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Translating Caterina Edwards' The lion's mouth into Italian : an example of cultural translation in practice

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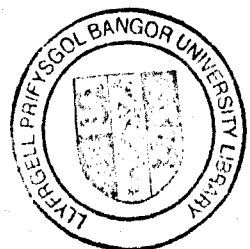
**Translating Caterina Edwards' *The Lion's Mouth* into Italian: An Example of
Cultural Translation in Practice**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD by practice in
Translation Studies

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis investigates the link between migrant writing and translation studies from a practice-led position on the basis of my own Italian translation of Caterina Edwards' novel *The Lion's Mouth* (1982). This literary text, taken as an exemplary model of Anglophone Italian-Canadian literature, is analysed through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural translation (1994). The novel is centred on the migrant experience of the narrator, who translates her Italian past to a Canadian audience and engages in acts of negotiation between her Italian and Canadian cultural identities in order to integrate into her host country. The narration of the intercultural encounters between the Italian migrant narrator and the Canadian host society enacts mechanisms of cultural production, construction of 'self' and 'other', as well as of self-representation in source-text readers.

Translating such hybrid literary texts involves shifts in perspective and expectations as well as new mechanisms of representation. Translation practices become even more complex when migrant literary texts 'travel back' to the narrators'/authors' home country. Through an analysis of the existing Italian translations of Antonio D'Alfonso's *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995) and Nino Ricci's short literary memoirs 'Passage to Canada' (2003), this study also looks at how the translation strategies used, like linguistic homogenisation, are often at variance with the narrators' process of cultural translation and their transcultural identity. The result is a monocultural target text, which remains at odds with the theoretical debates in translation studies and the literary criticism of Italian-Canadian writing in the Italian context. This study shows, by contrast, that cultural translation can shed light on the interlingual translation of literary texts, where reflections on cultural identity, (non)belonging, memory, language and (self-)translation play a crucial role. More specifically, my Italian translation of *The Lion's Mouth* shows how postcolonial translation theories have informed my textual practices and translation strategies in an attempt to reproduce a heterolingual target text, which conveys the narrator's cultural difference. Translation by practice shows how the recreation of a hybrid literary text, which enlivens the narrator's process of cultural translation, also involves readers in a similar act of translation.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to investigate the relationship between translation and migrant writing from a practice-led position, on the basis of my own Italian translation of Caterina Edwards' novel *The Lion's Mouth* (1982), which I present as an exemplary model of the Italian-Canadian literary body. I will analyse this literary text as a form of cultural translation before exploring the link between this theory and translation in practice. The experience of migration is one of the most recurring themes of literary works by Canadian authors with Italian origins, which often feature a strong autobiographical component. The authors' experience of migration from Italy to Canada triggers their shared reflections on memory, cultural identity, language and translation, which make Italian-Canadian literature a fairly coherent literary tradition. Under this view, a number of Italian-Canadian critics pointed out how these writers are involved in a process of translation. This study takes a step further from the simple term 'translation' and aims to show, first of all, how Italian-Canadian literary works can be read as a form of *cultural* translation. The originality of this thesis resides in the fact that it is the first to engage with an Italian-Canadian novel in translation studies both from a theoretical and a practical perspective. My second aim will be to show the complexities of translating the migrant narrators' translational process. Cultural translation was originally theorised in ethnography as an act of describing for readers of one culture how people of another culture interpret the world. It was subsequently introduced in cultural studies by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994) as a form of negotiation performed by migrant subjects when displaced from one cultural community into another by bearing their own culture with them. While both of these theoretical applications of the term have attracted scholars from different disciplines, it is still a highly controversial issue in translation studies. Along with involving power issues, cultural translation has also been criticised for being an abstract concept and having a metaphorical connotation, which has deprived translation of its 'proper' meaning (D'Hulst 1998/2009: 204; Burke 2009: 61). More specifically, it has been accused of creating confusion and overgeneralisation in discussions of translation as well as undermining the specificity of translation studies (Hui 1998/2009: 204). The metaphorical connotation of translation has been seen as a threat to the meaning of the word itself, which risks becoming meaningless (Duarte in Pym 2010). Moreover, the fact that scholars from different disciplines draw on this theory has been seen as a misappropriation, since they do

not seem to refer to translation studies (D'Hulst 2008: 226). Finally, as Anthony Pym pointed out, cultural translation scholars are often suspected of not being familiar with or interested in interlingual translation (2010: 160–1). Against this background, my third aim is to oppose these observations and show instead the close link between cultural translation and interlingual translation through my own Italian translation of *The Lion's Mouth*. While interlingual translation enlivens the complex translational process in which migrant narrators are involved, insights from cultural translation allow translators to resort to more appropriate strategies. More specifically, I will show that denying a metaphorical connotation of the idea of translation would lead translation studies scholars to reject any sort of interdisciplinary work (161). As my theoretical framework will prove, a translation studies approach is impossible without drawing on theories of literary and cultural studies. My practice-led approach will show that cultural translation and interlingual translation are closely linked; that although there is a lack of existing practice-led perspective, cultural translation scholars are not necessarily disinterested in translation by practice and that, as pointed out by Pym, there is no theoretical reason why cultural translation should exclude a closer focus on translation as practice (2010: 160).

Before explaining my methodologies and research questions in more detail, I will provide some clarifications on my use of the term 'Italian-Canadian' and why I define this writing as a transcultural migrant literary body. My adherence to the hyphenated term 'Italian-Canadian' does not aim to be an essentialist or homogenising label for the authors' cultural identity. I have adopted this expression to refer to Canadian authors of Italian origin because it highlights their transcultural identity, which is a crucial point in their writing. In the existing criticism, the definition 'Italian-Canadian' has often been used interchangeably with the non-hyphenated version 'Italian Canadian' and occasionally with 'Italian/Canadian' (see D'Alfonso 1996; Patriarca 2005a).¹ My use of the hyphenated version 'Italian-Canadian' is informed by my interpretation of literary works belonging to this literary body as a prime example of fictional representation of what Bhabha defined cultural hybridity, namely the process of identity formation in a space of translation by the 'Other'.² More specifically, this spelling is in line with Bhabha's idea of 'hybrid

¹ On the (non-)hyphenated spelling of bicultural identities, see Anthony Julian Tamburri (1991).

² In capitalising or not the 'o' of 'other', I adhere faithfully to the Lacanian distinction (1968) used in postcolonial theory between the 'other', the colonised other who is marginalised by imperial discourses and is identified by their difference from the centre, and the 'Other', the 'grand-autre', the great Other, in whose gaze the subject gains identity (Lacan in Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 155). However, the spelling has been

hyphenation', which suggests an identification that is 'neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between*' (1994: 219, original emphasis). It is in the interstitial space of the hyphen that Italian-Canadian authors can question the narratives of binary oppositions and multiculturalism of contemporary Canadian identity discourses. The hyphen is a marker of acts of negotiation – namely of cultural translation – performed by the authors between their Italian past and Canadian present, as well as between their Italian cultural identity and their Canadian one, which is always in transition.

In light of the central role of the migrant experience played in these literary works, I will refer to Italian-Canadian literature as 'migrant writing'. The relationship between migrant writing and translation has already been explored by a number of scholars, who have analysed fictional representations of the migrant experience through a translation studies approach (see for instance Martín Ruano 2003; Larkosh 2006; Polezzi 2006b, 2010; Maher 2007; Gentzler 2008; Wilson 2011a, 2011b; Pas 2013). The link between notions and practices of translation and migration, which might be 'tricky' to establish (Polezzi 2013b: np), has been widely examined also on a more theoretical level by Loredana Polezzi (2006a, 2012a, 2012b, 2013b). Her article 'Translation and Migration' (2012a) has been the starting point for other critics' reflections, which have been collected in 2013 in the form of responses to her input in three issues of the journal *Translation Studies*. Polezzi pointed out how language practices emerging from migrant writing are the result of the authors' act of translation, and how their migration from one country to another is reflected in their texts, which continuously travel between different languages and cultures (2012a: 346–7). Like Polezzi, I will use 'migrant writing' to define a literary system 'directly related to the experience of migration' (2012a: 351). However, unlike her, I will not adopt this term to refer to works 'produced in a host language' (351). The majority of Italian-Canadian literary works is written in English, which is the authors' literary language in most cases.³ Language is one of the driving creative tensions in their texts and identifying their mother tongue is extremely problematic for some of these migrant authors, who constantly travel between at least two languages, English and

often used interchangeably (157), hence when quoting from other critics I will preserve their own habits of spelling 'O/other'.

³ While most Anglophone Italian-Canadian authors write exclusively in English, a number of works have appeared in Italian (see Ardizzi 1982, 1984, 1985a, 1987, 1990; Salvatore 1977; Bertoni Di Giuseppe 2004). These works form what Loriggio called a 'literature of exile', namely a literature written in the language of the authors' home country (1990b: 31). Moreover, some Italian-language works have also been published in Italy (see Moroni Parken 1896; Albani 1958; Maccaferri Randaccio 1979; Corsi 2003; Famà 2013).

Italian.⁴ The presence of Italian in the English-language texts reflects the authors' sense of belonging to Italy – which most of them claim as their 'home' – and their continuous movement back and fro from Italian to Canadian culture. However, for most of these writers defining 'home' is as difficult as identifying their own mother tongue, whilst in both cases the answer is to be found in what Bhabha influentially termed the 'Third Space' (1994), that is 'the space where the cultural frontier is in constant movement' (Carbonell 1996: 94).⁵ In the migrant experience the definition of 'home' is intimately connected with one's own cultural identity (Threadgold 2003: 595) and closely linked to the place occupied by language (Polezzi 2006b: 223). The authors' constant act of travelling between two languages and straddling two cultures is reflected in their fictional – and yet often autobiographical – migrant characters engaging in a process of cultural translation, which takes place 'whenever an alien experience is internalized and rewritten in the culture where that experience is received' (Carbonell 1996: 81). With their characteristic autobiographical component in mind, I would argue that the process of translation in which the fictional characters engage can be read as a reflection of how the authors themselves are involved in a process of translation when writing. In light of the authors' constant negotiation of their transcultural identity and of their constant movement from one cultural context to another, I would argue, further, that the adjective 'migrant' is particularly eloquent in defining Italian-Canadian literature. Contrary to Italian-Canadian critics who used the term '*immigrant*', I will adopt *migrant*, since it reflects my idea of migration not only as the act of leaving one's own homeland for another country, but more broadly as 'migrancy', that is 'not a mere interval between fixed points of departure and arrival, but a mode of being in the world' (King *et al.* 1995: xv).⁶ Despite my use of the term 'migrant writing', for my analysis I rely on sources both by cultural theorists who used the term

⁴ Debates on native and adopted languages are even more complex for those authors speaking not only English and Italian but also French – like Antonio D'Alfonso and Filippo Salvatore – and Italian local languages, like Friulian in Dôre Michelut's and Marisa De Franceschi's case, *ciociaro*, spoken by Gianna Patriarca, Neapolitan – the regional language of Pasquale Verdicchio – and Calabrian in Damiano Pietropaolo's case.

⁵ Bhabha also defined the 'Third Space' as 'in-between space', which has been adopted by a number of scholars (see also Carbonell 1996; Simon 1997: 463; Wolf 2000: 135; 2002: 187; Malena 2003; Saidero 2011: 31). Other critics have used a different terminology, like 'interstitial space' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007; Sanga 2001; Simon 2001) and 'liminal space' (Pratt 1992/2008; Bassnett and Trivedi 1998; Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007; Brisset 2003; Zuccherò 2003; Petterson 1999; Bachman: 2006; Wilson 2011a, 2001b). Paolo Bartoloni adopted the synonym 'interstitial zone' (2003), while Tina Steiner used 'space of liminality' (2009).

⁶ In the North American socio-political context, the term 'migrant' is associated to foreign workers (see for instance Sharma 2009). Several North American critics consider this term a European taxonomy and an exclusionist practice since it hints at a non-integration of the displaced subject (see for instance Tötösy de Zepetnek 2006: 4–6). However, I will not adhere to the use of 'immigrant' because it implies a Canadian perspective, which presents authors as perpetual foreigners instead of Canadians with foreign origins.

'migration' (see for instance Papastergiadis 2000; Parati 2005) and those who adopted 'diaspora' instead (see Cohen 1997; Brah 2006; Gabaccia 2013). As noted by John McLeod, the divide between these terms is not clear-cut (2000: 207). The postcolonial scholar suggested a distinction between migrant and diasporic identities based on whether the experience of migration has been lived in first person or not (207). In line with this differentiation, I will use the term 'diaspora' when analysing the literary works of second-generation migrant authors Antonio D'Alfonso and Nino Ricci (see Chapter 3). I opted for this term because their texts throw light on the concept of diaspora as defined by Robin Cohen, that is, as 'communities of people living together in one country, who 'acknowledge that "the old country" – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions' (1997: ix). However, I do not find the term 'diaspora', which derives from the Greek *dia* (*through*) and *sperein* (*to scatter*), as exhaustively representative of the Italian-Canadian literary body as a whole. Its meaning of 'dispersion from' invokes a point of departure from which the dispersion occurred, a dispersion from 'home', which is a problematic concept in Italian-Canadian literature. As has been interpreted by postcolonial theorists Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, diaspora is a 'movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions' involving a temporary or permanent dispersion and *settlement* (Ashcroft 2000/2007: 61, my emphasis). I would argue that this definition remains at odds with the process of continuous movement in which most Italian-Canadian authors, like Caterina Edwards, are involved. Their act of moving between points of departure and arrival is never complete and does neither lead them 'home' nor does it allow them to 'settle' in their host country. For this reason, I prefer to use the term 'migration', which instead is 'not completed by the arrival of an individual in a foreign place' and invokes more effectively concepts of mobility and travel (Papastergiadis 2000: 205).

Similar to postcolonial literary texts, which narrate the encounters between colonised and colonisers, works belonging to migrant literature narrate encounters between different cultures, namely between migrants' home and host cultures, thus enacting processes of cultural representation.⁷ In this light, migrant literature has been defined as 'cross-cultural' (Besemeres 1998; Pym 2010; Pas 2013), 'intercultural' (Polezzi 2001;

⁷ In using the term 'cultural representation,' I engage with Kate Sturge's definition as a mechanism through which ethnographers and translators write about a culture to their domestic audience and through which they report the others' words in the language of that audience (2007: 1).

Steiner 2009) and ‘transcultural’ (Rama 1982; Sanga 2001; Simon 2001; Trabelsi 2003; Faquir 2004; Pan 2004; Steiner 2009), which has also been widely used in the Canadian context (see Tassinari 1985; Keefer 1996; De Luca 2009a, 2010c, 2013a; Saidero 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a). While ‘crosscultural’ seems to foreground a one-dimensional movement – the act of crossing boundaries and going across from one language to another – ‘intercultural’ focuses on a process of fertilisation from both the source and the target languages and cultures (Schäffner and Adab 2001b: 167–8). In view of the importance of the mechanisms of cultural production enacted by the encounters between Italian migrant characters and Canadian host society in Italian-Canadian literary works, I will use the term ‘intercultural’ to refer to the encounters between Italian migrants and Canadian natives, while I will adopt ‘transcultural’ to define the Italian-Canadian literary body as a whole, since it places emphasis on the author’s movement back and fro from one culture to another.⁸ The term ‘transcultural’ was coined in sociology by Fernando Ortiz (1978) and was later introduced in literary studies by Angel Rama (1982), as well as in cultural studies by Mary Louise Pratt in her seminal study *Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992/2008). Pratt used the term ‘transculturation’ as ‘a phenomenon of the contact zone’ and explained that contact zones are ‘social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination’ (7). Her theorisation was a model for the analysis of specific postcolonial scenarios in which language and cultural politics are closely linked (Polezzi 1998/2009: 177). Drawing on Pratt’s definition, ‘transculturation’ has been adopted in postcolonial studies as ‘the reciprocal influences of modes of representation and cultural practices of various kinds’ (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 213). On a more literary level, Ukrainian-Canadian writer Janice Kulyk Keefer used the term ‘transculturalism’ to refer to a discourse, which includes literary works categorised as ‘ethnic’/‘immigrant’/‘native’/‘visible minority’, namely any narrating of an encounter between different cultures (1996: 59; see also 1991: 14).⁹ I find the term ‘transcultural’ suitable not only to define Italian-Canadian literature but also the authors’ cultural identity, since the prefix *trans-* is reminiscent of the act of ‘carrying across’. It therefore hints at how the authors’ cultural identity is carried across from one culture to another similarly to

⁸ In using the term ‘cultural production’, I engage with Polezzi’s definition as a ‘contested space in which images of migration [...] and practices of translation as self or hetero-definition, are repeatedly played out’ (2012a: 352).

⁹ This term was also endorsed by Nino Ricci, who saw it as aptly conveying the idea of a culture that ‘includes rather than ghettoizes’ (1992/2003e: 134). It was criticised instead by D’Alfonso since he found it ‘too weak’ to be used for the ‘understanding of ethnicity’ (1996: 177).

how a text is carried across from one language to another when translated. My interpretation of this adjective engages with postcolonial translation scholar Anne Malena's observation that migrant subjects are in movement from one country to another much like texts move from one language to another (2003).

The (fictional) intercultural encounters narrated in Italian-Canadian literary works are not the only thematic feature that they share with postcolonial texts. Just as postcolonial authors rewrite the history of their home countries and their position in the context of a Western canon, Italian-Canadian writers narrate their migrant past in their new place for the audience of their host country. In both cases, they are involved in a process of cultural translation. Moreover, they show how they are subject to an exotic representation from the dominant culture, which sees them as the 'other'. They are, therefore, victims of the oppositional model set up by the traditional binaries 'centre'/'margin' and 'self'/'other'. While in the postcolonial context 'self' and 'other' are represented by 'coloniser' and 'colonised', in the migrant framework this dichotomy is embodied by 'native' and 'migrant'. As noted by Polezzi, although not all migrant writing is inscribed within postcolonial literature, these categories often overlap (2012a: 351). Whether Canada is postcolonial or not is still a controversial issue as is clear from the essays published in Laura Moss' collection *Is Canada Postcolonial?* (2003a). Although Canadian literature has often been catalogued as postcolonial (see for instance Ashcroft *et al.* 1989/2004: 2; McLeod 2000: 2), Moss argued that it has too often been omitted from discussions of postcolonialism as Canada is seen considerably different from most of the other former colonies in terms of history, relationships with the imperial power, social and political environments and relationships to globalisation (2003b: 2). Although several critics opposed the reading of Canadian literature as postcolonial (see for instance Williams and Chrisman 1994; Weaver 2000; Ramray 2003; Mukherjee in Moss 2003b), I draw on theories of postcolonial studies when analysing Italian-Canadian literary works. Despite the self-evident past of Canada as a British and French colony, I will not use this term to refer to the historical period following that of colonialism. By contrast, I interpret it as 'forms of *representations, reading practices and values*' (McLeod 2000: 5, emphasis in the original). I engage with the term 'postcolonialism' as encompassing 'the ways of thinking and modes of behaviour in the "new" states, which are partly a result of independence' (Wolf 2000: 127). My postcolonial approach is not based on the imperial/colonial divide and I will not see Anglophone Canada as postcolonial in reference to its relationship with

the former British Empire but in relation to its status of a multicultural country characterised by cultural diversity, where power relationships between natives and migrants are enacted. Hence, my choice not to use the hyphenated form ‘post-colonialism’.¹⁰ Moreover, both postcolonial and Canadian literatures deal with issues like emergent nationalisms within a nation and between nations, multiculturalism and ‘englishes’ versus Standard English (Moss 2003b: 4). An approach to Italian-Canadian literature with postcolonial insights has already been adopted by Enoch Padolsky (1996a) and Jim Zucchero (2003).

My practice-led research will demonstrate how my engagement with postcolonial (translation) theories has resulted in a much more conscious way of translating a hybrid literary text like *The Lion’s Mouth*, and through an approach which differs from the one adopted by translators of the existing Italian translations of Italian-Canadian literary works. This practice-led thesis therefore aims to show how research can lead to new understandings about practice. Moreover, once published, my translation also aims to act as the basis of the contribution to knowledge, since it sheds light on new translation strategies that could be applied to similar hybrid texts. More specifically, the strategies I have used in my translation aim to shed light on the following theoretical questions:

- If a hybrid text like *The Lion’s Mouth* is in some sense already a translation – namely a product of the encounter of two languages and two cultures – how can the interlingual translation recreate the tensions that are part of the original?
- Which kinds of changes in content, presentation and perspective take place when the novel ‘travels back’ to the Italian context? How is it possible to retain the Italian-Canadian narrator’s double perspective and her description of Italy through a foreign gaze?
- How is it possible to retain the migrant narrator’s cultural difference? Which translation strategies are necessary in order to prevent the unfamiliar ‘other’ from becoming familiar when she is brought back home? How is it possible to prevent the Italian ‘untranslated words’ signalling otherness in the source text from being read as familiar signs of sameness by the Italian target audience?

¹⁰ The hyphenated form ‘post-colonialism’ places emphasis on the ‘discursive and material effects of the historical ‘fact of colonialism, the ‘historically and culturally grounded nature of the experience it represents’ and the ‘materiality of political oppression’ (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989/2004: 198). The non-hyphenated version ‘postcolonialism’, instead, highlights the cultural difference and marginality triggered by it. However, when quoting from other critics, I will preserve their own habits of spelling.

- How is it possible to acknowledge the pervasive presence of heterolingualism and make the Italian narrator's process of translation visible when the embedded Italian language in *The Lion's Mouth* also happens to be the target language?
- How is it possible to involve Italian target-text readers in a continuous translation from Italian into English and let them participate in the narrator's process of cultural translation?

As pointed out by translation studies critic Ovidio Carbonell, the lack of a 'discursive "micrological" dimension' represents a limit for cultural translation theory but at the same time without a 'broad "macrological" dimension' textual approaches remain limited and are regarded 'with suspicion' or even 'ignored' by most cultural theorists (2006: 47). Drawing on this observation, I will examine *The Lion's Mouth* in the broader context of Anglophone Italian-Canadian literature before proposing my own translation, *La bocca di leone*, as an example of how translation in practice can be enhanced by a critical engagement with the concept of cultural translation.

In Chapter 1, I will provide the theoretical framework for my analysis of Italian-Canadian literature and for my approach to translation. I will review critical debates on the concepts of cultural translation and hybridity, which are paramount for my proposed translation of *The Lion's Mouth*. I will subsequently explain how Italian-Canadian literary works can be read as significant examples of cultural translation. In Chapter 2, I will offer a critical review of Italian-Canadian literature and map out the main critical debates on its status and position in the Canadian literary scenario. I will examine the shared traits within this rather coherent literary tradition, including the autobiographical component, the tendency towards self-translation, reflections on cultural identity, language and translation. In Chapter 3, I will draw a parallel and investigate the visibility of this literature in the Italian context. I will point out the crucial role played by interlingual translation in representing this literary body and examine the existing translation of two literary works: Ricci's short memoirs 'Passage to Canada' (2002/2003c) and D'Alfonso's novel *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995/2000). Through an analysis of the translators' strategies, I will point out the problematic issues involved when translating hybrid texts 'back' into the language of the narrators' cultural origins. The last two chapters of this thesis will focus on my main case study of Edwards' *The Lion's Mouth*. In Chapter 4, I will show how cultural translation plays a crucial role in this semi-autobiographical novel, which features an extensive use of metalinguistic reflections and explores the themes of hybrid cultural

identity and memory. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will examine a selection of passages from *The Lion's Mouth* together with my own Italian translation to show how interlingual translation can shed light on *cultural* translation. I will provide my explanations and rationale for choosing among different translation practices and forms of compensation. I will explain how the final aim of my translation practice is to highlight the narrator's transcultural identity, the process of cultural translation in which she is involved and, as a consequence, the novel's cultural hybridity.

CHAPTER 1

Cultural Translation and Hybridity: Debates and Applications

In this chapter, I will provide the theoretical background for my analysis of Italian-Canadian literature and for my approach to translation. I will review critical debates on cultural translation and hybridity, which are paramount for my proposed translation of *The Lion's Mouth*. I will illustrate how cultural translation is reflected not only at a thematic level but also at a textual one through the presence of foreign linguistic elements, which make the texts 'heterolingual' (Grutman 2006). I will review theorists' and critics' observations on the issues involved in translating hybrid and heterolingual literary texts, which share thematic and linguistic features with *The Lion's Mouth*. I will finally explain how Italian-Canadian works – and more specifically *The Lion's Mouth* – can be read and translated as a significant example of cultural translation.

The theory of cultural translation is a relatively recent one in translation studies. It firstly appeared in an entry of the second edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* in 2009 (see Sturge 2009: 67–70) and in *The Handbook of Translation Studies* in 2012 (see Conway 2012a: 21–5), in which Kate Sturge and Kyle Conway traced the debates around it. As noted by Conway, both ethnographers and cultural theorists have explained the use of 'cultural translation' by referring to the etymological origin of *translation*, namely *translatus* – the Latin past participle of *transferre*, meaning *to carry across*. Moreover, he pointed out that while in ethnography *culture* is 'carried across' to readers of a different culture in a textual form, in cultural studies *people* are 'carried across' from one country into another (2012a: 21). He finally summarised their difference by associating the first form of cultural translation with 'translation as rewriting' while the second one with 'translation as transposition' (21). The theory of cultural translation as rewriting a culture has posed one of the most enduring and heated challenges in cultural and translation studies, since it might involve power issues. This complex discursive practice, which is based on acts of representation, may entail the construction of stereotypes. The translator takes on authorship and assumes to know a culture well enough to represent it. As a consequence, the cultural 'other' might be objectified and silenced. More specifically, the imbalance of power arises from political inequality between source and target languages. However, I would argue that an overpreoccupation with questions of

power in cases in which it does not apply might limit the potential of cultural translation to explain intercultural encounters.

1.1 A Critical History on Cultural Translation

Cultural translation started to be seen as a form of rewriting by British cultural anthropologists in the 1950s (Asad 1986: 141). Historian Peter Burke (2009) pointed out Edward Evans-Pritchard as one of the first ethnographers who wrote about ‘translation from one culture to another’ and about the skill necessary ‘to translate a foreign culture into the language of one’s own’ (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 81–2). According to ethnographer Talal Asad, however, the earliest example of engagement with cultural translation as rewriting dates back to 1954, when Godfrey Lienhardt used the term ‘translation’ in the sense of ‘modes of thought’: ‘The problem of describing to others how members of a remote tribe think [...] begins to appear largely as one of translation, of making the coherence primitive thought has in the languages it really lives in, as clear as possible in our own’ (Lienhardt 1954: 97). The ethnographic translation he proposed aimed, therefore, to represent the thinking behind language and discursive practices (Sturge 2007: 5). His theorisation, however, has been criticised by Conway, who has argued that ‘if “cultural translation” refers to an attempt to translate an entire system of beliefs and customs – that is, the context itself – then that distinction is lost’ (2012a: 22). Ernest Gellner (1970) solved what Conway has seen as a ‘paradox’ by taking a ‘concept, assertion or doctrine’ as the object of translation rather than the system of beliefs itself (Conway 2012a: 22).

Clifford Geertz (1973) was the first one to see cultures as complex webs of meaning capable of being ‘read’. He suggested that ethnography cannot be equated with the ‘translation of cultures’, since this would mean the transfer of a foreign culture into analogue concepts and would clash with the anthropological endeavour to understand and describe foreign cultures from the perspective of its members (Wolf 2002: 182). If ‘translation of culture’ means the re-framing of meanings from one set of cultural categories to another, the addition of the concept of ‘culture as text’ brings ‘translation of culture’ closer to traditional notions of translation (Sturge 2007: 7). In Geertz’s view, ethnographers have a similar function to that of a writer and translator. They create texts by making use of the rhetorical resources of the receiving language and produce the ‘reality’

of the culture being studied by means of selection, editing and analysis. From the perspective of translation, the translator creates the source text, not only the target text, and the translation itself cannot claim to be an 'accurate and faithful record' of a static 'original' (Sturge 2007: 8). The same approach to ethnography as a writing practice was applied by the authors of the essays included in James Clifford and George E. Marcus' groundbreaking collection *Writing Culture* (1986). Influenced by Geertz, the other book contributors criticised the classical ethnographic tradition and accused it of representing other cultures by translating their realities into ready-made ideological and rhetorical categories belonging to the target culture (Sturge 2007: 8). Moreover, they complained that the personal ethnographer's experience in the field was translated into a written account that seems neutral, objective and timeless (8).

Clifford and Marcus' collection also included Asad's essay 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Cultural Anthropology', one of the pioneering studies on cultural translation. Asad theorised his concept of cultural translation as a matter of 'learning to live another form of life and speak another kind of language', that is life has to be put in a textual form (1986: 149). He focussed on the political and institutional context of cultural translation by discussing the impact of asymmetrical power relations on translations. He advocated Walter Benjamin's theory (1968) that a good translation shows the structure of the source language and therefore made a 'call to transform a language in order to translate the coherence of the original', especially in cases of a relevant asymmetry in the power of the languages involved (Asad 1986: 157).¹¹ He criticised the metaphor of 'translation of cultures', since he saw ethnographer-translators as assuming authority to interpret the natives' acts of communication regardless of their meaning. As he explained, this happens because ethnographers' translations are 'addressed to a very specific audience, which is waiting to read about another mode of life and to manipulate the text it reads according to established rules, not to learn to live a new mode of life' (159). Although Asad did not reject the concept of cultural translation as a whole, he insisted that it must always be approached by being aware of the 'asymmetrical tendencies and pressures in the languages of dominated and dominant societies' (164).

¹¹ As Pym (2010) pointed out, Benjamin's translation strategy was originally theorised by Friedrich Schleiermacher, who suggested that the translator 'bend the language of his translation to accord to the greatest possible extent with the language of the original so as to give as full a sense as possible of the system of ideas inherent in this other language' (1813/2012: 60).

The notion of 'culture as a text' was instead completely discredited by Tim Ingold, who argued that 'to construe the anthropological project in general as one of translation is to assume a world of humanity already parcelled up to discrete cultures, each having a distinctive essence and credited with the power to 'construct' the experience of the people living under its sway' (1994: 229). The critic saw boundaries as deceptive, since they push difference to the periphery and create artificial uniformity within categories. It is this idea of discontinuous bounded groups that create the equally artificial need to translate between them. He argued that boundaries are created by anthropologists who persist in stressing discontinuity, contrasts and hierarchical differences instead of relatedness and unboundedness (Jordan 2002: 99).

Wolfgang Iser (1994) introduced the concept of translation not only in relation to encounters between cultures, but also as the interaction between them. He employed the term 'untranslatability' to refer to cultural difference in order to change the way descriptions are produced (Pym 2010: 154). As he argued, in translation 'foreign culture is not simply subsumed under one's own frame of reference; instead, the very frame is subjected to alterations in order to accommodate what does not fit' (Iser 1994: 5).

The inquiry opened up by ethnographers and anthropologists led to new paths, following Clifford's seminal study *Routes: Travel and Translation* (1997), which he collocates 'on the border between an anthropology in crisis and an emerging transnational cultural studies' (8).¹² He did not present travel as a movement between bounded cultures, but argued that culture itself is the process of travelling and translating. By redefining culture as travel, he privileged cultural contacts and border crossing by 'people in transit' (2) above the understanding of unified cultural entities. He acknowledged notions of flux and in-betweenness rather than fixity and reduced the asymmetries between intercultural alterity.¹³ His concept of 'culture as translation' projected culture as the site of interaction of the components of translational processes and the space, where translation is

¹² Clifford's *Routes* belongs to the trilogy, which includes *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) and *Returns* (2013); the books explore intercultural representations, travels and returns.

¹³ Alterity means 'the state of being other or different; diversity, otherness' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 9). This concept is one of the key points in intercultural encounters narrated in postcolonial studies. The self-identity of the colonising subject is inextricable from the alterity of the colonised 'other', an alterity determined, according to Gayatri Spivak (1985), by an 'othering' process (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 9–10). Spivak theorised the concept of 'othering' as the process by which imperial discourse creates its 'others' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 156). Although 'alterity' and 'otherness' have often been used interchangeably, I will deploy the term 'otherness' because it invokes more efficiently the process of othering to which colonised subjects, travellers and migrants are subject. However, when citing theorists and critics, I will be faithful to their terminology.

conceived as the reciprocal interpenetration of 'self' and 'other' (Wolf 2002: 186). His theorisation of translation as travel has been criticised by Michael Cronin for being a mere metaphor, which is not linked to practice (2000: 103).

The idea of cultural translation developed in ethnography has been adopted by travel writing scholars, who have elaborated the relationship between travel and translation (see Cronin 2000; Polezzi 1998, 2000, 2001, 2006a; Polezzi and Ouditt 2012). This writing contributes to the reciprocity of cultures, namely the way in which travellers mould the identity of the travellee country. In her seminal study *Translating Travel* (2001), Polezzi discussed works by British travellers visiting Italy and by Italian authors travelling to Tibet, like for Giotto Dainelli and Giuseppe Tucci among others. Like ethnography, travel writing is the locus of cultural production and of the construction of 'self' and 'other', of identity and difference (Polezzi 1998: 322; 2001: 4). More specifically, Polezzi explained that the images produced by travel writers for their home audience can act as a positive or negative 'mirror' for the travelled country (2001: 31).¹⁴ She therefore confirmed Pratt's observation that the narratives produced by travel writers have a profound effect on local people and their self-representation (Pratt 1992/2008: 172–97).

