

LES CULTURES DU CANADA:  
AU-DELÀ DU PASSÉ, VERS L'AVENIR

THE CULTURES OF CANADA: BEYOND  
THE PAST, TOWARDS THE FUTURE

edited by Cristina Brancaglion,  
Marco Modenesi, Oriana Palusci

Collana Dialogues

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Cristina Brancaglion, Marco Modenesi, Oriana Palusci (eds.)  
*Les cultures du Canada: au-delà du passé, vers l'avenir*  
*The Cultures of Canada: Beyond the Past, Towards the Future*  
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Introduction	5
<i>Oriana Palusci, Cristina Brancaglione</i>	

HISTOIRE, MIGRATION, DROIT  
HISTORY, MIGRATION, LAW

A Half Century of Canada: A Memoir on Research and Knowledge	15
<i>Luca Codignola</i>	
Reimagining Canada as Norland	29
<i>Vincent Rasmussen</i>	
Insights into 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Italian Migration Patterns in Canada	45
<i>Guido D'Elia</i>	
Mental Health and Italian-Canadian Literature	63
<i>Carmen Concilio</i>	
Revisiter l'histoire de la renaissance africaine depuis le Canada : <i>J'irai danser sur la tombe de Senghor</i> de Blaise Ndala	73
<i>Michał Obszyński</i>	
Canada's Legal Pluralism and the Revitalization of Indigenous Legal Orders: an Overview	87
<i>Sara Riccetti</i>	

APERÇUS LINGUISTIQUES  
ET PERSPECTIVES IDENTITAIRES  
LINGUISTIC INSIGHTS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Le sport national des Québécois : parler de langue	107
<i>Benoît Melançon</i>	
Overcoming Linguist Duality in Canada: The Role of Education in Fostering Linguistic and Cultural Diversity	127
<i>Francesca D'Angelo</i>	
Les idéologies linguistiques au prisme de la notion d'“attitude énonciative”	141
<i>Francesco Attruia</i>	
Alla ricerca del tempo perduto: dal multiculturalismo all'interculturalismo	159
<i>Agostina Latino</i>	
<i>L'album multicolore</i> de Louise Dupré : raconter le Québec entre autobiographie et témoignage	175
<i>Elena Ravera</i>	
Pratiques de relecture et réécriture d'un corpus mutilé : le cas de Marguerite Bourgeoys	189
<i>Giada Silenzi</i>	

PENSER LA DIVERSITÉ AU PRISME DE LA LITTÉRATURE  
LITERARY VISIONS OF DIFFERENCE

The Naturalcultural World of the Future According to Margaret Atwood <i>Héliane Ventura</i>	207
“Making the Impossible Possible”: Alienness in Nalo Hopkinson’s Short Stories <i>Daniela Fargione</i>	221
Marie-Claire Blais et la tradition de demain <i>Angela Buono</i>	237
The emotional geography of St. John’s in Megan Gail Coles’ <i>Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club</i> <i>Ewelina Feldman-Kolodziejuk</i>	247
Enfermement, sauvagerie et hostilité chez Jacques Benoit ( <i>Jos Carbone</i> et <i>Le Petit monsieur</i> ) <i>Francesca Paraboschi</i>	265
Soviet and Jewish Identities within Canadianness and the Importance of Residence in David Bezmozgis’ Short Story Collections <i>Grigorios Iliopoulos</i>	283

ARTS, RÉÉCRITURES, THÉÂTRE, CINÉMA  
ARTS, RE-WRITING, THEATRE, FILM

Transdisciplinarité et création : De la mise en scène aux arts visuels et à l’écriture <i>Danièle LeBlanc</i>	299
<i>Barbe Blue le maudit Québécois</i> de Camille de Cussac : réécriture et illustration d’un conte perraultien en sauce québécoise <i>Andrea Fanton</i>	315
The Iranian Journey of “Post and Beam” by Alice Munro <i>Sabrina Francesconi</i>	327
Les modèles identitaires et la littérature autochtone du Québec <i>Petr Kyloušek</i>	343
AVT and NFB Indigenous-Made Animation Films <i>Eleonora Sasso</i>	357
<i>Anne of Green Gables – The Musical</i> : Song Translation and Singability for Dubbing <i>Manuela Francia</i>	375
<i>Notices sur les auteurs / Notes on Contributors</i>	393

## Introduction

*Oriana Palusci, Cristina Brancaglion*

### *Les cultures du Canada : au-delà du passé, vers l'avenir*

La société canadienne est mondialement connue pour sa diversité culturelle, fruit d'une histoire marquée par la coexistence de plusieurs peuples et par des vagues successives d'immigrants provenant d'Europe, d'Asie, d'Afrique et des Amériques. Le Canada se fonde en effet sur la cohabitation de plusieurs peuples qui sont venus s'installer progressivement dans la partie septentrionale de l'Amérique du Nord : des Premières Nations qui y vivent depuis des temps immémoriaux, aux communautés francophones et anglophones qui s'y sont installées après le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, aux divers apports de l'immigration de masse qui caractérise l'époque contemporaine. Bien que relativement jeune, le Canada se présente comme un terrain privilégié pour observer les défis liés à cette pluralité, étant aujourd'hui un pays caractérisé par une grande richesse artistique, idéologique, politique, économique, linguistique.

Le présent volume invite à réfléchir à ces multiples enjeux, en adressant l'attention tant à la contemporanéité qu'à l'histoire des diverses communautés canadiennes et aux défis pour l'avenir. Toutes les sciences humaines y sont convoquées – de l'histoire au droit, à la géographie, sociologie, linguistique et littérature – à travers l'étude de documents issus des champs du savoir les plus variés. Les essais ici réunis proposent des approfondissements consacrés à des auteurs incontournables de la littérature québécoise et des littératures canadiennes anglophones mais permettent également de mettre en lumière des œuvres oubliées ou encore peu connues. Les Premières nations, profondément ancrées dans tous les territoires, se révèlent un important élément de réflexion pluridisciplinaire.

