nonno era un Cocciolongo, un Serafino, un Lepore? [...] Il cognome Fiorito – rarissimo e fonte di problemi in Canada – era invece tanto comune, lì a Ripabottoni, come da noi Smith.

(2000, 270-271)

The above target text paragraph is, indeed, a close rendition of the source text, and it re-introduces some elements that were removed and misunderstood earlier in the translated narrative as a result of its manipulation:

I learned that it would be impossible to find out how we were related without knowing my grandfather’s *sopranome*, the extra name given to the branches of a numerous clan, a way of keeping track of blood relations to avoid inbreeding. Was my grandfather a Seraphina, a Cocciolongo, a Lepore? [...] The name Fiorito, so rare and the source of so many problems at home, was so common here it might as well have been Smith.

(1999, 267)

This type of manipulation indicates Paolini’s *habitus* and strong authorial voice, which becomes evident, for instance, in the choice of the strong adjectival phrase *mezz’isterilita* (half-barren, half-sterile) to translate *withered*, a more delicate image, which also conformed to the images of the family being a tree with its many branches; an image that is completely ‘pruned’ in the target text.

3.4. *The Closer We Are to Dying Translated: Conclusions*

To summarize, Fiorito's translated text was not inserted in an openly declared discourse around migration unlike what happened with Melfi's work: because of their prestige and social capital, both the publisher Garzanti and the translator Paolini do not have particular interests in exploiting the migrant network. Indeed, the paratext does not bear any trace of the migrant element, which only reappeared in the words of various agents in the Italian cultural field when the volume was published and promoted in Italy.

From the linguistic viewpoint, the most interesting element presented by the text is its hybridity. While Fiorito's text does not fully exploit the typical migrant juxtaposition of languages, the incursion of Italian is perceived by the source text reader as a constant reminder of the writer's family roots.

Pier Francesco Paolini uses *compensation* to counteract the loss of hybridity that any type of translation into Italian of this type of text necessarily implies¹⁹¹ and uses the incursion of the English language as a corresponding mark of hybridity in the target text. As a result, the Italian reader perceives the presence of English as the foreign element that symbolizes the narration of the family history of the Fioritos. While, on the one hand, the audience is brought to believe that they are reading a story about an Italian family, they soon remark the presence of a foreign voice.

Concomitantly, *amplification* and the insertion of descriptive sentences in the target text are common strategies adopted to introduce and explain details that may not be clear for target readers, making them feel more comfortable, more at home.

Thanks to the reputation and prestige he has acquired, Pier Francesco Paolini has taken the liberty¹⁹² to manipulate the text in the name of better readability, in order to ease the comprehension of selected passages. Reading the two texts side by side, one cannot fail to notice Paolini's strong authorial voice (deriving from his *habitus* and a strong decision-making power) and strong shifts in the target text, which may (and did) result in cases of inconsistency and incoherence between the source text and its translation.

¹⁹¹ Regardless of the translation strategies adopted, in the source text the Italian element is considered as the Other, the foreign; inevitably this correlation is nullified when Italian becomes the target text (the local, familiar, tongue) the work is translated into.

¹⁹² It can be assumed that Pier Francesco Paolini was granted more leeway than a less experienced (or less celebrated) translator would have had.

4. Conclusions

The aim of the present chapter was to examine what happens to texts that originate in the heart of migrant contexts when they are translated back into the culture and language of origin – when the migrant's source environment becomes the target. In other words, what happens when the migrant discourse – and its related linguistic and extra-linguistic elements – travels back to the land of origin.

For this reason, my investigation focused on some specific areas of interest: first and foremost, the agents of translation – namely, the publishers and the translators themselves, followed by the paratextual elements that frame the translated texts, and lastly, the translated texts themselves, but only focussing on the markers of cultural foreignness. These components combined give an overview of the fate of the discourses of otherness and reconciliation conveyed by the authors in the source culture (aided by textual, paratextual, and extra-linguistic elements, as seen), when these make their way back into the culture where this otherness originated.

The above investigation has reinforced the idea that different translators, besides being different individuals with different life stories, interests and knowledge (thus, different *habiti*), also hold different prestige and decision-making power (their *symbolic capital*) when it comes to their profession. All of these aspects come together and influence the translation process, as well as the final translation product. Prestige, for instance, is not negligible when it comes to both the final outcome and its success: well-known translators who have decades of experience in the field, as in the case of Pier Francesco Paolini, will have greater leeway than less-known ones; they command the trust that their contribution will help the book gain value and reach a wide audience.