Cultural translation has acquired a different meaning in cultural studies with Bhabha's groundbreaking work *The Location of Culture* (1994), where he analysed Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) as a form of cultural translation. Although several critics recognise Bhabha as the theorist of cultural translation in cultural studies (see for instance Pym 2010; Steiner 2009; Ramone 2011; Sanga 2001; Conway 2012a, 2012b), Harish Trivedi pointed out that, in reality, Bhabha's interpretation of cultural translation had already been expressed by postcolonial theorist Tejaswini Niranjana in her book *Siting Translation* (1992), where she used the term 'translation' to denote the colonial power-play between British rulers and Indian subjects (Trivedi 2005/2007: 284). I would argue, however, that Niranjana's use of the term 'translation' can be traced back to the idea of cultural translation, which had already been theorised in ethnography and is different from the one expressed by Bhabha as 'the performative nature of cultural communication' (1994: 228). Through his analysis of *The Satanic Verses*, Bhabha pointed out how migration is a form of translation, which is meant as an existential condition. Cultural

¹⁴ Polezzi uses the expression 'mirror' to discuss the influence of representations in travel writing in line with the image of the 'negative mirror' evoked in Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972).

translation here is therefore not conceived as the act of translating a culture, but as the process of translating oneself. Bhabha presented migrant subjects as translated identities by taking Rushdie's metaphorisation of 'translated men' as a starting point: 'Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained' (Rushdie 1991: 17). Migrants, like the Indian characters of *The Satanic Verses*, who moved to the United Kingdom, translate themselves into a new place, express themselves in a new language, thus becoming translated individuals bearing the traces of both their source and target languages and cultures. Similarly, cultural translation occurs every time that borders are crossed. Migrant narratives traverse the national divide and show that the question of identity, agency and affiliation are mutually negotiated across such boundaries (Steiner 2009: 19).¹⁵ In Bhabha's view, cultural translation has the potential to challenge dichotomies of 'foreign' and 'familiar' and of oppressive and restrictive social norms: 'cultural translation desacralizes the transparent assumptions of cultural supremacy, and in the very act, demands a contextual specificity, a historical differentiation within minority positions' (1994: 228). Bhabha identifies the location of cultures in the era of globalisation at the intersection of the transnational and the translational (Wilson 2011a: 236). Therefore, culture cannot be defined in terms of borders, but constitutes itself through translation, which is not a movement between entities but a process of mixing and mutual contamination. It is not a transfer from the source to the target culture; it is located instead in a 'Third Space' between the two, where 'conflicts arising from cultural difference and the different social discourses involved in those conflicts are negotiated' (Wolf 2002: 190). Since Bhabha conceives translation as a movement of people rather than of texts from one language to another, Pym pointed out that the postcolonial theorist introduced a 'human dimension' in translation studies (2010: 159) and, I would add, an 'affective' one. Pym judged Bhabha's theorisation as 'a way of talking about the world', since it relates to the demographical movements that are changing the shape of our cultures (148). Moreover, he pointed out how the theorist introduced the idea of 'a translation without translations' (148).

¹⁵ 'Affiliation', which has been brought to prominence by Edward Said (1983), refers to a process of identification through culture (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 96). 'Agency', instead, hinges on the question of whether actions performed by individuals are in some sense determined by the ways in which their identity has been constructed (6).

Although Bhabha's theorisation of cultural translation has been espoused by several postcolonial critics, it has been severely criticised by a number of scholars (see Petterson 1999; Trivedi 2005/2007; D'Hulst 2008). First and foremost, Bhabha has been accused of providing 'enigmatic and mercurial' definitions of cultural translation, of using 'conceptual vagueness, bad logic [and] rhetorical fudging' and of mystifying theoretical jargon on postcolonial power structures (Petterson 1999). Other critics agree that Bhabha operates on 'an abstract theoretical and conceptual level' (Bery 2007: 7) and that he did not provide 'clear definitions' (Batchelor 2009: 246). However, Bhabha has received the most articulate criticism from Trivedi, who argued that cultural translation is no more than the representation of migration and diaspora 'in just the one global language, English' (2005/2007: 277). Moreover, he specified that cultural translation does not reflect the migrants' need to negotiate their cultural identity but a requirement of the migrants' host society, namely a 'hegemonic Western demand and necessity' (284). He thinks that using the term 'translation' to refer to a condition of human migrancy is an act of 'usurpation' and 'abuse' (285). Trivedi sees cultural translation as a threat to linguistic diversity and the cause for the 'extinction and erasure of translation', since it does not mean translation from one language and culture into another (282). In this way, rather than promoting the encounter between cultures, translation would be 'assimilated in just one monolingual global culture' (287). He therefore claimed that postcolonial writers who still write in their native language will nevertheless be led to translate themselves into the English global language, thus presenting a false sense of monolingualism to a western audience.

However, as Conway pointed out, the linguistic aspect does not necessarily disappear, as Trivedi fears, but remains central in the negotiations occurring between members of different communities (2012b: 277). Moreover, I would argue that Trivedi's view of cultural translation as the representation of migration in 'just the one global language' (2005/2007: 277) might be simplistic. As indicated by Carbonell, cultural translation takes place 'whenever an alien experience is internalized and rewritten in the culture where that experience is received' (1996: 81). It can therefore take place in any language, although this may not be pointed out by most of the scholarship of cultural translation, which seems to be in English. Trivedi's idea of cultural translation as a requirement of the host society is also too narrow as he ignores the migrants' need to negotiate their transcultural identity in order to integrate into the host society and yet to survive as migrants without being assimilated. Moreover, Trivedi's view of cultural

translation as performed by authors from former colonies for a Western audience is reductive. Cultural translation instead can be performed by migrants living between two Western countries. I would not see the use of the word 'translation' as an 'usurpation' in this context. As noted by Rita Wilson in her analysis of works by translingual writers, translation works *inside* the narratives 'to negotiate between different languages and cultures, between author and reader, and even between the different layers of affiliation and identity that the author brings to the text' (2013: 109). Therefore, I would argue that the term 'translation' successfully captures the idea that the authors' representation of their home/host country, is the act of describing a culture through the 'foreign gaze', namely an external perspective (Polezzi 2000: 30), for an audience of a different culture. The process of cultural translation might undoubtedly involve power issues in cases of asymmetrical power relationships between the two countries involved. For instance, in the case of Indian-born British author Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, his representation of Indian culture is influenced by his being Anglicised and by the fact that the novel is addressed to a British audience. However, I would argue that the migrant authors' 'erroneous' and 'defective' representations are not a limit but an important symbol of their non-belonging to the culture involved and their being cast in the 'Third Space'. Finally, I would point out that cultural translation does not threaten linguistic diversity, which instead also comes sharply into view at a textual level through heterolingual literary works, which reveal the narrator's native language.

Rushdie's metaphor of 'translated men' has been espoused by several theorists and critics from different disciplines (see for instance Niranjana 1992; Clifford 1997; Malena 2003; Cronin 2006; Steiner 2009). While Niranjana refers to postcolonial subjects and sees them as 'living in translation' (1992: 46), Clifford defines ethnographers as 'people in transit' (1997: 2). In the migrant context, Malena describes migrants as 'translated beings' in countless ways, since they have to adjust to a new culture and learn a new language (2003: 9). The same expression, 'translated being', is used by Cronin to refer to the condition of migrants living in a multilingual world (2006: 45). Similarly, Tina Steiner adopts the term 'translated people', drawing on Asad's definition of cultural translation. In her book *Translated People, Translated Texts* (2009), Steiner presents a selection of novels by African migrant writers Leila Aboulela, Jamal Mahjoub and Abdulrazak Gurnah as a form of cultural translation and she defines them as 'translated texts'. The expression 'translated texts' was previously used by Polezzi (2001) and is reminiscent of the

'translations of themselves', theorised by Maria Tymoczko, namely 'translations of texts never written in the other (usual native) language of a culture' (2000: 156). The postcolonial translation studies scholar analysed a selection of texts, which evoke two languages simultaneously, and she drew a parallel between James Joyce's use of Irish in his works and North African postcolonial Francophone literary works of the twentieth century. While Polezzi uses the term 'translated text' in relation to travel writing, Tymoczko adheres to 'self-translation' to refer to migrant literary texts (1998/2009, 2012b). The same term has been adopted by other translation studies scholars (see Larkosh 2006; Wilson 2011a, 2011b, 2013), who do not approach it according to Gideon Toury's definition as 'translating what one has just said in one language into another' (Toury 1995: 244). Christopher Larkosh engages with 'self-translation' in the sense of 'a daily experience and mode of expression that is lived in another language' (2006: 280). Similarly, Wilson refers to works of authors who translate the 'self' into the 'other' (2011b: 124; 2013: 108). She justifies the use of this term by explaining that she sees the narratives in which authors articulate their pre-migration self as a source text written in the migrant's mother tongue, while she considers the narrated self emerging from the translating act of their adoptive-language audience as a target text (2011b: 124).

Seeing migrant narrators as agents of 'self-translations' and authors of 'translated texts', leads me to present them as translators in the sense that storytelling is a form of exchange during which narrators present the story anew. This can be traced back to what Susan Bassnett called 'fictitious translator' (1998) and what Wilson termed 'fictional translator' (2011a). Analogies between migrant writers and translators have been an influential research field since the 'fictional turn' has emerged in translation studies. The 'fictional turn' is a trend of translation studies developed in the 1990s. It was coined in 1995 by Else Viera, who defined it as the move in the discipline that signalled the incorporation of fictional-theoretical parameters as a source of theorisation on translation (Pagano 2002: 81). One of the main writers who has thrown light on translation theories is Chicano author Guillermo Gómez Peña, according to whom translation is something that does not occur after an original, but contemporaneously with it (1996: 1). He stated that the writer acts as a kind of 'cross-cultural translator', s/he speaks from more than one perspective about more than one reality, her/his job is to 'trespass, bridge, interconnect, reinterpret, remap, and redefine; to find the outer limits of [her/his] culture and cross them' (12). The Chicano writer's identity has been defined as 'translational' by Edwin Gentzler,

who has classified his works among ‘border writing’, namely that form of writing, where ‘languages are in constant flux’ (2008: 165).¹⁶

Interestingly, a debate on cultural translation was published in three rounds in the journal *Translation Studies*, in 2009–10.¹⁷ The debate has shed light on how cultural translation is one of the most controversial issues in translation and cultural studies, since it opens up the problem of its intrinsic political meaning. The debate was initiated by cultural scholars Boris Buden and Stefan Nowotny, who argued that cultural translation can become an act of translating human beings for political purposes. They offered the German citizenship test as a case study. In answering the test questions, which are based on personal opinions on German society and its integration policies, applicants are forced to answer in only one possible way (Buden and Nowotny 2009: 197). They are therefore culturally translated from non-Germans into ‘being German’ and provided with a new political identity (197). According to Buden and Nowotny, the result is an act of essentialising foreigners into German beings, hence their interpretation of the citizenship test as an instrument of control of both inclusion and exclusion. A number of scholars responded to Buden and Nowotny’s input, among them Pratt, who argued that using translation as a metaphor in this case does not convey such an instrument of control (2010: 95). Tymoczko pointed out that using the term ‘translation’ for the movement of people is ‘self-defeating’ if one wishes to have a real understanding of migration, since there is little theory that speaks to the performance complexities of identity (2010: 108–10). Buden and Nowotny’s argument was criticised not only by several authors of the responses but also by Pym, who judged it ‘sloppy thinking’ (Pym in Conway 2012b: 271). He explained that he refused to contribute to the ‘Translation Studies Forum’ because he was ‘appalled’ by the two scholars’ inability to ‘break “cultural translation” down in terms of appropriate distinctions (like the one between translations as products and translating as a process’ (270–1). Reactions such as these attest to the often heated debates about cultural translation.

Cultural translation was also previously examined in migrant studies by other scholars, like Nikos Papastergiadis, who formulated it as ‘the process by which communication occurs across boundaries’ and ‘the means by which people with different

¹⁶ The adjective ‘translational’ has also been used by other critics in relation to literary bodies (see Steiner 2009; Pym 2010; Hassan 2011).

¹⁷ See volume 2, issue 2; volume 3 issues 1 and 3.

cultural histories and practices can form patterns of communication and establish lines of contact across these differences' (2000: 127). Tomislav Longinovic, instead, looked at micro-instances, where 'legal and illegal immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers as well as itinerant academics' come to understand their identities through their displacement and their experience of being the 'other'. He was hopeful when he wrote that 'The impossibility of absolute sameness in translation opens a horizon for a new performance of cultural identity as a process of dynamic exchange between semiotic registers motivated by non-hierarchical openness and movements of meaning and identity' (2002: 7–8). For António Sousa Ribeiro cultural translation is tautological: culture is a border, where 'the commonplaces of a given culture [...] no longer apply as premises, and rather become themselves an object of contention and argumentation of negation' (2004: 6).

1.2 A Critical History of Cultural Hybridity

The theory of cultural translation is closely linked to that of hybridity, one of the 'most widely deployed and most disputed terms in postcolonial studies', which commonly refers to 'the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 108). It was first introduced by linguist and cultural theorist Mikhaïl Bakhtin, in his seminal study *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), in relation to the disruptive power of multivocal narratives. He defined a hybrid language as a language that can be double-voiced and represent another language while still retaining 'the capacity to sound simultaneously both outside it and within it' (1981/1994: 358). In his model of linguistic hybridity we can see how language encompasses a sense of duality and how a single voice can be split in two. The duality of the hybrid voices is not composed through the integration of differences but via a series of dialogical counterpoints, each set against the other, thus allowing the language to be both the same and different (Papastergiadis 1997: 268). In Bakhtin's words, a hybrid construction is 'an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems' (1981/1994: 304–5).

The theory of hybridity has been subsequently introduced in cultural studies by Bhabha (1994). This critic's idea can be traced back to Said's observation that 'all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic' (1993/1994: xxv). Bhabha's theorisation was endorsed by Robert Young (1995) and Stuart Hall (1996). Young questioned the fixity of identity by discussing issues of colonial desire that are rooted in hybridity. He differentiated between two forms of hybridity: hybridity as the combination of two distinct things that come together, making one – thereby 'making difference into sameness'– and hybridity implying the 'severing' or 'splitting' of one object into two – thereby turning 'sameness into difference' (1995: 26). Therefore, 'hybridity makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, and the different no longer simply different' (26). Difference and sameness thus occur in simultaneity, suggesting that hybridity must be understood in terms of doubleness, or a binary logic, where sameness and difference are always already deconstructed. According to Hall, cultural identity is always hybrid. He also insists, however, that the precise form of this hybridity will be determined by specific historical formations and cultural repertoires of enunciation (1996/2005: 502).

Throughout this thesis I will engage with Bhabha's theorisation of hybridity in language and cultural identity, namely a 'transnational and translational' culture (1994: 5). Echoing Said, Bhabha argued that cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic. Rather he argued for a 'Third Space', which can neither be reduced to the 'self' nor to the 'other' (36). Bhabha argued that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in the 'Third Space of enunciation' (37). The 'Third Space', which recalls Pratt's 'contact zone' (1992/2008), is an interstitial space, where cultural translation takes place and where 'the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences' (Bhabha 1994: 218). This sort of 'in-between space', an interstitial passage between fixed identifications, opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (4). Under this view, then, identity is constructed through a negotiation of difference, and the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions is not necessarily a sign of failure. Identity is not the combination, accumulation, fusion or synthesis of various components but an energy field of different forces. Hybridity represents an ambivalent space that is not necessarily the resolution of conflict between two cultures but an area of tension that is created by the

splitting of different aspects within different cultures. Cultural difference is therefore no longer seen as the source of conflict but as the effect of discriminatory practices; the production of cultural differentiation becomes a sign of authority. The interaction between cultures proceeds with the illusion of transferable forms and transparent knowledge and simultaneously leads increasingly into resistant and dissonant exchanges; it is in this tension that the 'Third Space' emerges and enacts forms of political change going beyond an antagonistic binarism between rulers and ruled (Papastergiadis 1997: 279). According to Bhabha, the recognition of the ambivalent and contradictory 'Third Space', in which cultural identity emerges, makes the claim for a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. Moreover, it helps to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 108). Hybridity implies a view of the world in which the fixity of identity is continually contested. It dismantles the sense of anything being 'pure' or 'essential' and stresses the notion of heterogeneity and difference. The concept of hybridity has proven to be of special relevance for migrant subjects as a way of thinking beyond exclusionary, fixed and binary notions of identity based on ideas of rootedness as well as cultural, racial and national purity (McLeod 2000: 219). Bhabha argued in favour of the double vision possessed by migrants at the merging of cultures and stressed the intercultural tension produced by this merging. In this 'double vision' situation, the migrants' complex perspective is transmitted through the creativity of translation and transformation, thereby contributing to transcending social binaries of race, nation, gender or generation. The nation-space is ambivalent, constructed from multiple identities. Therefore, the nation can never be perceived as whole or pure, but always as a hybrid space. Cultural hybridity is produced at the moment of the colonial encounter when the 'self' and the 'other' are inseparable from mutual contamination by each other. The concept of otherness is not about protecting borders to keep the nation 'pure', devoid of outside influences. It is instead what constructs a nation. Once the concept of 'migrant' is established, there is no longer a straightforward relationship between 'self' and 'other'. The 'other' is within the 'self' because the 'self' – the nation as a whole – is constructed from multiple individuals as ideas, some of which are 'other'. (Ramone 2011: 116).

Bhabha explained that 'this liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the 'survival' of migrant life' (1994: 224). Drawing on

Benjamin's concept of 'untranslatable' (1968/1999), Bhabha formulated the idea of 'resistance': 'Living in the interstices, the subject of cultural difference becomes a problem that Benjamin has described as the irresolution or liminality of "translation", the *element of resistance* in the process of transformation, "that element in translation which does not lend itself to translation"' (Bhabha 1994: 224, emphasis in the original). Benjamin defines translations as 'untranslatable'; a translated text cannot be further translated into another language because the meaning attaches to it with 'fleetingness' (1968/1999: 81). Bhabha associated Benjamin's 'untranslatability' with 'resistance' – namely the negation of a complete integration – a will to 'survival' found in the subjectivity of the migrant (Pym 2010: 145). The hybrid is formed not out of a transferral of foreignness into the familiar, but out of this awareness of the untranslatable parts that linger in translation (Papastergiadis 1997: 279). As noted by Pym, Bhabha associated 'resistance' with 'survival' by mixing Benjamin's theory of untranslatability with Jacques Derrida's translation of Benjamin's 'Überleben' and 'Fortleben' with 'survivre' (Pym 2010: 146). Benjamin used the terms 'Überleben' and 'Fortleben' when explaining that translations mark the stage of continued life in their originals (1968/1999: 71). This interlingual interpretation pointed out by Pym becomes clear from Bhabha's statement: 'It is the dream of translation as "survival" as Derrida translated the "time" of Benjamin's concept of the after-life of translation, as *survivre*, the act of living on borderlines' (1994: 226, emphasis in the original). Bhabha adapted these concepts to the considerably different context of migrancy and hybridity when analysing Rushdie's novel: 'Rushdie translates this into the migrant's dream of survival; an *initiatory* interstices; an empowering condition of hybridity' (227, emphasis in the original). Just as translation gives an afterlife to its original, resistance allows the migrants' survival. Both Benjamin's 'continued life' and Bhabha's 'survival' are related to the state of being in the problematic border between life and death (Pym 2010: 146). As pointed out by Benjamin, an afterlife 'could not be called that unless it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living' (1968/1999: 73). As Pym has fruitfully synthesised, what for Benjamin was 'fleeting' has become 'resistance', what was a discussion of texts has become an explanation of people, what was an issue of languages has become a concern within one language, what was the border between life and death has become the cultural border of migration, and what was a theory of textual translation has become a struggle for new cultural identities (2010: 146). Bhabha did not solve the question of whether migrants should integrate or not but pointed to the 'Third Space', where the terms of these questions are enacted (147). Hybridity means that

migrants cannot be assimilated and made invisible in their host country, but neither are they forced into a racist othering process. The survival of migrants depends on listening to and understanding the many voices speaking simultaneously. Moreover, survival depends on discovering how bits and pieces can constitute newness, by realising that this newness is an agent of sustaining life. In this sense, migrants can be seen as privileged people, who can offer an alternative view of the world because they know that other perspectives exist (Sanga 2001: 44). The perpetual motion from one country to another in which hybrid subjects are involved, and their ability through that movement to interrupt hegemonic narratives of national identity, is a means by which 'newness enters the world' (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha borrowed this expression from the narrator of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*: 'How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of what fusions, translations, conjoining is it made?' (1988: 8). This passage is taken from the opening scene of the novel, where a plane explodes over the English Channel while flying from India to England and the protagonist falls to the ground. Such a transposition has the potential to destabilise notions of 'foreign' and 'familiar'. This destabilisation emerges from the way in which the linguistic and cultural disjunctures – brought about by the movement of people – draw to a community's received sense of itself into question; this results in a hybrid space (Conway 2012b: 269). The 'newness' of migrant or minority discourse cannot be contained in the mimesis of 'original and copy' (Bhabha 1994: 227). Bhabha interpreted Benjamin's notion of 'foreignness of languages' (1968/1999: 75) as an apt description of the 'performativity of translation as the staging of cultural difference' (Bhabha 1994: 227).

As in cultural translation, Bhabha's theory of hybridity has been the object of acute criticism in the area of cultural theory. As pointed out by Simon, this notion has been criticised mainly because it presupposes the existence of purity and it effaces the conditions as well as the power relations that bring it into being (2011: 52). A number of essays questioning cultural hybridity have been collected in *Debating Cultural Hybridity* (1997), edited by Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood. While some theorists, like Papastergiadis, argued in favour of hybridity, others such as Werbner and Jonathan Friedman expressed their deep scepticism. Both Werbner and Friedman argued that the danger of hybridity is essentialism, which ends up criminalising ethnicity (Werbner 1997a: 19; Friedman 1997: 79). According to Friedman, identifying oneself as 'hybrid' is a statement of self-/other-identification and the particular form of identification is grounded

in the same premise as ethnicity, that is essentialism. In this view, hybridity is founded on the metaphor of purity (1997: 83). According to Friedman, theorists of hybridity are the products of a group that self-identifies the world in such terms, not as a result of ethnographic understanding but as an act of self-essentialising (81). He sees ethnic purity and hybridity as variations of the same essentialised and objectified notion of culture that is continuously reproduced by a specific form of identity practice in combination with the general properties of social experience acquired in different positions within the local hierarchies of the global system (83).

While Bhabha's theory of hybridity has been highly debated in cultural studies, it has also been espoused by a number of postcolonial translation studies scholars (see Simon 1997; Tymoczko 1999b, 2000; Wolf 2002). According to Sherry Simon, Bhabha's concept of translation is an activity enacting cultural identity as a contribution to the understanding of new modes of cultural exchange (1997: 463). Annie Brisset confirms that hybridity is the condition for the emergence of a new identity, one that is no longer viewed as essentialist but as 'interstitial' and mixed, formed in the 'liminal' space, where alterities mingle and mutually enrich one another (2003: 124). Bhabha's theory of the 'Third Space' has been the starting point for postcolonial translation strategies, as it can neither be reduced to the original nor to the target text (Wolf 2002: 189). In such a view, culture is not only to be seen as a dynamic process, which suggests difference and incompleteness, but also as a point of convergence, where translation is envisioned as the reciprocal interpenetration of 'self' and 'other' (189). As pointed out by Simon, hybridity in translation studies belongs to a tradition of debates on 'plurilingualism and linguistic creolization, notions of transculturalism and transtextualization, as well as aspects of diasporic cultural expression that include bilingualism and double consciousness' (2011: 49).

Hybridity has been analysed at a textual level by a number of translation studies scholars (see Mehrez 1992; Lefevere 1995; Papastergiadis 1997; Tymoczko 2000; Simon 2001, 2011; Snell-Hornby 2001). Samia Mehrez pointed out that postcolonial texts have often been defined as hybrid because of the culture-linguistic layering existing within them (1992: 121). Lefevere explained that a hybrid text is 'a text written in one language with sprinkling of another language mixed in it' (1995: 223). Drawing on Bakhtin's linguistic hybridity, Papastergiadis observed that a hybrid text 'always undoes the priorities and disrupts the singular order by which the dominant code categorizes the other' (1997: 268).

Mehrez argued that hybrid texts create a language ‘in between’ and therefore come to occupy a space ‘in between’ (1992: 121). By drawing on more than one culture, more than one language and more than one world experience, hybrid texts defy the binary notion ‘original text’/‘translation’ (122). They resist and exclude monolingual readers and demand them to be at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience (122). Readers, like hybrid texts, therefore occupy an interstitial space and are involved in a continuous between two languages. Tymoczko referred to hybrid texts as ‘translations of themselves’ and explained that in straddling two cultures, postcolonial writers – like translators – mediate cultural difference by means of a common variety of techniques, like deviations from the standard language, unusual syntax and a defamiliarised language (2000: 148). Finally, Simon argued that hybrid texts ‘display “translation effects”, like dissonance, interferences, disparate vocabulary, a lack of cohesion, unconventional syntax, a certain “weakness” or “deterritorialization”’ (2001: 218; 2011: 50). Echoing Tymoczko, she explained that a hybrid text can be understood as a translation, which is ‘deliberately unfinished’, and is produced especially by migrant writers (2011: 50–1). In this sense, both translation and hybridity are alternatives to ideas of assimilation and multiculturalism and shed light on the ‘provisional nature of affiliation’ (51).

While the aforementioned postcolonial translation studies scholars used the term ‘hybrid text’ in relation to literary original texts that can be seen as a form of cultural translation, other critics in different scholarly traditions used the expression ‘hybrid texts’ to mean translations showing traces of both source and target languages and cultures. Different positions in this debate have been included in the special issues of *Across Languages and Cultures*, on ‘Hybrid Texts and Translation’, edited by Christina Schäffner and Beverly Adab (2001a). In their introduction to the volume, the editors defined a hybrid text as ‘a text that results from a translation process’ and that ‘shows features that somehow seem “out of place”/“strange”/“unusual” for the receiving culture’ but that is ‘accepted in its target culture because it fulfils its intended purpose in the communicative situation’ (2001b: 169). Assuming that hybrid texts are features of contemporary intercultural communication and result from languages and cultures in contact, Schäffner and Adab argued that this hypothesis poses several questions in terms of contact as conflict, where *conflict* refers to a situation of change in the target culture (176). By using this definition as a point of departure, scholars in different strands of translation studies

offered their responses according to their own interpretation of a 'hybrid text'. Ieva Zuberger, Klaus Gornig and Esim Erdim, Niall Bond and Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit supported Schäffner and Adab's hypothesis of a 'hybrid text' as the result of an interlingual translation. Mary Snell-Hornby and Simon, instead, did not link hybrid texts to interlingual translation, but defined them as originally-produced texts within a specific intercultural milieu in line with Bhabha's theorisation of hybridity. As pointed out by the editors of the essay collection, Snell-Hornby and Simon 'go beyond the aspect of translation' (Schäffner and Adab 2001c: 278). For them, 'hybrid texts' are texts emerging from a space between cultures. Snell-Hornby offered examples of postcolonial hybrid texts, which create a 'new language' featuring elements, like lexical and grammatical innovation and culture-bound items (2001: 207). Although she referred to source texts, she agreed with Schäffner and Adab that hybrid texts share 'strange, unusual' features and the phenomenon of 'contact as conflict' (207). Similarly, Simon specified that hybrid texts involve acts of interlingual creation without being necessarily translations of a previous text (2001: 218). She tackled the concept of hybridity from the perspective of cultural affiliation, where new cultural identities have been formed through intercultural interaction and mutual influence of one on the other. A hybrid text is 'a product of a voluntarily incomplete translation process', which is 'produced by writers who want to highlight their position between cultures, creating a new site of individual and collective expression' (217). The literary texts analysed by Simon arise from hybrid sites of belonging and use 'translation effects to question the borders of identity' (218). In line with Snell-Hornby and Simon, Alexis Nouss' contribution is concerned with cultural identity but in a slightly different way, since he claimed that the process of hybridisation consists of the blurring of the very notion of identity. Echoing Snell-Hornby and Simon, Pym claimed that hybridity is not necessarily the result of a translation process. On the contrary, he asserted that non-translations are promoters of hybridisation, while translations can result in dehybridisation. He explained that a translated text marks a line between at least two languages and cultures and therefore posits the separation and the possible purity of both. Finally, Albrecht Neubert questioned the validity of Schäffner and Adab's definition of hybrid texts and argued that the features they identified can be traced back to any translations. He rejected the term 'hybrid', since he saw it as having negative implications on the translator's work. Moreover, he interpreted it as a synonym for 'defective text'. After summarising the similarities and differences of their contributors' responses, Schäffner and Adab revisited

their original hypothesis and clarified that ‘hybrid texts, in addition to being texts produced in an intercultural space, can also result from a translational process’ (2001c: 279).

1.3 Linguistic Traces of Cultural Translation and Hybridity: Heterolingual Texts

The translational process performed by the authors of hybrid literary texts emerges at a textual level through the presence of foreign linguistic elements, which have been pointed out by Bhabha as ‘untranslatable’ elements in the midst of the performance of cultural translation (1994: 227). Drawing on Benjamin’s ‘foreignness of language’ (1968), Bhabha interpreted them as the nucleus of the untranslatable through which translation is performed as the staging of cultural difference (1994: 227). The ‘untranslatable’ element reveals the interstitial and becomes the ‘unstable element of linkage’, the indeterminate temporality of the in-between that has to be engaged in creating the conditions through which ‘newness comes into the world’ (227). Bhabha’s ‘untranslatable’ elements are reminiscent of Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin’s ‘untranslated words’, which have a significant function in inscribing cultural difference (1989/2004: 52). Other critics adopted the linguistic term ‘codeswitching’, which was originally used by Paul Bandia (1996) in his analysis of postcolonial literary works and was borrowed by other scholars in the same context (see for instance Gordon and Williams 1998; Albakry and Hanock 2008), as well as in migrant writing (see for instance Martín Ruano 2003; Camarca 2005; Cutter 2005; Vizcaino 2005; Baldo 2008, 2011, 2013; Casamarca 2010).

The linguistic phenomenon arising from the interspersing of a foreign language in a text, which shows how authors travel between languages and bear linguistic marks of their cultural hybridity, has been widely analysed by literary and translation studies critics, who used a variety of terminology like ‘translingualism’ (Zabus 1991; Kellman 2000; Besemeres 2006; Larkosh 2006; Wilson 2011a, 2011b, 2013), ‘plurilingualism’ (Mehrez 1992; Simon 2011), ‘multilingualism’ (Grutman 1998/2009; Martín Ruano 2003; Cutter 2005; Ramakrishna 1997/2007; Baldo 2008, 2011, 2013), ‘polylingualism’ (Martín Ruano 2003; Polezzi 2010, 2012a, 2013a), ‘polyglossia’ (Godard 1989, 1990, Bertacco 2003) and ‘heterolingualism’ (Grutman 2006; Meylaerts 2006; Steiner 2009; Pas 2013). After authoring the entry of ‘multilingualism’ in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998/2009) and specifying that a text does not necessarily give equal prominence

to both languages in order to be ‘multilingual’ (Grutman 1998/2009: 183), translation studies scholar Reinier Grutman labelled the same phenomenon as ‘heterolingualism’ in his article ‘Refraction and Recognition: Literary Multilingualism in Translation’ (2006).¹⁸ As he explained, the use of ‘heterolingualism’ instead of ‘multilingualism’ helps to ‘avoid confusion with real-life situations stemming from language contact, such as societal bilingualism and diglossia’ (18). Following Grutman’s theorisation, the term has been used by several translation studies scholars, like Meylaerts (2006), who explained that research on heterolingualism in novels has developed a solid tradition in Canada and beyond; it appears as a solution to validate the inscription of the hybrid language texture in Francophone literature and by extension in other postcolonial languages (4). As Meylaerts noted, Grutman’s ‘heterolingualism’ is reminiscent of Bakhtin’s ‘heteroglossia’ (1981). Although the latter term is more concerned with variations in linguistic register within languages, it has been employed by several translation studies scholars (see Godard 1989; Cronin 2000; Agorni 2002; Martín Ruano 2003). As commented by Carbonell, in heterolingual texts translation takes place at a different level from that of linguistic equivalence and it is a linguistic piece of evidence that ‘meaning is not located in a source culture or a target culture in an univocal signifying movement’, but is ‘created endlessly in a third cultural space of growing conflict and complicity’ (1996: 90).

1.4 Cultural Translation through Translation: An Applied Approach

In view of the above theoretical observations, translating a heterolingual hybrid literary text, which can be analysed as a form of cultural translation, emerges as a rather complex task. Texts narrating intercultural encounters and enacting mechanisms of cultural representation have been analysed through a translation studies approach by Carbonell (1996, 2006) and Polezzi (1998, 2001). Polezzi’s observation that translating travel writing texts involves a complex pattern of representations, interferences, readings and re-readings, cultural and linguistic transfers reveals itself as particularly relevant to my case studies

¹⁸ As noted by Reine Meylaerts, Grutman’s term ‘heterolingualism’ is the translation of the French ‘hétérolingualisme’, which he had already introduced in 1997 in *Des Langues qui résonnent. L’hétérolingualisme au XIXe siècle québécois*, a study of Quebec’s nineteenth-century novels in which he analysed the use of foreign languages or social, regional and historical language varieties in literary texts (Meylaerts 2006: 4).