Ce recueil d'articles émane du colloque international bisannuel de l'Association italienne d'études canadiennes, consacré au thème "Les cultures du Canada : au-delà du passé, vers l'avenir",

qui s'est tenu à l'Université de Milan (Italie) du 29 novembre au 1<sup>er</sup> décembre 2023. Il est organisé en quatre sections thématiques, s'ouvrant chacune par le témoignage d'un conférencier d'honneur. Les auteurs appartiennent à des universités canadiennes, européennes (de Tchéquie, France, Grèce, Pologne) et, en particulier, italiennes.

Le volume s'ouvre par une section intitulée *Histoire, migration, droit*, qui étudie l'histoire du Canada à partir de multiples points de vue, en soulignant le pluralisme du pays et ses stratégies nationales et internationales. Luca Codignola retrace les moments forts de sa formation en tant qu'historien du Canada, en mettant en valeur les relations entre le Canada et l'Italie sur le plan scientifique, grâce également à son rôle actif en tant que président de l'AISC. Vincent Rasmussen aborde la question de l'ancienne dénomination "Norland", et documente les noms alternatifs proposés pour le nouveau pays à l'aide d'exemples marquants. Guido D'Elia se penche sur les tendances récentes de l'immigration italienne au Canada dans le cadre de la politique d'immigration du Canada. Carmen Concilio se tourne vers les mémoires littéraires d'écrivains contemporains pour attirer l'attention sur la maladie mentale et la guérison. La métaphique historiographique est au cœur de la discussion de Michal Obszyński sur l'écrivain afro-canadien Blaise Ndala, illustrant les complexités de l'héritage de la diaspora africaine. L'article de Sara Riccetti clôt un cercle idéal en parlant du pluralisme canadien et de la revitalisation des ordres juridiques indigènes, en s'appuyant sur son expérience en tant que jeune universitaire italienne ayant bénéficié d'une bourse du Conseil international d'études canadiennes ; les relations entre le Canada et l'Italie se révèlent extrêmement stimulantes.

La deuxième section, *Aperçus linguistiques et perspectives identitaires*, met l'accent sur les dynamiques concernant la langue, la culture, l'histoire du Québec et du Canada. Benoît Melançon ouvre cette section par un essai au titre piquant, "Le sport national des Québécois : parler de langue". Il montre l'importance des débats autour du français au Québec, où l'on s'intéresse aux comportements linguistiques des Français et des Québécois, aux lois linguistiques et aux statistiques. La diversité linguistique et culturelle à l'échelle du Canada est ensuite approfondie par Francesca D'Angelo, qui met en avant le rôle de

l'éducation pour promouvoir l'inclusion et la compréhension interculturelle. Francesco Attruia se penche sur la situation du français en Alberta dans une contribution où il analyse les représentations linguistiques concernant le français à travers un texte de Joëlle Préfontaine. Agostina Latino oriente son attention vers les paradigmes de gestion de la diversité culturelle au Canada, avec un focus sur les pensionnats pour enfants indigènes et les approches interculturelles. Les deux derniers essais portent sur des pratiques littéraires. Elena Ravera examine l'œuvre autobiographique de Louise Dupré, qui mêle mémoire individuelle et collective pour dépeindre les transformations du Québec. La contribution de Giada Silenzi termine cette section par une analyse des écrits fragmentaires de Marguerite Bourgeoy et de ses techniques de réécriture.

Héliane Ventura fait débiter pertinemment la section 3, *Penser la diversité au prisme de la littérature*, par une étude approfondie de la trilogie MaddAddam de Margaret Atwood, qui se déroule après une catastrophe écologique et dépeint un avenir possible dans lequel une alliance entre les êtres humains et les animaux devient envisageable. Le potentiel de la fiction spéculative est repris par Daniela Fargione dans son étude des visions contre-hégémoniques figurant dans certaines nouvelles de l'écrivaine canadienne d'origine caribéenne Nalo Hopkinson. L'article d'Angela Buono nous conduit au Québec et à l'avenir de l'humanité envisagé dans les romans de Marie-Claire Blais. Nous nous déplaçons ensuite vers Saint-Jean de Terre-Neuve, grâce à Ewelina Feldman-Kołodziejuk, qui présente le premier roman de Megan Gail Coles sous l'angle de la géographie émotionnelle. L'article suivant, de Francesca Paraboschi, nous fait revenir au Québec et aux thèmes de prédilection de Jacques Benoit. Grigorios Iliopoulos propose un aperçu fascinant des identités soviétiques et juives à travers les recueils de nouvelles de David Bezmozgis.

Danièle LeBlanc introduit la dernière section du volume, qui regroupe des études autour du thème *Arts, réécritures, théâtre, cinéma*. L'artiste québécoise retrace son expérience personnelle d'exploration de la transdisciplinarité – des arts visuels à la mise en scène et à l'écriture – et réfléchit à l'impact de ces expériences sur sa pratique pédagogique. La réécriture littéraire est au cœur de la contribution d'Andrea Fanton, qui examine comment Camille de Cussac a retravaillé un conte perraultien en le situant à

Montréal et en utilisant le français québécois. Sabrina Francesconi s'intéresse aux adaptations cinématographiques et télévisuelles des œuvres d'Alice Munro et en particulier au film *Canaan* de l'Iranien Mani Haghighi. Ensuite, une réflexion sur la question de la modélisation identitaire est proposée par Petr Kyloušek, à travers l'analyse des œuvres de plusieurs auteurs amérindiens et de leurs rapports avec la littérature québécoise majoritaire. Dans les deux dernières études l'attention s'oriente vers le processus de traduction, avec l'essai d'Eleonora Sasso, qui examine les stratégies de traduction audiovisuelle dans les films d'animation autochtones produits par l'Office National du Film, et celui de Manuela Francia, qui se penche sur la comédie musicale *Anne of Green Gables* pour avancer une proposition de traduction et de sous-titrage vers l'italien de quelques chansons avec le souci de respecter la cohésion multimodale de l'œuvre.

### *The Cultures of Canada: Beyond the Past, Towards the Future*

Canadian society is world-renowned for its cultural diversity, the result of a history marked by the coexistence of several peoples and successive waves of immigrants from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. Indeed, Canada is based on the cohabitation of many communities that have gradually settled in the northern part of North America: from the First Nations, who have lived there since time immemorial, to the first European colonisers (French and British) starting from the XVI century, to the various flows of mass immigration that characterise the contemporary world. Although Canada is a relatively young country, it is an ideal context in order to examine the questions posed by this plurality, as it is today characterised by a wealth of artistic, ideological, political, economic and linguistic diversity.