Moreover, different translators – regardless of their fame – may also have different levels of familiarity with the source culture: while Paolini had a deep knowledge of the North American literary environment (specifically, the United States), his experience was not specific to the Italian-Canadian sub-system which is ruled by different actors and is dominated by distinctive discourses. Thanks to her experience in this specific field, Laura Ferri, on the other hand, has a deep understanding of Italian-Canadian subjects, issues and (hi)stories. While this may not be sufficient to guarantee the quality or success of the final product, it does – at least in the case at hand – imply a certain commitment to their cause.

Similarly, the publishing houses influence the textual and para-textual features and how these will be conveyed in the target text, as well as all the extra-textual components that come into play in the reception of the works in the target culture. While their authority and/or reputation is not the only

element that affects the distribution of translated literature – the presence of an international support network may help develop an interest in said works. It is evident that small-size niche publishers such as Cosmo Iannone aim for a different readership than the large Milan publisher Garzanti. Publishers' choices affect not only the size of their readership, but also their composition: by framing Fiorito's work in no particular topic or agenda but, rather, including it in a collection of transnational literature, the publisher has chosen to aim for a general (as well as wider) audience than a niche one; conversely, inserting Melfi's memoir in a specific editorial line, Cosmo Iannone has purposely drawn the attention of those readers – certainly, a smaller group – who are interested in migration and migrants.

In short, while the writer and the original publisher, together, have a certain control over the images conveyed by the source text, and how and for whom these are conveyed, when the text crosses the borders into the target environment, the source actors lose most of their authority, which is passed on to the translator and the publisher of the translation. The two, together with the above-mentioned pre-existent or newly created support network (which comprises actors of the source environment) have the power to shape these narratives. In this regard, subjectivity is paramount.

Consequently, one question arises: do the readers of source and target texts perceive the same discourse in the original language and in its translation? More specifically, given the strong migrant element in both Melfi's and Fiorito's memoirs, are the corresponding *leitmotifs* of homesickness and the desire to visit the motherland (a visit which is made difficult by the linguistic barrier) and the role of (cultural) translation also evident in the translated versions of their text?

The analysis has underlined that in Canada, the source environment of these writers, there seems to be some homogeneity and unity among the different narratives by Anglophone and Francophone Italian-Canadians. There exists a certain conformity and consistency in their discourse, in their intents and literary techniques, but also in the way the publication and promotion of their works occurs, supported by literary and cultural associations at national level. On the other hand, because of their minor¹⁹³ presence on the Italian territory, the Italian-Canadian literary panorama is less compact. The fate of these works in translation is in the hands of separate Italian agents of translation, and their agendas.

While superficially dissimilar, Melfi's and Fiorito's memoirs carry with them a series of common *topoi*: the idea of feeling uprooted and the presence of a distant mother/father land and mother/father tongue. These *topoi* form their migrant discourse, which is first translated into the

¹⁹³ Minority is used here in terms of number, as seen in the third chapter, since only a small percentage of Italian-Canadian authors have managed the crossing; nevertheless, those who made their way to Italy have also been mostly inserted into a niche discourse of minority.

hybridity of the literary language – the two texts operate this stratagem on a different scale – and then preserved by the agents who promote the works in the source literary market by means of specific events to which authors are also invited (as seen in the previous chapter, often, these events have been labelled as a *return of the migrant*).

The two volumes, nonetheless, seem to take two different routes on their way back to Italy. On the one side is the itinerary of Melfi's translated migrant discourse, which follows closely that of the source text. The translated text diligently shadows the structure and the linguistic choices of the source: the translator decides to visually preserve the hybridity of language by italicizing words that were kept in Italian in the English text, and informing the reader of said device at the beginning of the volume. The incursion of English is only sporadic and occurs for *compensation* purposes; moreover, whenever an English word is inserted in the Italian text, the translator promptly provides an explanation in the footnotes. The reader is taken by the hand into the story of a family of Italian migrants abroad, in the comfort of Melfi's (translated) idiolect, which is occasionally regionally connoted and alludes to the country she now lives in.