(2001: 33). Translating narratives of intercultural encounters implies a shift in perspective and expectations, which are different when cultural contact is observed from an internal point of view (58, 104). Translating such works means 'adding yet another layer to the already complex translation operated by this type of text' and implies 'new mechanisms of interpretation and representation, of domestication and foreignization' (104–5). The mechanisms enacted when translating cultures and *between* cultures had been previously pointed out by Carbonell, who argued that 'the production and transmission of knowledge, of relocation and the unfolding of the borderlines of identity between selfhood and otherness' are fundamental issues (1996: 85). The critic admitted that current debates on the representation of cultural difference remains a thorny issue in translation studies and raises the question of to what extent newness is necessary. He explained that there are two opposing trends: on the one hand, a mostly theoretical one aims to highlight difference and to go beyond the ethnocentric attitude that naturalises and domesticates the foreign text, while, on the other, exoticising practices are avoided (2006: 44). Drawing on Bhabha's theory of the 'Third Space' in answer to whether migrant subjects should integrate or not into their host society, Carbonell argued that 'the uncompromising "third space" is the space of the only possible legitimate translation since it is also the space where the cultural frontier is in constant movement' (1996: 94).

The 'Third Space' has also been called into question by postcolonial translation scholars, who analysed hybrid texts (see Tymoczko 1999a, 1999b; Wolf 2000, 2002; Simon 2001). Echoing Carbonell and Polezzi, Simon observed that hybrid texts are in some sense already a translation (2001: 50–1). She pointed out that there is no easy solution to translating culturally and linguistically hybrid texts, as well as to retain the tensions characterising the source text (51). Like Carbonell, she advocated for a target text, which lies in the 'Third Space' (51). By highlighting the interactions between colonial representation and postcolonial resistance, Tymoczko pointed out that 'translation is paradoxically the means by which difference is perceived, preserved, projected and proscribed' (1999a: 17). She noted that translators, like writers, are 'caught in the dilemma' of deciding to what extent cultural difference is to be preserved which in the end is often mitigated due to a number of factors, like ideology and affiliation (1999b: 22–9). Preserving cultural difference is to be the translators' priority also according to Michaela Wolf (see in particular 2000, 2002). Echoing Carbonell and Polezzi, she invites translators to adopt interventionist strategies, which go beyond the old dichotomy of foreignisation

versus domestication and imply instead a shift towards the centre, where cultures encounter each other and hybridity comes into being (2000: 142). She suggests a model of translation, which is not conceived to bridge a gap between two different cultures, but rather to produce meanings created through the encounter of cultures (142). Translators are no longer mediators between two different poles, but their activities are inscribed in cultural overlaps which imply difference (142). In Wolf's view, interlingual translation is not a movement from a source to a target text, but is located in the 'Third Space', where 'conflicts arising from cultural difference and the different social discourses involved in those conflicts are negotiated' (2002: 190). This has been confirmed by Kate Sturge, who suggested abolishing the 'source'/'target' model and to bring instead translation into 'infinite permutations across a social space' (2007: 13).

On a more linguistic level, a number of translation studies scholars have pointed out the issues arising when translating a heterolingual literary work (see Berman 2000; Grutman 2006; Meylaerts 2006). As argued by Polezzi, retaining heterolingualism in target texts is extremely important, since it makes the narrator's process of translation 'fully visible' (2012a: 352). However, Antoine Berman warned translators that the superimposition of languages is often 'threatened by translation' (2000: 287). Grutman confirmed that translators dealing with heterolingual texts are faced with a 'unique challenge' (2006: 19) and that additional complications arise when the target language happens to be the embedded foreign language of the source text (22). The risk is that the linguistic elements signalling otherness in the original are read as 'familiar signs of sameness by the target audience' (22). These issues have been confirmed by critics Maria Rosario Martín Ruano (2003), Maria José García Vizcaino (2005), Brigid Maher (2012) and Justine Pas (2013), who analysed the translation of novels, where the target language is also the embedded language of the corresponding source texts.¹⁹ From a more practice-led position, Raylene Ramsay and Deborah Walker (2010) analysed their own translation, from French into English, of the heterolingual novel *L'épave* (2005) by Kanak writer Dévé

¹⁹ Pas (2013) looked at Michal Ronikier's translation of *Lost in Translation* (1990) by Eva Hoffman from English into Polish. Both Martín Ruano (2003) and Vizcaino (2005) analysed Lialiana Valenzuela's translation of Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991) into Spanish. Vizcaino compared this translation with two additional translations of Cisneros' novels *Caramelo or Puro Cuento* (2002) – translated by Valenzuela – and *The House on Mango Street* (1984), translated by Elena Poniatowska. Martín Ruano (2003), instead, compared Valenzuela's and Enrique de Hériz's translations of *Woman Hollering Creek* and analysed Esmeralda Santiago's self-translation of *When I was Puerto-Rican* (1993) into Spanish. Finally, Maher (2012) examined Rita Baldassarre's translation of Tim Parks' *Italian Neighbours: an English in Verona* (1992) and Chicca Galli's translation of Tobias Jones' *The Dark Heart of Italy* (2003) from English into Italian.

Gorodé. These critics focussed on slightly different aspects of the issues involved in translating heterolingual and transcultural texts into the authors' 'original' context. Pas pointed out how translating migrant life stories into their authors' first language deserves engagement within literary and translation studies (2013: 64). Martín Ruano's specific aim was to analyse whether the target text would remain in an intercultural space inhabited by the migrant author; she investigated how translators can retain the author's otherness when s/he is 'brought back home' without making her/his familiar to the target-text readers (2003: 101–94). Instead, drawing on travel writing theories, Maher focussed on the changes in content and perspective implied by the author's act of translating a culture when a text 'travels back' into the context of that translated culture (2012: 179). As she pointed out, the interlingual translation of an already 'translated text' is a particularly complex enterprise, since the author's experience and opinions are negotiated in a complex process of reshaping during her/his 'journey in translation' (180). From a more linguistic perspective, Vizcaino looked at how codeswitching has been treated in translation and she reminded us of the importance of achieving a pragmatic equivalence (2005: 213).

All these case studies share the same findings, namely a neutralisation and homogenisation of the heterolingual texts in favour of monolingual and standardised target texts characterised by centralism, linguistic purity and a monocultural reproduction.²⁰ The main criticism shared by these scholars is related to the reduction – in some cases even disappearance – of traces of the originally 'embedded language'. It follows from this that the authors' migrant experience is silenced and their cultural difference is purified as well as assimilated into the target culture (Martín Ruano 2003: 1999). Martín Ruano pointed out how the erasure of the original heterolingualism prevents target-text readers from 'grasping the emotional strain and the cultural schizophrenia characteristic of the hybrid condition' (196). According to Pas, the reduction of the linguistic hybridity of Ronikier's translation restructures Eva Hoffman's linguistic journey from Polish to English into a 'national transition from Poland to Canada and the US and diminishes the power of English over the migrant life instead of conveying her separation from Polish in her new English-language environment' (2013: 66). The scholar noted that the monolingual Polish text is a 'more conventional narrative about geographical uprooting from a nation to which [the narrator] professes allegiances' (74). In this way, the impact of the metaphor of a 'translated person'

²⁰ The only exception is Valenzuela's translation analysed by Martín Ruano, in which a hybrid linguistic identity is successfully reconstructed through minoritising strategies (2003: 196–7).

has been tremendously diminished as Ronikier's target text bridges the gap between Polish and Canadian cultures (71) in contrast with Wolf's theorisation of translation mentioned above (2000: 142). By translating from English much of what Hoffman herself had translated from Polish, Ronikier reduced the narrator's cultural difference and involved his target audience in a monolingual experience instead of the continuous process of translation suggested by Mehrez (1992: 122, 134). Taken as a whole, these findings confirm that the reduction of the linguistic interplay is one of the most common strategies used when translating heterolingual texts (Berman 1985) and that translators are tempted to gloss over linguistic differences highlighted in the original when addressing a monolingual audience (Grutman 2006: 23). Moreover, they prove how the process of interlingual translation reduces the hybridity of texts created in a language 'in-between' and occupying a space 'in-between' (Snell-Hornby 2001: 216).

The erasure of the original heterolingualism, however, is not the only translation strategy criticised by the aforementioned scholars. Some of them, for instance, questioned the translators' choice of correcting the authors' misspelled 'untranslated words' (Martín Ruano 2003; Pas 2013), of omitting the authors' own explanations of their 'untranslated words' (Pas 2013) and of mitigating the author's criticism about the target-text culture (Maher 2012; Pas 2013). Therefore, these scholars confirmed Grutman's observation that translators are often tempted to correct 'the original in the (false) hope of improving it' (2006: 21). In Hoffman's case, the narrator has been transformed 'from a disoriented and transplanted adolescent into a Polish patriot, [whose] recall of the past improved to the point that she seems preternaturally invested in Polish history' (Pas 2013: 72). This strategy also makes Hoffman's memory too perfect and it does not mirror how she recreated her life out of fragments of memory rather than out of a smooth historical narrative (73). According to Pas, instead, Ronikier's translation strategy of omitting Hoffman's explanations of her Polish 'untranslated words' does not emphasise 'Polish as foreign to her English-language readers and therefore in need of translation and explanation' (66), thus 'neutralis[ing] the foreign content of Hoffman's original' (74). These critics all shared the same conclusions. According to Martín Ruano, linguistic traditionalism, purism and prescriptivism are still common attitudes among Spanish publishers, who favour a 'transparent and fluid translation' based on the 'observance of the traditional rules of standard Spanish' (2003: 200). As confirmed by Maher, this attitude is shared by the Italian editorial industry, where the orientation is 'not to emphasise the

foreignness of a translated text but rather to reduce it (often by favouring a 'fluent', 'invisible' translation style)' (2012: 187). The linguistic purism promoted by Italian publishers had already been pointed out by Jennifer Burns, who noted that orthographical mistakes have often been corrected by proofreaders in several original literary texts by migrant writers (2003: 203–4). This was echoed by Grutman, who pointed out that the editorial policies of Canadian publishing houses are only one of the factors influencing the translators' strategies together with readers' expectations and the prestige of the literature (2006: 26).

1.5 Approaching Italian-Canadian Literature as a Form of Cultural Translation

Against this background, I will present Italian-Canadian literary works as a form of cultural translation. The crucial role played by translation in Italian-Canadian writing has already been pointed out by a number of literary critics (see Pivato 1987, 1994; Verdicchio 1996b/1998, 1997; Canton 1998b, 2004, 2009; Canton and Verduyn 2002) and translation studies scholars (see Baldo 2008, 2011; Saidero 2008, 2011; Casagrande 2010; Palusci 2013). Moreover, insightful reflections on the relationship between (self-)translation and identity have been made by literary authors themselves (see D'Alfonso 1986/1988, 1995/2000, 1996; Michelut 1989; Patriarca 2011).²¹ Joseph Pivato, who was the first critic to point out translation as a central issue in Italian-Canadian literary works, revealed how their authors are continuously involved in a process of translation, which is for them an 'act of self-discovery' (1994: 127) and is reflected by their use of Italian in their English-language texts (1987: 62).²² Pivato, therefore, paved the way for the link between Italian-Canadian literature and translation, where 'translation' is meant not just as 'a literary transcription from one milieu to another, but the transporting of ethnic values and issues from one milieu to a vaster one – Canada' (60). In a later essay, he specified that the authors' translational process consists of translating from 'the Italian language of emotions into the Canadian-English of consciousness' (1994: 121–2). This relationship was confirmed by Pasquale Verdicchio, who pointed out how 'writing and translating are

²¹ An extended version of Michelut's article 'Coming to Terms with the Mother Tongue' (1989) was published as an essay under the same title (see 1990d).

²² Pivato's article 'Constantly Translating: the Challenge for Italian-Canadian Writers' was originally published in the literary journal *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* in 1987 and republished in his book-length essay (1994).

synonyms' for Italian-Canadian authors (1997: 110). Moreover, it was elaborated by Licia Canton, who analysed how Italian-Canadian authors' translational process manifests through the 'clash' of English and Italian (2004, 2009). The link between Italian-Canadian literature and translation has also been explored from the perspective of translation studies and linguistics. While Mirko Casagrande's monograph *Traduzione e codeswitching come strategie discorsive del plurilinguismo canadese* (2010) analyses the use of codeswitching in D'Alfonso's and Mary di Michele's novels, Michela Baldo's unpublished PhD thesis *Translation as Re-Narration in Italian-Canadian Writing* (2008) looks at how this linguistic device signals the shift in focalisation and voice and how it has been relayed in Gabriella Iacobucci's Italian translation of Ricci's trilogy (see a detailed analysis of Baldo's findings in Section 3.2 in Chapter 3).

I would argue that Italian-Canadian literary works can be seen as a form of cultural translation not only for the authors' act of translating their Italian cultural identity to their Canadian readers but also for their act of translating the Canadian culture through an Italian perspective. Moreover, as with travel writing texts, the narration of intercultural encounters between Italian migrants and the Canadian host society enacts mechanisms of cultural production and self-representation. Although the term 'travel' implies a journey in a limited period of time with a departure and a return, I will also draw on travel writing theories conceiving 'travel' as a form of mobility, which goes under the label of 'migration' (Polezzi 2013b: np). Travel, which can be seen as a metaphor for the migrant subjects' existential condition, marks an important moment in their experience of migration (Kamboureli 1996b: 13). As I will illustrate in Chapter 2, the migration journey and the 'return journey' are central themes in several Italian-Canadian works (see Section 2.1). The first works testifying intercultural encounters between Italians and Canadians are traced back to a travel writing text (see Bressani 1653). As pointed out by Pivato, Francesco Giuseppe Bressani – a missionary in the former colony of France – reported his experience to his home country, 'through an Italian perspective', and he did so in Latin (1998c: 10). Just like Bressani, contemporary Italian-Canadian authors describe their host country from an external point of view and contribute to mechanisms of construction of self-images and images of the 'Other' – of 'autostereotypes' and 'heterostereotypes', to put it in Manfred Pfister's words (1996). As the literary scholar explained in the introduction to his anthology *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, which includes British travellers' accounts about Italy from the sixteenth century to present, a 'heterostereotype' is a 'definition of the other

culture' (4). Pfister clarified that British travellers' representation of Italy is the result of their perception of this country, which is filtered through their home culture. It is therefore an 'Italy made in England', a construction resulting from preconceptions and stereotypes, which claims to establish what Italy is really like. However, as Pfister pointed out, British travellers define Italy in terms of difference from Great Britain and concludes that each 'heterostereotype has as its reverse an autostereotype', namely each description of the other culture implies a self-description – the 'self' defines itself by defining the 'Other' (4). This has been confirmed by Carbonell, who pointed out that 'the self-image of any culture is construed in opposition to the image (the representation) of the 'Other' in terms of an all-pervasive difference, which stands at the very core of the process of the production of meaning' (1996: 86).

Just like the pieces of travel writing presented by Pfister, Italian-Canadian literature plays an important role in shaping Canadian 'heterostereotypes'. In the initial stage following their migration journey, Italian-Canadian narrators describe Canada as an unwelcoming and hostile country. Their perception is influenced by the experience of displacement and the initial strong sense of belonging to Italy. However, notions of 'self' and 'other' become even more complex than in travel writing – while the 'Other' described by travel writers is still the 'Other' for the audience of their own home country, Canadian culture, which is represented as the 'Other' by Italian-Canadian narrators, is perceived as the 'self' by their readership. More specifically, Canadian culture, which is defined from an Italian perspective, is simultaneously the authors' host culture. The images of Canada, often revolving around a cold and unwelcoming country, are produced from an external point of view and yet internally. Italian-Canadian authors therefore speak as 'outsiders from the inside'. Following Pratt's observation that narratives produced by travel writers have a profound effect on local people and their self-representation (172–97), I would argue that these mechanisms reveal themselves as even more complex in the case of Italian-Canadian literature. While travellers represent a foreign culture to readers of their own home country, Italian-Canadian authors represent the Canadian host society to the audience of their *host* country. Unlike travel writing works, which mould the identity of the travelled country only after they have been translated into its language, in the case of Italian-Canadian writing the source texts themselves contribute to mould the identity of Canada, since their works are written in English, are addressed to a Canadian audience and

distributed by Canadian publishing houses.²³ The construction of ‘heterostereotypes’ becomes even more complex in Italian-Canadian literature since narrators also portray *Italian* culture from an external perspective. As a result of their progressive integration in Canada, their perception of Italy is influenced by their host culture as is clear from their descriptions of the Italian diasporic community as well as their accounts of Italy as the cultural ‘Other’ during their ‘return journey’. Italian-Canadian narrators therefore produce both Canadian and Italian cultures’ ‘heterostereotypes’.

Similar to the colonial encounters discussed by Bhabha (1994), the intercultural contacts occurring between Italian migrants and Canadian natives produce cultural hybridity, since the ‘self’ – the Canadian host society – and the ‘other’ – Italian migrants – are involved in a mutual contamination. Unlike clearly colonial contexts, in my case study there is not an asymmetrical power relationship between Italy and Canada or between the Italian and the English languages. However, the encounter between migrants and natives requires a constant awareness of the limits and possibilities of representation similar to the postcolonial context analysed in *The Location of Culture*. While the hybridity of postcolonial subjects theorised by Bhabha is an active moment of challenge and resistance to the dominant cultural power, the hybridity of Italian migrant characters resides in their resistance to assimilation into the Canadian host society.

The cultural hybridity emerging from the intercultural encounters is reflected at a textual level through Italian linguistic elements in Italian-Canadian heterolingual texts. The use of Italian has already been pointed out by a number of literary critics, who used a variety of terminology (see in particular Pivato 1987, 1998d/1999a; Loriggio 1990b; Padolsky 1990; Verdicchio 1997; Canton 2004, 2009). While Canton’s neologism ‘ethnic marker’ (2004: 155) hints at how this linguistic device reveals the author’s cultural identity, Padolsky’s ‘linguistic stone’ (1990: 56), together with Francesco Loriggio’s ‘device of the stone’ (1990: 39), places the emphasis on the foreignising effect created on an Anglophone monolingual readership.²⁴ Their terminology recalls the ‘metonymic gap’ theorised in postcolonial studies, namely ‘that cultural gap formed when appropriations of a colonial language insert unglossed words, phrases or passages from a first language, or

²³ For a discussion on the kind of publishing houses distributing Italian-Canadian literary works, see Section 2.2 in Chapter 2).

²⁴ Loriggio defined the Italian words in the English text as ‘devices of the stone’, following Italian-Canadian writer and poet di Michele’s reading during which she compared the Italian words in her poems to little stones dropped in the flow of English (1990: 43).

concepts, allusions or references that may be unknown to the reader' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 122–3). Italian linguistic traces in Italian-Canadian literature have been analysed in linguistics and translation studies by Italian scholars Silvia Camarca (2005), Baldo (2008, 2013) and Casagrande (2010), who employed the term 'codeswitching'. Although the frequency of Italian linguistic traces in Italian-Canadian literary works is minimal, the blend of English and Italian is a very significant linguistic feature. A few critics argued that in some cases authors use Italian linguistic traces merely to add 'local colour' to the text (see Padolsky 1990: 57; Pivato 2010b: 25) or to represent their daily reality 'truthfully with all its ramifications' (Pivato 1998d/1999a: 54; see also 1999b: 41; 2010b: 26; Camarca 2005: 29). Pivato added that sometimes Italian linguistic traces are inevitably linked to the Italian reality (1999b: 40) or are due to a lack of English equivalents (2010a: 25). Most significantly, Pivato also noted that Italian linguistic elements are an 'integral part of the metaphorical journey' performed by authors from the Canadian to Italian cultures and languages (1994: 125). As a result, most of them 'impregnate their new languages with the meaning and emotion left behind in the old language' (125). As is clear from Pivato's observation, the authors' attachment to the Italian language operates on an affective level (see also 1994: 121–2). This is confirmed by di Michele's confession: 'I am aware that Italian represents a side of my life charged with feelings, an emotional dimension. For this reason Italian words often come out in my work as if they came from another realm of experience or intensity of feeling. These two worlds may continue to create a tension in my life and work' (1984b: 2). While some critics pointed out that Italian linguistic traces reflect the authors' desire to express their belonging to Italy and to claim their Italian cultural identity (see Pivato 2010a: 25; Baldo 2013: 6), Verdicchio argued that they constitute an '*illusion* of belonging' for authors (1997: 105, my emphasis). He observed that the Italian words embedded in the English texts are 'decontextualized fragments' of a 'dehistoricized language' (102). The authors' attempt to remember does not contain an historical consciousness of linguistic choices and usage (102). By using the Italian language, writers 'attempt to acquire a standard Italian which they never possessed' (110). They are 'caught within an instinctual search' that finds emptiness when it turns away from English (110) and their use of Italian is an 'involuntary reaction to this void' (100). Verdicchio therefore interpreted Italian linguistic traces as a 'frustrated need' to repossess a language which is lost (100), a 'violently imposed incapacitation' (111). Along with the (non-)belonging component characterising Italian linguistic traces, critics agreed that writers recur to the Italian language to express

their 'migrant condition' (D'Alfonso and Verdicchio 1998: 32), their cultural 'difference' (Palusci 2013: 24) as well as their 'subalternity and marginality' in the Canadian mainstream literary canon (Verdicchio 1996: 211). The result is a 'deterritorialized language', since English is subject to a displacement, which reflects the authors' own displacement²⁵ from one culture to another (Pivato 1996b/1998a: 154; 1998d/1999a: 57; 1999b: 45).²⁶

Throughout my thesis I will refer to Italian words appearing in Italian-Canadian texts as 'untranslated words'; this term was also used by Steiner (2009) and Pas (2013) in their analyses of Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999) and Hoffman's *Lost in Translation* (1989). In both these literary works the relationship between language and cultural identity plays a crucial role as in the Italian-Canadian texts I will analyse. I think that the expression 'untranslated word' aptly encapsulates how the Italian linguistic traces in the English-language texts are the result of the narrators' act of translation from Italian – the language of their cultural origins – into English. In order to highlight the fictional device of these 'untranslated words', I will define Italian-Canadian literary texts as 'heterolingual', drawing on Dirk Delabastita and Grutman's observation that narratives characterised by heterolingualism 'describe and fictionalize the encounters and struggle between continents and people' (2005: 21). My intention at this point is to investigate which strategies allow a translation to lie in the 'Third Space' when the original heterolingual text is translated into the narrator's mother tongue.

²⁵ The term 'displacement' can be used interchangeably with 'dislocation' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2002/2007: 65). The concern with displacement is one of the main thematic features of migrant literature. As pointed out in postcolonial theory, it is here that the crisis of identity comes into being: 'As a consequence of migration, dislocation can erode a valid and active sense of self' (1989/2004: 9).

²⁶ Pivato's essay 'Representation of Ethnicity as a Problem: Essence or Construction' (1998a) was originally published as an article (see 1996b).

CHAPTER 2

Italian-Canadian Literature: Critical Debates, Packaging and Reception

In this chapter I will provide a critical review of Italian-Canadian literature and show how shared traits, like the authors' reflections on cultural and national identity, (non-)belonging, memory, language and translation, make it a fairly coherent literary tradition. I will point out how the authors' act of negotiation between their Italian and Canadian cultural identities is reflected in their (fictional) characters, which contributes to the highly autobiographical nature of this literary body. As will emerge from my analysis, the narration of the 'return journey' to Italy is the most recurring autobiographical element and an eloquent expression of cultural translation. I will outline the existing Italian-Canadian criticism and investigate the position of this literary body within the Canadian literary, academic and cultural systems, thus examining debates on multiculturalism and ethnicity.

2.1 Defining Italian-Canadian Literature

Italian-Canadian writing has been defined by Pivato as a 'trilingual body of literature' (1998d/1999a: 51), since it includes not only works in English and Italian but also French.¹ Pivato pointed out how readers are 'expected to share in the knowledge of another language when they are reading English, French or Italian' (51). This observation is reminiscent of Mehrez's analysis of postcolonial writing as texts that exclude monolingual readers and demand them to be like themselves: 'in-between', at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience' (1992: 122).

Although most of the authors mentioned in this thesis write in only one language, some of them engage with self-translation not only at a metaphorical but also at a linguistic

¹ Pivato's essay 'The Singing Never Stops: Languages of Italian-Canadian Writers' (1999a) was originally published in 1998 under the same title as an article in *Toronto Review* (see 1998d) and in the essay collection edited by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Yiu-nam Leung (see 1998e).

level.² Some of these works have been produced in Francophone Canada, like Mario Duliani's *Ville sans femmes* (1945), which was self-translated into Italian (see 1946) and D'Alfonso's *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995/2000), which he translated into French (see 1990).³ Dôre Michelut's poetry collection *Ouroboros: The Book that Ate Me* (1990) includes some Italian and Friulian-language poems together with self-translations into English, while Gianna Patriarca translated her entire poetry collection *Italian Women and Other Tragedies* (1994/1999a) into Italian (see 2009). Finally, Pietro Corsi translated his non-fiction book *Halifax: l'altra porta d'America* (2003) into English (see 2012). These authors reveal themselves as constantly 'travelling between languages, in a permanent stage of (self)translation' (Meylaerts 2006: 1). Pivato poignantly observed that the audience needs to read these works in each of the languages in which they have been written 'in order to understand fully individual works and the body of literature as a whole' (1998d/1999a: 51). This is reminiscent of translation scholar Marilyn Gaddis Rose's observation that 'literary texts are fuller when read with their translations because taken together they loosely enclose interliminal space of meaning' (1997: 73). This consideration becomes even more relevant when applied to *self*-translation, since the authors' cultural identity is duplicated in their different languages, each of which discloses a particular side of their transcultural identity.

The origins of this 'trilingual body of literature' conventionally date back to the late 1970s. Before this date, however, different kinds of works on the Canadian experience of Italians appeared, like pieces of travel writing (see Bressani 1653; Gallenga 1884/2009; Turri 1912/1980), memoirs (see Moroni Parken 1896/1907;⁴ Duliani 1945) and social histories about migration (see Gualtieri 1929) (Pivato 1989/1990: 288,⁵ 1998c: 10; Stellin 2006: 55). However, Italian writers living in Canada were still not conscious of their

² Italian-Canadian authors' dedication to translation also emerges clearly from their activity as translators of works by their fellow writers. Among these, Verdicchio translated some of Maria Ardizzi's Italian-language works into English (see Ardizzi 1985b, 1999). Verdicchio is also the translator of fiction and non-fiction books of Italian authors (see Merini 1996, 2002; Pasolini 1999; Gramsci 2006). Similarly, Antonino Mazza translated Eugenio Montale's poetry collection *Ossi di Seppia* (see 1983), while Isabella Colalillo Katz is the translator of a passage from Elio Vittorini's novel *Conversazione in Sicilia*, which was published in an anthology edited by Italian-Canadian authors Venera Fazio and Delia De Santis (see Vittorini 2010). These translation projects are a clear expression of Italian-Canadian authors' strong desire to establish a connection with the Italian literary system.

³ D'Alfonso explained that he 'consciously chose' to publish the French version of *Fabrizio's Passion* before the English one (1996: 249).

⁴ Anna Moroni Parken's memoirs *Emigranti: quattro anni al Canada* (1896/1907) was the first contribution by a woman writer to Italian-Canadian literature (Stellin 1998b: 9).

⁵ Pivato's essay 'Italian-Canadian Writing: A Polysystem' (1990a) was originally published as an article under the same title in the literary journal *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée* (see 1989).

cultural context; they were not aware of each other and worked in isolation (Pivato 1985: 169; 1989/1990: 288; 1998c: 11; Canton 2012: 5). They were neither part of the Italian literary system nor of the Canadian one but rather of a 'fragmented culture of immigration' (Pivato 1989/1990: 288). After the publication of Pier Giorgio Di Cicco's *Roman Candles* (1978a) (the first anthology of Italian-Canadian poetry) and Frank Paci's *The Italians* (1978) – the first English-language novel dealing with the Italian migrant experience in Canada – Italian-Canadian literature became 'a recognizable body of writing' (Pivato 1998c: 12; see also 1989/1990a: 286; 1994: 87). Di Cicco was acknowledged by Pivato as the first person to realise that 'the possibility for a distinct body of literature did exist in Canada' (1998c: 12). His anthology put an end to the isolation of Italian-Canadian authors, who became self-conscious of their writing. They could finally speak *to* and *for* those people who until then had remained 'silent and invisible in the mainstream Canadian society' (1989/1990a: 286; see also 1998c: 13; Di Cicco 1978b: 9; Canton 2012: 5). The success of *Roman Candles* was for Italian-Canadian writers both 'exciting and shocking' as Pivato explained: 'We were happy with the reception of this first anthology of Italian-Canadian poetry, but we were shocked by the realization that we had discovered a literature about ourselves, and the great responsibility which this entailed' (1998c: 13). Pivato's comment sheds light on the strong sense of community among Italian-Canadian authors and his idea of creative writing as a social statement shared by several authors.⁶ I would suggest that the Italian-Canadian writers' sense of responsibility towards their cultural community is a reason for the autobiographical nature of their literary works. As confirmed by the two autobiography studies theorists Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, authors who were previously 'voiceless' because they were marginalised by the dominant culture claim their cultural identity through autobiographical acts, which they see as a means to speak publicly (2001: 28). By finding their voice, Italian-Canadian writers *give* voice to their marginalised Italian diasporic community. Smith and Watson's observations are useful to our understanding of the exploration of migrant identity in Italian-Canadian narratives as a call to resistance to dominant Canadian culture (107).

However, Frank Paci's explanation of why he wrote *The Italians* casts light on a further crucial catalyst for autobiographical works. In an interview with Dino Minni, Paci declared that he wrote about his Italian cultural origins not only in honour of his parents but also to 'com[e] to terms' with his Italian background (Minni 1985: 6). As is clear from

⁶ On the role of migrant writers as representatives of their cultural communities, see in particular Parati 2005.

the works set in the 1960–80s that I will analyse in Chapters 3 and 4, both first- and second-generation migrant authors often perceived their Italian past and cultural origins as a burden, which is reflected in their (fictional) characters.⁷ In the first case, the displacement caused by migration leads migrant subjects to look back nostalgically to their past. In the second case, their Italian origins are a distinguishing feature of second-generation migrant subjects, which leads them to be seen as the ‘other’ and to be marginalised by the host society. In both cases the result is a difficult integration, which is made possible only through a continuous process of cultural translation, hence the narration of their Italian past and of their process of cultural translation. Therefore, Italian-Canadian literary works can also be seen as those autobiographical narratives, discussed by Smith and Watson, which become sites of negotiation through which migrant authors explore their cultural identity (2001: 107). As poet Patriarca confirmed, her writing is often a ‘journey into memory’ and a means to ‘find some reconciliation within the debris of the worlds, two cultures [and] two languages’ (2005a: 119). Her search for reconciliation is shared by several authors both of memoirs (see Petrone 1995, 2000; Edwards 2008; Melfi 2009; Gunn 2013a; Kluthe 2013) and several fictional accounts containing explicit references to their own migrant experience.⁸ Interestingly, most of the memoirs are by women writers, a fact that is illustrative of the relationship between gender and genre and how women writers engage with autobiographical discourses to renegotiate their cultural marginality and enter the literary system (Smith 1987).

One of the most recurring autobiographical elements in Italian-Canadian literature is the journey, a ‘major metaphor’ (Pivato 1990c: 38) for the existential life and even an ‘obsession’ in this literary body (1985: 170; see also 1989/1990a: 290). Several works deal with the migration journey to Canada (see for instance Moroni Parken 1896/1907; Edwards 1982/1993; Patriarca 1994/1999b, 1994/1999c) and in particular with the ‘return journey’ to Italy (see for instance Paci 1978, 1982, 1984, 2002; Ardizzi 1982; Edwards 1980a,⁹

⁷ Since the 1950s Italian migrants living in Canada were victims of prejudice and labelled with the derogatory term ‘wop’, as they were considered rude and lowly-educated peasants (Jansen 1988: 167). The same term was used to define Italian migrants in the US (see for instance LaGumina 1973/1999).

⁸ Edwards was the first Italian-Canadian woman writer in Western Canada to publish to critical acclaim (Pivato 2000b: 8).

⁹ Edwards’ short story ‘The Island of the Nightingales’ (1980a) won the *Howard O’Hagan (Writers Guild of Alberta) Short Fiction Award* in 2001 (see Edwards’ website: <http://www.caterinaedwards.com/Bio>). It was republished in Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni’s anthology (see 1984a) and Edwards’ collection of short stories (see 2000a).