This volume is an invitation to reflect on these multifold issues, focusing as much on the present as on the history of the various Canadian communities and on the challenges for the future. A number of disciplines are involved – from history to law, geography, sociology, education, art, film, theatre, linguistics and literature – through the study of texts and documents from the most varied fields of knowledge. The essays included here offer a

detailed analysis on historical and linguistic perspectives, on artistic and educational matters, as well as on key authors in Quebec and English-Canadian literature, but also highlight forgotten or little-known works. At the same time, the First Nations, deeply rooted in every territory, become an important element of multi-disciplinary reflection.

This collection of papers is the output of the biennial International Conference of the Italian Association for Canadian Studies on “The Cultures of Canada: beyond the past, towards the future”, held at the University of Milan (Italy) from 29 November to 1 December 2023. It is divided into four main sections, each of which examines related topics and opens with a keynote lecture. Contributors belong to Canadian, European (Czechia, France, Greece, Poland) and, above all, a range of Italian universities.

The first section: *History, migration, law* investigates Canadian history from multiple viewpoints, underlining Canada’s pluralism and its national and international strategies. Luca Codignola traces salient moments of his formation as a historian on Canada, enhancing Canada-Italy relations on a scholarly level, thanks also to his active role as IACS President. Naming the country as Norland is discussed by Vincent Rasmussen, who documents the alternative names proposed for the new country through noteworthy examples. Recent trends in Italian migration to Canada are discussed by Guido D’Elia in the framework of Canada’s immigrant policy. Carmen Concilio switches to literary memoirs by contemporary writers to call attention to mental illness and healing. Historiographic metafiction is pivotal in Michał Obszyński’s discussion on African-Canadian writer Blaise Ndala, illustrating the complexities of the heredity of the African diaspora. Sara Riccetti’s paper closes an ideal circle by speaking of Canada’s pluralism and revitalization of Indigenous legal orders, based on her experience as a young Italian scholar thanks to a grant by the International Council for Canadian Studies; in fact, Canada-Italy relations are thriving.

The second section, *Linguistic insights and cultural identity*, focuses on the dynamics involving language, culture and the history of Quebec and Canada. Benoît Melançon opens this section with an essay with a suggestive title, ‘Le sport national des Québécois: parler de langue’, in which he shows the importance of the debates about the French language in Quebec, the lan-

guage laws and statistics. Linguistic and cultural diversity across Canada is then explored by Francesca D'Angelo, who highlights the role of education in promoting inclusion and intercultural understanding. Francesco Attrruia looks at the situation of the French language in Alberta by analyzing linguistic representations of French through a text by Joëlle Préfontaine. Agostina Latino turns her attention to the paradigms of cultural diversity governance in Canada, with a focus on residential schools for indigenous children and intercultural approaches. The last two essays focus on literary practice. Elena Ravera examines Louise Dupré's autobiographical work, which combines individual and collective memory to capture the transformations of Quebec, while Giada Silenzi probes the fragmentary writings of Marguerite Bourgeoys and her rewriting techniques.

Héliane Ventura aptly starts Section 3 on *Literary visions of difference* through an in-depth investigation of Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy set after an ecological catastrophe, depicting a possible future in which an alliance between human beings and animals is feasible. The potential of speculative fiction is taken up again by Daniela Fargione in her examination of counter-hegemonic visions in some short stories by Caribbean-Canadian writer Nalo Hopkinson. Angela Buono's paper leads us to Quebec and to the future of humanity envisioned in the novels by Marie-Claire Blais. We then move to St. John's, Newfoundland, thanks to Ewelina Feldman-Kołodziejuk on Megan Gail Coles debut novel read through the lens of emotional geography. The next paper by Francesca Paraboschi shifts back to Quebec and to the themes which characterize Jacques Benoit's works in time. Grigorios Iliopoulos gives as an intriguing insight on Soviet and Jewish identities through David Bezmozgis' short story collections.

Quebec artist Danièle LeBlanc introduces the final section of these collected essays, which includes studies on the theme *Arts, re-writing, theatre, film*. The Quebec artist retraces her personal experience of exploring transdisciplinarity – from visual arts to directing and writing – and reflects on the impact of these experiences on her pedagogical practice. Literary rewriting is at the heart of Andrea Fanton's contribution, which examines how Camille de Cussac reworked a Perraultian tale by setting it in Montreal and using Québécois French. Sabrina Francesconi

## Introduction

looks at film and television adaptations of Alice Munro's works, and in particular the Iranian Mani Haghighi's film *Canaan*. Petr Kylaoušek then examines the question of identity modelling, analyzing the works of several Amerindian authors and their relationship with mainstream Quebec literature. In the last two papers, attention turns to the translation process, with Eleonora Sasso's essay examining audiovisual translation strategies in Indigenous animated films produced by the National Film Board, and Manuela Francia's, who looks at the musical *Anne of Green Gables* to put forward a proposal for the translation and subtitling into Italian of some of the songs with the aim of respecting the multimodal cohesion of the work.

HISTOIRE, MIGRATION, DROIT  
HISTORY, MIGRATION, LAW

# A Half Century of Canada: A Memoir on Research and Knowledge

*Luca Codignola*

*Abstract:* The author recalls the origins of his early interest in Canada, nurtured in the 1960s by the reading of historian Francis Parkman and novelist Kenneth Roberts, and his first visit to the Canadian continent, from Toronto to Victoria, in 1969. He later studied at the University of Toronto, where the Canadian historian, William J. Eccles, was his mentor, and taught in Italy at the universities of Pisa and Genoa, and in Canada in several universities, in a west-to-east itinerary that took him from Toronto all the way to Moncton and Halifax, via the Province of Québec, where he had first direct experience of Québec nationalism in the 1970s. As a historian, he is better known as a scholar of the early history of Catholic church in North America. In this memoir, the author also emphasizes the role played by chance in his lengthy career as an international Canadianist.