Similarly, the publisher has supported the source text decision of framing Melfi's narrative in the migrant memoir genre: the inclusion of the volume in the specific editorial line, *Reti*, which hosts literary works of world writers of Italian origin, and the visual reference to these old origins (with a specific focus on regionalism) in the photo presented on the front cover are consistent with the source publisher, Guernica, agenda of promoting the diversity of hyphenated writers like Melfi.

By focussing on the migrant setting Melfi works in and, simultaneously, emphasizing the regionalism of her roots, Laura Ferri and Cosmo Iannone welcome Melfi back into the Italian language and the Italian literary world (although only for a niche readership). This return is further supported by a series of events dedicated to the writer and her work which, once again, emphasize the idea of her homecoming.

Joe Fiorito's route to Italy takes a different direction. While the writer's Italian origin is never concealed in either the source or target texts (or literary circles), migration is not at the core of his narrative. *The Closer We Are to Dying* is Fiorito's first and only work to deal with the story of his family and his migrant origins. Both the source and target publishers opt for paratextual elements that leave out the idea of migration, but rather refer to the father figure, which is central to the memoir.

Nevertheless, the idea of the return to the land where the roots lay is pervasive and is specifically described in one of the chapters of his memoir. The writer's attempt at reconciling with the Italian language is perceived by the English reader thanks to the Italian words and expressions the

English text is dotted with. From the linguistic viewpoint, the translation does not embrace the writer and draw him back into a familiar environment; his return to Italy via literature has a different effect: where Fiorito used the Italian language to signify the foreignness of his roots, Paolini uses English to remind the reader of Fiorito's own foreignness to Italy. There is no indication in the target (para)text that the original text contained Italian words that are now italicized. Conversely, readers are introduced to many elements of the Canadian (and, more generally, North American) culture that the translator dutifully explains for them. Fiorito, thus, is presented as a North American writer; once again, Fiorito falls back into the dilemma of the migrant individual: foreign both in Canada and Italy, he is not at home anywhere.

Nevertheless, Fiorito has the privilege of being supported on both sides by two major publishers that ease his way into the two literary systems: while, in translation, he does not fully conform to the image of the Italian writer, he is welcomed among the many celebrated international writers translated by Garzanti. This allows him to have access to a wider readership – his book has been reprinted twice – and to be invited to important national literary events. He may not be fully accepted as an Italian writer, but his return was indeed successful.

To conclude, translating works that fall into the migrant memoir genre affects both the movement and the development of the narrated self, influencing the discourse conveyed. Because translation is a highly social activity, many elements come into play in the 'manipulation' of the *illusio* of the source text: first and foremost, the difference between the writer's and translator's *habiti* (the author's personal experience of migration plays a fundamental role in its development), but also the different forms of *capital* detained by the different actors in both networks, as well as their scopes.

Specifically, the translation of memoirs can fit into a publisher's agenda of disseminating a testimony that is thought to have some relevance for the target audience: for instance, Cosmo Iannone's translation of Melfi's *Italy Revisited* fits with their aspiration to promote social and cultural difference by creating a transnational network of (translated) migrant works.

From a different perspective, translation also affects the highly intimate nature of these narratives: translators are confronted with the difficult task of identifying with the "elusive I" (Brierley 2000). The controversial border between original writing and translating becomes ambiguous and, as seen in the case of Fiorito's translation, the translator's voice is able to manipulate the authorial voice and the underlying discourses.

In sum, only by recognizing the underlying *passion du retour* can the agents of translation help the *elusive I* make a fulfilling homecoming.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary of Findings

The present work has engaged in a discussion of the migrant discourse in Italian-Canadian writing and its translation to Italian.

The research started with the search for a common denominator between translation and migration studies in order to develop a novel interpretation of the relationship between the two. For the purpose of this investigation, I turned my attention towards literature: a cultural practice and domain in which transnational/translational identities and practices are exemplified.

Supported by the theoretical framework introduced in the first chapter, the textual analysis conducted on the narratives by this group of authors confirmed my initial assumption: that writing and translating in migrant contexts are analogous activities that can be interpreted as journeys of linguistic, cultural and geographical border-crossing.