1982/1993, 1990a, 2008; di Michele 1984b; Ricci 1997,¹⁰ 2003c, 2002/2003d; Michelut 1990a; Melfi 2009; Gunn 2013a; Kluthe 2013). The 'return journey' is not only a recurring theme but also the catalyst for writing for a number of authors (see for instance Di Cicco 1978b: 9; Edwards 1986b: np; Ricci 2003c: 58; 2002/2003d: 86). According to Pivato, it is often narrated as a means of self-recognition (1994: 121, 163). Through a brief comparative analysis of Edwards' earliest novel *The Lion's Mouth* (1982/1993), her play *Homeground* (1990) and her memoir *Finding Rosa* (2008), I will show how the trigger for the 'return journey' depends on the degree of the migrant characters' sense of (non)belonging to Italy.¹¹ In light of the highly autobiographical component in these and other works, I would argue that the (fictional) characters' trigger for their 'return journey' also happens to be the *authors'* catalyst for its narration. In *Homeground* the main characters Maria and Cesare, who moved to Canada as adults in search of a job, are an example of how first-generation migrant subjects are led to return home because of nostalgia. In contrast, the narrator of *The Lion's Mouth*, Bianca Mazzin, who left Italy with her parents when she was eight years old, longs to go back to Venice to come to terms with her split cultural identity. Facing her past helps her to negotiate her Italian and Canadian cultural identities. Finally, for the autobiographical narrator of *Finding Rosa*, who has never lived in the former Italian Lošinj, her 'return journey' to her mother's country means a search for her own identity.¹² Edwards' sense of belonging to Lošinj is illustrative of the complexity of the concept of 'home' in diasporic literature. The narrator is an example of how diasporic subjects associate 'home' with the site of their cultural origins (see Ashcroft *et al.* 2000/2007: 86). Unlike Bianca, who spent her childhood in Venice, Edwards, who was born in Earls Barton, England, and migrated to Canada at the age of eight (Edwards 2008: 29), does not embark on a return journey to come to grips with her transcultural identity – and therefore to re-construct it – but to discover, namely to *construct* it. *Finding Rosa* is also a prime example of the close relationship between mother and motherland in migrant/diasporic women's writing. As pointed out by Adalgisa Giorgio, mothers embody

¹⁰ Ricci's memoir piece 'Passage to Canada' (2003d) was originally published in Michael Ignatieff's anthology (see Ricci 2002).

¹¹ Edwards' *The Lion's Mouth* was the first Canadian novel to 'combine ethnicity with feminist questions' (Pivato 2000b: 8). *Homeground*, instead, was the first play about Italian migrants to be staged in Western Canada, in 1986. Its original title was *Terra Straniera* (8), and it was shortlisted for the *Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award* (WGA) for Drama (see Edwards' website: <http://www.caterinaedwards.com/Bio>). Finally, *Finding Rosa* was awarded the *Wilfred Eggleston Award for Nonfiction* in 2009 and the *Bressani Prize for Writing about Immigration* in 2010 (see Edwards' website: <http://www.caterinaedwards.com/Bio>).

¹² Lussingrande became part of Croatia in 1991 and was renamed Veli Lošinj.

one's own cultural origins and mother tongue, which are often rejected by diasporic women daughters in an attempt to assimilate into the dominant culture (2002: x).¹³

Although in the three selected works the 'return journey' is triggered by different factors, it remains nonetheless a useful expedient to reconstruct ideas of home, belonging and cultural identity. In the case of *Finding Rosa*, the narrator's 'return journey' to Lošinj enables her to discover dark sides of her mother's past and identity and, as a consequence, helps her to reconstruct her own identity. Therefore, she confirms Adriana Cavarero's point that we understand who we are and the significance of our actions and our life only when we understand who our mother is (Cavarero in Giorgio 2002). For the first-generation migrant characters of *Homeground*, instead, the 'return journey' sheds light on their concept of 'home'. Maria and Cesare are urged to go back to Italy by the sense of displacement experienced in Canada and consequently by their 'homing desire', namely their longing for a place where they feel home (Brah 1996: 177). However, once back in their home country, they no longer perceive it as their home and they return to Canada after only one year. Therefore, Italy proves to be a 'mythic place of desire' in the migrant imagination, namely a place of no return (192).¹⁴ Maria and Cesare realise that the positive relationship with their past was just the product of a nostalgic memory. Brah's 'mythic place of desire' is reminiscent of Rushdie's 'imaginary homelands', namely fictitious and invisible villages and cities that migrant subjects reconstruct in their memory (1991: 10). As argued by Rushdie, the physical alienation experienced by migrant subjects prevents them from 'reclaiming precisely that thing that was lost' (10). Finally, Bianca's case in *The Lion's Mouth* is totally different because Venice is not a place that she 'lost', in fact she had never possessed it. Her return journey is not triggered by nostalgia but by her need to come to terms with her Italian cultural identity, which she perceives as an obstacle to her integration in Canada. Revisiting Venice, realising her difficulties in communicating in Italian and noticing how she is seen as the Canadian 'other' by her Italian cousin, help her develop a sense of non-belonging to Italy. As I will analyse in detail in Chapter 4, Bianca's self-consciousness does not enable her to see her Canadian host country as home but

¹³ The problematic mother-daughter relationship is one of the examples of conflict inherent in Italian-Canadian women writers (Canton 2009: 47). It is the central theme of a number of memoirs (see Petrone 1995, 2000; Edwards 2008; Melfi 2009), as well as prose fiction (see Edwards 1977, 1982/1993, 2000b; Gunn 1993; Petrone 1998; De Santis 2008b; Guzzo-McParland 2013a) and poetry (see Michelut 1986, 1990b, 1990c; Patriarca 1994/1999b, 1994/1999d, 2005b, 2005c). Interestingly, the mother-daughter conflict has also been narrated from a male-perspective in Paci's *Black Madonna* (1982).

¹⁴ On the concept of home in migrant/diasporic literature and the impossibility of returning see Anne Marie Fortier (2000, 2001, 2003) and Paolo Bartoloni (2008).

allows her to accept that home cannot be found but in movement, as theorised by anthropologist Nigel Rapport: 'It is in and through the continuity of movement that human beings continue to make themselves at home' (1997/2002: 77). This was confirmed by cultural and translation studies scholars Anne Marie Fortier (2003: 131) and Steiner (2009: 23). Bianca's impossibility of returning home and her liminal position in the 'Third Space' are shared by several fictional characters of Italian-Canadian works.

As shown by these three literary works, the migrant experience is a recurring theme in Edwards' writing, which makes her one of the most committed advocates of the autobiographical genre in the Italian-Canadian scenario. She is the author not only of literary works characterised by clear references to her own migrant experience but also of a number of essays offering theoretical and critical insights on autobiography (see 1990b, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2005). Moreover, Edwards is the co-editor of two collections of women writers' autobiographical essays (see Edwards and Stewart 1994, 2000). The writer stressed the importance of the community when she explained that she wrote her play *Homeground* 'to give voice to that first generation of immigrants from their point of view' (1990b: 107). According to the author, it is almost a duty for writers who are in a minority position to speak *for* and *to* that minority, thus making a social and political statement about cultural discrimination, sexism and classism (1990b: 108; 1996b: 324; 2005: 23). However, Edwards does not see the Italian-Canadian community only as something that needs to be enshrined but also as a support, since it helps her defeat the isolation as a writer (1996b: 323). She sees autobiography as a tool to struggle against stereotypes and ignorance (2005: 23) but also as a cathartic experience (1990b: 110), as well as a method of 'self-awareness' and 'self-disclosure' (1996b: 323). After *The Lion's Mouth* received a negative review in the *Prairie Journal of Canadian Literature* in which Edwards was 'chastised' for narrating her migrant experience and not having the 'courage' to write about her *Canadian* experience instead, she initially decided to shift to 'more Canadian themes' (1999: 27). However, despite the isolation from the Canadian literary mainstream, the author realised her incapability of not dealing with her past and her migrant experience (1996a: 65; 1999: 27). Therefore, she moved 'more deeply into an ethnic voice, with a, perhaps, presumptive sense of duty' (1996a: 65): 'If I ever have a place in the canon of Canadian literature, it will not be by putting my Italian interests aside. It will not be by moving on to so-called broader themes' (67). Edwards argued that writing about the migrant experience does not necessarily keep writers from 'universal appeal or

significance' and she pointed out the real 'dangers' for Italian-Canadian writers, namely using Italian cultural identity as local colour or decoration, offering sentimental as well as glorifying descriptions of Italy and focussing only on one's own personal or individual experience (1996a: 67). She specified that 'even if using the autobiographical form, the 'ethnic writer' must consciously integrate other experiences, viewpoints and voices' in the attempt to create a multifaceted and polyphonic text (1996b: 326). Edwards emphasised the importance of belonging to a community of Italian-Canadian writers within which she felt 'the possibility of acceptance without explanation', differently from what she perceived among Western Canadian writers (1996a: 64). She explained that writing out of the Italian-Canadian experience in Western Canada means being 'doubly isolated and doubly conscious of one's separatedness' (63). Interestingly, Edwards is one of those writers claiming most resolutely her Italian cultural identity although, unlike most of the other Italian-Canadian authors, she did not migrate to Canada from Italy, but from England. She owes her Italian origins to her mother Rosa Pia Pagan, who was born of a Venetian father and a Croatian mother, presumably in 1910, in the former Italian village of Lussingrande, where she lived most of her life (2008: 32–5). Despite her indirect Italian origins, Edwards' sense of belonging to Italy emerges clearly from her works and in the way she presents herself as a writer in the Canadian literary scenario. In one of her earliest conference talks she confessed that recognising herself as an Italian-Canadian author is 'liberating and enabling' and means to 'discover one's centrality rather than marginality' (1986b: np).

Edwards' attitude towards the autobiographical genre and her Italian cultural identity is shared by other authors, like D'Alfonso (1996: 21), Marisa De Franceschi (1998b: 23; 1999: 12), Patriarca (2005a: 119) and Connie Guzzo-McParland (2013b: np). However, Guzzo-McParland pointed out that although she is 'honoured' to be considered as a part of the Italian-Canadian literary tradition, 'tags' like 'Italian-Canadian' might be problematic when they stand for 'minority' or 'ethnic' and are used 'to marginalize one's work or cut the author's chance of being recognized as a full participant in the Canadian literary scene' (2013b: np). D'Alfonso, who defined autobiography as 'the best tool for the invention of collective imagination' (1996: 107), specified that he prefers the definition 'Italic' rather than 'Italian-Canadian', as eloquently shown by the title of one of his book-length essays *In Italics: in Defense of Ethnicity* (1996). I would argue that D'Alfonso's neologism 'Italic' is a meaningful symbol for his transnational identity and expresses

poignantly his refusal of a one-to-one relationship between the Italian country and culture. While the authors mentioned above showed consistency between their attitude towards autobiography and their relationship with their Italian-Canadian cultural identity, Ricci's case is more complex. Despite the countless references to his own Italian cultural origins in his trilogy (1990, 1993, 1997) as well as short stories and essays (1992, 1992/2003e, 2003b, 2003c, 2002/2003d)¹⁵ and despite his fame as the best-known Italian-Canadian author in Canada (Salvatore 1999: 152) as well as in Italy, Ricci firmly refuses to be presented as an Italian-Canadian writer. As he declared in an interview with Michelle Alfano, he finds this definition 'inaccurate', essentialist and the source of stereotypical definitions (Alfano 1995: np). He therefore reveals himself as one of those writers who 'do not like to be labelled' (Padolsky 1991/1997: 27). Ricci explained that he was initially reluctant to deal with Italian themes because he did not want to be labelled as an 'ethnic writer' (Alfano 1995: np; see also Ricci 2005: 80). Although he carefully avoided Italian names for his early fictional characters so as not to be 'pinned down to cultural stereotypes', he realised that he could not escape his Italian cultural background and he was 'forced to fall back' on it, since it was the only one in which he had any particular expertise (Ricci 2005: 80).¹⁶ Despite the Italian origins of the characters of his trilogy, and the migrant experience as the central theme of most of his works, Ricci specified that he does neither write for 'an ethnic community' nor as its representative (Ricci in Salvatore 1999: 155). He argued that the writers' act of addressing their cultural communities specifically is urged by Canadian multicultural policies and the institutionalisation of minorities, which aim to relegate them to the margins of the Canadian literary system (Ricci 1992/2003e: 130; 2005: 82). The result is nothing but 'reinforcing ethnic identification without fostering any sense of participation in a larger cultural enterprise that cuts across ethnic boundaries' (1992/2003e: 130). Moreover, he pointed out that sometimes readers themselves belonging to the author's cultural community are not interested in works dealing with migration and transcultural identity (2005: 80). Ironically, Ricci suggested that migrant writers 'look more closely at the present reality' instead of 'casting back' (1992/2003e: 134) although the 'return journey' to Italy is the central theme of the last novel in Ricci's trilogy (see 1997) and of some of his memoir pieces (see for

¹⁵ Ricci's essay 'Questioning Ethnicity' (2003d) was originally published as an article under the same title (see 1992).

¹⁶ Naming fictional characters in Italian is very common among Italian-Canadian writers. Oriana Palusci pointed out that this strategy highlights both the authors' hybridity as well as their cultural difference and creates a foreignising effect on Canadian readers (see 2013: 29).

instance 2003c, 2002/2003d). His rejection of the label 'Italian-Canadian writer' is shared by other authors, like Verdicchio (see 1990a: 54) and Genni Gunn (Saidero 2009: 90).

Ricci's reflections shed light on how multiculturalism and ethnicity represent some of the most heated debates in the Canadian political, social and literary scenario. The image of Canada as a 'multicultural country' dates back to the introduction of the 'Policy of Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework' in 1971 by former prime minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who made Canada the first country in the world to officially adopt a multicultural policy (De Luca 2013a: 195). According to Linda Hutcheon, Trudeau's strategy to turn Canada from a bilingual into a multicultural country was not only a way to recognise the culturally diverse Canadian population but also a device to control the Québécois separatism of which he was a 'fierce federalist opponent' (2010: np). The multicultural policy was enshrined in the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism entitled *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, which arrived in 1988 with the passing of Bill C 93, known as the Canadian Multicultural Act (De Luca 2013a: 195). As a consequence of this title, the adjective 'ethnic' came to signify all those non-native Canadians and therefore established a dichotomy between Canadians of British and French ancestry on one side and Canadians of different cultural origins on the other side (Dimić 1990: 6; Hutcheon 2010: np). Responses to the categorisations created in the report included the terms 'First Nations' and 'founding nations' (Padolsky 1996a: 252). According to the Multicultural Act, the constitution of Canada 'recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians'.¹⁷ However, concepts of 'multiculturalism' and the resulting 'ethnicity' revealed themselves as the most debated and controversial issues especially among Canadian critics and writers with different cultural origins, whom the Multicultural Act was intended to support (Padolsky 1990, 1991/1997, 1996a, 1996b/1998, 2000; Kamboureli 1994, 1996b; Kulyk Keefer 1998; Moss 2003b).¹⁸ While most Italian-Canadian critics and writers opposed multicultural policies (see for instance Verdicchio 1996/1997, 1997; Ricci 1992/2003e, 2005; Alfano 1995; Hutcheon 2010), Pivato and D'Alfonso seemed to support them (see Pivato 1985/1991b, 1989/1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1994; D'Alfonso 1996, 2005/2006).

¹⁷ See the preamble of Bill C-93 of the Multicultural Act available on the *Justice Laws* website: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/Statute/C/C-18.7.pdf>.

¹⁸ Padolsky's essay 'Ethnicity and Race: Canadian Minority Writing at a Crossroads' (1998) was originally published as an article under the same title (see 1996b).

Pivato argued that through the Multicultural Act the Canadian government ‘finally’ recognised the validity of ‘ethnic’ groups and started to support a number of cultural and literary activities (1994: 50). Similarly, D’Alfonso sees the institutionalisation of multiculturalism as an opposition to the policies of biculturalism and bilingualism and thus as the recognition not only of Canadians of British and French ancestry but also of those with different cultural origins (1996: 174–5, 225). This was reflected in the promotion of literary works of migrant authors (225). However, D’Alfonso prefers to define Canada with the ‘less politically-burdened’ term ‘pluriculturalism’, which aptly emphasises the coexistence of different cultures and languages in Canada (178). Interestingly, Pivato and D’Alfonso showed a more disillusioned view of multiculturalism in later essays. While Pivato defined it as an ‘invention’ of the 1970s (2010b: 83), D’Alfonso pointed out some ‘contradictions’ of the multicultural policy which ‘merge[s]’ all foreign cultures ‘into what is commonly known as multicultural communities’ (2005/2006: 48). Despite these isolated observations, the two critics supported the multicultural policies, as significantly shown by their endorsement of the term ‘ethnic’. In his book-length essay eloquently entitled *Italics: In Defense of Ethnicity* (1996), D’Alfonso offered critical and theoretical insights on the concept of ‘ethnicity’ in the Canadian context. He explained that he sees ethnicity as ‘a mark of prestige’, while for several people it represents ‘a scar that recalls a hurt that they want to forget’ and ‘a stigma that many ethnic authors wish to rid themselves of’ (198). He considers ‘ethnicity’ an act of non-assimilation into Canadian dominant culture and an act of resistance to the concept of nation, since it does not imply a one-to-one relationship between country and culture/language (62, 150–1, 203). D’Alfonso’s definition of ‘ethnic’ seems to correspond to Bhabha’s use of ‘transnational’, which I will adopt when analysing the identity of the protagonist in his novel *Fabrizio’s Passion* (see Chapter 3). Similar to Pivato and D’Alfonso, several Italian-Canadian authors and critics have embraced the term ‘ethnic’ to define their cultural identity.

Unlike Pivato and D’Alfonso, Verdicchio showed a more disillusioned attitude towards multiculturalism. He explained that although the multicultural policies offer support to those who are constructed as ‘minorities’, at the same time they ‘hold out the promise of mainstreaming’ (1998: np). He sees multiculturalism as characterised by a ‘colonial attitude’ (1997: 108) and as the institutionalisation of concepts, like ‘immigrant, ethnic, minor, marginal cultures’, which are ‘suppressed in the hegemonic dialectic’ (1996/1997: 214). Verdicchio’s point found an echo in Ricci’s definition of the ‘multicultural mosaic’ as a ‘palliative [and] convenient myth’ (1992/2003e: 132), the aim

of which is to 'legislate culture' (2005: 75).¹⁹ Verdicchio accused multiculturalism of propagating 'images of ethnic and minority literatures as nothing more than nostalgic portrayals of the possibility or impossibility of a return to an illusionary rootedness (1997: 34). He explained that minority literatures are institutionally supported with the aim of promoting an ethnically diverse society and therefore only if they present themselves as recognisably ethnic and fulfil certain thematic prerequisites (1997: 104). For several writers this implies a double exclusion from both the official and ethnic categories (1996/1997: 215). He pointed out the homogenising effect of multiculturalism, which tends to erase the cultural differences within Italian-Canadian writing (1997: 108). Verdicchio's critique of multiculturalism for promoting a process of ethnification among writers has been shared by several (Italian-)Canadian critics and writers (see Kamboureli 1994: 38; 1996b: 12; Padolsky 1996: 252; Moss 2003b: 13; Ricci 1992/2003e: 126, 128–30; 2005: 80). Critics and writers' scepticism towards the 'multicultural mosaic' is reflected by their refusal of the definition 'ethnic', which they perceive as a social construct and a label adopted by the dominant Canadian society in order to marginalise Canadians with different cultural origins (see Verdicchio 1990a: 55; 1997: 45; Kamboureli 1993: 208; 1994: 28; Blodgett in Edwards 1990b: 109; Padolsky 1996a: 249; Tuzi 1997: 8; Ricci in Salvatore 1999: 155; Ricci 1992/2003e: 134).²⁰ Some of these critics and writers revisited the term 'multiculturalism' and suggested alternative adjectives to define Canadian society such as 'pluralism' (Padolsky 1991/1997), 'pluriculturalism' (D'Alfonso 1996), 'transculturalism' (Kulyk Keefer 1996) and 'diversity' (Pietropaolo 2009).

While many if not most Italian-Canadian authors and critics endorsed the term 'ethnic', I will not use it throughout this thesis. Since it places emphasis on the concept of race, I find it more suitable for critical analyses in social science rather than translation, literary and cultural studies. Although Hall revisited this term and suggested a positive connotation (1996/2005), I see 'ethnicity' as a social construct created by a nationalist desire of the dominant culture, which implies practices of homogenisation, essentialism, ethnification and stereotypical representations. I will adopt, instead, Bhabha's expression

¹⁹ The expression 'multicultural mosaic' was coined by Scottish-Canadian writer John Murray Gibbon in 1938 'to contrast assimilatory premises of the American melting pot model' (De Luca and Saidero 2012b: 7).

²⁰ In her essay 'A Playwright's Experience' (1990b), Edwards stated with a clear tone of disapproval that she had recently heard a critic and poet – whose name was not mentioned – say that 'to be called an ethnic writer is the kiss of the death' (109). Edwards was erroneously acknowledged by Padolsky as the author of this quote (1996a: 259), which clearly clashes with the Edwards' relationship with her cultural origins. In a private correspondence of the 8 August 2013, Edwards clarified that that sentence was stated by Ted Blodgett.

'cultural difference', since it emphasises the porous borders between cultures and their act of leaking into each other (1994: 34).²¹

2.2 Distributing and Packaging Italian-Canadian Literature

Italian-Canadian literature has been considerably helped by the publishing house Guernica Editions in acquiring its current position on the Canadian literary scene. Most Italian-Canadian literary works as well as anthologies and critical collections have been distributed by this publishing house, which is still the 'major supporter and ally' of Italian-Canadian writing (Foschi Ciampolini 2013).²² Guernica was founded by D'Alfonso in 1978 in Montreal, moved to Toronto in 1993 and was finally passed on to Guzzo-McParland and Michael Mirolla in 2010.²³ D'Alfonso expressed several reflections on his experience as a publisher and his failed attempt to create a multilingual publishing house because of the lack of support from the Canadian government (1996). As a publisher, he saw himself as 'a sort of loudspeaker which would transmit to the rest of the country the Italian voice that began to be heard' (167). Guernica has paid considerable attention to translated literature, as significantly shown by the section 'Translations' on its website. This reflects D'Alfonso's dedication to translation, which he sees as 'one of the best ways of building a fine library' (197) and 'the most beautiful act of love a writer can offer another writer' (2009b: np). Several published books are English translations of works by Italian authors (see Merini 1996, 2002; De Filippo 1997; Guerra 1999; Pasolini 1999, 2008; Pirandello 2003; Gramsci 2006), which shows a desire to establish a link with the Italian literary system. Guernica no longer presents itself as a promoter of exclusively Italian-Canadian literature but of 'fine Canadian literature with a special understanding of different cultures'.²⁴ The long list of works by writers with different cultural origins confirms its focus on transcultural literature. Along with Guernica, however, several other publishing houses across Canada have recently been distributing works by Italian-Canadian authors, like Quattro Books (see Patriarca 2007, 2012a; Giangrande 2010;

²¹ This term has been endorsed by several theorists and critics (see for instance Godard 1990; Hall 1990, 1996/2005; Radhakrishnan 1996; Saidero 2000; Lowe 2003; Malena 2003).

²² Anna Foschi Ciampolini's quote is taken from a collective message of 15 September 2013 sent to the *AICW* executive members.

²³ See D'Alfonso's personal website <http://antoniodalfonso.wix.com/antoniodalfonso> and Guernica Editions website <http://www.guernicaeditions.com/about>.

²⁴ See Guernica website: <http://www.guernicaeditions.com/>.

Mirolla 2011; Favro 2012), Signature Editions (see Mirolla 1991, 2013; Gunn 2007, 2010, 2013a), Exile Editions (see D'Alfonso 2002a, 2005/2006; Madott 2012), Longbridge Books (see Canton 2008, 2014; De Santis 2008a; Madott 2008, 2014; De Franceschi 2010), LyricalMyrical (see Patriarca 2003, Bertoni-Di Giuseppe 2004, Di Placido 2006), Ekstasis Editions (D'Alfonso 2013; Militano 2013) and Linda Leith Publishing (see Guzzo-McParland 2013a; Edwards forthcoming). Despite the small size of most of these publishing houses, I would argue that it is an indication that Italian-Canadian literature is claiming its space in the Canadian publishing industry.

The close association between Italian-Canadian authors and their cultural difference also clearly stands out in the anthologies which have included their works written mainly by 'multicultural' Canadian authors (see Hutcheon and Richmond 1990; Kamboureli 1996a).²⁵ Only a few anthologies containing Italian-Canadian pieces have been presented, instead, as 'Canadian' (see Rooke 1994, 1997). Some of these anthologies have been devoted exclusively to Canadian women authors (see di Michele 1984; Edwards and Stewart 1994, 2000a) and Albertan writers (see Heath 1985; Stenson 1986; Radford and Savage 1987; Van Herk 1990, 1993; Pavlović 1999; Lee Norman 2013). Outside the Canadian context, pieces of Italian-Canadian works have been published in anthologies of Italian-American literature (see Ciatu *et al.* 1998) and Sicilian-North America writing (see Fazio and De Santis 2004, 2010).²⁶ However, most of the anthologies containing Italian-Canadian literary pieces are dedicated exclusively to this literary body and are edited by critics, who are at times authors themselves. In line with Wolf's observation that editors act as cultural mediators between the texts and their readers (2002: 189), I will review the introductions to Italian-Canadian anthologies to show how Italian-Canadian editors 'have translated' these literary works for their Canadian readership and how they contributed to its self-representation.

Di Cicco's *Roman Candles* (1978) was only the first of several Italian-Canadian anthologies (see Caccia and D'Alfonso 1983; Caticchio 1983; Morgan Di Giovanni 1984a, 2006a, 2012a; Minni 1989a; Michelut 1993; De Franceschi 1998a; Pivato 1998b; Canton

²⁵ Hutcheon and Marion Richmond's volume *Other Solitudes* (1990) was defined as the first anthology marking 'a decisive shift in the articulation of ethnic difference in Canada' (Kamboureli 1994: 44). In turn, Smaro Kamboureli was acknowledged by Simon for writing a 'sensitive introduction' to her own anthology *Making a Difference* (1996a), which successfully showed that the most innovative and energetic writing in Canada is by 'minority writers' (Simon 2004: 9).

²⁶ The second volume of Fazio and De Santis' anthology *Sweet Lemons* (2010) include pieces not only by Sicilian-North American authors but any writers of Sicilian origins living in Anglophone countries.

et al. 2012a; Chirumbolo and Galippi 2009a; De Santis and Gatto-White 2013; Canton 2014).²⁷ Other volumes include not only literary pieces but also critical essays and are the proceedings of the biennial conferences organised by the *Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW)* (see Minni and Foschi Ciampolini 1990; Canton 2002a; Canton *et al.* 2006, 2010; Foschi Ciampolini *et al.* 2007; Canton and Morgan Di Giovanni 2013).²⁸ Via a reading of the introductions to the anthologies mentioned above, it is clear how the editors' greatest emphasis is on the authors' cultural identity, which has been defined as 'bicultural' (Di Cicco 1978b: 7), 'ethnic' (Morgan Di Giovanni 1984b: 19; Minni 1989: 9; Canton 1998b: 19; Stellin 1998b: 11) and 'hyphenated' (Chirumbolo and Gallippi 2009b: 7). In other cases the writers' transcultural identity has been pointed out by highlighting their cultural origins, for instance through expressions like 'Canadian writers with Italian background' (Minni 1989b: 9; Canton and Verduyn 2002: 19–20) and 'Canadian-born authors with an Italian cultural heritage' (Morgan Di Giovanni 2012b: 11–2). Some editors pointed out that the authors' Italian cultural origins often imply cultural tensions with the Canadian dominant society (Morgan Di Giovanni 1984b: 19) or even marginalisation (Minni 1989b: 8; Stellin 1998b: 7). In one of the earliest anthologies, Dino Minni emphasised how the writers' Italian cultural origins are reflected in their works at a thematic level by narrating their nostalgia, which led them to embark on a 'return journey' to Italy (1989b: 7). Therefore, not only is the 'return journey' the catalyst for creative works, as I mentioned in Section 2.1, but also for the publication of some anthologies (see Di Cicco 1978a; Canton *et al.* 2006; Canton and Morgan Di Giovanni 2013). Di Cicco explained that after returning to Italy and becoming aware of his non-belonging, he decided to collect poems by authors who shared the same experiences, hence his idea of *Roman Candles* (1978b: 9). Similar comments have been included in the introductions to some proceedings of the *AICW* conferences held in Italy. Canton stressed that attending the tenth *AICW* conference in Udine helped several writers accept Italy not as their physical home but their 'cultural home' (2006a: 14, my emphasis). This enabled them 'to move on

²⁷ The anthologies edited by Fulvio Caccia and D'Alfonso (1983) and the one edited by Tonino Caticchio (1983) include creative works by Italian-Quebecois authors, while the anthology edited by Michelut (1993) is dedicated to Friulian-Canadian women's poetry.

²⁸ The *AICW*, which brings together literary authors, critics as well as academics and is currently chaired by Domenic Beneventi, was founded in 1986 on the occasion of the *First National Conference of Italian Canadian Writers* held in Vancouver (Pivato 1989/1990: 287). Since then it has played a crucial role in supporting Italian-Canadian literature through the organisation of biennial conferences and other literary events, as well as the publication of volumes of creative and critical works.

as writers' (13). Seven years later Canton was echoed by Elena Lamberti, who explained how the thirteenth *AICW* conference in Atri was an occasion for several authors to reflect on the necessity to move back in order to move on (2013: 15). These critics' reflections seem to confirm theorist Bartoloni's observation that returning is to be understood 'not as a movement backward but a movement forward' (2008: 40). Finally, Lamberti suggested that the answer to the eloquent conference theme *Writing Our Way Home* is that home cannot be found but in movement (2013: 15), which is reminiscent of Fortier's (2003: 131) and Steiner's (2009: 23) observations and confirms my interpretation of the 'return journey'.

Going back to the thematic features presented by the editors, according to more recent prefaces, Italian-Canadian authors still deal with the concept of memory (Canton and Verduyn 2002: 20), but contain very little nostalgia (Morgan Di Giovanni 2012b: 11). While the earliest introductions emphasise how Italian-Canadian works stage the migrant experience as the central theme (Di Cicco 1978b: 9; Pivato 1984: 13–4, 1998c: 17; Morgan Di Giovanni 1984b: 19; Minni 1989b: 7), the editors of later anthologies pointed out how authors embrace a wider range of topics (Canton and Zuccherò 2010: 16; Lamberti 2013: 14). Although Minni was one of the critics who placed great emphasis on the shared theme of migration, he also pointed out that Italian-Canadian writing is not simply an 'immigrant literature' and should take more than a thematic approach (1990: 12); his point was confirmed by Caroline Morgan Di Giovanni (2006b: vii). In the introduction to her anthology of Italian-Canadian women writers, Marisa De Franceschi stressed that the themes analysed by her contributors are universal and relevant to people of any gender and cultural origin (1998b: 24). Unlike other editors, who dedicated their anthologies to migrants and in particular their migrant ancestors (Minni 1989b: 7; Canton 2012: 6), or unlike Pivato, who argued that Morgan Di Giovanni's anthology was addressed 'not only to Italian-Canadians but to people from many other backgrounds' (1984: 13), De Franceschi specified that her anthology is 'relevant to everybody' (1998b: 24). In the preface to the same anthology authored by Canton, it was pointed out how every writer expresses her Italian cultural identity in a very different way although they all share the same cultural origins (1998b: 20). Canton's call to resistance to homogenisation was echoed by Morgan Di Giovanni (2006b: vii), who also poignantly pointed out that the

authors' transcultural identity gives them a different cultural perspective (1984b: 19).²⁹ This observation is of the utmost importance, since the writers' 'foreign gaze' on Canadian culture and their act of translating it from an Italian point of view, make their works a form of cultural translation. Their external perspective is given by their 'plurality of vision', which 'gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions' (Said 2001: 186).

On a more linguistic level, Canton and Christl Verduyn pointed out the trilingual nature of their Italian-Canadian anthology, which challenges the policies of institutional bilingualism but at the same time makes these works 'unappealing to publishers' (2002: 15, see also 23).³⁰ Like Pivato, Canton also pointed out the heterolingualism featuring the collected works (Pivato 1984: 13; 1998c: 14; Canton 2002b: 15) and took it a step further by highlighting the translation process, namely the acts of identity negotiation performed by authors (Canton 1998b: 21; 2012: 7; Canton and Verduyn 2002: 20, 24). The difficulty of Italian-Canadian literature in establishing itself in the Canadian literary system was already noted by Morgan Di Giovanni when in the first anthology of Italian-Canadian prose she presented it as an 'emerging literature' (1984b: 17), which was starting to be 'recognized and appreciated' and was contributing to 'a new perspective of Canadian literature' (18). Instead, her most recent anthology was presented as a volume which 'makes a distinct contribution to the landscape of Canadian literature' (2012b: 13).

While Pivato pointed out the benefits of publishing 'ethnic anthologies', such as the importance given to the authors' Italian cultural identity and the fostered sense of community (1994: 58; see also 1998c: 14), Verdicchio criticised Italian-Canadian anthologies for presenting a 'writing of the *different*' rather than 'a writing of *difference*' (1990a: 54, emphases in the original).³¹ The critic accused editors of focussing on the authors' ethnicity and of presenting them as 'different', namely as the 'other'. Instead, Verdicchio suggested highlighting Italian-Canadian literature as a 'writing of difference', thus pointing out its distinctive features, like the process of translation in which authors are involved (1990a: 55). Almost a decade later, Verdicchio confirmed his opinion and argued that most of Italian Canadian literary anthologies were continuing 'to limit themselves to

²⁹ Morgan Di Giovanni's observation was also confirmed by a number of critics (Loriggio 1990a: 89–90; Minni 1990: 10; Pivato 1990b: 35; Padolsky 1991/1997: 36–7; Verdicchio 1996/1997: 213; Ricci 2005: 81; Canton and Zuccherò 2010: 21).