I wish to begin this memoir by thanking the current President of the Italian Association of Canadian Studies, Oriana Palusci, for her invitation to speak about my experience as a Canadianist in front of an association that I helped found in Urbino, in 1979, forty-four years ago, together with the eminent Americanist, Professor Alfredo Rizzardi. Although 1979 is the official date of the birth of the Association, the first two conferences of Canadian studies had already taken place, in Bologna and Pisa, in the two previous years. I also wish to thank Luigi Bruti-Liberati, with whom I shared a passion for Canada for many years<sup>1</sup>. We

<sup>1</sup> Università di Bologna, Seminar of Canadian Studies (Bologna, 5-8 February 1977); Università di Pisa, Secondo Convegno di Studi Canades (Pisa, 10-12 March 1978); Università di Urbino, 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of Canadian Studies (Urbino,

co-authored *Storia del Canada*, a first in Italy, a book that was first published by Bompiani in 1999 and republished in 2018. Of course I also thank the Government of Canada, which, through its Embassy in Rome, has always given its support to all my initiatives<sup>2</sup>, ever since, immediately after graduation, I applied for a scholarship to go and study at the University of Toronto under the guidance of the great historian of New France, Dr William J. Eccles. Frankly, it was not difficult to obtain that scholarship, on which my whole life as a Canadianist then depended. I seem to recall that at the time of my application, in 1972, the number of scholarships was greater than the number of applications submitted to the Ministry of External Affairs. Furthermore, my application was the only one in the field of the humanities<sup>3</sup>.

I feel somehow awkward and embarrassed to speak about my own personal experience, that of an old-timer who has lived through the birth of Canadian studies in Italy, their major Italian and global developments in the 1980s and 1990s, and the more sedate years that followed. In 2012, the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper closed the generous “Understanding Canada” programme, thus cutting off support for international Canadianist scholars. Allegedly, in a general context of budget reductions, it was high time to verify whether the seed that it had implanted through its generous financial assistance over three decades (1979-2012) had indeed produced a generation of Canadianists who were able to carry on their own research and interest in Canada independently<sup>4</sup>. In this regard, as an active par-

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no, 30 March-1 April 1979). These conferences were later officially recognized as the first three international conferences of the Italian Association for Canadian Studies.

<sup>2</sup> I wish to recognize the special assistance of David G.H. Anido, Christopher Antis, Albert Dumas, Antonio Gonizzi, Pierre Granger, Franca Mazzolani, Chiara Mignini, and Gilbert Reid, in their various capacities.

<sup>3</sup> Canada Council Scholarship, University of Toronto, School of Graduate Studies, Department of History, MA Programme, Toronto, Ont., Canada (1 September 1973-31 August 1974). The University of Toronto offered me to remain for a full PhD programme, a most generous offer that, at the time, I had to decline. In those years, Italian universities did not offer any PhD programme. Years later (23 May 2003), Saint Mary’s University (Halifax) awarded me an honorary DLitt degree, the equivalent of a PhD title.

<sup>4</sup> For a discursive yet scholarly assessment of the negative consequences of the end of Canadian Studies programmes, see Coates 2015. Incidentally, in 2025

ticipant in that programme, my own experience could be of some interest to this younger audience. Furthermore, in the past half a century or so, Canada changed before my very eyes. As a historian, I am aware of the fact that changes are normally detected by later historians, but not perceived by contemporaries. But in our times changes have taken place so rapidly, that even I, a “contemporary”, has seen the consequences of the passing of time.

Let me start at the beginning, with a book I picked up by chance in a Cambridge, England, bookshop in the Fall of 1968. It was a collection of writings by Francis Parkman, a nineteenth-century American historian, devoted to the conflict between France and England in North America, a theme that had fascinated me ever since a friend, in my younger days, had handed me an Italian translation of *Northwest Passage*, the novel by the American writer Kenneth Roberts, originally published in 1937<sup>5</sup>. Both Parkman and Roberts made for fascinating reading and dealt with themes that would have accompanied me throughout my life. Equally by chance, in 1969, I was invited to speak about the student movement in Italy at a conference organized by the student union of Glendon College of York University. The conference was aptly titled “The Year of the Barricade”<sup>6</sup>. When I write “by chance”, I do mean it. In fact, Glendon College’s first selection had been Luigi Bobbio, then a leader of the Turin’s student movement, but he was too much involved in politics and passed on the invitation to a fellow student, the future English scholar Paolo Bertinetti, who, for his part, had just accepted a job and could not leave. When my turn came, I accepted at once. Not only that, but the Glendon College student union fully funded a lecture tour

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Coates was elected as President of the Canadian Historical Association. For an “internal” assessment of the closing of the “Understanding Canada” programme, see Graham 2023.

<sup>5</sup> See Parkman 1968. This was a condensed version of Parkman’s *France and England in North America*, the collective title of the several books (published 1851-92) that the American historian had devoted to the conflict between those two European powers in North America. Roberts’ novel later inspired *Northwest Passage*, the movie directed by King Vidor in 1940 featuring the American actor Spencer Tracy. The novel was translated into Italian by Elio Vittorini (1939). My own copy, in two volumes, was dated 1962.

<sup>6</sup> The main organizers were Christopher Wilson and Peter Tabuns, the latter a member of the Provincial Parliament of Ontario since 2006, representing the New Democratic Party.

which took me to Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, during which, incidentally, I was shadowed by Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers who assessed the possible consequences of my revolutionary message. That was for me a total immersion in the British Canada of the 1960s.

Those times were not entirely peaceful. Less than a year later, at the time of the October Crisis of 1970 – started off by the kidnapping and assassination of Pierre Laporte, a Québec minister, by the Front de Libération du Québec – when a journalist asked Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau how far he would go with his repressive measures, he responded with a dry “Just watch me” (13 October 1970). Two days later, Trudeau implemented the *War Measures Act*, which allowed for the preventive arrest of a large number of Québec independentists<sup>7</sup>.