The narratives by Canadian writers of Italian origin evoke the plurality of the migrant experience: the enrichment, the loss, and the fragmentation of the self between the private and affective sphere on the one hand (representing family history and the land of ancestral origin) and the public and professional domain (embodying the present and life in Canada). To each part of these split identities there corresponds a distinct linguistic medium: the so-called mother tongue and the acquired language (or, in other words, the language of the Old Continent and that of the New Continent).

The relevance of this linguistic dichotomy is especially evident and emblematic in the history and development of the migrant as a writer. The mother tongue, learnt primarily in its oral form and relegated exclusively to the realm of the private, is often deemed unfit, inappropriate for artistic purposes. However, while secondary to the acquired language in poetic terms, the relevance of the mother tongue lies in its inseparability from the migrant experience and what was originally lived and experienced in it.

The two languages, although close, remain distant: each a testimony of adjacent, yet separate, life stories. Literature becomes the means for migrant selves to put an end to this incommunicability: they shape language in the same way they have been shaped by it. They mould language creating a new form, a new linguistic possibility, which is in itself a process of (self-)translation: the dialogue between languages becomes a communicative tool which helps the migrant writer express each and both individual personalities. The act of translating taking place in migrant writing practice is, first and foremost, an act of self-definition and a means to seek understanding between the different fragments

of the self. However, as explored in the previous chapters through a scrutiny of three generations of Italian-Canadian writing, the tension between the migrant's multiple selves finds only a superficial appeasement through the literary effort; something remains unsettled, unfulfilled.

The first part of my research highlighted that many productions within the Italian-Canadian group are characterized by a strong nostalgic element that pervades both the thematic and the linguistic level of the literary work. In many Italian-Canadian texts, in their protagonists, their stories and their voices, there rest autobiographical components merging individual/family history and fiction, which become more manifest in the motif of the characters' return journey to the land of origin. This return symbolizes more than a sentimental trip to the ancestral home; it is also a reunification of all the cultural and linguistic ties that migration severed.

In most cases, however, the protagonists' first journey to the land of origin concludes with an even bigger disappointment. The unfeasibility of the symbolic homecoming of the protagonist (often the narrator and the writer's *alter ego*) lies not in the inability to cross the physical boundaries, but rather in the realization that the fictional space that the protagonist was looking for, inside and outside its narrative, does not exist. From a narrative standpoint, the account of the unsuccessful return witnesses the migrants' lack of preparation and the limitedness of their means to bridge the gap between the two cultural and linguistic systems.

After having ascertained that the *passion du retour* is the driving force behind the production of many Italian-Canadian migrant works, the analyses I conducted in the third and fourth chapters contributed to answering the research questions presented in the introduction to this work.

The first question aimed to uncover the role played by translation in shaping the literary migrant discourse – specifically, that of the return to the land of origin. The investigation of the main themes and literary devices used by the Italian-Canadian literary group revealed that migrant narratives – especially autobiographical works like the first-person narrations of Melfi's and Fiorito's memoirs – exploit two distinct translational processes to construct a discourse around a desired return to the ancestral motherland, Italy: *cultural translation* and *linguistic translation*, or *translation proper* (Jakobson, 1959); two journeys across the two distinct cultural and linguistic spaces (the self and the Other) interpreted as a way to understand and reconcile with the ethnic identity.

In the case of Mary Melfi, the linguistic gap between the author/narrator and Italy mirrors the linguistic divide between her and her mother. The memoir becomes her personal translational journey towards a reconciliation with the mother(-tongue/land). Translation is central to Melfi's discourse, both as a tool for self-(re)definition and as a communicative device. The explication, interpretation and

negotiation of cultural elements (both Italian and Canadian) is a two-way process of *cultural translation* that helps Melfi (and the Canadian reader) understand her mother(land) culture, and assists her mother in comprehending her daughter's (Canadian) culture. This process is mostly activated in order for the protagonist to come to terms with, and bridge the gap between, her own double ethnicity, while informing the reader about the migrant's hyphenated identity struggle.

Travelling back and forth between English and Italian, the interweaving of languages is an exemplification of Melfi's personal (self-)translational journey. Melfi articulates her own cultural hybridity through *linguistic translation*, which becomes evident in the interference of the Italian language (or, rather, her own *idiolect*) throughout the novel, which she (re-)translates to English for the Anglophone reader. The use of italicization throughout the text and the many Italian spelling and grammar mistakes represent the author's inner battle, her incapacity to fully reconcile with Italy, linguistically and culturally. Indeed, in many works by Italian-Canadians, the inaccuracies and deflections from the norm in the Italian words and sentences inserted in source texts expose the migrants' struggle with the mother tongue they wish to master.