³⁰ The thorny trilingual nature of Italian-Canadian works had already been pointed out by Di Cicco, who, unlike Canton, decided to include only English-language poems in his anthology in order to stress the authors' contribution to Anglo-Canadian poetry and to prevent them from being labelled as 'The Italian Poets Writing in Canada' (1978b: 9).

³¹ Verdicchio's essay 'The Intellectual Ghetto' (1990a) was republished in his book-length essay (see 1997).

self-representations in terms of this *italianità* filtered through a purely «immigrant» or «ethnographic» key' (1998: np, emphasis in the original). According to Verdicchio, the editors' thematic readings and their focus on Italian cultural identity as well as on their migrant experience played down a significant feature of Italian-Canadian literature, namely 'the emergence of hybridity' (1998: np). However, Verdicchio's article was followed by interesting readings offered by the editors of more recent anthologies, who emphasised the translation process and the acts of identity negotiation performed by writers (see Canton 1998b: 21; 2012: 7; Canton and Verduyn 2002: 20, 24). Moreover, the analysis of 'hyphenated identities' provided by Paolo Chirumbolo and Franco Galippi (2009b) is relevant to the emergence of hybridity pointed out by Verdicchio (1998).

Although I agree that the experience of migration is the catalyst for Italian-Canadian writing, I would argue that Italian-Canadian literature would benefit from a translational – rather than thematic – approach. The emphasis on the migrant experience as the main distinguishing feature of this literary tradition and its historical value diminishes the complexity of its transcultural nature and might lead critics to analyse this writing only 'for sociological reasons', as has already happened in the past (D'Alfonso 2005/2006: 145). A thematic approach could be restrictive not only because it is likely to attract mainly readers who experienced migration but also because it would exclude the new generation of Italian-Canadian authors, whose works do not necessarily deal with this theme. Moreover, it is impossible to ignore that in the era of globalisation, the new generation of Italian-Canadian authors might experience migration – and the resulting feelings of displacement and nostalgia – differently from the way their counterparts did in the mid-twentieth century. A restrictive approach, like the thematic one, would be a reductive and essentialist practice neglecting the authors' different points of view and could undermine the flourishing of Italian-Canadian literature. By contrast, critics should emphasise how Italian-Canadian writers have moved beyond a documented history of migration, as observed by Anna Pia De Luca (2005: 9). The focus of critical analyses should be on how the creative tension triggered by migration and displacement – or by cultural difference – is reflected not only at a thematic but also linguistic and textual level, which distinguishes these works from those by authors who do not share a transcultural identity. Moreover, it would be important to highlight how the authors' 'plurality of vision' provides them with an external perspective on Canada, which turns them into cultural translators and offers an invaluable contribution to the national literary system. I would argue that the external

perspective of Italian-Canadian authors is one of the reasons for their marginalisation from the 'mainstream' literary system. This is confirmed, for instance, by the refusal of Edwards' agent to represent her forthcoming novel *The Sicilian Wife*. As reported by Edwards, the agent thought that her book 'would be hard to place' as 'it is not a Canadian book although [she] wrote well about Edmonton'. The novel has been accepted by a publisher, who is originally from Northern Ireland and 'very "up" on European literature'.³² I would argue that a comparative analysis of Italian-Canadian literary works and those by Canadian writers with no transcultural origins would shed light on their contribution to the 'national' literary system, would open a new zone of critical investigation and help Italian-Canadian authors to go beyond 'the comfort zone of [their] group' (Guzzo-McParland 2010: 147).³³

2.3 Critical and Academic Reception in Canada

The origins of Italian-Canadian literary criticism date back to Pivato's 1982 article eloquently titled 'The Arrival of Italian-Canadian Literature'. The article was adapted from what is considered to be the first paper on Italian-Canadian writing, which was 'well-received' at 'a major conference on Canadian literature' in Halifax in 1981 (Pivato 2010b: 83; see also 1989/1990a: 287).³⁴ However, it was judged as 'too exotic' and rejected by several literary journals before being published in the social science journal *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (2010b: 83; see also 1989/1990a: 287). Due to repeated rejections from the Canadian literary establishment, the earliest critical texts were authored by Italian-Canadian writers themselves (2010b: 84). Pivato is also the editor of the first Italian-Canadian essay collection, *Contrasts: Comparative Essays in Italian-Canadian Writing* (1985/1991a), which is currently seen as a breakthrough study, although at the time it did not receive a positive response (2010b: 84). Italian-Canadian writing, however, started to gain greater recognition, as proven by issue 106 of *Canadian Literature*, published under the eloquent title *Italian-Canadian Connections* (1985). Pivato is also the editor of the *The*

³² Information provided by Edwards in private correspondence of 23 August 2013 and 29 March 2014.

³³ The concept of 'nation' is highly debated among Canadian literary and cultural critics. Kamboureli, for instance, argued that the unity of the Canadian identity is a 'cultural myth' (1996b: 10).

³⁴ Pivato's essay (1982) was recognised by George Eliot Clarke as 'a useful model for scholars of other minority or ethnic Canadian communities who seek to affirm and reconceptualize these literatures' (2002: 325).

Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing (1998b), which was conceived as a textbook (2014: np). Moreover, he is the author of *Echo* (1994), which was followed by a number of other book-length essays (see Tuzi 1997; Verdicchio 1997; Salvatore 1999) and by a monograph (see Stellin 2006) by other critics. Other critical works have been published in the proceedings of the *AICW* conferences listed in Section 2.2 and in a few collections edited by Italian-Canadian critics (see Perin 1989; Canton *et al.* 2012b).³⁵

Among Italian-Canadian critics, Pivato is the one who first insisted on the autobiographical nature of this literary body. He explained that Italian-Canadian writing, similar to other migrant literary bodies, has often been criticised for being 'too autobiographical, too historical, too sociological and not literary enough' (1994: 60, 206). Moreover, it has been accused of being 'stuck in the conventions of literary realism' instead of being experimental and exploring new ways of representing the migrant subject (1996b/1998a: 159). Pivato questioned this criticism and firmly defended the central role played by autobiography in Italian-Canadian literature (see in particular 1996b/1998a). According to Pivato, the authors' tendency towards autobiography 'increases the literary value of their work, rather than diminishing it' (1996b/1998a: 159; see also 2000b: 9). He specified that the centrality given to the realistic representation of the migrant experience makes Italian-Canadian writing 'valuable both as literature and as story' and allows 'minority' writers to exercise their agency and to make a strong statement about the process of ethnification (1996b/1998a: 159). Pivato stressed the crucial role of the migrant experience, which is the catalyst for the authors' writing (see 1990c: 36–7) and 'demonstrates the close interweaving of history and literature' (1985: 169). He therefore advocated its narration, and pointed it out as the thematic feature, which makes Italian-Canadian writing a coherent literary tradition (1989/1990: 290; 1990c: 38). Moreover, Pivato criticised postmodern readings of migrant literary texts for presenting migrant characters as 'decentred' and argued, instead, that writing is a way for migrant writers to *construct* their identity and to 'reconstruct a lost narrative for the first time from the chaos of fragmented oral histories' (1996b/1998a: 159). He emphasised the public role that migrant writers have to fulfil in their society (160, 290; 2000b: 8–9), which was pointed out also by other critics (see Diminić 1990: 7; Loriggio 1990: 29). The historical value that

³⁵ The collection edited by Roberto Perin (1989) is the result of the proceedings of the first conference on Italian-Canadian literature *Writing about the Immigrant Experience in Canada*, organised by Perin himself together with Franc Sturino and held in Rome in 1984 at the *Canadian Academic Centre in Italy*. The conference was defined by Pivato as an 'historic event' (1998b: 12).

Pivato gives to migrant narratives is somehow supported by Smith and Watson's observation that 'when the narrators write to chronicle an event to explore a certain time of period or to enshrine a community, they are making "history" in a sense' (2001: 10). The two theorists seem to confirm Pivato's point when they discuss authors narrating their trauma of displacement in an attempt to have a therapeutic effect on their readers and to create a sense of community (23).

The autobiographical genre has been deeply criticised, instead, by Verdicchio (see 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1996, 1997, 1998).³⁶ Unlike Pivato, D'Alfonso and Edwards, Verdicchio declared that migrant writers cannot act as representatives of their cultural communities (1996: 222). The critic argued that being associated with a specific cultural community diminishes the heterogeneity characterising Italian-Canadian writing; he rather suggested exploring an historical commonality, which instead would reinforce the group's cultural diversity (1996: 215; 1997: 105). Verdicchio pointed out that most of Italian-Canadian literary works are 'rooted in a misguided nostalgia', which might lead to the oversimplification of migrant fictional characters into naive, harmless and old-fashioned stereotypes (1998: np; see also 1997: 105). Similarly, the critics' purely thematic approach to literary works encourages the circulation of images of the stereotypical Italian-Canadian writer dealing with the migrant experience (1990b: 100; 1997: 105). In one of his earliest essays, Verdicchio criticised Italian-Canadian writers for expressing a '*false* identity, a historical position that has been *assigned* and not *chosen*' (1990c: 123, my emphasis). In his later essays, Verdicchio clarified that Italian-Canadian writers are urged by Canadian multicultural policies and their consequent process of ethnification to pursue their idealised *italianità*, which does not reflect their historical background (1997: 43, 104–6). The construction of otherness imposed on Italian-Canadian writers by multicultural policies leads them to pursue a 'narcissistic self-representation' of the idealised Italian migrant subject (106). The connotation of the 'prejudiced and weighty term' *italianità*, which was glorified during the fascist dictatorship, was elucidated in a later article, where Verdicchio stressed its nationalistic essence (1998: np). He highlighted how this term invokes a cultural and linguistic standardisation and homogenisation, as well as the image of an idealised Italian national identity, which significantly excludes Italian diasporic communities (1998: np). Under this view, the concept of *italianità* clashes with the

³⁶ Verdicchio's essays 'More than a Thematic Approach' (1990b) and 'The Failure of Memory in the Language: Re-membering of Italian-Canadian Poets' (1990c) were republished in his book-length essay (1997).

'hybrid' and *transnational* migrant Italian-Canadian culture (1998: np, my emphasis). The critic argued that Italian migrant writers who acknowledge the importance of history in literature have to 'destroy any notion of Italian culture and history that denies the presence and influence of Italian emigration' (1998: np). He suggested that Italian-Canadian writers 'defy their identities as e/immigrants by a critique of those imposed categories' (1990c: 123). He presented it as the only way to 'exercise/exorcise the effects of official and national cultures both Canadian and Italian' (123). Verdicchio suggested going beyond a mere 'contemplation of the past' (1990a: 53), as well as a 'romanticized and nostalgic position' (1997: 107). He encouraged authors not to promote a 'pseudo-historical affiliation', but to recast their writing in a 'resistance mode' (107). This approach should include a 'critique of origins, not an attempt to return to nationalist notions of culture and language' (107). As a consequence, writers should focus on the 'exploration and not exploitation' of their Italian-Canadian cultural identity and highlight similarities as well as differences (107). This would prevent Italian-Canadian writing from becoming an 'invisible minority' (1998: np).

Although I agree that the remarkable autobiographical component of Italian-Canadian works might have been a reason for their marginalisation, I would argue that this genre is a significant reflection of the authors' acts of identity negotiation, which have been pointed out by a number of critics. As emerges from my analysis of these texts as a form of cultural translation, they reveal themselves as autobiographical narratives, which are sites of negotiation, as well as a means for migrant authors to explore their transcultural identity (Smith and Watson 2001: 107). Autobiography enables authors to translate their cultural difference into discourse, more specifically to translate their Italian cultural identity in the Canadian context through a discursive process. Negotiating their transcultural identity allows their final integration into their host country. No less importantly, autobiographical discourses enable Italian-Canadian authors to challenge the socially constructed 'ethnic' identity assigned by the Canadian dominant culture and, as a consequence, their marginalisation from the 'mainstream' literary system. Such negotiations enable the emergence of an agency that refuses binary representations, like 'ethnic'/'mainstream'. Italian-Canadian writers deploy their original culture to construct visions of community and versions of historic and collective memory that give a narrative form to the 'minority position' they occupy. However, I would argue that speaking exclusively *to* and *of* their cultural community would contribute to the marginalisation of Italian-Canadian works from the Canadian literary system. Their reflections on cultural

identity, language and nation are relevant not only to readers sharing their Italian cultural origins but to everybody living in a Canadian society characterised by cultural diversity. I agree with Verdicchio that authors should not *exploit* their Italian cultural identity to make themselves 'visible' in Canadian society, but they should *explore* it in a 'writing of difference' (Verdicchio 1997: 107). As already pointed out by a number of critics, a lack of focus on the migrant experience and Italian cultural origins does not mean to deny history or forget the past (see Verdicchio 1990a: 53; Guzzo-McParland 2010: 147; Lamberti 2013: 13). I support Verdicchio's argument that instead of emphasising their *italianità*, authors should highlight the peculiarities of their 'writing of difference', namely the translational process in which they are involved and their cultural hybridity (1998: np). It would be useful to go beyond a mere 'contemplation of the past' (1990a: 53) and to show how their Italian cultural identity fits into the Canadian present. Presenting themselves as Canadian and highlighting how their cultural difference and transcultural identity offer enlightening insights on questions of nation, culture and language might prevent authors from being marginalised from the 'mainstream' literary system.

Beside Italian-Canadian essay collections, critical pieces have been published in established Canadian literary journals, like *Canadian Literature* (see for instance Minni 1985; Pivato 1985), the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (see for instance Pivato 1987, 1989), the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (see for instance Padolsky 1991, 1996b, 2000; Pivato 1996b), *Toronto Review* (see for instance Pivato 1998d) and *Tessera* (see for instance Michelut 1989). Further essays have appeared in collections, where contributors share non-Canadian cultural origins. Through their titles and introductions these essay collections are presented as volumes on literatures defined as 'minority' (see Pivato *et al.* 1990; Canton *et al.* 2004), 'ethnic' (see Verduyn 1998; Davis and Baena 2000) and 'multicultural' (see Tötösy de Zepetnek and Leung 1998; Aziz 1999). Outside the Canadian context, other collections including essays on Italian-Canadian writing have been presented as volumes on 'cross-cultural' (see Jurak 1988) and 'migrant' (see Loriggio 1996; Löschnigg and Löschnigg 2009) literatures. Lastly, some criticism appeared in two book-length essays on Italian-American literature (see Gardaphe 1996; Tamburri 1998). The publication of essays on Italian-Canadian writing in collections dedicated to 'ethnic' and 'minority' literatures proves how this literary system is relegated to different sub-categories of the Canadian 'mainstream' one, as has been confirmed both by critics and writers (see for instance Padolsky 1991/1997: 25; Patriarca 2005a: 121; Pivato 1994: 47,

61).³⁷ Some of them pointed out that Italian-Canadian writers have often been disregarded for their disinterest in issues related to the Canadian identity and the nationalism of Quebec and Anglophone Canada (Di Cicco 1978b: 9; Pivato 1994: 61). However, I maintain that this criticism is groundless. D'Alfonso, for instance, offered insightful reflections on Québécois nationalism in works such as *Fabrizio's Passion*, which I will analyse in the following chapter (see Section 3.4 in Chapter 3). His standpoint differs from other Québécois writers, however, because he looks at Quebec and Anglophone Canada from an external perspective, which, I would argue, does not appeal to the established Canadian publishing houses.

Interestingly, although Italian-Canadian authors denounced being seen merely as 'ethnic' and not Canadian writers, they accepted – along with critics – the term 'ethnic' to define their writing. Pivato challenged the original meaning of 'ethnic writing' as a literary system which includes works written in unofficial languages (1985/1991b: 27–31; 1994: 51, 53–4). He saw this approach of defining 'ethnic writing' as nationalist, conformist and restrictive, since it considered language as the only distinguishing element and disregarded instead the thematic features as well as the authors' perspective and translational process (see 1985/1991b: 28–31; 1994: 51, 53–4). Therefore, the critic revisited the definition of 'ethnic writing' and interpreted it as a body of literature 'concerned with the meeting of two (or more) cultures, where one of the cultures is Anglophone or Francophone' regardless of the language in which the work is written (1985/1991b: 31). Pivato's use of 'ethnic writing' clearly corresponds to my use of 'transcultural' literature, which instead emphasises the cultural difference characterising the Canadian literary system, thus changing the view of what a national literature is. Pivato pointed out that ethnic writers are 'artistically in limbo' and in conflict both with their Italian cultural origins and the expectations created by the mainstream literary canon (1990c: 33). He acknowledged Edward Dickinson Blodgett's volume (1982) as the first study 'that seriously considers the work of ethnic writers and their contribution to the majority literatures of Canada' (1985/1991b: 18). In his conclusion to the essay collection *Literatures of Lesser Diffusion*, Pivato presented ethnic minority writing as 'an area of study in itself' and separate from the Canadian mainstream canon (1990b: 312). In a previous essay, he explained that ethnic writing should be referred to as 'literatures of Canada' rather than 'Canadian literature' (1987: 60). He did emphasise, however, the great contribution to the national literature,

³⁷ Padolsky's essay 'Cultural Diversity and Canadian Literature: A Pluralistic Approach to Majority and Minority Writing in Canada' (1997) was originally published as an article under the same title (see 1991).

since not only does it act as a bridge between Canadian culture and the diverse cultures of other countries, but also challenges the Canadian canons and sheds light on the diversity of Canadian literature (1990b: 312; 1994: 48, 61). These concepts were confirmed by Verdicchio who also saw Italian-Canadian literature as the 'threat to the dominant' (1996/1997: 18) as well as a way to offer new dimensions to the 'critique of nation' and to put different literatures in dialogue (1997: 30). Pivato explained that 'ethnic writing' was presented 'defensively' as a 'minority literature' by 'ethnic' authors themselves (1989/1990a: 286) and criticised those writers with different cultural origins who refuse to recognise themselves as 'ethnic' in order to be 'recognizably Canadian' (1990c: 32, see also 33–4).

Although the term 'minority' has been deployed by Bhabha to refer to those identities producing cultural difference (1994: 3), I will not engage with this term throughout my thesis, since it has often been used to refer to ethnicised groups (Brah 1996: 185) and subordinate cultural and political positions (Venuti 1998/1999: 135). As in the case of 'ethnicity', I would argue that the Italian-Canadian critics and authors' acceptance of the term 'minority' involuntary implies an acceptance of their marginalisation from the Canadian mainstream literary and cultural systems. Like Verdicchio (1996/1997), I would rather present Italian-Canadian literature as a '*minor* literature' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975/1986, my emphasis). In their seminal study *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theorised this literature on Franz Kafka's writing model presenting a unique linguistic situation given the coexistence of German, Czech and Yiddish. They defined his literature as 'minor' in opposition to canonical writing. As specified by the French theorists, minor literature 'doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language' (16). They explained that it is characterised by 'the deterritorialisation of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and a collective assemblage of enunciation' (18). These three distinguishing features can be applied to Italian-Canadian literary works. Authors exercise their agency through a deterritorialised English language inscribed with their experience of migration and displacement within the English, which is one of the two 'major languages' according to the official Canadian bilingualism policy. Their English is deterritorialised by the authors' 'foreign gaze', a latinized syntax and the infusion of Italian 'untranslated words', which 'assert cultural difference' (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989: 41). These linguistic features make Italian-Canadian writing a potentially 'innovative' and

'revolutionary' 'minor literature' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975/1986: 29–50). In relation to the second characteristic of a 'minor literature', namely the 'political immediacy', the little distance between individual concerns and the political status of the Italian minority group stands out clearly. As explained in Section 2.1, most Italian-Canadian authors claim the right to speak for their cultural community and are connected to political discourses, as shown by their debate on the multicultural policy. Finally, the 'collective assemblage of enunciation' is represented by the existence of the *AICW* (Verdicchio 1996/1997: 210).

Finally, the marginalisation of Italian-Canadian writing from the Canadian 'mainstream' literary system is also clear from the academic courses offered by Canadian universities. The academic recognition of Italian-Canadian literature has been widely discussed by Pivato (see 1985/1991b, 1989/1990a, 1990c, 1996a, 2006, 2010b). The critic also delivered the first course on Italian-Canadian writing offered anywhere, which was taught in the academic year 1987–88 at York University.³⁸ Moreover, since 1996 he has been teaching courses in Comparative Canadian Literature, including Italian-Canadian writing, at Athabasca University.³⁹ However, Pivato denounced the 'modest institutional recognition' of Italian-Canadian literature (1989/1990a: 287), which was due to the 'nativist attitude' of Canadian academics, who discouraged the attention to the work by 'ethnic writers', thus contributing to the invisibility of Italian-Canadian literature (1985/1991b: 26). In the 1980s, academics were sceptical of Pivato's interest in Italian-Canadian writing (1990c: 27; see also 2006: np), which they saw as a 'passing phenomenon'. They thought that Italian-Canadian writers would have 'nothing left to say' after the migrant phase (1990c: 27; see also 2006). That statement was inspiring for Pivato, as shown by the provocative title of his paper 'Nothing Left to Say: Italian-Canadian Writers', presented at the *First National Conference of Italian-Canadian Writers*. On that occasion, the critic expressed his firm belief in the survival and flourishing of Italian-Canadian literature, regardless of whether it would be part of the literary mainstream or not (1990c: 35). Although Pivato taught the first course on Italian-Canadian writing within Canadian Comparative Literature, and he has been teaching courses on Italian-Canadian authors at the School of English at Athabasca University, he denounced a lacking recognition of Italian-Canadian literature within Italian studies, as shown by the eloquent title of his essay 'Italianistica versus Italian-Canadian Writing' (1996a). With a particular

³⁸ See Athabasca University website <http://mais.athabascau.ca/faculty/jpivato/>.

³⁹ Information provided by Pivato in a private correspondence of 5 March 2014.

reference to Italian-language writers, he pointed out how they were disregarded by Italian scholars in Canada because of a ‘political conservatism and intellectual elitism’, which characterise the Canadian academic context and which put Italian Studies programmes in a ‘colonial position’ with regard to the Italian literature studied in Italy (229, see also 237). He explained that the Canadian academics’ opinion on Italian-Canadian literature started to change in 1989 after Jean-Jacques Marchand’s conference *La letteratura dell’emigrazione* (held in Lausanne) on Italian migrant literature in the world, where Italian and Canadian academics discussed the Italian literature produced outside Italy (237).⁴⁰ Pivato listed a number of universities, like Carleton, Concordia, York, Alberta, Toronto and Waterloo, where the Schools of Comparative Literature and Modern Languages offered undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Italian-Canadian literature (1996a: 230; 2010b: 85). At a doctoral level, in turn, PhD theses have been completed in the Schools of English at York University (see Tuzi 1995) and Université de Montréal (see Canton 1998a) as well as in the School of Italian Studies at Toronto University (see Stellin 1998a).⁴¹ Among the universities cited by Pivato, only a few still offer courses on Italian-Canadian writing – single modules are taught within courses on Italian-Canadian culture at the Schools of Modern Languages at York and Wilfrid Laurier universities, as well as at the University of Edmonton.⁴² The School of Italian Studies at Toronto University is the only one offering full courses on this literary body.⁴³ It also hosts the *Frank Iacobucci Centre*, a research institute, established in 1988 and directed by Salvatore Bancheri. It publishes the annual literary journal *Italian Canadiana*, which is devoted exclusively to criticism on Italian-Canadian literature.⁴⁴ Undergraduate courses are also taught at the Schools of Modern Languages of Brock and Laurentian universities.⁴⁵ Moreover, modules are occasionally

⁴⁰ Interestingly, Verdicchio pointed out, instead, that the proceedings of this conference edited by Marchand (see 1991) showed that the Italianists based in Italy are interested only in Italian-language emigrant writing (see Verdicchio 2002: 8).

⁴¹ Marino Tuzi’s and Monica Stellin’s PhD theses were published in a book-length essay (see Tuzi 1997) and a monograph (see Stellin 2006). Along with these PhD theses completed in Canada, doctoral studies on Italian-Canadian literature have also been pursued in Italy (see Tognan 2011) and in British universities (see Baldo 2008; Lomartire 2013).

⁴² See Wilfrid Laurier University website <https://www.wlu.ca/~mibrahim/class/201401%20Course%20List.pdf>, York University website <http://www.yorku.ca/laps/dlll/italian/> and the University of Edmonton website <http://www.mlcs.ualberta.ca/en/People/Faculty/AnselmiWilliam.aspx>.

⁴³ See Toronto University website: <http://italianstudies.utoronto.ca/undergraduate/course-list/>.

⁴⁴ See Toronto University website: <http://italianstudies.utoronto.ca/iacobucci-centre/>.

⁴⁵ See Brock University website <http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/undergrad/ital.html> and Laurentian University website: <http://luyoyageurs.com/courses/detail/4970>.

included in courses of Canadian literature at Bishop's and Sherbrooke universities.⁴⁶ Although not many courses on Italian-Canadian literature are taught in Canadian universities, the Schools of Italian at Toronto, Brock and Laurentian universities show the link between Italian-Canadian writing and Italian Studies claimed by Pivato. Moreover, this is proven by the participation of a number of Italian-Canadian literary critics during the biennial conference organised by the *Canadian Society of Italian Studies (CSIS)* in June 2013 at the University of Victoria (see De Luca 2013c; Pivato 2013; Saidero 2013b).

Pivato's argument that Italian-Canadian literature is not represented enough in Italian Studies programmes at Canadian universities shows his desire to bring this literary body back to the Italian context. I would argue that a link with the Italian literary system should not be attempted by presenting this transcultural literary body as Italian but by promoting its translation into Italian, as suggested by Guzzo-McParland (2010: 147). Presenting Italian-Canadian writing as part of the Italian literary system contributes to its marginalisation from the Canadian one. Given the remarkable cultural diversity characterising Canadian society, I would argue that Italian-Canadian literature should be presented as part of *Canadian Studies* similar to any other Canadian transcultural literature.

⁴⁶ Information provided by academics Linda Morra and Domenic Beneventi in private correspondence between 6 and 22 March 2014.

CHAPTER 3

Italian-Canadian Literature in Italy: Distribution, Reception and Translation

In this chapter I will analyse the distribution of Italian-Canadian literature in the Italian literary system and I will point out how its critical as well as academic reception in Italy differs considerably from the Canadian one. After reviewing the existing criticism, I will show how this literary body is represented even more differently when it is translated into Italian. I will show some differences at a microtextual level through two case studies – a selection of passages from Ricci's short literary memoirs 'Passage to Canada' (2002/2003d) and D'Alfonso's novel *Fabrizio's Passion* (1995/2000), in conjunction with their corresponding Italian translations 'Passaggio in Canada' (2002/2003d) and *La Passione di Fabrizio* (2002b), by Carmen Concilio and Antonello Lombardi respectively. Through the analysis of the translation of these two literary pieces into Italian, I will illustrate the complex issues that arise when translating transcultural works into one of the narrators' languages.

3.1 Distribution and Academic Reception in Italy

As noted by Pivato, only a few of the Italian-Canadian writers who have written texts originally in Italian have been 'fortunate enough to get their books printed back in Italy' (1996a: 240). These Italian-language original texts have been published by Cosmo Iannone Editore (see Corsi 2003), Somi (see Moroni Parken 1896), Edizioni Sirio (see Albani 1958; Maccaferri Randaccio 1979)¹ and Pellegrini Editore (see Famà 2013). Pivato's use of the adverb 'back' is particularly interesting, since it shows how he perceives Italian-Canadian literature as conceived in Italy. Along with the works originally written in Italian, Italian-Canadian writing appears in the Italian publishing scene mostly in the form of translated literature, as I will show in the next section.

While in Canada literary criticism on Italian-Canadian literature has also been promoted by writers themselves, in Italy critics are exclusively academics. Interestingly,

¹ Elena Maccaferri Randaccio wrote between 1958 and the late 1970s under the pseudonyms of Elena Albani and Elena McRan (Golini 1998: 12). Her novel *Canada, mia seconda patria* (1958) was the first fictional work written by an Italian-Canadian woman (Pivato 1989/1990a: 288).

while Pivato claimed that Italian-Canadian literary works should be included in Italian Studies programmes in Canadian universities, they are included in *Canadian Studies* in the Italian academic context, as shown by the modules offered at the University of Udine.² This institution has given substantial support to the promotion of Italian-Canadian literature thanks to its *Centre for Canadian Culture (CCC)*, a research institute founded in 1998 and directed by Anna Pia De Luca.³ The CCC has collaborated with the *AICW*, the *Frank Iacobucci Centre*, the *Italian Association for Canadian Studies (AISC)* and the *International Centre for Migrant Literatures (CIML)* (De Luca 2010b: 9). The *CIML*, which was founded in 2008 and is currently directed by Silvana Serafin, is also established at the University of Udine and has been the first research institute in Italy to focus on Italian migrant literature in the world. It distributes the annual journal *Oltreoceano*, where several articles on Italian-Canadian literature have appeared⁴ (see Chittaro 2007; De Luca 2007, 2009b, 2010c, 2013b; De Luca and Saidero 2008; Pivato 2009; Saidero 2009, 2010b, 2011, 2012b, 2013a).⁵ Thanks to the research carried out both by the CCC and the *CIML*, the University of Udine has established itself as an international centre for the development of transcultural Canadian literature with a focus on literary works by Canadian authors with Friulian cultural origins. Moreover, modules at postgraduate level are included in courses of Canadian literature and several MA dissertations and a PhD thesis (see Tognan 2011) were completed.⁶

Since 1998 the centre has been constantly active in organising periodic events, like biennial conferences, the proceedings of which have been regularly published by the university press Forum Editrice (see De Luca *et al.* 1999a; De Luca and Saidero 2001, 2012a; De Luca and Ferraro 2005, 2008; De Luca 2010a).⁷ A reading of the introductions

² Information provided by academic Deborah Saidero in a private correspondence of 4 March 2014.

³ See the CCC website: <http://ccc.uniud.it/?q=taxonomy/term/1/9>.

⁴ See the University of Udine website: <http://www.uniud.it/extra/oltreoceano>.

⁵ A few articles by Italian-Canadian critics have also been included in the cultural studies journal *Altreitalie* (see Verdicchio 1998; Rando 2002; L'Orfano 2009). The journal is distributed by the research institute of migrant studies *Centro Altreitalie sulle Migrazioni Italiane*, founded in 2005 in Turin and currently directed by Maddalena Tirabassi (see *Altreitalie* website: http://www.altreitalie.it/Chi_Siamo/Chi_Siamo.kl).

⁶ See the CCC website: <http://ccc.uniud.it/?q=taxonomy/term/4/9>.

⁷ Conference papers on Italian-Canadian literature have also been recently included in seminar programmes organised annually by the *AISC*, which is established at the University of Naples and directed by Oriana Palusci (see Canton 2006c, 2011c, 2013c; De Luca 2011b; Del Zotto 2006; Stellin 2011; Ferraro 2012; Patriarca 2012b) as well as in occasional events organised by the *Centro di Studi Canadesi Alfredo Rizzardi* and the *Centro Interuniversitario di Studi Quebecchesi*, directed respectively by Carla Comellini and Paola Puccini at the University of Bologna (see De Luca 2011a; Canton 2011a, 2013a; Iacobucci 2011; Ferraro 2013; Puccini 2013a). Finally, Italian-Canadian papers have been presented at events organised by the former *Siena-Toronto Centre* at the University of Siena (see Canton 2011b) as well as at the Schools of Modern

to these essay collections shows how this literary body has been represented in Italy, which differs from the way the Italian-Canadian editors of the anthologies and essay collections have represented it in Canada. While the volumes distributed in Canada present the contributions as part of Italian-Canadian literature by stressing the authors' Italian cultural origins, the collections published in Italy, instead, are presented as literary criticism on *Canadian* literature and a significant emphasis is given to the transnational nature of this writing. Concepts of 'ethnicity', nostalgia, migrant experience and social marginalisation are neglected in favour of an emphasis on how Italian-Canadian writing – together with other Canadian transcultural literatures – contributes to the cultural diversity of the Canadian literary system (see De Luca *et al.* 1999b: 9–10; De Luca 2005: 9; De Luca and Saidero 2012b: 8). De Luca stressed how Italian-Canadian writers 'move[d] beyond documented history of immigration' and do not portray themselves as 'victims of history' but rather as 'active protagonists in modifying, shaping and enriching the social, cultural and political panorama of a contemporary Canada' (2005: 9; see also 2010b: 11). The emphasis on the authors' *italianità* disappears in favour of a representation of transcultural and transnational identities, which are continuously transformed and reconstructed, while 'home' is reformulated as a home country and a nation reconceived as a 'hybrid spac[e]' (2010b: 11; see also 2005: 10; De Luca and Saidero 2012b: 8). Most significantly, De Luca's external perspective on Italian-Canadian literature was echoed by Italian academic Lamberti in her introduction to the *AICW* anthology *Writing Our Way Home* (2013). The Canadianist exhorted the new generation of Italian-Canadian writers to 'speak *in the present and for the present*', to show their different understanding of home (country) and to emphasise their success in integrating into the new country (13, emphasis in the original). She stressed how new voices in Italian-Canadian literature 'turn pain into energy' and convey 'a new flavour' to nostalgia (14). This is reflected in the fictional characters, who are no longer 'victims' but 'protagonists of other exciting stories' (18). Under this view, the new generation of Italian-Canadian writers 'transcends the ethnic elements' and 'reaches universal themes' (14).