Indeed, although representatives of these Québec dissidents were present at the Glendon College conference, my grand tour west of Toronto had not made me understand the extent of Québec’s independentist sentiment. It was only much later, during the summer of 1977, that an extended visit to Montréal gave me a first-hand feel of its real significance. My hosts of rue St.-Denis, who had generously welcomed me, pretended not to understand me when I spoke to them in English, and insisted that I speak to them in the coarse French that I had learned at school (an insistence – incidentally – later reiterated by my friends and colleagues Paul-André Linteau, Fernand Harvey, and Yvan Lamonde among others, which allowed me a few years later to give regular courses at Université Laval). The constitutional debate was one of the highlights of my Canadian and Québec experience in the 1980s and 1990s, with the two referendum of 1980 and 1995, the repatriation of the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982, and the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords respectively of 1987 and 1992.

Still on the subject of Quebec independence, I would like to point out that the only negative review – a very negative one – of the *Storia del Canada* that I wrote with Brutti-Liberati, was precisely that of an early independentist, Lucia Ferretti (2000),

<sup>7</sup> The *War Measures Act* was a federal law that dated back to 22 August 1914. It was applied to the Province of Quebec on 15 October 1970.

who accused us of “bonententisme”, that is, of having espoused a logic of compromise between the two parties – the federal and the provincial – as opposed to a hard and militant attitude of the sort exemplified by the Québec prime ministers René Lévesque and Jacques Parizeau. Evidently the author of the review had not read the book, which actually affirmed the constitutionally recognized right of the Province of Québec to separate, albeit under certain conditions. However, it is certainly true that I personally – and here I am not speaking for my co-author – have always had great sympathy for the independence movement, but I believed – and I still believe – that Québec would have obtained the same results without the need for any traumatic separation – which I believe is a development that actually took place in later years.

In fact, one feature that I have identified in the history of Canada, from its origins to the present day, and which distinguishes that country from any other country of European origin, the United States first and foremost, is the absence of rapid and profound traumas. Canada has never had a major Indian war, and European penetration into the continent occurred in a substantially peaceful and shared way. The British Conquest of Canada of 1760 was indeed a traumatic event caused by international war, but the trauma was absorbed in a relatively short time. The massacres of the French Revolution, of which the Rebellions of 1837-8 were not even distant relatives, were avoided. Indian and African slavery was a phenomenon of minor significance. Canada’s independence from Great Britain occurred gradually and did not require any revolution or civil war. Canada has always been on the right side during the two global wars of the twentieth century and the Cold War that followed. Sure, as I read in a *Globe and Mail* editorial (2023), “Thirty years ago, Canada could rightly be thought of as one of the most prosperous countries in the world... That’s the past. The present and future look to be a great deal less pleasant: Canada is not just losing ground relative to other countries but there is an increasing likelihood of an outright decline in living standards”.

Indeed, during my student years at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s, life was better, or, at least, much easier. The John P. Robarts Library – or Fort Book as it was nicknamed after its brutalist appearance – had just been inaugurated (30 July 1973),

and was a jewel of efficiency<sup>8</sup>. Housing was available and affordable, even in The Annex, and thanks to the very generous unemployment benefit system (which was later abolished on those terms), my peers happily quit their jobs whenever they felt like it and found another one just for the asking after their three-month required interlude. The TTC (the acronym for the Toronto Transit Commission, i.e., the public transportation system, for those unfamiliar with Toronto) was spick and span, and there was no need for cameras to guard against petty crime (incidentally, for the sake of linguistic equidistance, a must for anyone dealing with Canada, *spick and span* is a slang expression used by both Anglophones and Québécois). In short, it is true that Canada is no longer what it used to be, but which country in the Western world can claim to be immune to our generalized socio-economic decline?

If anything, what today strikes me most, in a negative sense, is a prevailing political correctness that makes community identities prevail over individual rights, together with that sense of self-censorship that imposes equidistance by law and forces one to shut his or her mouth, to avoid offending. Never would today a current Prime Minister such as Justin Trudeau confront a journalist by telling him to his face “Just watch me”, and then proceed to action two days later, as his father Pierre Elliott Trudeau did half a century ago. Here is my own personal case. During my 1969 “Year of the Barricade” lecture tour around Canada I was indeed shadowed by RCMP personnel, but no one ever bothered me and the federal government did not refuse to grant me a student visa when I applied in 1973. Three decades later, times had indeed changed. From 2002 to 2006, upon the invitation of its director, poet and manager Corrado Paina, I had written several editorials for a non-scientific, but widely circulated, Toronto magazine published by the Italian Chamber of Commerce of Ontario. That collaboration stopped abruptly when, on 14 November 2005, the editor refused to publish my latest contribution unless I deleted the following sentence, dealing with the sixteenth-century Tuscan-French explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano: “Aboriginal peoples used fire to destroy millions of trees well before their

<sup>8</sup> The design project was conceived by Toronto-based Mathers & Haldenby Architects in consultation with New York’s Warner, Burns, Toan & Lunde.

meeting with Europeans, just as they wasted hundreds of thousands of buffaloes in the prairies... Luckily for the human race, the aboriginal peoples were not numerous enough to cause irreparable damage onto our one and only globe<sup>9</sup>. The 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's five-volume report was still ten years away, but evidently certain things could only be thought, but not said or least of all written long before then.

But let us get back to the negative review of our *Storia del Canada*, which I mentioned earlier. According to Ferretti, my own and Bruti-Liberati's "bonotentisme" was directly linked to the generous funding associated with the programme for the diffusion of Canadian studies in the world, with which the federal government intended to create an atmosphere of international consensus for its policies among the intellectual and academic elites, and, consequently, among the diplomatic and commercial elites. Indeed, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the federal government (followed closely by the national government of Québec) contributed to the creation of Canadian studies associations in all European countries, subsequently extending the programme to Asia (primarily Japan, China and India) and later to other countries. Starting in 1979, the federal government also contributed to the creation of the International Council for Canadian Studies<sup>10</sup>, to which it had delegated the management of a large number of cultural programmes, including scholarships for study abroad<sup>11</sup>. As a Canadianist from the very beginning, I personally found myself at the centre of these programmes, so much so that I was elected president of the International Council in 1985 and, subsequent-

<sup>9</sup> All the seventeen articles that I had written for *Italy Canada Trade*, later renamed *Partners, Italy & Canada*, between 2002 and 2006 were later republished in Codignola 2008, including the latest article that, at the time, had been refused. The "hundreds of thousands of buffaloes" had perhaps been an exaggeration, but certainly not the reason of the censorship.