In Fiorito's memoir, the first-person narrator (the writer himself) is the interpreter of the stories told by the father: he is in charge of bridging the gap between reader and the protagonists of said accounts. Consequently, *cultural translation* pervades Fiorito's narrative: translation takes place in the two-way dialogue between the distinct cultural spaces (the self and the Other) of father and son, in which the explicating, interpreting and negotiating of Italian cultural elements are processes that help the author understand the father(land), and assist the reader in comprehending this culture.

Through the use of linguistic and cultural devices, Fiorito translates the idea of *Italianness* for his Canadian audience. In enacting translation, he works in two opposite directions: on the one hand, he *foreignizes* his work by juxtaposing Italian and English, constructing the migrant discourse using linguistic hybridity; on the other hand, he *domesticates* otherness when he (back-)translates into English conversations that took place in Italian during his recent trip to Italy. This divergence in approaches is a result of the writer's feeling of inadequacy following his Italian journey; the realization of the difference between older and newer generations of Italians leads to a certain difficulty in recognizing any real essence of *Italianness*.

Summarily, and as a response to the first question, the analysis of Melfi's and Fiorito's works (despite their noticeable differences) highlighted that writing by authors of migrant origin is in its essence a form of translation: an act of mediation and negotiation of cultural and linguistic differences aimed at bridging the gap between the writer's source and target countries, which is often symbolized

by a return to the land of origin. Cultural and linguistic traces of this authorial translation process linger in the migrant text: *traces of the Other*, perceptible evidence of the intercultural and interlinguistic encounter.

These findings brought me to investigate how translation reshapes the migrant discourse when it travels back to the migrant's land and language of origin, and what role the agents of translation play in the representation of this discourse, the second and third research questions respectively.

The authors' failure to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap separating them from the motherland led me to the understanding that said transition requires a preparation and detachment that only a mediator could offer. Through a third party, translation might succeed where the migrant's first actual visit to the land of origin had failed by offering another occasion for the desire for reconciliation with the past to be fulfilled. This second interlinguistic and intercultural movement – the translation of the migrant text into the migrant's language of origin – can be interpreted as a back translation of sorts. Symmetrically, the translation act becomes a journey back to the motherland.

Few authors (mostly Anglophones) have found their way back into the Italian literary market. Often, works that have managed to make a *homecoming* have a strong autobiographical component (such as Melfi's and Fiorito's): the cathartic act of autobiographical migrant writing – which according to White (1995) is one of the most intimate – appears to be the literary element that has attracted the most interest in both the literary market and the audience.

While, in the past few decades, Italian-Canadian migrant writing has evolved in regard to both its literary devices and themes, and despite the reluctance of many of the Italian-Canadian writers to be associated with such a label, most works continue to draw attention to the idea of otherness and the nostalgic element deriving from the migrant experience. As a result, in Italy, most of these works have been included in a migrant agenda, with translators, publishers and cultural institutions – the *agents of translation* – supporting the production, diffusion and promotion of the return of the expatriate.

In the first case, Cosmo Iannone's translation of Melfi's *Italy Revisited* fits with the publisher's agenda of promoting social and cultural difference by creating a transnational network of (translated) migrant works. Iannone has maintained and reinforced the source text publisher (Guernica's) decision to frame Melfi's narrative in the migrant memoir genre by both including the volume in an editorial line dedicated to hyphenated writers, and by using specific paratext. In the translation, Laura Ferri closely follows the structure and the linguistic choices of the source text: the hybridity of language is preserved and highlighted by italicization. The incursion of English is sporadic and only occurs for *compensation* purposes, when strictly necessary.

Fiorito's return to Italy via literature, however, falls into a different agenda: he is supported by a major publisher, Garzanti, which includes him among its many celebrated international writers and does not underline his migrant origin. In the Italian language version, Fiorito is introduced and recognized as a contemporary North American writer. Indeed, while in the source text, Fiorito used the Italian language to signify the foreignness of his roots, in the translation, Paolini preserves English and some elements of the Canadian (and, more generally, North American) culture to remind the reader of Fiorito's own foreignness to Italy. Nonetheless, Fiorito's return is supported by a series of events dedicated to the writer and his work that, once again, emphasize the idea of his homecoming. The author falls back into the migrant dilemma: foreign both in Canada and Italy, he is not at home anywhere.