3.2 Italian-Canadian Literature Translated into Italian

Most of the translations of Italian-Canadian literary works into Italian have been published by Cosmo Iannone (see Colantonio 2000; D'Alfonso 2002b, 2009a; Melfi 2002, 2012; Paci 2007), while others have been distributed by Tirrenia Stampatori (see Ricci 2003a), Schifanoia (see Gunn 2004), Fazi Editore (see Ricci 2004), Marlin Editore (see di Michele 2006), Edarc Edizioni (see Mirolla 2009) and Felici Editore (see Gunn 2013b). Among these publishing houses, Cosmo Iannone stands out as the most active in promoting both original and translated Italian-Canadian literary works. These books have been included in the collections *Reti* and *Quaderni delle migrazioni*, devoted to fiction and non-fiction works by migrant authors. As declared on the Cosmo Iannone website, the migrant experience together with popular tradition is one of the main interests of this publishing house.⁸ While Italian-Canadian literature is received as Canadian transcultural writing by Italian academia, the publishing industry promotes it as *migrant* writing.

The Italian translations published by Cosmo Iannone have been analysed by Baldo in her article 'Landscape of Return: Italian-Canadian Writing Published in Italian by Cosmo Iannone Editore' (2013). With a particular focus on microtextual linguistic elements (like 'code-switching') and paratextual devices (like book covers, titles, introductions to the novels and interviews with the publisher), Baldo pointed out how the narrators' 'return journey' constructed by Cosmo Iannone differs from the one narrated in the source texts. More specifically, she explained how the migrant narrators' failed attempt to return to Italy is represented, instead, as an idealised return journey 'back home' (2) through a 'patriotic and sentimentalist rhetoric of nostalgia' (7). On a paratextual level, this is proven, for instance, by the book covers with family pictures or historical portraits of emigrant communities, which replaced the abstract paintings representing the authors' anxieties of the source texts published by Guernica. As confirmed by publishing director Rosanna Carnevale, this strategy aimed to emphasise the writers' Italian origins and their nostalgic return to their families (12). On a linguistic level, Baldo observed how the original presence of 'code-switching', which makes the authors' English language 'hybrid' and eloquent of their negotiations between Italian and Canadian cultures, has been turned

⁸ Cosmo Iannone publishers declared: 'In una seconda fase [la linea editoriale] si è sviluppata in direzione di un'articolata produzione su diversi aspetti delle migrazioni, intese come espressione privilegiata della mondializzazione e come laboratorio di integrazione e di interculturalità' (see Cosmo Iannone website: http://www.cosmoiannone.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=13).

into a monolingual version in a standardised Italian (14). As a result, the Italian target texts emphasise the authors' Italian identity and a 'stereotypical notion of *italianità*' centred on fashion, good food and a standard Italian language, which clashes with the narrators' impossibility of returning home (14–5). Although the several titles published by Cosmo Iannone might initially suggest an attempt to include the 'heterogenic' Italian-Canadian literature into the Italian canon, the translation strategies adopted prove Salvatore Lorriggio's point that the political acceptance of Italians outside Italy depends purely on their presumed *italianità* (Lorriggio in Baldo 2013: 14). As argued by Baldo, the emphasis on the concept of *italianità* hints at the publishing industry's desire to expand the borders of Italian literature by including Italian-Canadian writing and its Italian translation into that canon (15). Therefore, the strategies adopted by Cosmo Iannone prove a tendency of linguistic traditionalism, prescriptivism and purism common among Italian and other European editorial industries, as pointed out by a number of translation studies scholars (see Section 1.4 in Chapter 1). However, despite the influence of publishing houses on translators' strategies, Iacobucci – who translated a number of Italian-Canadian works (see Colantonio 2000; di Michele 2006; Ricci 2004) – offered some reflections revealing her shared interpretation of the idealised and romanticised authors' return *back* to their Italian home country (see Canton 2002c; Iacobucci 2011). As summarised by Baldo, the translator felt that the English language of Ricci's first novel was only a 'disguise' and that her translation was supposed to 'return the novel to its *original* language – Italian' (2013: 3, my emphasis).⁹ Iacobucci's desire to bring Ricci back to Italy led her to engage with the Italian translation of his entire trilogy, which has been analysed in detail in Baldo's PhD thesis (2008). As argued by the translation studies scholar, Iacobucci's interpretation of Ricci's trilogy led her to opt for debatable translation strategies, like the replacement of the author's Italian words with more specific terms and the correction of erroneous Italian spelling, which reduce their 'pragmatic force' (214). Interestingly, Iacobucci's strategies are shared by translator Elisa Frattolino according to whom, the translators' role is to 'straighten out' the migrant authors' incorrect linguistic expressions in order to simply 'bring two cultures together' (2013: 15). A further strategy criticised by Baldo in

⁹ In an interview with Canton, Iacobucci confessed: 'Quando sfogliai le prime pagine del romanzo, e vi scoprii qualcosa che mi apparteneva, decisi di tradurlo tutto, di riportarlo a quello che era per me "la sua lingua *originaria*", l'italiano. Sì, perchè avevo la strana impressione che quella lingua Americana in cui era descritta una realtà a me così familiare fosse solo un'*anomalia*, un *travestimento*. Non volevo tradurlo, volevo svelarlo nel senso letterale del termine' (2002c: 227, my emphases).

Iacobucci's translation is the suppression of the original italics signalling Italian words. Although Baldo admits that this loss is partly unavoidable as Italian is both the embedded language in Ricci's source texts and the target language, she argued that preserving it would have been recommended, since it is an 'emphatic tool' (2008: 213). The translation scholar explained that Iacobucci might have aimed to facilitate the Italian readers' encounter with the text (2013: 14). Moreover, she pointed out that the translator's Molisan origins shared by Ricci might have triggered her to bring the migrant author back – not only to his – but also to *her* hometown (2008: 221). As stated by Baldo, Iacobucci is a member of *Coordinamento molisani nel mondo*, 'a group which aims to create and maintain links with Molisans worldwide' (Canton 2002c: 225), and she is also the founder of *Molise d'autore*, a cultural association with a blog dedicated to the promotion of writers with Molisan roots living outside Italy (Baldo 2013: 3). I would argue that Iacobucci's Molisan origins, her strong sense of regional identity and her engagement with the local cultural activities have played a crucial role in the selection of her strategies when translating Ricci's trilogy.

Moreover, I would point out that the importance of the regional identity is also the reason for the publishers' selection of Italian-Canadian novels – be they in the original or translated. It is important to note a link between the Italian regional origins of the authors mentioned above and the geographical position of the Italian publishing houses that distributed their works. The most eloquent case is Cosmo Iannone, located in the Molisan town of Isernia, which has published both Italian-language source texts (see Corsi 2003) and Italian translations (see Colantonio 2000; D'Alfonso 2002b, 2009a; Melfi 2002) by writers who were all born in Molise.¹⁰ A short story by Pietro Corsi has been recently published by Edizioni Di Felice, located in Abruzzo, a region on the border with Molise. Similarly, *L'oceano nel pozzo* (2013) by Sicilian-born writer Nino Famà has been distributed by the Calabrian publishing house Luigi Pellegrini Editore, which is particularly interested in literary works set in southern Italy.¹¹ Moving from the author's origins to a more thematic level, the Italian translation of di Michele's *Tenor of Love* (2005), which is a fictionalised biography of Neapolitan tenor Enrico Caruso, has been published by Marlin, located in Campania (see di Michele 2007). The clear link between the authors' regional origins and the geographical position of publishing houses leads me to analyse the Italian translations of these works within the framework of the polysystem

¹⁰ The only exception is D'Alfonso, who was born in Montreal but of Molisan parents.

¹¹ See Luigi Pellegrini Editore website: <http://www.pellegrinieditore.com/chi-siamo>.

theory, developed by Itamar Even-Zohar (see in particular 1990) and elaborated by a number of translation scholars (see for instance Toury 1981; Lefevere 1992; Lambert and Van Gorp 1985; Hermans 1985; Lambert 1995). This theory conceives literature as a polysystem, namely as a complex of systems characterised by internal oppositions and continual shifts. Focussing on the internal oppositions, and more specifically on those between the centre and the periphery of the Canadian literary system, some Canadian literary critics used this approach to illustrate the position of 'ethnic literature' within the Canadian literary system (see Diminić 1990; Loriggio 1990; Pivato 1994). I will apply this theory, instead, to explain the shifts occurring when Italian-Canadian literature moves from the Canadian to the Italian literary system. This approach makes it possible to establish a link between the micro and macro levels of translation studies and to make descriptive statements both on the translated text and the literary system in which it has been introduced (Lambert and Van Gorp in Polezzi 2001: 59). As observed by Even-Zohar, 'as a system, translated literature is itself stratified, and [...] it is often from the vantage point of the central stratum that all relations within the system are observed'; as a result 'while one section of translated literature may assume central position, another may remain quite peripheral' (1990: 49). This emerges clearly in Italian-Canadian literature in Italy, where Ricci's trilogy (2004) was distributed by Fazi Editore, an established publishing house at the national level.

In line with Even-Zohar's hypothesis of the hierarchical position of translated literature, Italian-Canadian writing as a whole within the Italian polysystem, the regular selection of literary texts occurred according to the novels' setting and their author's origins can be classified among the 'translational norms, models, behaviour and systems', which regulate translated literature (Lambert and Van Gorp 1985: 193). This was confirmed by André Lefevere, who analysed the way in which translation is regulated by the cultural system in which it takes place and pointed out that the translator's attitude is influenced by elements, like the status of the original, the self-image of the target culture and the type of texts accepted in that culture (1992: 87). Even-Zohar's hypothesis, which implies a hierarchical view of the literary polysystem – and consequently of the role played by translation within it – can aptly be applied to this case if we consider the 'minority' status of Italian-Canadian literature in Canada and the Italian homogenising cultural programme, which assimilates it into its literary system. According to Even-Zohar, translation strategies play a crucial role in the representation of literature in the target culture and behave as an innovatory force under three circumstances: 'when a literature is

“young”, that is in the process of being established”; when it is ‘either “peripheral” (within a large group of correlated literatures) or “weak”’; and when ‘there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums’ in it (1990: 47). Under other conditions, translation would act as ‘a major factor of conservatism’ (48). Given the recent appearance of Italian-Canadian literature in the Italian literary system, the tendency to distribute it as a form of literature produced by Italian authors emigrated abroad as well as the turning point it is undergoing thanks to the academic promotion, all three cases can be applied to Italian-Canadian literature. The innovative force of translation is proven by the fact that the transcultural identity of Italian-Canadian migrant writers is turned into an Italian cultural identity of authors emigrated abroad. This is eloquent of the interference between the different cultural polysystems noted by Even-Zohar and of how an ‘appropriate repertoire does not necessarily maintain the source literature function’ (70). The literary studies theorist concluded that ‘the function of the [...] transferred items in the source system is irrelevant for the target system, as long as they are employable for target system functions. Thus, transfers often involve functional shifts’ (49). This observation is relevant to the translations of Italian-Canadian literature, since the authors’ hybridity is ignored by the Italian target literary system, the aim of which is instead to claim Italy as these authors’ home country.¹² As pointed out by Baldo, publishers and literary translators are triggered by the necessity of rediscovering local traditions and repopulating towns and villages deserted by emigration (2008: 222). I would argue that this observation can also be applied to cultural associations promoting migrant authors, as proven by the literary prizes won by Antonello Lombardi’s translation of D’Alfonso’s novel *Fabrizio’s Passion*, and by Corsi’s short story ‘Raven’s Daughter’ (2013).¹³ In 2003 D’Alfonso’s *La Passione di Fabrizio* (2002b) was awarded the *Premio Internazionale Emigrazione* even though D’Alfonso was born in Montreal and has never experienced emigration. A decade later Corsi’s ‘Raven’s Daughter’ was awarded the literary prize *Premio letterario internazionale “Città di Martinsicuro”* as a short story in a foreign language even though Abruzzo is not the region from which the author emigrated. Corsi’s short story has been translated by Marcella De Meglio and has been recently published by Edizioni Di Felice under the title ‘La figlia del corvo’ in a bilingual edition (see Corsi 2014).

¹² Some clear textual evidence of the translators’ aim to bring the authors’ back home are presented by Iacobucci’s translation of Ricci’s trilogy under the title *La terra del ritorno* (2004) and Ferri’s translation of Mary Melfi’s *Revisiting Italy* under the title *Ritorno in Italia* (2012), which invoke a successful return journey to Italy.

¹³ See D’Alfonso’s website <http://antoniodalfonso.wix.com/antoniodalfonso#!books/livres> and Molise d’autore website <http://molisedautore.blogspot.co.uk/2014/02/ravens-daughter-la-figlia-del-corvo.html>.

Through the ‘translational norms’ adopted by the Italian literary and cultural system, Italian translators seem to be faithful to the *italianità* expressed by some Italian-Canadian authors as fixed stereotypical images of emigrated Italian writers. The Italian translators’ ‘translational models’ reproduce a patriotic self-representation of Italy as the motherland of Italian emigrant authors who long to return home. Just like Italian-Canadian authors narrate their return journey to Italy in search of their cultural identity, Italian translators translate the works *back* in an attempt to reconstruct the identity of Italy as the home from which a remarkable migratory flux occurred in the mid-twentieth century. According to Baldo’s criticism to the existing Italian translations, translators seem to have resorted to ‘domesticating strategies’ (Venuti 1992, 1995). The ‘domesticating’ or ‘familiarising’ approach theorised by Lawrence Venuti tends to select texts that can be easily incorporated in the dominant ideology of the target culture and to translate them according to fluent strategies, which do not unveil the translated nature of the work and conceal the translator’s role. Venuti argued that hegemonic cultures tend to translate according to domesticating models, thus imposing ‘target language values, beliefs and social representations’ on the source text, performing ‘a labor of acculturation’, and ‘enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture’ (1992: 5). In line with Even-Zohar and the other translation studies theorists mentioned above, Venuti stressed the important role of translation in shaping both the representation of the source culture and identity positions within the target culture (Polezzi 2001: 61).

Domesticating strategies, however, do not do justice to those writers, like Ricci, who do not want to emphasise their Italian cultural origins and those authors, like D’Alfonso, whose hybrid and transnational identity emerges clearly from their works. Moreover, if we engage with Rose’s theorisation that ‘literary translation is also a form of literary criticism’, since it helps readers get inside literature (1997: 13), the reading of Italian-Canadian literature entailed by its translation into Italian remains at odds with De Luca’s interpretation of this literary body as a Canadian transcultural literature. In the following sections I will analyse the Italian translations of Ricci’s ‘Passage to Canada’ and D’Alfonso’s *Fabrizio’s Passion* as illustrative of the thorny issues arising when translating Italian-Canadian literary works into Italian. In light of my analysis, I will present Concilio’s ‘Passaggio in Canada’ and Lombardi’s *La Passione di Fabrizio* as two different translation models; this examination will throw light on the strategies of my own translation of *The Lion’s Mouth*, which I will present as a ‘third model’ (see Chapter 5).

3.3 Nino Ricci's 'Passage to Canada'

In 'Passage to Canada', Ricci narrates his first (return) journey to Italy and more specifically to Villa Canale – the Molisan hometown of one of his parents – in 1971. This short memoir was originally published in the anthology *Passages: Welcome Home to Canada* (2002), which was edited by Michael Ignatieff and included pieces by Canadian diasporic writers. The version I will analyse, however, appeared one year later in the bilingual collection *Roots and Frontiers/Radici e frontiere* (2003), published in Italy by Tirrenia Stampatori. This miscellaneous collection includes six texts by Ricci along with Concilio's Italian translation. As explained by the academic and literary translator in her note on the texts, the collected pieces, which had all been previously published elsewhere, were selected by Ricci with an Italian readership in mind (Concilio 2003a: 12). The texts share the author's reflections on cultural identity, home and belonging.

Although Ricci was born in Leamington and has never lived in Italy, he presents his first visit to Italy as a 'return journey' and therefore proves Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's observation that diasporic subjects associate 'home' with the site of their cultural origins (2000/2007: 86). The representation of Villa Canale as Ricci's cultural home emerges clearly at the beginning of his piece when he explains that he felt like an emigrant to Canada despite having been born there: 'my own entry into Canada was by that most traumatic of emigrations, birth' (Ricci 2002/2003d: 74). His illusory belonging to Italy was fostered by the Italian diasporic community in which he lived in Leamington. Spending his entire childhood with his Italian family and second-generation Italian friends made him feel a foreigner among his Canadian classmates: 'It was as if I too had set out on a ship and arrived in another country, where people did things differently' (78). In a manner typical of diasporic communities, his family proudly preserved the Italian customs and traditions even after moving to their host country: 'the language we spoke was the dialect my parents had brought with them; the festivals we celebrated were the local ones of their hometowns; the people we saw were my parents' siblings and cousins and neighbours from back home' (76). The inclination of Ricci's parents to maintain cultural values and the language of their country of origin was very common among Italians who migrated to Canada (see Pivato 1994: 121; Tuzi 1997: 14). This contributed to moulding his Italian identity, which emerges from his 'foreign gaze' at the Canadian landscape characterised by 'wind-swept and snow-covered and bleak', as well as 'flat' fields that seemed 'the last outreaches of the

habitable world' (74). Canada is clearly seen from an external perspective, namely that of his Italian parents' eyes. Ricci, however, started to perceive his Italian origins as a burden as soon as he moved from the private to the public sphere. The rejection of one's Italian identity – and as a consequence of traditional values and customs – was a common reaction among second-generation migrant subjects once they assimilated into Canadian mainstream culture (Pivato 1990c: 33; 1994: 121; 2010a: 17; Padolsky 1996a: 260; Tuzi 1997: 14; De Luca 2013a: 196) as testified by a number of literary works (see for instance Edwards 1982/1993, 2008; Paci 1982, 1984; D'Alfonso 1995/2000; Petrone 2000; Calabro 2009). Ricci perceived his cultural difference as 'otherness' in his everyday experience, such as the sandwiches his mother made for him with 'thick-crust, spongy' homemade bread, which 'did not resemble in the least the white, perfect, store-bought bread of other kids' (78). He 'did not like the experience of difference one bit' and tried to 'mitigate it' (80). Moreover, he was embarrassed of the 'patched, old-fashioned, hand-me-down look of [his] clothes' (78). Ricci considered his first days at school as his first 'passage to Canada' (78), as the moment in which he really came into contact with Canadian society. As explained by De Luca, for second-generation migrant children the private diasporic space becomes a battlefield for their own physical and emotional struggles, while the Canadian public sphere – with its social pressures – becomes the space for conflicts inherent in a definition of identity, which is always in tension between the values of the culture of origins and that of the host country (2013a: 196). Similarly, Ricci started to perceive his Italian diasporic milieu, his 'little domain, the closed autonomous world [he]'d been raised until then', as 'makeshift and shabby and low' (78). Everything related to Italy became an 'anathema' (80).¹⁴ He saw his 'questionable origins' as an obstacle to his 'assimilation' into Canadian culture, which he longed for, and he thought of keeping the Italian and the Canadian cultural spheres 'cleanly separate and distinct so that the former should not in any way compromise [his] standing in the latter' (80). However, his 'return journey' to Italy helped him realise that this was not the solution to his integration into Canadian society. When he visited his cousins in Rome, he discovered a part of Italy which was totally different from the one described by his parents, and he realised that Italianness did not mean only 'shabby clothes and spongy bread' (80). However, when he moved from Rome to Villa Canale, it was a 'shock' for him to find out the 'other Italy', that southern

¹⁴ Significantly, the same term 'anathema' was used by Perry Petrone in her memoir (2000), when she confessed how uncomfortable she felt with her Italian name: 'No matter how it was spelled or pronounced, my Italian name in all its variations was *anathema* to me. I winced when I heard it called or saw it written' (145, my emphasis).

mountain village characterised by ‘abandoned houses and questionable plumbing and animal shit in the roads’ (80). The author’s shock stands out clearly when he translates Italian culture to his Canadian readers. He explains that plumbing was still a ‘great novelty’ and that water heaters and bathtubs were a ‘luxury’ (82). He mentions the local tradition of making wine and cultivating olives, customs handed down from generation to generation, like calling each other by nicknames, the habit of gathering in squares, religious celebrations and culinary rites, such as the pig slaughter. The narrator was shocked not only by the popular traditions of the village but also by his relatives’ life style. He was disgusted by his grandfather’s house to the extent that it ‘turn[ed]’ (82) his stomach and prevented him from having dinner there. Moreover, he did not find it pleasant to be ‘deprived’ (82) of hygienic standards when he learned that his mother used to buy unpasteurised milk directly from a stable. The author’s descriptions, fraught with disgust, show how his belonging to Italy manifested in the opening sentence of his piece was only illusory. The ‘return journey’ revealed itself as an unsettling experience that initially disrupted rather than affirmed stable notions of home: everything was so ‘unsettling and strange’, like ‘the dwarfish aunts with rotted teeth’ (82). He was ‘horrified’ at the prospect of spending several weeks in the ‘hopeless backwardness’ of Villa Canale, where there was only one telephone at the local bar and only one television (82). The author’s descriptions of Italy are therefore full of ‘heterostereotypes’, namely images of the Italian ‘other’.

However, visiting Villa Canale helped the narrator to better understand the reality of the Italian diasporic community in Leamington: ‘It should not have been a surprise to me then how in Canada the new homes of Italians, fitted with every modern convenience, became the symbols of success for them’. Moreover, with the passing of time a ‘strange thing’ happened: ‘the place got more and more under [his] skin’ (84). What he initially perceived as ‘unsettling and strange’ (82) became ‘familiar’ (86): ‘The village seemed no longer a foreign place I was visiting but a familiar one I was returning to. In fact it had always been but I hadn’t seen that, the shadow at the back of our lives that had dogged us, now finally brought to the light of day’ (90). Discovering the Italian reality made him realise the impossibility of keeping the Italian and the Canadian cultural spheres ‘clearly separate and distinct’ (80): ‘It seemed a strange kind of haunting, these two worlds so distant and complete in themselves and yet each of which seemed the other’s shadow’ (86). The author is cast in the ‘Third Space’, where the frontiers between Italian and Canadian cultures are in constant movement. Ricci’s perception that the two cultural spheres depend on each other for their completeness shows that his cultural identity can neither be reduced

to the Canadian 'self' nor to the Italian 'other', but rather needs to be continuously negotiated.

Moreover, the author's return journey to Italy was the catalyst for the first novel of his trilogy, *Lives of the Saints* (1990), which ends with the transatlantic journey of the narrator Vittorio and his family to Canada. Ricci therefore reveals himself as one of those Italian-Canadian writers, whose return journey inspired their writing. The narration of Vittorio's crossing marked the author's 'real passage to Canada': 'and now in retrospect it almost seems to me that my real passage to Canada came exactly in that fictive voyage, at the point when I had finally been able to fully imagine the place I needed to set out from, since without a point of departure there could be no arrival' (2002/2003d: 88). The author therefore proves that home is to be found in writing (Min-ha 1994: 15). Ricci's return journey can be interpreted as a 'journey forward' (Bartoloni 2008: 86), since it made him accept his own Italian cultural origins.

The author's process of cultural translation emerges at a textual level through his use of Italian linguistic traces, like *penne* (82), *merenda* (86) and *americani* (88). *Americani* and the international word *penne* are highly recognisable to Canadian readers and therefore would not have necessitated an English translation. The author, however, signalled them as foreign elements through the use of italics. Unlike other Italian-Canadian literary works, the frequency of Italian 'untranslated words' is minimal, which might also be due to the short length of the text. However, as noted by Delabastita and Grutman, 'the actual quantity of foreignisms in a text is less important than the qualitative role they play within its overall structure' (2005: 17). In Ricci's case, Italian 'untranslated words' are indicative of his process of cultural translation, as clearly shown by *merenda* appearing in the following passage:

It seemed a strange kind of haunting, these two worlds so distant and complete in themselves and yet each of which seemed the other's shadow, as if I might round a corner and what was strange would suddenly become familiar as day, and it would be time to slaughter the pork and set out the sawhorses or to bring the bread and cheese to the fields for the morning *merenda* (86).

It is noteworthy that the 'untranslated word' is used by the author when he realises the importance of negotiating his transcultural identity through a process of cultural

translation. *Merenda* is the linguistic sign of the author's familiarisation with Villa Canale and the gradual acceptance of his Italian cultural identity. It can be interpreted as Bhabha's 'untranslatable element', which becomes the 'unstable element of linkage', the indeterminate temporality of the in-between that has to be engaged in creating the conditions through which 'newness come into the world' (1994: 227). The heterolingual nature of this passage is a linguistic piece of evidence of the 'Third Space' inhabited by the author, an interstitial space, where conflicts between Italian and Canadian cultures are continuously negotiated.

My interpretation of Ricci's transcultural identity and of 'Passage to Canada' as a hybrid text has been confirmed by Italian translator Concilio in her note to the texts collected in *Routes and Frontiers/Radici e frontiere* (see 2003a: 20). Unlike most Italian-Canadian literary works, the collected pieces are also introduced by Concilio's commentary to her own translation, where she highlighted the challenges faced in translating Ricci's works (see 2003b: 24–31). In her mostly linguistic analysis of the source texts, the translator pointed out the author's use of long sentences characterised by a hypotactic structure, ellipses, nominalised adjectives, adjectival substantives and repetitions (24–6). Most interestingly, Concilio stressed the presence of Italian 'untranslated words' and explained that they have always been italicised and therefore signalled as foreign elements to Canadian readers, who are never provided with an English translation. She specified that the author, however, has either contextualised these 'untranslated words' or clarified them through a paraphrase, thus allowing his Canadian readers to acquire notions on Italian culture (28). She concluded with a brief commentary on her own target text and explained that she retained the italics as well as adjusted the original paraphrases to the Italian context.

The analysis of Concilio's translation reveals that she was faced with a 'unique challenge' as the embedded foreign language of the source text also happens to be the target language (Grutman 2006: 19). The Italian translation of the excerpt containing the 'untranslated word' *merenda* is an eloquent example of how linguistic elements signalling otherness in the source text are read as 'familiar signs of sameness by the target text audience' (22), as shown by the following passage.

Sembrava uno strano tipo di persecuzione: questi due mondi così distanti e completi in se stessi e tuttavia ciascuno sembrava l'ombra dell'altro, come se avessi potuto svoltare un angolo e ciò che era strano sarebbe all'improvviso diventato naturale come il giorno, e sarebbe stata ora di ammazzare il maiale e di disporre i cavalletti o di portare il pane e il formaggio nei campi per la *merenda* mattutina. (87)

In translating this passage it would have been impossible to retain its original heterolingual nature. The translator retained the 'untranslated word' *merenda* in italics although the Italian target-text audience reads it as a familiar linguistic element. This strategy has been applied systematically to all the Italian 'untranslated words' appearing in the source text. Concilio is likely to have resorted to this typographical device to signal that those linguistic elements were in Italian in the original text. Moreover, it could be suggested that the translator's strategy is motivated by the bilingual nature of the collection and the consequent readers' expectation of finding a clear correspondence of this device both in the source and the target text, which are arranged side by side.¹⁵ Along with a linguistic homogenisation, the translator opted for some lexical choices, which partly failed to emphasise the narrator's transcultural identity, as I will show in the following selection of passages. The items under analysis are highlighted in bold.

PASSAGE 1

I cannot call up now what I had thought my parents' birthplace would actually be like, based on the **mythologizing** anecdotes and commentaries I'd heard from them until then. But surely I had not imagined it as anything quite so unsettling and strange, so real, as what actually **confronted me**. (PC: 82)

Adesso non riesco a ricordare come avessi immaginato che fosse davvero il paese natale dei miei genitori, sulla base degli aneddoti **mitici** e dei commenti che avevo udito da loro sino ad allora. Ma di certo non lo avevo immaginato come una cosa così inquietante e strana, così reale, come quella che in effetti **mi si parò davanti**. (PC: 83)

The author was clearly shocked when he saw his parents' villages, which were so different from those of their 'mythologizing' commentaries. His parents are examples of how

¹⁵ Retaining the original italics is a very common strategy among translators of Italian-Canadian literary works (see for instance Melfi 2002, 2012; D'Alfonso 2009; Paci 2007). This has been declared explicitly in the publisher's note introducing Melfi's *Ritorno in Italia*: 'I termini corsivi, in italiano nel testo originale, sono conservati nella traduzione' (2012: np).

migrant subjects share the memories of their pre-emigrant past with their children (Papastergiadis 2000: 205). Their ‘mythologizing anecdotes’ prove how the past is constructed through ‘memory, fantasy, narrative and myth’ (Hall 1990: 226). During his first ‘return journey’ to Italy the author realised that his understanding of his parents’ home country was based purely on their memories and on how they translated their experiences to him. The mythologising descriptions of the narrator’s parents suggest the nostalgic nature of their memory, which acts as a ‘retrospective mirage’ that ‘greatly simplifies, if not falsifies the past’ (Hewison in Lowenthal 1989: 20). However, the power of memory of altering one’s own past is toned down by Concilio’s translation of *mythologizing* as *mitici*. The Italian *mitici*, which is the literal equivalent of *mythic*, is commonly used to refer to something, which is great or famous. *Mitizzanti*, instead, would have emphasised the sense of process and conveyed how the memory of Ricci’s parents altered their perception of the past. Moreover, it would have put emphasis on the fact that the events were not mythic in themselves but were used to create a mythology.

Moreover, the author’s effort to adjust to Villa Canale has been somehow downsized by the translation of *confronted* as *si parò*, literally *to come up, to present itself*. The more literal *come quella che in effetti mi trovai ad affrontare*, where *affrontare* stands for *to face*, would have conveyed instead the author’s difficulty in living in that environment, which was so different from the Canadian one, as well as his pain for being deprived of the ‘familiar trappings of modern living’ (82).

The author’s ‘shock’ when he arrived in Italy is testified by his descriptions of his parents’ hometowns, which are clearly seen through Canadian eyes. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, translating the representation of Italian culture is particularly complex when the text ‘travels (back)’ to Italy. The translation of the following passage proves Polezzi’s observation that translating a narrative of intercultural encounters implies a shift in perspectives when the cultural contact is observed from an internal point of view (2001: 33). While the Molisan culture of Villa Canale is represented as the cultural ‘other’ by the diasporic author, thus acting as an ‘heterostereotype’ for the source-text readers, it has been represented as the ‘self’ when translated into Italian. The following passage proves how translating such works implies ‘new mechanisms of interpretation and representation’ (104–5).

PASSAGE 2

It was a bit of a **shock** to me then to arrive at this other Italy, that of my parents' little mountain villages, and to find there an entirely different world, of abandoned houses and questionable plumbing and animal **shit** in the roads. (PC: 80)

Fu una **sorpresa** per me giungere poi in quest'altra Italia, quella dei piccoli paesi di montagna dei miei genitori, e trovarmi un mondo completamente diverso, di case abbandonate, tubature discutibili e **sterco** di animali sulle strade. (PC: 81)

Concilio's use of the neutral *sorpresa* (*surprise*) tones down the author's 'foreign gaze' at Italian culture and the affective dimension conveyed by the original *shock*. Similarly, she has neutralised the strongly negative *shit* with *sterco*, namely *dung*. The translator has opted, instead, for a more neutral vocabulary in order to comply with the target-text readers' expectations. The negative effects evoked by the more literal equivalents of *shock* and the word *merda* would have led Italian readers to see their home culture through an unflattering external perspective. In this way, however, the translator has distorted the narrator's negative affect and anti-nostalgia. Berman would have defined Concilio's target text as a 'bad translation', since it 'shapes toward the foreign culture a domestic attitude that is ethnocentric' and negates the foreignness of the source text (1992: 5). This passage is a linguistic piece of evidence of how Italian translators are influenced by the self image of the target culture. Although I am aware that these two examples are far from exhaustive, I aimed to show some of the thorny issues that Concilio was faced with in her mostly accurate translation.

3.4 Antonio D'Alfonso's *Fabrizio's Passion*

In the semi-autobiographical novel *Fabrizio's Passion*, the 'complex triangulation of cultures' (D'Alfonso 1996: 160) of Montreal author Antonio D'Alfonso is deeply reflected in the main male narrator and character Fabrizio Notte. Via a reading of D'Alfonso's book-length essays (1986, 1996, 2005/2006) it is inevitable to interpret several features of this novel as autobiographical. Defining D'Alfonso's hybrid identity as the result of a negotiation between Italian and Canadian cultures exclusively might be reductive and

problematic. As he explained in one of his essays, he is ‘the typical product of Montreal’: ‘Within me the Italian, English and French cultures were able to flourish freely and dynamically. [...] Whatever I have accomplished as a person is largely due to this complex triangulation of cultures’ (1996: 160). D’Alfonso sees himself not only as Canadian but also Québécois. These nationalities, however, do not define his transnational identity exhaustively, as proven by this ‘never-ending list of terms’ : ‘Abbruzzese/Molisan/Canadian/Québécois/Italian/European/North American’ (187).¹⁶ Unlike Ricci, who believed in a homogenous Italy – the mythical Italy described by his parents – D’Alfonso is aware of the regional cultural differences characterising Italy and stresses the importance of the Molisan and Abbruzzese regional identity inherited by his parents rather than the Italian national identity. The author’s clarification is eloquent of his resistance to the idea of nationalism, as he explicitly declared in the same essay:

One of the troubles against which I react in a visceral manner is the rise of a nationalistic fervor. This may be due to the fact that my parents, who left a war-ridden Italy, taught me to mistrust any sentiment of nationalism. Perhaps it is because I was born in a minority (Italian) that was dominated by another minority (French) which felt colonized by an overwhelming majority (British). Real and fictitious, whatever the reason, I have become allergic to any blind adherence to an identity which bases itself on a nationalistic sentiment. (13)

These reflections on the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘country’ shed light on my reading of *Fabrizio’s Passion*. The novel was first published in 1995 by Guernica and republished in 2000.¹⁷ It is the first novel of a trilogy, which consists of *Un vendredi du mois d’août* (2004) and *L’aimé* (2007).¹⁸ *Fabrizio’s Passion* was awarded the *Francesco Giuseppe Bressani Prize* in 2000.¹⁹ It first appeared in its French version under the title *Avril ou l’anti-passion* (1990), which was self-translated from the English (1996: 249) (see footnote 3 in Chapter 2). As explained by the author, his choice was influenced by commercial reasons, since his work had rarely received positive reviews in Anglophone Canada (249). In a conversation with Verdicchio, he specified that he was ‘destroyed’ by Anglophone

¹⁶ While I have referred to Ricci’s cultural identity as ‘transcultural’, which conveys his continuous movement from the Canadian to the Italian culture, I will define Fabrizio Notta’s identity as ‘transnational’, since the text contains several critical and theoretical reflections on concepts of nation and country, which are clearly reflected in D’Alfonso’s semi-autobiographical novel *Fabrizio’s Passion*.