<sup>10</sup> For a history of the International Council for Canadian Studies, see Codignola 1992, 2011; Jaumain 2006.

<sup>11</sup> The official creation of the International Council for Canadian Studies took place at the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, "Perspectives on Canada", of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS) (Washington, DC, 28-30 September 1979). The meeting of a number of international Canadianists had been sponsored by Canada's Department of External Affairs and mainly engineered by Richard G. Seaborn, who was in charge of implementing the academic side of the "Understanding Canada" programme.

ly, president of the Italian Association in 1988, president of the Association internationale des études acadiennes in 2004, and a member of the board of directors of the Association internationale des études québécoises in 2005.

To my knowledge, the academic division of Canada's Department of External Affairs (later commonly referred to as Global Affairs Canada), consisting of devoted and intelligent officials (Richard G. Seaborn, Brian G. Long, and Jean Labrie *in primis*) never directly interfered in the activities of the International Council or of the national associations. Its only concern was to raise them from a prevalent emphasis on the humanities in favour of the social sciences, such as economics, sociology, business studies, and political science. Indeed, it was a fact that some Canadianists had read Margaret Atwood, Jean Ethier-Blais, or Frank Paci, but could not tell the name of the Canadian prime minister of their day or the difference between Saint John, New Brunswick, and St. John's, Newfoundland. These External Affairs officials also favoured the use of the term "Canadianist" among the members of the various associations and, implicitly, described "Canadian Studies" as a discipline in itself, as opposed to the more generic academic specialist in his or her own discipline – say, "an historian who also has a major interest in Canada".

Personally, I have always considered Canadian studies a field of research that was distinct from others for its historical, geographical, linguistic, and cultural connotation and that allowed fruitful multidisciplinary exchanges between specialists from different areas, but not a discipline scientifically characterized by its own methodology. In short, I consider myself first and foremost a historian; I also apply my work to a geographical-cultural field that corresponds to Canada, and, to the best of my ability, I take advantage of the results of the research carried out by other specialists (literary critics, geographers, economists, etc.), better to understand the context of my own research.

When in 1974 I left the University of Toronto, where I had studied the history of the conflict between France and England in North America during the Old Regime, my mentor, Dr Eccles, suggested that I went to Paris and follow the research path he had walked immediately after World War II. In those ardent days of rising Québec nationalism, the debate on the Seven years' War

and the subsequent conquest of Canada by the British (1760) had taken such an ideological turn, that he thought it was high time to go back to the archives and look for documentary evidence. In his words, “the historian is concerned with the past for its own sake, and only incidentally with what developed out of it”. He also added that the historian “has to strive to be detached from the present and its claims” (Eccles 1972: i-ii). However, for personal reasons I did not go to Paris, but to Rome, where I had no other choice but to immerse myself in the archives of the Holy See<sup>12</sup>. Several historians, lay and ecclesiastic, had made use of some of them, especially when French America was considered unique for the essential role played by the Catholic Church in the early days of French expansion. However, my predecessors had always been limited by their distance from the Roman archives and the brevity of their stays in the Eternal City. Since I then resided in Rome, I could embark in a more systematic search for North American documents, indeed thousands of them, mostly still unknown or underused.

In 1976-7, after some initial soundings into the archives of the Sacred Congregation “de Propaganda Fide”, mainly devoted to the second half of the eighteenth century, I decided to verify whether I was on the right track by addressing the international community of scholars. The lessons I learned then deeply influenced my subsequent life as a historian, and, indeed, as a Canadianist. First, I submitted an article for publication in *Archivaria*, the journal of the newly-founded Association of Canadian Archivists. Secondly, after more systematic research, I confronted the discerning audience of the Canadian Historical Association with a paper that emphasized the importance of the Roman archives<sup>13</sup>. This elicited the interest of the Manuscript Division of the Public Archives of Canada (present-day Library Archives Canada),

<sup>12</sup> My first visit to the Vatican Secret Archives (now Vatican Apostolic Archives), my initial door to the Holy See archives, took place on 27 January 1975. I have also dealt with my early approaches to the Holy See archives in Codignola 1991 and 2024.

<sup>13</sup> To *Archivaria*, I submitted the translation into English of a chapter that I had published in Italian (Codignola 1976). At the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association (Fredericton, NB, 2-5 June 1977), I presented a paper titled “The Value of the ‘Propaganda Fide’ Archives for North American History, 1622-1799”.

that in the fall of that year signed me as part of project aiming at finding and describing all documents of North American interest – and specifically Canadian – preserved in the Roman archives, starting with the Propaganda archives<sup>14</sup>. Thanks to the initiative of Pierre Hurtubise, OMI, the Vatican project was later extended to Université Saint-Paul and involved a team of Canadian and Italian researchers<sup>15</sup>. For the following thirteen years or so, my collaboration with the Public Archives of Canada allowed me to make use of all the resources they generously made available to me and constantly to verify my own research path with competent archivists and historians in Canada, the United States, France, Ireland, and Great Britain. Meanwhile, I was able to familiarize myself with a primary documentation of which in 1975 I barely knew the existence, and to substantiate Dr Eccles's *dictum*, that is, “to judge men and their action by the values of their own time” (Eccles 1972: i-ii).

Were these – and are they – Canadian studies? Certainly not, if we meant “Canadian studies” as a discipline in its own right in the strict sense. But certainly yes, if we applied the definition of “Canadian studies” to a broader research field, to which each researcher brings the methodological contribution of his or her

<sup>14</sup> At the time, the Head of the Manuscript Division was Robert S. Gordon. I was to report to him through Victorin Chabot. In 1991 the overall result of my work was published in book form as Codignola 1991a, including nineteen microfiches, to be used in conjunction with Finding Aid no. 1186, the latter only available on site at the Public Archives of Canada. The chronological limits of my work were later extended to 1846.