Lastly, while the Canadian literary circles' positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and migration have facilitated the success of these works, the Italian-Canadian group has yet to receive a similar response in Italy, where they remain mostly unknown, consigned to scholarly circles and niche readerships. Indeed, Italian-Canadian works in Italian translation have been published mostly by small-sized and specialized, niche publishers – Nino Ricci and Joe Fiorito represent an exception. Despite the efforts of a selected number of translators, publishers and academics to promote them, the voices of hyphenated Italians have been neglected despite the fact that they are part of the Italian heritage and history. This parallels how the migrant past of Italy has been purposely snubbed (Gnisci 2013).

In this regard, an interesting perspective has emerged during this work: the parallel between emigrant and immigrant *hyphenated* authors. Italian-Canadian authors have several similarities with the *new* Italian writers, authors who have immigrated to Italy and opted for Italian as their literary language. The commonalities between the two groups surpass their differences: while the former group represents emigration from Italy and the latter immigration to the peninsula, both seek a rapprochement. As seen, Canadian artists of Italian origin express in their works a desire to migrate (back) to Italy and the difficulties encountered in the process; similarly, Italian authors of migrant origin portray the struggle to integrate into Italy (just like the first Italians in Canada had done).

Illustrating the Italian immigrant literary phenomenon, Daniele Comberiati (2010) has outlined a series of peculiar properties of this group in relation to its target literary system that are reminiscent of the Italian-Canadian group examined here. First, these authors rarely succeed in publishing more than one work with the same publisher (and rarely are these major publishing houses), and among these the autobiographical element is preponderant: migrant literature is only accepted when it becomes synonymous with a life experience that an Italian has not lived. Moreover, for publishers, the media

coverage and the public interest in the migrant issue becomes a stronger rationale than any ‘simple’ literary interest in these authors: the relevance of these narratives is no longer in their aesthetic value, but rather in their commercialization of a testimony. Lastly, these testimonies are often rewritten/manipulated by an external agent: an Italian journalist or writer who cooperates in the writing process. Rarely, however, is the co-authorial role of these agents revealed to the reader, who is led to believe that these are only the curators of the volumes (53-54). The parallelism between the group introduced by Comberiati (2010) and the Italian-Canadian writers discussed here is relevant, and it deserves further investigation.

In sum, translation and its agents play a relevant role in not only reshaping (manipulating) the migrant discourse according to the specific scope intended for the receiving audience, but also in endorsing specific issues within cultural/political agendas. In the present case, by promoting the idea of a return migration, a homecoming, translation could help the receiving country – Italy – come to terms with its migrant past, its many emigrants and, ultimately, understanding migration as a contemporary phenomenon. The translation of autobiographical or fictional accounts of Italians who experienced migration first hand, without concealing their otherness or assimilating them to transnational literature, may work towards this aim.

2. Suggestions for Further Research

This study has just started uncovering the existence of a bond between two *practices on the move*: migration and translation. More work remains to be done in this field, and the number of narratives produced by migrants internationally testifies to the relevance of the migrant phenomenon to current knowledge and research.

One of the main findings of my study is that translation practices (both linguistic and cultural) are tools utilized by migrant authors in the construction of their discourse around the return to the land of origin. Similar analyses to the one contained in this work could be expanded to literary works by other representatives of the Italian-Canadian group, to other hyphenated-Italians in the world, or to other hyphenated groups in different parts of the world.

Likewise, the framework developed in this thesis could be extended to include migrant self-translations (a topic which has been only briefly mentioned in the previous pages), and *intersemiotic* translations (incorporating other media and art forms, such as cinema, visual arts, music, etc. into the idea of translation as the migrant’s return to the land of origin).

Moreover, it would be interesting to further investigate the factors and causes – for example, the lack of literary quality of many of these works – that prevent more representatives of this group from making a comeback to Italy. This might provide a deeper understanding of the social and cultural implications that these types of works may have on the receiving culture, a topic which I have just hinted at in this work. In this regard, I believe that textual analyses can still be fruitful in the development of novel and comprehensive sociological studies of translation in contexts of mobility.

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