¹⁷ The passages under analysis are taken from the second edition of the novel.

¹⁸ The second novel was translated into English by Jo-Anne Elder under the title *A Friday in August* (2005).

¹⁹ See D’Alfonso’s website: <http://antoniodalfonso.wix.com/antoniodalfonso#!books/livres>.

Canadian literary critics, who did not appreciate the style of his language, while his French version became a bestseller and received several positive reviews with the exception of one, which based its criticism on the Québécois nationalism issue (D'Alfonso and Verdicchio 1998: 29; see also D'Alfonso 1996: 250).

Fabrizio's Passion has been analysed by a number of critics (see Canton 1998c, 2006c; Moyes 2010). In her article 'Fabrizio's Confusion: The Risks and Pleasures of Revised Translation', Canton offered a comparative analysis of *Fabrizio's Passion* and *Avril ou l'anti-passion*, where she pointed out some substantial differences in content and perspective between the two versions. She noted that the author was involved in a process of translation even before writing his English manuscript, which was originally a mixture of chapters written in Italian, English, French and Latin, as D'Alfonso himself stated in an interview with Jean Royer of *Le Devoir* (Canton 1998: np). According to Canton, D'Alfonso's use of a different language affected the content, the meaning and the novels' interpretation (1998: np).

As D'Alfonso stated in an interview, the entire trilogy is about 'personal, interpersonal and professional failure' (2009b: np). He confessed that the concept of failure strikes his imagination more than what success does (2009b: np). It is no coincidence that this theme has been explored in a number of his works, as testified by the eloquent titles of his book-length essay *Gambling with Failure* (2005/2006) and his latest poetry collection *The Irrelevant Man* (2014). *Fabrizio's Passion* tells the story of Fabrizio Notte's failure as a lover, a writer and a film-maker. Like the author, Fabrizio was born of Italian parents in Montreal, the city where he lives. The novel is the expression of Fabrizio's quest for identity, which leads him to narrate the key moments of the history of his Italian family. The importance of the family is one of the several references to the author's life, as proven by the fact that the book was dedicated to his grandparents and his sister Angela. It consists of twenty-five chapters most of which are narrated by the main protagonist, while others take the form of different genres, like letters written by Fabrizio's father during his military service, passages from his mother's diary, scripts of his movies and excerpts from his own diary. A linear narrative thread is replaced by a collection of flashbacks, digressions and reflections on cultural identity, language, nation and sexuality. As D'Alfonso admitted in a conversation with Verdicchio, the novel 'tells a story by the use of fragments' (D'Alfonso and Verdicchio 1998: 28) in an unconventional way, often via a lack of characterisation, which is a further reason for its negative reception in Anglophone Canada (29). The non-

linear structure of the novel has been interpreted by Canton as the reflection of the narrator's confusion in his quest for identity in Montreal's pluricultural society (1998: np) and, as suggested by Lianne Moyes, it conveys a sense of 'disjunction, tension and complexity' (2000: np). Most of the narrator's reflections on his transnational identity took place during his sexual encounters with Lea, his Hungarian lover, who was also his best friend Mario's wife. April, which he defines as the 'cruellest month' (1995/2000: 79) echoing T.S. Eliot, marked the most significant events of Fabrizio's life, like his first encounter with Lea, her decision to have an abortion and his grandmother's death. The narrator associates the idea of love with that of language, since they both help to recognise the 'other', while he relates passion, which poses the risk of 'blindness' as well as 'obsession', with nationalism that he sees as the effacement of the 'other'. The novel therefore reveals Fabrizio's quest for a balance between passion and anti-passion, hence the titles of the English and French versions *Fabrizio's Passion* and *Avril ou l'anti-passion*.

Fabrizio's Passion, which contains reflections that destabilise national borders and challenge ideas of purity and rootedness, can be read as a form of cultural translation. Similar to Ricci, D'Alfonso's narrator Fabrizio Notte lived in an Italian diasporic community, which allowed him to keep the connection with his Italian origins alive. However, his parents' attitude made him feel excluded from Canadian society: 'I don't understand why Father and Mother, on the one hand, keep repeating to Lucia and me that the 'others' can do what they please because it is their home here and, on the other hand, that we have to do what we can which, very often simply is never enough' (56). His diasporic community was not only made of his family but also second-generation Italian kids, who became his classmates. As he narrates, at school they used to exchange their 'meatball Panini prepared with Sunday's leftovers by [their] mothers' with the 'peanut butter sandwiches [of their] Québécois schoolmates' (124–5). As with Ricci, Fabrizio started to perceive his cultural difference as an obstacle to his integration into Canadian/Québécois society: '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' (61). Fabrizio's wish to become Canadian triggered his process of cultural translation and his acts of negotiation between his Italian diasporic identity and his new Canadian one. Significantly, he began feeling the necessity to find a 'point of exit' from his diasporic family environment and to run from 'a

reality which [he] did not fully understand' (61) when he started to observe his Canadian cousins' family, namely his first 'point of entrance' into Canadian society (Olausson 1997: 16): 'My godfather is a Notte, just like my father, but a Canadian Notte. He represents for me that which I want to become' (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 61). Fabrizio thought that emulating his Canadian cousins, who opened 'the doors to happiness' (61), would allow his integration into Canadian society and help him start a new life. Spending the summer with them made him feel 'free': 'free to eat ground meat fried in butter and served on sliced Wonder bread, free to drink Cream Soda and, just before going to bed, have a glass of milk with Village biscuits' (61). Their wooden wagon, the 'magic car', represented to him his 'way out of [his] parents' home' (61): 'Every day I take a ride across the heavens on my wooden chariot pulled by horses with wings. I see no one. I speak to no one. I am in a dream in which only my cousins are permitted to enter. They laugh their heads off, and say: "Fabrizio is finally able to play with what his parents won't buy him"' (61-2).

Although Fabrizio's process of cultural translation helped him integrate into his host society, he realised that assimilation was not the solution to his quest for identity. This can be read as one of several references to the author's life in the light of D'Alfonso's confession in one of his essays: 'I thought I was Canadian. But I was soon to learn: even if I wanted to be a Canadian, I couldn't. One is given only one chance to be a Canadian, or for that matter any nationality. And that chance appears in the form of assimilation' (1996: 21). With the passing of time, Fabrizio reassessed his Italian origins and started to see them as an integral part of himself, which is to be explored and valorised. This also reminds us of D'Alfonso's process of rediscovery of his Italian cultural identity, a 'process of becoming', which is 'slow and often painful' (25). Similarly to the author, the narrator accepted his cultural difference: 'Is it my fault if I am different? It's not as though I work at being different. I am myself. Difference is valid only if one's essence is open' (1995/2000: 170). As shown by the following passage, Fabrizio accepted his transnational identity and realised that it is constructed through a negotiation of difference and that the presence of contradictions is not necessarily a failure (see Bhabha 1994):

To be Latin: What the hell does it mean? How should we portray, on screen, characters that are neither of British nor French descent? Mine, a film on the chaos of language, on ethnic dissension. What am I? If a Canadian, can I say I'm Italian? If an Italian, can I say I'm Canadian? Or is my identity purely North American? Answers to such ontological questions can never arise from a

simplified concept like 'country'. What is a country? What is a territory? A nation? Or worse, what does the age-old myth known as 'roots' truly imply? (163)

The narrator praises the idea of nation conceived as a group of people sharing the same language, ideology and culture but not confined to geographical boundaries. According to the narrator, who moves across national boundaries and dissolves them, Italian culture – like any other culture – cannot be confined to geographical borders. His idea of nation is reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's theorisation of an 'imagined political community', namely an indefinite concept built up on imaginary connections between the members of that assumed group (1983/2006: 6). The narrator's resistance to nationalism emerges clearly in his reflections shared with Lea: 'What can I say, Lea, about the nationalist obsession that leads men and women to believe that a piece of land should grow its own particular brand of people?' (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 191). He is therefore in line with Bhabha's idea of hybridity, which resists the one-to-one relationship between language and country (1994). The boundaries of a nation are not simple, straightforward or certain, but shifting and ambivalent and they 'alienate frontiers of the modern nation' (1990/2000b: 315). The narrator rejects the concept of 'country', which he sees as a political construction: 'There is no such thing as a "pure country". We all come from elsewhere' (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 89). He therefore shares Bhabha's idea that a nation can never be perceived as whole or pure but rather as a hybrid ambivalent space constructed by multiple identities (1990/2000a). Hybridity implies a view of the world, where fixity is continually contested. It dismantles the sense of anything being 'pure' or 'essential' and stresses, instead, the notion of heterogeneity and difference (1994). Cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic (36). All cultural systems are constructed in the 'Third Space' (37), where the 'negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences' (218). This sort of 'in-between space', an interstitial passage between fixed identifications, opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (4). This stands out clearly when the narrator declares himself as the citizen of a deterritorialised nation-state: 'O Lea, how can I tell you where I come from if I haven't said *where I am* at the present moment? I want to be a stateless man. An eternal pilgrim. I want to plant a tree in every city and country I visit' (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 193, emphasis in the original). Fabrizio is clearly unable to define his cultural identity; he wants to be both Italian and Canadian and yet he

refuses to be either as an act of resistance to fixed notions of cultural identity. He thinks beyond fixed and binary notions of identity based on ideas of rootedness, as well as cultural, racial and national purity. The metaphor of the pilgrim highlights the length of his journey, which has the 'Third Space' as its final destination. He is in a continuous movement between the cultures of the cities and countries where he is originally from and in which he lives.

The narrator's transnational identity emerges not only from his explicit reflections on nation and country but also from the process of cultural translation in which he is involved when he describes Italian culture to his Canadian readers. His 'foreign gaze' at Italian culture stands out clearly when he refers to Italian diasporic people as 'the Italians' (55) and he judges their style as 'kitchy' (148). He explains their tradition of '*la busta*' – namely an envelope containing a monetary gift for newlyweds; he presents the kitchen as 'the master room of the Italian household' (43); and he ironically calls Italy 'Wopland' (107) as a way to exorcise the discrimination he suffered as a kid. He provides the example of his family, which maintained the culinary traditions, like preparing the homemade sausage every autumn. He points out the importance that 'manliness' (136) had in his house and portrays his mother and grandmother as submissive women, who always served men first during their meals. The narrator contributes to the construction of gender stereotypical identities when he explains that young Italian diasporic women hasten to get married in order not to risk remaining unmarried and their husbands often repeat their own fathers' authoritative behaviour.²⁰ The narrator therefore contributes to the formation of the image of Italian women in need of a dominating male figure and as victims of social conventions according to which a missed marriage represents a personal failure. He offers the example of his sister Lucia, who longed to marry her 'prince charming' Peter Hebert (132), an Anglophone Montreal textile salesman, who represented an escape from her 'Father's dictatorship' (129). Peter, however, had to ask Lucia's father for permission to marry her. Mr. Notte did not consent immediately because he wanted his daughter to marry Bruno, an 'educated and wealthy' doctor, who represented 'the apex of the pyramid of success' (134). Lucia represents the stereotypical Italian woman of the 1970s, who was seen as the possession of men, be it of her father or husband. Moreover, this family portrayal sheds light on the stereotypical tyrannical Italian father, who wants to impose his

²⁰ The image of Italian migrant women in Canada in the 1950s has been discussed by Giovanna Del Negro (1997/2003) through an analysis of life stories of nine Italian women who migrated to Montreal. For theoretical insights on gender stereotyping see in particular Palmer 1989.

opinions on his daughter's life choices. Such a man sees marriage as an opportunity for his daughter to gain economic stability and social status thanks to a husband, who ideally shares her nationality and cultural values. Italian women in need of a protective male figure are also represented by Fabrizio's mother, who is portrayed as a prudish, reserved and chaste woman embarrassed to show her 'secret parts' (190) to strangers during her first childbirth. While she 'craved for her husband's presence, for his masculine warmth', Fabrizio's father found her 'beautiful' while she was 'lying in her life-giving pain, the same pain suffered by her mother when she gave birth to her many children on one of those hills in Guglionesi' (190). As shown by these portrayals, the Italian female figure is mainly depicted in her role as a wife and a mother, while the male is portrayed as protective and dominating. This image is also conveyed through Lea's eyes when she excites Fabrizio during one of their sexual encounters: 'You are so typically Mediterranean! [...] You are so predictably warm, extroverted and jealous' (104). Through this passage the author contributes to the formation of the stereotypical identity of Mediterranean men as passionate, possessive and masculine. These examples show the way in which a culture is read and interpreted by another and has to do with the 'mythology of stereotyping and representation' linking the respective societies (Carbonell 1996: 80). The narrator's portrayal of his family and his translation of Italian culture to his Canadian readers contributes to the circulation of prejudices about Italians in Canada, which were very common since the 1950s (see footnote 7 in Chapter 2). While men were perceived as sexist, women were seen as submissive and completely dependent on men (Iacovetta 1992; De Maria Harney 1998). The novel contributes to mechanisms of cultural production as a contested space, where images of the Italian diasporic community and practices of translation as heterodefinitions are repeatedly played out (see Polezzi 2012a: 352). Questions of translation can therefore be seen as complex practices involved in the construction of images and identities, in the interaction between cultures (2001: 77).

The translational process in which the narrator is involved clearly stands out not only when he translates Italian culture to his Canadian readers but also when he translates himself through several self-translations, as I will show in detail in the next section. Moreover, the novel is replete with metalinguistic reflections arising from the narrator's preoccupation with a series of translation dilemmas (see for instance D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 127) and his interest in the differences and similarities between languages and the etymological origin of specific terms (188). He informs his readers about his

relationship with his multiple languages and explains that he was sent to Anglophone schools by his father because he considered English ‘the language of power and money’ (53) as well as of the ‘majority’ (54). However, he confesses that ‘English syntax does not correspond in any way to the things that are fleeting through [him]’ (66). He explains that English is only one of the three languages, which he uses together with Guglionese – the language he speaks at home – and French, the main language spoken in Montreal. The narrator’s accurate lexical choices unveil his awareness of language and his devotion to translation, as revealed by his use of the verb *to translate* meant as *to reproduce* (38) and *to convey* (189), as well as by his comparison of the act of learning to speak a new language with the act of kissing (106) and receiving the Holy Spirit (125).

The process of cultural translation is reflected by the co-existence of more languages (Steiner 2009: 144), which signal the narrator’s movement between different cultural contexts and create a high degree of heterolingualism. Unlike Ricci’s ‘Passage to Canada’, Italian is only one of the several foreign languages embedded in *Fabrizio’s Passion*. Further ‘untranslated words’ appear in French (see 49, 52, 114–5, 124–5, 130, 139, 148, 170, 184), which reveal the official bilingualism of the narrator’s city and can be explained as an act of resistance of the Montreal Francophone community, which feels colonised by the overwhelming Anglophone one. A less considerable amount of ‘untranslated words’ are in Hungarian – the language spoken by Lea (see 74–5, 78, 144, 146–7, 184–5), Molisan – the mother tongue of the narrator’s parents (see 57, 126), Spanish, which he spoke during his stay in Mexico (see 164), as well as German (see 9, 95–6, 114–5) and Latin (see 24, 113, 179).

The Italian language, which signals the narrator’s cultural difference, is often interspersed in the form of full sentences, which are immediately followed by a literal translation into English (see 10, 15, 25, 34, 35–8, 58, 71, 92, 94–5, 113–5, 135, 137, 145, 153, 187, 203). Through the resulting ‘translation couplets’ the same idea is expressed in two languages, thus reinforcing the expressive acts (Vizcaino 2005: 118). Moreover, these ‘translation couplets’ flesh out the author’s role as a ‘fictional translator’, who peppers the English-language text with ‘untranslated words’ through different translation strategies. The only two cases in which Canadian readers are not provided with any translation are two sentences in the chapter ‘Mass for the Dead’ (see 113–5) consisting of the narrator’s heterolingual interior monologue, which he was reciting after learning about Lea’s decision to remove the foetus from ‘the walls of her womb’ (114). These completely untranslated

Italian sentences act as a ‘linguistic stone’ (Padolsky 1990: 56) for Anglophone monolingual readers and make them feel ‘insecure’. They create a sense of displacement and convey the narrator’s confusion, as well as his shock at being deprived of the opportunity of becoming a father. At a textual level, the resulting heterolingualism reproduces the cultural contrast between the narrator’s attachment to moral values inherited by his Italian family and the indifference with which his lover opted for an abortion. The Italian language also appears in a considerable amount of single ‘untranslated words’, which are used for social positioning, like *Signor* (11, 125, 126), *tenente* (26, 31), *latifondista* (35), *Nonna* (44–5, 57, 63–4, 135, 137, 143, 148–50, 178–9, 201–2, 212), *Nonno* (45, 63, 136, 150, 179) and *Padre* (124–7), stereotypical words, like *amore* (17, 20, 26, 31), *amore mio* (23, 31, 83–4), *bella* (18), *cara* (148), *baci* (19, 21, 25) and *Mamma Italia* (31–2), as well as formulaic expressions, like *salve* (143), *Dio mio* (54), *ah porca miseria* (54), *minchia* (124) *per piacere* (126, 185), *buona sera* (135), *come stai* (135). A significant number of Italian words consist of cultural references, like *scopa* (18), *finocchio* (38), *bocce* (47), *busta* (205), *tarantella* (213) and, more specifically, place names like *Trattoria del nord* (24–5), *La Chiesa della Madonna della Consolata* (149) and *Istituto Italiano di Cultura* (154), song and film titles, like *l’Internazionale* (31) and *Antigone Pacifica* (167), passages from songs, film scripts and prayers (see 92, 96, 107–8, 147, 113–5, 205), as well as food and drinks, like *Lambrusco* (21), *pasta* (56–8, 137), *lasagna in brodo* (99), *mozzarella* (99), *espresso* (105), *fettuccine* (114), *panini con prosciutto* (124), *polpette* (125), *panini* (125 *pennine* (137), *antipasto* (138, 206), *pigna* (138), *brodo di pollo* (206), *cannelloni* (206), *insalata* (206), *gelato* (207), *pasta e fagioli* (207) and the only misspelled word *bisteca* (206).²¹ Finally, a few words do not have a high degree of specificity, like *tuo* (26), *inferno* (83), *la fine* (194) and *sbagliare* (197). While these four ‘untranslated words’ are inserted in the narrative voice, others appear in direct speeches and show the author’s intention of signalling to his Canadian readers that the conversations took place in Italian, thus reproducing the local setting and showing how those words are still imprinted in his mind, as in the case of *una vita nuova* (37), *correttamente* (54), *in un’altra lingua* (95) and *persone istruite* (134). A few words are particularly associated with the narrator’s cultural origins, like *Italia* (54) and *famiglia*

²¹ This long list of Italian dishes proves how migrant writers associate food with their own cultural origins and family (De Luca 2010c: 79–81; see also 2013a: 197). On the relationship between food, cultural identity and memory in Canadian migrant literature see also Padolsky 2003, 2005.

(100), while *forestiero* (132) implies an Italian perspective on Lucia's fiancé, who was seen as a foreigner by her father.

Most of these Italian 'untranslated words' are followed by a translation into English, as explained by the author in his acknowledgments. The translation strategies used by the author as a 'fictional translator' to embed the 'untranslated words' are mostly 'literal translations', 'contextual translations'— which allow Anglophone readers to understand the Italian 'untranslated word' from what precedes or follows – and 'non-literal', namely paraphrases (Rudin 1996). In only a few cases, the author did not provide a translation, namely for *signor*, *scopa*, *tenente*, *correttamente*, *Dio mio*, *ah porca miseria*, *minchia* and *persone istruite* together with the entire heterolingual inner monologue acted in the church during the mass to the dead. Apart from *signor*, *correttamente* and *Dio mio*, which are easily recognisable to an Anglophone audience, the other Italian 'untranslated words' have a foreignising effect on English-speaking monolingual readers.

These Italian 'untranslated words' interspersed in the novel are highlighted in italics and therefore signalled as foreign elements with the exception of *inferno*, the social positionings *signor*, *Nonna*, *Nonno* and *Padre*, as well as the international words *pasta*, *lasagna*, *mozzarella*, *espresso* and *panini*. Highlighting these words in italics would have been unnecessary as they are easily recognisable to an Anglophone readership.

With the exception of these international words and untranslatable cultural elements, like *scopa*, *trattoria*, *scarpetta*, *pigna*, *busta* and *tarantella*, most of the 'untranslated words' appearing in the novel are significant linguistic signs of the narrator's transnational identity and his process of cultural translation. They act as 'elements of resistance' to the official bilingualism of Montreal, to the idea of a one-to-one relationship between country on one side and language/culture on the other side, as well as to the assimilation to Canadian society. The highly heterolingual nature of the text questions the unequal relations between the Anglophone majority and the Francophone minority, as well as between Canadian host society and Italian migrants, thus disrupting dominant 'national' discourses. Through the use of Italian 'untranslated words', the author makes himself visible as a reaction to his marginal position conveyed both by Canadian society, which perceives him as a 'wop', and in Italy, where he is seen as an outsider. As noted by Verdicchio, the author stresses the denial of English and tries to diminish its power by hybridising it through the use of other languages (1997: 36). In light of D'Alfonso's act of submitting the English language to a constant variation in the attempt to make it minor and deterritorialised, the novel can be seen as a work of 'minor literature'. Like the authors

discussed by Deleuze and Guattari, D'Alfonso is a foreigner in his own language. As revealed by the semi-autobiographical narrator, his mother tongue is English, the language of his education, nevertheless he does not 'master' any of the three languages he speaks (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 128).

The Italian translation *La Passione di Fabrizio* (2002) is one of several novels published by Cosmo Iannone Editore. As I mentioned in Section 3.2 of this chapter, it was awarded the *Premio Internazionale Emigrazione* in 2003. The novel is introduced by a preface by Verdicchio, which starts with a great emphasis on the author's transnational and hybrid identity: 'Antonio D'Alfonso. Canadese, Québécois, Italiano, Guglionesano. Uno, nessuno, centomila' (2002b: 7). Verdicchio presented the author as an intellectual, who contributed to the literary and cultural production of the Québécois context, characterised by cultural diversity and yet often represented by the reductive binarism of Anglophone/Francophone cultures (7). He stressed D'Alfonso's resistance to the Canadian, Québécois and Italian nationalism and pointed out his reflections on cultural identity, nation and country (9). Finally, he highlighted the novel's linguistic hybridity and the accuracy of the author's lexical choices (10).

Unlike Concilio, whose translation strategies used in Ricci's 'Passage to Canada' did not highlight the author's transcultural identity, Lombardi resorted to several translation strategies in an attempt to convey D'Alfonso's transnational identity as presented by Verdicchio. While 'Passaggio in Canada' has been turned into a monolingual text, *La Passione di Fabrizio* features a high level of heterolingualism. On the other hand, Lombardi's translation strategies have been facilitated by the longer length and the heterolingual nature of the original text. The translator did not retain all the Italian 'untranslated words' in italics, since he is likely to have perceived it as unnecessary to signal linguistic elements which are recognised as familiar by target-text readers. Together with those 'untranslated words' in French, Hungarian, Molisan, Spanish, German and Latin, Lombardi, however, maintained the italics for Italian passages from songs, film scripts and prayers (see D'Alfonso 2002b: 75, 80, 90, 95–6, 111, 113, 119, 144, 168). Moreover, like Concilio, he retained in italics those 'untranslated words' appearing in the narrative voice to show that they were in Italian in the original and to emphasise the author's cultural origins, as in the case of *scarpetta* (50), *io* (80), *famiglia* (84), *forestiero* (110), *un più di noi stessi* (128), *busta* (169) and terms related to food (see 83, 103, 114, 169). He used the same typographical device for 'untranslated words' inserted in direct

speeches to signal to target-text readers that the conversations took place in Italian in the original (see 47, 60, 70, 103–4, 113). Lombardi omitted most of the narrator's self-translations, which overlooked his role as 'fictional translator'. He retained the original 'translation couplets' only in direct speeches in which he highlighted the narrator's English self-translation in italics (see 49, 56, 89, 135, 155, 167, 163).

Just like other Italian translators discussed in Section 3.2 in this chapter, Lombardi opted for some corrections. Besides correcting the typo in *bisteca* with *bistecca* (169), he turned the initial lower case of some words into capital letters (see 26, 31, 79) and vice versa (see 14, 24, 28, 40–1, 126). While these Italian words are mostly titles, place names and brands, a significant example is represented by *Nonno* and *Nonna*. Spelling them with the initial lower case *n* diminished the important role that the narrator's grandparents played in his life, as testified by their portrayal on the book cover. A further editorial change consists of the switch from the original use of *lei*, the formal *you*, into the informal *tu*. Fabrizio's question addressed to his grandmother *Lei si ricorda dello sposalizio di Lucia?* (1995/2000: 203) has been changed to *Ti ricordi dello sposalizio di Lucia?* (2002b: 167). On the one hand, Lombardi's informal *you* conveys the narrator's intimate relationship with his grandmother, on the other, however, it alters it and belittles the great respect he had for her. In the 1970s it was a common practice in southern Italy to address old people formally as a sign of reverence even though they were part of one's own family. The formal pronoun, which was used, however, was *voi* instead of *lei*. Lombardi is likely to have perceived *lei* as inappropriate in light of the temporal and geographical context and therefore opted for the informal *tu*, which instead is not associated with a particular regional use. Apart from corrections, the translator opted for omissions as I will show in detail in my analysis of passage 3.

Lombardi, unlike Concilio, resorted to a number of compensation strategies in an attempt to reproduce the heterolingual nature of the source text.²² He opted for foreignising strategies – namely strategies which show the translated nature of the text (Venuti 1995) – and retained some words in English (see 43, 46, 56, 62, 83, 87–8, 92, 108, 110, 113–4, 130, 142–3, 147, 207). In one case the English 'untranslated word' was in Italian in the original (see 161). Moreover, he translated the original English into French (see 39, 49, 54) and Molisan (see 50). In some cases these foreignising strategies have been applied to cultural references or direct speeches to show the original language in which the

²² As noted by Peter Newmark, compensation occurs 'when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence' (1988: 90).

conversation took place. Lombardi retained several words in English which, however, do not have a high semantic specificity and therefore did not convey successfully the narrator's transnational identity, as in the case of *soldiers' house* (46), *slim* (88), *chocolate shop* (92), *stage fright* (142) and *the end* (161). However, the foreignising effect of many of these compensation strategies has been diminished by footnotes, which contain the Italian translation of the English/French 'untranslated words' appearing in the target text (see 43–4, 46, 49, 54, 56, 62, 65, 87, 115, 143). This domesticating strategy created a 'thick translation', which aims to locate a text in a rich cultural and linguistic context in order to allow a fuller understanding of the target culture (Appiah 1993).²³ Although according to Martha Cheung, 'thick translation' promotes a deeper respect of the culture of the 'other' (2004/2007: 3), I would argue that the narrator's cultural difference has been disrupted. On the one hand, the narrator's otherness has been acknowledged through foreignising strategies, on the other, however, translation revealed itself as a 'threat' to discursive autonomy and identity (Robyns 1994: 224). This is an example of how the superimposition of languages is often 'threatened' by translation (Berman 2000: 287).

Although Lombardi's translation is very accurate, he opted for some lexical choices, which did not fully shed light on the narrator's transnational identity, as shown by my analysis of the following passages.

PASSAGE 3

Because we are the children of immigrants does not preclude us of being worthy of worldly laurels. The professor says: 'They always scream assassins when it comes to pleasure.' Many students refuse to write honestly on the topic of ethnicity or on our ignorance in dealing with ethnic issues. (FP: 72)

L'essere figli di emigranti non ci impedisce di essere meritevoli di allori temporali. Il professore dice: «Urlano sempre assassini quando si giunge al piacere.» Molti studenti rifiutano di scrivere a cuore aperto sull'argomento "etnicità", o sulla nostra ignoranza nell'affrontare argomenti etnici. (PF: 60)

It is worth noting that the word *immigrants* has been translated as *emigranti* instead of *immigrati*. Although both terms refer to somebody who moves from one country to another, they imply a different perspective. While in the original text migrant parents are seen from the perspective of the host country, in the target text they are seen through the

²³ 'Thick translation' is Kwame Anthony Appia's adaptation (1993) of the term 'thick translation', coined by Geertz (1973) (Sturge 2007: 82).

eyes of the home country that they left behind. D'Alfonso's use of *immigrant* suggests that the narrator looks at his parents and other diasporic subjects through Canadian eyes, which is proven by his initial desire for assimilation. While D'Alfonso's focus is on the point of arrival, namely Canada, Lombardi's *emigrant* places emphasis on the point of departure, namely the Italian home country that Fabrizio's parents were forced to leave in search of a job. The difference between the two terms has also been pointed out by some critics (see Pivato 1998d/1999a: 57; Verdicchio 1996/1997: 216). While Verdicchio noted that the passage from *emigrant* to *immigrant* marks a 'moment of change' and of 'challenge' (1996/1997: 216), Pivato remarked that *emigrant* emphasises the idea of the journey and freedom differently from *immigrant*, which implies, instead, a sense of adjustment (see 1998d/1999a: 57). The two terms therefore register a shift in focus, which is significant in light of the crucial role played by the migrant identity of the narrator's parents. This is an example of how Italian translations of Italian-Canadian texts are regulated at a microtextual level by the target cultural system and more specifically how translators' attitude is influenced by the self-image of the target culture and readers' expectations. Lombardi's focus on the point of departure of the narrator's parents proves how Italian translators tend to bring the author 'back home' – the narrator's parents are seen as Italians emigrated to Canada and not as Canadian citizens with Italian origins. The Italian perspective conveyed in the target text hints at the narrator's sense of belonging to Italy, which is completely absent in the original.²⁴

The migrant identity of Fabrizio Notte's parents emerges also at a linguistic level in the following passage, which contains a dialogue between his father Guido and one of his Montreal friends.

²⁴ The nostalgia and sense of belonging conveyed by the use of *emigrante* is confirmed by its appearance in Italian-language literary works by first-generation migrant women Moroni Parken (1896/1907), Maccaferri Randaccio (1979) and Ardizzi (1982, 1984). As is clear from the eloquent titles of their literary works *Emigranti: quattro anni al Canada* (1896/1907) and *Diario di una emigrante* (1979), Moroni Parken and Randaccio see themselves as emigrants and implicitly express their sense of belonging to that home country they left as adults. Nostalgia makes the integration into the host country difficult also for the protagonist of Ardizzi's *Made in Italy* (1982), who confesses to be unpleasantly impressed by the meaning of *emigrante*: 'Il significato della parola emigrante mi ha sgradevolmente colpita solo dopo aver emigrato: e mi ha colpita per le implicazioni che balzano alla superficie solo quando sei emigrante' (15). The sense of belonging is shared by the female character of *Il sapore agro della mia terra* (1984), who feels split between her two countries: 'Io, chi sono? ...sono un'emigrante. Non sarò mai separata dal mio vecchio mondo, ho pensato, potrò sottrarmi al nuovo mondo? Rimarrò qualcosa di mezzo, che non sta né da una parte né dall'altra?' (175). In all of these cases it is clear that the writers see themselves through Italian eyes, namely through the eyes of the relatives they left in Italy.

PASSAGE 4

'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.'

'The majority? There are, Guido, more French-speaking people in America than you think.'

'And Italians, *Dio Mio*? Fernand, you're the only one I speak French with! Up till now I never felt the need to speak a language other than my own. There are Italians everywhere. Whenever we drive down to Wildwood or Florida I speak nothing but Italian.'

'Very well then. Why don't you send your child to an Italian-speaking school?' The doctor says.

Father drops his head into the palms of his hands: '*Ah porca miseria*. There isn't any. If you only knew, Fernand, how much I miss *Italia*.' (FP: 53–4)

«Ne sono consapevole, ma l'America parla in maggioranza l'inglese. Voglio che mio figlio sia in grado di parlare *correttamente* la lingua della maggioranza».

«La maggioranza? Guido, ci sono molti più francofoni in America di quello che pensi».