<sup>15</sup> The Université Saint-Paul, under the guidance of Pierre Hurtubise, OMI (Université Saint-Paul) and Roberto Perin (York University), took charge of the period after 1846, employing other researchers: Monique Benoit, Bruti-Liberati, Giovanni Pizzorusso, Matteo Sanfilippo, Gabriele P. Scardellato, and Nicoletta Serio. The role of Perin, later a professor of history at York University, must be singled out. He had pioneered Canadian research in the Propaganda archives for his PhD dissertation, *Bourget and the Dream of a Free Church in Quebec, 1862-1868*, University of Ottawa, 1975, which was later at the origin of his main books (1990 and 2008). His 1975 dissertation was directed by historian Pierre Savard, who also happened to be the first president of the International Council for Canadian Studies (1983-85), immediately after James E. Page. Perin then returned to Rome as director of the Canadian Academic Centre in Italy (1983-85). The overall result of the Vatican project was later made available on line. On the scholarly results produced by this team, see Harvey and Hurtubise 1999 (with contributions by Pizzorusso and Sanfilippo).

## Notices sur les auteurs / Notes on Contributors

*Francesco Attruia* enseigne la langue et la linguistique françaises à l'Université de Pise. Ses recherches portent sur la variation du français en Amérique du Nord et sur l'analyse des discours littéraires et du Web 2.0. Il co-dirige la collection « Francophonies itinérantes » chez Pisa University Press, et coordonne un projet de recherche sur les idéologies linguistiques et les littératures minoritaires.

*Cristina Brancaglion* enseigne les cours de Langue et de Linguistique françaises au Département de Langues et littératures étrangères de l'Université de Milan. Ses recherches portent sur la variation linguistique en France et dans les espaces francophones, en particulier dans le domaine canadien, étudié à travers des sources lexicographiques et littéraires ou des documents issus de la presse et des médias sociaux.

*Angela Buono* enseigne les littératures francophones à l'Université de Naples "L'Orientale". Spécialiste de la littérature franco-canadienne et québécoise, elle a fait partie du Conseil de Direction de l'Association Italienne d'Études Canadiennes de 2011 à 2021. Elle a publié de nombreux articles sur l'œuvre de Marie-Claire Blais, de Hédi Bouraoui, sur les écritures migrantes et des Premières Nations du Québec. Ses intérêts de recherche portent actuellement sur les nouvelles approches critiques des littératures émergentes.

*Luca Codignola* is Senior Fellow at the University of Notre Dame and Adjunct Professor at Saint Mary's University (Halifax). In 2016 he was elected to the Royal Society of Canada. He is best known for his work on the Roman Catholic church in the North Atlantic area in the early modern era. He has also written on early European expansion. Among his latest books, see *Colombo e altri navigatori* (2007), *Le Saint-Siège, le Canada et le Québec* (2011), *Little Do We Know: History and Historians of the North*

*Atlantic* (2011), *Guerra d'Indipendenza americana* (2016), *Storia del Canada* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2018, with Luigi Bruti Liberati), and *Blurred Nationalities across the North Atlantic* (2019). He is currently writing a book on the Catholic missionaries in the North American peripheries, 1763-1830.

*Carmen Concilio* is Full professor of Postcolonial Literature at the University of Turin. She is recipient of the Canada-Italy Innovation Award 2021. She is a member of the AISC since 1999 and of ANDA. She has recently published *Imagining Ageing, Representations of Age and Ageing in Anglophone Literatures* (2018); *Covid-19 & Us. Seniors' Letters to the Future* (2019) with AICW Canada; *Trees in Literature and The Arts* (2021), and the Spring 2023 issue of *Italian Canadiana* (with K. Eisenbichler).

*Francesca D'Angelo* is Junior Researcher in English Translation Studies at the Department of Interpretation and Translation at the *Alma Mater Studiorum* University of Bologna (Forlì). Her research project deals with museum communication and accessible communication in English. She is specialised in Third Language Acquisition, translanguaging, cognitive translation, ESPs (legal English), and gender studies.

*Guido D'Elia* is a PhD Student in the Department of History at York University (Toronto, Canada). His research focuses on Italian migration and is particularly interested in ethnic identity formation, transnationalism, and oral history.

*Andrea Fanton* est doctorant en Études linguistiques et littéraires à l'Université d'Udine avec le projet de recherche *Éditions iconotextuelles des contes de Charles Perrault : pour une base de données intermédiaire*, financé avec le soutien du PNRR. Ses intérêts de recherche portent sur les contes de fées classiques et leurs illustrations, sur la sémiotique visuelle, sur l'intermédialité et la multimodalité dans le domaine français et francophone. Il s'intéresse également à la littérature québécoise et aux réécritures des contes de fées classiques dans le Canada francophone.

*Daniela Fargione* is Associate Professor of American Literatures at the University of Turin. She has published extensively on

ecocriticism and environmental humanities (food, migrations, climate change); the interconnections of contemporary American literatures and the other arts; theory and practice of literary translation. In 2023, she was Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer Chair at the University of Pittsburgh (USA).

*Ewelina Feldman-Kołodziejuk*, Ph.D., is assistant professor at the University of Białystok, Poland. Her publications focus on the literary representations of motherhood and literary geography in the North American context. In April – July 2022, she was a Visiting Fellow at The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. Her current research project pertains to the literary representations of Newfoundland.

*Sabrina Francesconi*, Associate Professor of English Linguistics and International Relations Delegate of the Department of Humanities at the University of Trento, is a Scientific Board Member of the Italian Association of Canadian Studies. Her research interests include tourism and heritage discourses, adaptation studies, multimodal genre analysis. Her latest publication is *A Multimodal Stylistic Approach to Screen Adaptations of the Work of Alice Munro* (2023).

*Manuela Francia* is a PhD Candidate in Languages, Literatures and Cultures in Contact at the “G. d’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara, a professional singer-songwriter, a certified EMT singing instructor (Estill Master Trainer) and a graduate in Writing, Arranging, Jazz and Popular Music Singing. Her research fields include musical theatre, discourse analysis, literary and intersemiotic translation, song translation and subtitling.

*Grigorios Iliopoulos* is a PhD Candidate in the Department of American Literature & Culture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He holds a BA in English and an MA in English & American Studies. His interests include Urban, Canadian, and Spatial studies, and North American literature. He has taught at AU-Th and Mediterranean College, Thessaloniki. He was the Stavros Niarchos International Visiting Graduate Scholar at York University, Toronto, Canada.

*Petr Kyloušek* est professeur de littératures romanes à l'Université Masaryk (Brno). Sélection de monographies : *Histoire de la littérature québécoise* (2005), *Imaginaire du roman québécois contemporain* (2006), *Nous-eux-moi : la quête de l'identité dans la littérature et le cinéma canadiens* (2009), *Milan Kundera, ou Que peut la littérature* (2012). *Centers and Peripheries in Romance Literatures of the Americas and Africa* (2024).

*Agostina Latino*, Ph.D. in diritto internazionale, ISPI Senior Associate Research Fellow, è docente di Diritto internazionale, Tutela dei diritti umani e Diritto delle migrazioni presso l'Università di Camerino. Oltre a tenere regolarmente corsi e seminari in varie università italiane e all'estero, nonché in Master e Corsi di Alta Formazione, è altresì autrice di numerose pubblicazioni sui temi dei diritti della persona umana, del diritto internazionale dell'economia, dei rapporti fra ordinamenti.

*Danièle LeBlanc* est née à Montréal. Après une formation universitaire en études françaises et en art dramatique, elle développe une pratique de mise en scène. Elle enseigne le théâtre et la littérature et poursuit son travail de création au cœur de l'écriture dramatique, de la poésie et des arts visuels. Son texte *Ravages* est lauréat du prix Marcel-Dubé de l'Académie des Lettres du Québec, 2022.

*Benoît Melançon* est professeur émérite de littérature française de l'Université de Montréal, essayiste et blogueur (oreillette.com). Dix-huitiémiste de formation, il travaille actuellement sur les questions de langue au Québec. Il a reçu le prix Georges-Émile-Lapalme, la plus haute distinction du gouvernement du Québec en matière de rayonnement et de qualité de la langue française. Plus récent livre paru : *Nos Lumières* (2020).

*Marco Modenesi* enseigne la littérature française et les littératures francophones à l'Université de Milan. Spécialiste de la production littéraire du XIX<sup>e</sup> et du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, il a publié une monographie sur Georges Rodenbach (*Il malinconico incantesimo. La narrative di Georges Rodenbach*, 1996) et plusieurs études concernant d'autres domaines francophones, consacrées notamment au roman québécois et acadien, de l'Afrique subsaharienne (Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Sénégal) et de la Caraïbe.

*Michał Obszyński* est maître de conférences à l'Institut d'études romanes de l'Université de Varsovie. Ses intérêts scientifiques portent sur la littérature francophone du Québec, des Caraïbes et d'Afrique, notamment sur des sujets tels que le discours littéraire francophone, les manifestes et programmes littéraires des espaces francophones ainsi que les déterminants idéologiques de la littérature dans les débats des congrès littéraires et des festivals panafricains de 1945 à nos jours.

*Oriana Palusci*, Professor of English (University of Naples "L'Orientale"), has published extensively on women writers, gender studies, science fiction, travel writing, translation and environmental issues. In the field of Canadian Studies, she has authored essays on contemporary writers, on Italian-Canadian culture and a long essay on the Canadian novel. She has recently edited *Alice Munro and the Anatomy of the Short Story* (2017), *Canada: A Taste of Home* (with Y. De Luca, 2022), *Made in Canada. The Languages of the Media* (with E. Lamberti, 2023), and *The Invention of Italy as an Imaginary Homeland* (with M.C. Seccia, 2024). She is the President of the Italian Association for Canadian Studies.

*Francesca Paraboschi* est maîtresse de conférences à l'Université de Milan ; ses recherches portent sur la littérature française de la deuxième moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et sur les littératures francophones (de l'Afrique subsaharienne, de la Caraïbe et du Québec). Elle est rédactrice en chef de la revue *Ponti/Ponts. Langues, Littératures, Civilisations des Pays francophones* ; elle est l'auteure de plusieurs articles et d'une monographie sur *Troubles visionnaires, regards impitoyables. Masques et masquages chez Jean Lorrain* (2015).

*Vincent Rasmussen* is currently writing his PhD on Canadian Literature at University College, London. He holds degrees from Concordia University, Montreal and the University of Oxford.

*Elena Ravera* est docteure de recherche en Études Humanistes Transculturelles (Université de Bergame) et a consacré une partie de sa thèse de doctorat à l'écriture du corps chez Louise Dupré. Auteure de plusieurs articles portant sur les littératures franco-

phones, surtout en relation aux études de genre, elle est actuellement chercheure postdoctorale à l'Université d'Udine.

*Sara Riccetti* is a doctoral candidate in Studies in English Literatures, Language and Translation in a joint degree program between the University of “La Sapienza” in Rome, Italy, and the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. Her research focuses on the intersection between law and literature in Indigenous drama by contemporary women playwrights from the U.S. and Canada. In 2023, she was awarded the International Council for Canadian Studies Graduate Student Scholarship.

*Eleonora Sasso* is Associate Professor of English at the “G. D’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara. Her research fields include the Pre-Raphaelites, audiovisual and literary translation, cognitive linguistics, sociability, and contemporary Canadian women’s fiction (Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurence). Her latest monograph is entitled *The Pre-Raphaelites and Orientalism: Language and Cognition in Remediations of the East* (2018).

*Giada Silenzi* est doctorante en Sciences linguistiques et littéraires à l'Université d'Udine. Son sujet de thèse porte sur les “relations de captivité” des moniales de Port-Royal, sous la direction d’Alessandra Ferraro. Elle s’intéresse à l’écriture autobiographique des religieuses françaises pendant la Contre-Réforme en France et en Nouvelle-France.

*Héliane Ventura* is professor Emerita at the University of Toulouse-Jean Jaurès. She is agrégée d’anglais, and holds a PhD from York University, Canada. She has written books on Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1998), Alice Munro’s *Dance of the Happy Shades* (2015), Sarah Orne Jewett’s *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (2022) and over a hundred essays or articles on Canadian, American, British, New-Zealander or South African short story writers. Her most recent book is entitled *Alice Munro’s Bestiary A Book of Non-human and Human Animals* (2024).