«E italiani? Fernand, tu sei l'unico con il quale io parli francese! Finora non ho mai avvertito il bisogno di parlare una lingua diversa dalla mia. Ci sono italiani ovunque. Ogni volta che scendiamo a Wildwood o in Florida non faccio altro che parlare italiano.»

«Sta bene. Allora perché non mandi tuo figlio in una scuola italiana?» dice il dottore.

Mio padre lascia andare la testa nei palmi delle mani: «*Ah porca miseria!* Non ce ne sono. Se lo sapessi, Fernand, quanto mi manca l'*Italia*.» (PF: 47)

The above is an example of the various heterolingual passages contained in the novel. Through the Italian 'untranslated words' *correttamente*, *Dio mio*, *porca miseria* and *Italia*, the narrator sheds light on his father's cultural difference and represents him 'as cast into the midst of a world full of irremovable strangenesses' (see Geertz 1986: 271). Through a deterritorialised language, Fabrizio's father 'talks back', reappropriates the Italian language as a sign of non-assimilation to the Canadian dominant society (Parati 2005). His migrant identity is therefore made visible. While *correttamente* seems to emphasise how ridiculous the narrator considers Guido's statement about English as the language of the 'majority', the other 'untranslated words' make Guido's migrant subject visible and highlight him as an 'element of resistance', namely 'that element in a translation, which does not lend itself to translation' (Bhabha 1994: 224). The Italian 'untranslated words' are eloquent of Guido's resistance to be translated into English as a means of protecting his

migrant identity against any practices of assimilation. His drive for the “survival” of migrant life’ (224) is confirmed by the fact that Guido speaks ‘nothing but Italian’ and that he has never felt the need to speak a language besides his own. The ‘untranslated word’ *Italia* asserts his Italian cultural identity and mother tongue although he is no longer in Italy, thus revealing his resistance to the idea of a one-to-one relationship between language and country. By making his father’s migrant subject visible in the Canadian context, the narrator shows how the nation cannot be perceived as whole or pure, but rather constructed by otherness (see Bhabha 1994).

The Italian ‘untranslated word’ *Dio Mio* has been suppressed in Lombardi’s target text. This omission, along with the loss of the italics of *porca miseria* (for God’s sake) and *Italia*, does not shed light on the drive for ‘survival of migrant life’ of the narrator’s father. This would have been foregrounded, instead, by retaining the italics as Lombardi did in the case of *correttamente*, which would have put focus and suggested that those words were spoken in Italian in the source text.

Lombardi’s translation strategies not only partially altered Guido’s migrant identity but also Fabrizio’s role as a ‘fictional translator’. Passages 5 and 6 are taken from the second chapter of the novel consisting of a collection of letters written by Guido – during his military service in the late 1940s in northern Italy – to his future wife Lina, who was living in the southern village of Guglionesi at that time. These letters were originally written in Italian by Guido and were translated by Fabrizio into English, as he reveals in the introduction to his chapter ‘Father’s Military Service’, where he expresses his concern for not being able to convey his father’s ‘unintended literary style’: ‘My translation of these letters probably does not do justice to Father’s unintended literary style. I can only hope that the result of my efforts will shed some light on the kind of person that my father was’ (D’Alfonso 1995/2000: 17). This reflection, which unveils the narrator’s dedication to translation, is missing in Lombardi’s Italian target text. Overlooking the narrator’s act of translating does not allow Italian readers to grasp the crucial role of translation as a metaphor for his identity, which was not even highlighted when translating the narrator’s clarification below:

PASSAGE 5

I have chosen to **translate** the letters he wrote during the month of April 1948 in order to organize what seemed to be, for him at least, a particularly confusing moment in his life. (FP: 32)

Ho scelto di **riportare** le lettere scritte nel mese di Aprile 1948 allo scopo di ricostruire quello che è sembrato, quantomeno a lui, un momento particolarmente confuso della sua vita. (PF: 32)

In the target text the verb *translate* becomes *riportare* instead of *tradurre*. Being aware that the narrator acts as a ‘cultural mediator’ between his father and his Canadian readers would have shed light on the presence of some Italian ‘untranslated words’, which make Guido’s letters heterolingual, as shown in the following passage:

PASSAGE 6

Udine, 25 April 1948

Amore,

My Birthday today. It is also the day *Mamma Italia* was liberated from Nazi Occupation. [...] *Mamma Italia*, your soldiers are not out there toasting your liberation. They are drinking to forget the families and fields waiting for them back home. (FP: 32)

Udine, 25 Aprile 1948

Amore,

Oggi è il mio compleanno. È anche il giorno della liberazione di *Mamma Italia* dall’occupazione nazista. [...] *Mamma Italia*, i tuoi soldati non sono li fuori a brindare alla tua liberazione. Bevono per dimenticare le famiglie ed i campi che li aspettano a casa loro. (PF: 31–2)

Although *Amore* and *Mamma Italia* are easily recognisable to an Anglophone audience, it is no coincidence that the narrator left these words untranslated. *Amore*, namely *my love*, which Guido uses to address Lina, shows how the narrator uses Italian words for his more personal relations. As the narrator reveals later in the novel, their relationship was a model for him: ‘I wanted to imitate the love my parents had for one another. Impossible. Unfortunately, it soon occurred to me that I was the product of social anguish, disgust, and hatred’ (152). His attachment to the Italian language seems therefore to operate on an

affective level.²⁵ In the case of *Mamma Italia*, instead, the Italian language emphasises the sarcasm that the narrator perceived in his father's words. In light of his father's antinationalism, which is an autobiographical element, the word *Mamma* (*Mum*), which usually has an affective connotation, clearly clashes with the idea that Guido and Fabrizio have of Italy as a country. Through this 'untranslated word' the narrator ridicules the idea of *madrepatria*, namely *motherland*, and depicts instead Italy as a bad mother, who forces her soldiers to stay away from their families even on important occasions, like their own birthdays. Guido's frustration in fighting for his motherland is proven when he compares the importance of his birthday to that of the anniversary of Italy, which was liberated three years before from German occupation, thus revealing his indifference to the events affecting his home country.

In Lombardi's target text, however, the narrator's emphases are toned down both in the case of *Amore*, which does not unveil the crucial importance of the narrator's cultural origins, and *Mamma Italia*, which does not convey his resistance to any kind of nationalism. Lombardi's suppression of italics did not place emphasis on these 'untranslated words' and did not signal that they were spoken in Italian in the original. This would have helped, instead, target-text readers to interpret Guido's letter and grasp both his relationship with his country and the narrator's attachment to his family. The 'untranslated words' appearing in passages 4 and 6 are vibrant linguistic signs of Guido's migrant identity and of the narrator's role as a 'fictional translator'.

Lombardi, like Concilio, was faced with the challenge of translating images of Italian culture, which act as a 'mirror' when they 'travel (back)' to Italy. While the narrator's Italian diasporic family, which is represented as the cultural 'other' in the original, acts as a 'heterostereotype' for source-text readers, it has been represented as the 'self' when translated into Italian, as shown in the following passage.

PASSAGE 7

The kitchen is the heart of our family, the master room of the **Italian household**, the place where we eat and discuss, but also quarrel; it is the most sacred part of our home where all gives way and must be mended. (FP: 43)

²⁵ On the relationship between language and emotions in heterolingual memoirs see Besemeres 2006.

La cucina è il cuore della nostra famiglia, la stanza principe di **questa casa italiana**, il posto in cui mangiamo e discutiamo, e talvolta litighiamo; è la parte più sacra della nostra casa, dove tutto si infrange e tutto si ricompone. (PF: 40)

In this passage the narrator portrays Italian home environments as united families, which give noticeable importance to little daily things, like sharing meals and chatting – sometimes animatedly. Lombardi's translation of *the Italian household* as *questa casa italiana* turns the original stereotypical image into a characteristic typical only of the narrator's family. While the original definite article *the* suggests a generalisation of the narrator, who sees his family as other Italian (diasporic) families, Lombardi's use of the demonstrative adjective *questa* – namely *this* – refers exclusively to Fabrizio's home environment. This suggests that Lombardi regarded it as unnecessary to explain the distinctive features of Italian families to his target-text readers. However, this strategy failed in contributing to the construction of Italian cultural identity through the reproduction of stereotypical images, as suggested instead by Venuti (1998/1999: 68).

Similar stereotypical images of Italian culture are constructed in the following passage, where the narrator looks at his family through Canadian eyes.

PASSAGE 8

When **Nonno** Nicola passed away, my father inherited the healthy challenge of being the 'man' in a house of strong women. Because I was still a boy, at the time, my **manliness** did not count. It starts to count, however, with Peter's appearance which suddenly invests new significance to the male presence in our family. All these complex ideas make me seriously wonder about Lucia's future. Will Peter be a **replica** of the father she wants to leave so **badly**? This is why I will have to scrutinize Peter minutely, especially those gestures he will have no control over. (FP: 136–7)

Dopo che **nonno** Nicola fu passato a miglior vita, mio padre ebbe a misurarsi con l'arduo compito di essere *l'uomo* in una famiglia di donne forti. Io, all'epoca, ero ancora un ragazzino, e la mia **mascolinità** non contava. Inizia a contare, tuttavia, con l'apparizione di Peter, che investe di nuovo significato la presenza maschile nella nostra famiglia. Tutte queste idee complicate fanno sì che mi interroghi seriamente sul futuro di Lucia. E se Peter fosse un **replicante** del padre dal quale così **cinicamente** vuole staccarsi? È per questo che dovrò

scrutare Peter con accuratezza, specialmente in quegli atteggiamenti che non dovesse riuscire a controllare. (PF: 113)

This passage contains one of the Italian ‘untranslated words’, which have been edited in the target text. While *Nonno* appears in capital letter in the original, it is spelled in lower case in the target text, thus toning down the significant role that Fabrizio’s grandfather played in his family. The narrator informs his readers about the importance that ‘manliness’ had in his family. *Manliness* has been translated as *mascolinità*, which in everyday language, unlike its English equivalent *masculinity*, is used particularly to refer to physical features typical of men or to describe women with qualities conventionally associated with men. *Virilità*, instead, would have emphasised not only the physical but also the sociocultural characteristics according to which male subjects should be identified. Although the first definition of *virilità* given by the dictionary *Treccani* refers to men’s biological features, a second entry specifies that it is ‘La qualità propria dell’uomo forte, sicuro di sé e risoluto, coraggioso, che si manifesta nelle sue azioni’.²⁶ Therefore, *virilità* would have referred more accurately to those qualities – like being strong, brave, self-confident and protective – that the narrator’s parents might have associated exclusively with men and expected their son to have. The narrator clearly disagrees with these ‘complex ideas’, which make him ‘seriously wonder’ about his sister’s future. More specifically, he is concerned that her future husband might be a ‘replica’ of their father, which has been translated as *replicante*. While *replicante* is somebody who imitates somebody else, *replica*, which hints at the repetition of something, would have emphasised that the ‘prince charming’, whom Lucia longs to marry, might instead be exactly like her father, whom ‘she wants to leave so badly’. Fabrizio’s solidarity with his sister, however, has been distorted by Lombardi’s translation of *badly* as *cinicamente* instead of *disperatamente*. This adverb, which is the literal equivalent of *cinically*, implies Fabrizio’s disapproval of his sister’s desire, while he is clearly sympathetic to her. If we interpret Lucia as one of the several autobiographical characters, their close relationship is proven by the fact that the author’s sister is one of the addressees of his dedication unlike their parents. Through this mistranslation, Lombardi presented the narrator as endorsing his father’s perspective, thus complying with the values of the Italian diasporic community.

²⁶ See entry ‘virilità’ in the online dictionary *Treccani.it. L’enciclopedia italiana*: <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/virilita/>

Finally, the last two passages focus on how Lombardi conveyed the narrator's transnational identity, which emerges clearly through his reflections on language, nation and country.

PASSAGE 9

Monreale confers on to me the privilege of being three persons in one. Being a strange combination of three cultures, I was able to converge my three views of this city and form a **completely unique triangular (tripartite) worldview** which was not always appreciated by either the francophones or the anglophones who forced me to take sides in their strife for power. (FP: 191)

Monreale mi conferisce il privilegio di essere tre persone in una. Come peculiare combinazione di tre culture, sono stato in grado di fondere le tre visioni di questa città in una **concezione del mondo tripartita**, non sempre apprezzata da francofoni o anglofoni, che mi spingevano a prendere posizione nella contesa per il potere. (PF: 158)

In translating this passage, the effects of living in a tricultural environment, namely having 'a completely unique triangular (tripartite) worldview', have not been emphasised by Lombardi's omission of *completely unique*, which expresses instead the narrator's 'singularity' for both being a diasporic subject and living in the bilingual city of Montreal (D'Alfonso 1995/2000: 72). Moreover, while the narrator defines his worldview as *triangular* and *tripartite*, Lombardi only uses *tripartita*. Although *tripartite* is in brackets and might be interpreted as a synonym for *tripartite*, it is particularly meaningful, since it emphasises the connection and the interplay between every single culture constituting his worldview. Moreover, D'Alfonso's precision in specifying one word through the other is indicative of his constant act of translating and the accuracy of his linguistic choices, which has also been pointed out by Verdicchio (2002: 9).

Finally, the translator opted for similarly debatable lexical choices when translating the term *language* in the following passage:

PASSAGE 10

But the power of a country can't be saved only for the members of any one tribe; nor should culture confine itself to one sole **language**, or civilization be propelled by one ideology alone. (FP: 89)

Ma la potenza di un paese non può essere consacrata ai membri di una sola tribù; né la cultura dovrebbe essere confinata ad un solo **linguaggio**, o la civilizzazione essere promossa ad una sola ideologia. (PF: 73–4)

The term *language* has been translated as *linguaggio* instead of *lingua*. Although they share the same English equivalent, the difference between these two Italian terms is substantial in light of the focus on language in this novel. While *linguaggio* has a generic meaning and refers to any kinds of communication, *lingua* refers to the system of communication conventionally shared by people belonging to the same cultural community.

The analysis of these existing translations has shown the shifts occurring when Italian-Canadian literature ‘travels “back”’ from the Canadian to the Italian literary system. As demonstrated by my analysis of the first model of translation, Concilio’s target text is adjusted for the Italian cultural system. The linguistic homogenisation did not emphasise the process of cultural translation in which Ricci is involved. Lombardi’s second model of translation, instead, showed a more sensitive approach to D’Alfonso’s novel and resorted to a number of strategies in the attempt to convey the author’s transnational and hybrid identity. The effect of his foreignising strategies, however, has been altered by domesticating strategies, like footnotes, omissions (see for instance passages 4 and 9), the suppression of italics (see passages 5 and 6) and a modified representation of images of Italian culture (see passage 7). These strategies together with a mistranslation (see passage 8) partly failed to convey the author’s hybrid identity pointed out in Verdicchio’s introduction to the Italian target text. Clem Robyns would have defined Lombardi’s attitude as ‘defensive’, since it acknowledges the narrator’s cultural difference but it simultaneously transforms it (1994: 409). According to the translation studies scholar, a ‘defensive’ attitude can be seen as ‘reactive’, since it explicitly reacts against the presence of discursive migrations (409).

Against this background, I will present my own translation of *The Lion's Mouth* as a third model of translation, more specifically a ‘disruptive model’ (Polezzi 2013: np). As

explained by Polezzi, 'disruptive' has a positive connotation, since it hints at disruptive practices, which can transform and change dominant homogenising models and discourses.

CHAPTER 4

The Lion's Mouth: A Form of Cultural Translation

This chapter offers an analysis of *The Lion's Mouth* as a prime example of a form of cultural translation. The novel was published in 1982 by the Edmontonian publishing house NeWest and republished in 1993 by the originally Montreal-based Guernica.¹ As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was the first Italian-Canadian novel dealing both with transcultural and gender identity and made Edwards the first Italian-Canadian woman writer in Western Canada to publish to critical acclaim (see footnotes 8 and 11 in Chapter 2). She is the author of a play (1990a), two novellas (1992), a memoir (2008), several widely-anthologised short stories (see 1973, 1974, 1985, 1987a, 1987b, 1980b, 1990c, 1998, 2003, 2012, 2013a), some of which have been (re)published in her collection *Island of the Nightingales* (2000a), a number of critical essays (1984b, 1990b, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1999, 2005, 2013b), as well as personal essays (1994, 2000c, 2010).² Her forthcoming novel *The Sicilian Wife* will be published in 2015. A number of her works have been awarded prestigious literary prizes (see footnotes 9 and 11 in Chapter 2).

The influence of Edwards' transcultural identity and migrant experience on her writing has been extensively analysed in the essays included in *Caterina Edwards: Essays on Her Works*, edited by Pivato (2000a), as well as in articles (see for instance De Luca 1988, 2008; Canton 2006b) and book-length essays (see Pivato 1994; Tuzi 1997), circulated both in Canada and in Italy. A number of interviews with the author cast light on her transcultural and hybrid identity (see Francesconi 2005; Olding 2008; Scott 2013).

The Lion's Mouth is an exploration of the notions of home, language, as well as migration, and reflects the 'multiple selves and cultures' by which the author is 'obsessed', as she declared in an interview with Susan Olding (2008: np). Her transcultural identity is unveiled by her definition of herself as 'Welsh/English/Italian/Croatian' (Edwards 1999: 34). As the author commented, the contrast in cultures led her to understand at a young age that 'identity is not fragmentary but multiple' (Olding 2008: np), which is reminiscent of Rushdie's definition of migrant identity as 'plural and partial' (1991: 15). Her identity can

¹ The passages under analysis are taken from the second edition of the novel.

² Edwards' essay 'Light and Space in the Piazza' was awarded the *James H. Gray Award for Short Nonfiction* in 2013.

be seen as 'plural', since her writing contains aspects from both Canadian and Italian cultures, and 'partial' because it cannot be fully ascribed to either culture.

Most of the existing criticism on *The Lion's Mouth* consists of thematic readings, which focus on the narrator's search for identity and her belonging to Italy (see De Luca 1988, 2008; Tuzi 1997; Fachinger 2000; Francesconi 2002; Canton 2006b). The attention paid to these themes also emerges from a number of reviews, which present the novel as 'a significant contribution to Canada's national literature as well as to the immigrant writing of the world'; a 'uniquely Canadian consideration of the immigrant experience'; a 'finely told story, [in which] a precise and deliberate stylist creates an unforgettable portrait of a city and a man shadowed by despair' as well as an 'astonishing debut – well-conceived, sensuous, completely original'.³ As I have already mentioned, a reviewer 'chastised' Edwards for writing about Italy instead of Canada (see Section 2.1 in Chapter 2). In one of her earliest conference talks, Edwards confessed that the Canadian readers who were not familiar with the Italian political and social context, did not show a great interest in the chapters set in Venice (1986b: np).

Although Edwards clarified that the novel is not completely autobiographical (1999: 27), a reading of her memoirs, essays and interviews, shows that it is inevitable not to identify several autobiographical elements, like the narrator's catalyst for her writing process. As Edwards explained, the novel was neither a return to a place nor to the past but an 'attempt to cancel, to deny the loss' in order to be able to 'fully imagine' Western Canada: 'I had lost Venice, yet I would imagine it, recreate it, make it as if I had lived all my life there (1986b: np). Edwards' exploration of her relationship with her host country confirms the lack of foundation of the reviewer's critique. In order to 'cancel, to deny the loss' caused by her migration to Canada, Edwards needed to come to terms with her Italian past in order to overcome it: 'When I wrote my first novel I thought I would be able to exorcize my dream of Venice' (1999: 35). Like Edwards, the narrator and female protagonist of the novel, Bianca Mazzin, writes her (pre)migrant past as an act of healing, remembering, recreating and returning to Venice, the elusive home of her childhood that she cannot 'capture' (1982/1993: 263). Bianca is a Canadian writer, whose Venetian origins are deeply reflected in the novel in terms of content, form and language. Her impossibility of 'capturing' Venice recalls the 'vanishing' city that used to inhabit

³ See Edwards' website: http://www.caterinaedwards.com/Books/The_Lions_Mouth.

Edwards' dreams (1999: 27). The author/narrator's 'dream of Venice' presents her as 'haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back to the homeland', to put it in Rushdie's words (1991: 10). Drawing on Felicity Hand's observation that looking back at one's own past is essential to negotiate one's own identity (2006: 70), Bianca shows how making sense of her past helps her accept her split cultural identity, thus achieving a sense of her transcultural identity and enabling a future in her Canadian host country. This sheds light on Edwards' idea that life narrative has a cathartic function: 'Life writing can be a 'catharsis' [...] a search for order' (Edwards and Stewart 2000b: 7). In the case of *The Lion's Mouth*, not only is life narrative a cathartic experience but also a 'vehicle of translation' (Steiner 2009: 5), which allows the narrator to reach a sense of connection between past and present, thus enabling a future; translating her Italian past into a Canadian present helps her negotiate her transcultural identity.

4.1 Movable Spaces

Recreating her past inevitably leads Bianca to tell the story of her cousin Marco Bolcato, with whom she was in love, and who is 'the grain of sand that began the pearl that is [her] dream' (Edwards 1992/2003: 270). Marco, her 'Italian self' (Fachinger 2000: 49) and her Venetian alter ego (De Luca 2008: 169), is also her ideal reader, as is clear from her interior monologue in the prologue: 'Worse, Marco (you, you) suffered a nervous breakdown' (Edwards 1992/2003: 10). As she explains at the end of the novel, Bianca wrote his story 'not from choice but need' (230), the need to come to grips with her Italian past: 'Why have I spent my winter telling your story? I needed to exorcise my dream of Venice. I needed to rid myself of the ache of longing that I have carried for so long. And you – you are the grain of sand that began the pearl that is my dream' (269–70). Bianca's first-person life narrative, set in Edmonton and covering chapters 5, 9, 13, 17 and 20, is therefore interwoven with a two-day story of Marco's life in Venice narrated in the third person in the remaining chapters.⁴ These two levels of narration create a continuous shift

⁴ As already shown by Ricci's and D'Alfonso's pieces analysed in the previous chapter, first-person narratives are very common in Italian-Canadian writing (Pivato 1996b/1998a; Tuzi 1997). Pivato noted that this is a convention of 'literary realism' characterising 'ethnic minority writing' and he observed that speaking in the first person gives writers the illusion of power and control over their life (1998: 160). Tuzi

between two different cultural contexts, as well as between past and present and disclose the 'plurality of the ethnic subject', the 'constant divergence and overlaying of cultural identities' (Tuzi 1997: 30). Similarly to the mechanisms enacted in translation and migration, the structure of the novel implies a crossing of borders between Italy and Canada, which reflects the narrator's desire to bridge the two cultures. Edwards therefore represents those Italian-Canadian writers discussed by William Boelhower who embrace both their Canadian present and Italian past, thus creating a 'hyperspace, a nowhere and everywhere, in which the ethnic subject floats between two worlds, two cultural models' (1992: 232). While Marco's story is interrupted by continuous flashbacks of his childhood with his friend and later lover Elena, of arguments with his wife Paola and of the bombings of Zara, Bianca's life narrative is interspersed by her comments on her previous 'attempts at a novel' (Edwards 1992/2003: 12). The disorderly narration of the stories of the two protagonists has been interpreted by Canton as indicative of the maze of Venice and the social unrest in which Marco is involved (2006b: np). According to the critic, the temporal confusion created is necessary for the narrator to establish order in her life (2006b: np). I would argue that the apparently irregular structure of the novel is the result of the narrator's 'fundamentally discontinuous state of being', shared by any person living outside their home country (Said 1994: 137) and therefore the manifestation of her cultural split identity deriving from her spanning two worlds: Italy and Canada.

As noted by De Luca, the antithesis between Italian and Canadian cultures is revealed in the very first page of the prologue, where Bianca is 'gardening, uprooting thistles and chickweed from between the zucchini and lettuce plants, hacking back a wild rosebush and the Virginia creeper' (Edwards 1982/1993: 9). As thistles and chickweed are more widespread in Canada, while zucchini and lettuce are more easily associated with Italy, the critic interpreted this passage as a metaphor for the narrator's effort at acting as the 'establisher of order' (9) between her Italian past and her Canadian present (De Luca 1988: 472; 2006: 152; 2008: 169; 2010c: 81). By 'uprooting thistles and chickweed from between the zucchini and lettuce plants' (Edwards 1982/1993: 9), Bianca re-emerges from those 'two stools' between which migrants 'fall', to use Rushdie's metaphor of migrants' condition (1991: 15). The gap between the two countries is metaphorically bridged by the letter received by Bianca from Marco's mother, her aunt Elsa (Canton 2006b: np). Bianca

pointed out that first-person narratives convey the protagonists' commitment to redefine their identity (1997: 128).

hesitates to read it as her aunt's handwriting is 'illegible' to her 'Canadian eyes': 'She scorns punctuation, the sentences tumble, gasp, and sputter across the page. And the voice behind those poor sentences, need I tell you, pours out, complains, bemoans: endlessly' (Edwards 1982/1993: 10). The narrator's perception of the letter through Canadian eyes reveals her non-belonging to Italy. The way in which she carries on presenting the letter is a relevant illustration of the central role that translation plays inside the narrative:

'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'. (10)

This passage, taken from the very beginning of the novel, shows how the narrator travels between languages through translation. As is clear from the two women's reciprocal difficulty in communicating, English and Italian appear in contrast – while her aunt's writing is 'illegible' for Bianca, Elsa finds her script 'bizarre and aberrant' (10). The narrator's various acts of translation throughout the novel show her attempt to bridge Italian and Canadian cultures, which however failed, as shown by her mistranslation *God's disgrace*. A further example in which the narrator acts as a 'fictional translator', who engages in multiple negotiations, is provided when Bianca translates Marco's feelings for Paola with whom he got engaged:

'But are you in love with her? Sei innamorato di lei?' You blinked as if surprised. *'Naturally – Le voglio bene.'* (I have much affection for her.) Even then you couldn't say you were in love with her. *'Le vuoi bene?'* I was determined to push my point, but you deflected it. (225–6)

By translating Marco's answers, the narrator lets the source culture speak in the target language. She translates both her own question from English into Italian and Marco's answer from Italian into English to stress how he is evasive to her precise question, thus emphasising the resulting incongruity. He does not reply whether he is in love with Paola or not, but opts for a more neutral answer by using the verb *voler bene*, namely *to love*. The narrator, however, translates it as *to have affection* in brackets to stress that Marco does not mean that feeling of attraction and desire usually nourished towards one's own

lover – conventionally expressed with *amare* – but affection, attachment. By translating between her host and target cultures, the narrator acts as a cultural mediator between the Italian language and her Canadian audience, thus travelling between languages. The precision that the narrator shows and demands in this passage is illustrative of the central role played by language in the novel and confirms the great importance that the author gives to details, as pointed out by Canton (2006b: np).

Going back to the letter received by Bianca, it is important to note that not only does it bridge the two cultures, but it also stimulates the narrator's creativity (2006b: np). It therefore proves how the engagement with 'things from home' may be an important way for migrants to establish inner dialogues with their home country (Fortier 2000; Svašek 2008). After learning about Marco's nervous breakdown, Bianca wants to discover the origin of the 'depth of [his] collapse' (Edwards 1982/1993: 11), she wants to 'illuminate the truth' (11–2):

I want to be the one who not only knows but illuminates the truth. I want to tell your story. In the top drawer of the filing cabinet in the basement, there are three attempts at a novel, three attempts at understanding, at explaining you, three attempts that trail off into shallowness, falsity. (12)

Bianca's aim to discover the real reason for Marco's collapse sheds light on the author's observation that 'good life writing is not literary narcissism, but an attempt to find the truth' (2005: 29). As Bianca explains in the passage above, Marco's story is the final version of three previous failed attempts, which did not provide enough grounding to overcome her past, to 'exorcise [her] dream of Venice' (1982/2003: 269). The narrator, however, is confident in her fourth attempt: 'It is time again to lift the pen. It is time to succeed' (12). As noted by De Luca, the different versions of the same novel reflect Bianca's 'change in perspective', her maturation (1988: 472–3). Through a brief overview of the three different attempts, I will show how the evolution of the two protagonists reflects Bianca's progressive non-belonging to Italy, followed by her integration in Canada. In her first attempt – written in the summer after Bianca fell in love with Marco at the age of fifteen – the male protagonist Gianni, who represents Marco, was a migrant with 'old customs and habits' representing the 'Venice lost' (Edwards 1992/2003: 108). While in the second attempt Marco 'debauched' the female protagonist with his 'degeneracy' and

'corruption' (159), in her third version – written by the narrator when she was twenty-four years old – he is 'less dissipated, less charming, and generally less clear' (217). Analogously, in her first attempt Bianca was a 'doomed heroine', a 'sensitive Italian girl' migrated to 'loneliness and isolation' and 'destroyed by the hostile, cold land' (108). In her second version, she became an innocent Canadian 'seduced and abandoned by the European, set on the path of destruction' (159), while in her third 'attempt' she turned into a 'Canadian girl with a Venetian background', who was 'less innocent, less the victim' although 'irritatingly passive' (217). While according to Sabrina Francesconi, the definition of 'Canadian girl with a Venetian background' emphasises the importance of the past as an unavoidable element, as well as its influence on the present (2002: 96), I would argue that the female protagonist's transition from a 'sensitive Italian girl' to 'Canadian', and finally to 'Canadian with a Venetian background', reveals her gradual non-belonging to Italy, as proven by the fact that the adjective *Italian* is used to define her cultural origins and no longer her national identity. However, it should be noted that in the final version she specifies her origins, while they are omitted instead in her previous attempt. This shift shows the acceptance of her Italian past and Italian cultural origins, which she no longer perceives as an obstacle to her integration in Canada. As with Ricci and the narrator of *Fabrizio's Passion*, Bianca saw her family and the Italian diasporic community as an oppressive system during her early period in Canada (see a detailed analysis in Section 4.3 in this Chapter). The narrator confesses that she finds her first attempt 'embarrassing' and 'tedious' (Edwards 1992/2003: 108) and observes that Marco's different roles become evident when reading it together with the previous ones: 'As I look over those three earlier novels, I see that my changing needs, my shifting perceptions and understanding, cast you in different forms, bestowing different roles, different masks' (59). This proves Bianca's process of maturation and reveals how narrating one's own life influences migrants' perception of themselves. Her 'masks' confirm the crucial role played by identity in the novel. The narrator revisits and reconstructs her Italian cultural identity through her Canadian one, which is in turn re-examined through the memory of her Italian past (Pivato 1994: 137). As a result, she looks both at her home and host country from a different perspective and shows her 'plurality of vision'. The narrator's evolution, which is represented by that of her female protagonist, is the result of her constant being in dialogue between Italian and Canadian cultures. Her 'shifting perceptions', which made her 'bestow' Marco a

different 'role' (Edwards 1982/1993: 59), are confirmed in her confession to her cousin: 'While at fifteen I was impressed with your sophistication, at twenty-two I was impressed with my own' (218). This passage shows that Bianca no longer sees him as her hero but that now *she* is the heroine of her novel. My interpretation is confirmed by Edwards' observation that it is Bianca 'containing' Marco through her act of writing his story and not the other way around (1984: np). She casts herself 'in the role of the champion' (1982/1993: 10), thus 'rescuing [him] from [his] fortress of self, guiding [him] back to the world' (11). Marco is no longer portrayed only as the 'victimizer', who abandoned and 'debauched' (163) her but also as the 'victim' (253). As the narrator explains at the end of the novel, he is no longer her 'Prince Charming with [his] theatrical disillusion, [his] dated, alienated young man role' (270). Bianca realises that her identity cannot be bound to that of a man (Pivato 1994: 137) and shows her rebuttal of the traditional romantic plot.

Most notably, the evolution of her character goes hand in hand with Marco's involution. As noted by Canton, the narrator finds her own identity by narrating his 'disidentity' (2006b: np, my emphasis). This is reminiscent of Tuzi's observation that Bianca's life narrative is about an identity in process while Marco's story depicts a life that has already run its course (1997: 129). His story covers the last two days that preceded his rush towards the 'mouth of the lion' (Edwards 1992/2003: 260), '*la bocca di leone* – the mouth for secret denunciations' (16, emphasis in the original), from which the title of the novel is derived.⁵ He is portrayed as a failed engineer, husband, father and, most importantly, law-abiding citizen. He feels he has failed in his job as he did not succeed in discouraging his bosses Adolfo and Raponi from the project of a resort complex, which would turn Venice into a modern resort area. His private life is as unsuccessful as his professional one: he secretly desires euthanasia for his little son Francesco, affected by a heart malformation, and he betrays his wife Paola with his former lover Elena. His state of crisis resulted in a 'collapse' (11) when he realised that he had been involved by Elena and her friend Piero in a brigand attack and that he had unconsciously been used as a 'mere instrument' (245) to kill the chief prosecutor for the Veneto. His sense of guilt at betraying his city and his people is highlighted by Bianca's statement of which Marco dreamt the

⁵ The lion was a symbol of the power of the Most Serene Republic of Venice. At that time the lions' mouths were used as postboxes to collect the citizens' anonymous reports addressed to magistrates.

previous night: ‘*La bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto* (The mouth lifted from the proud meal)’ (129). Considering that this is a quote from a *canto* of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* set in the ice in the second ring of the lowest circle of *Inferno*, where betrayers of their own country are punished, Marco’s dream can be interpreted as premonitory.⁶ During Marco’s rush towards the ‘mouth for secret denunciations’ (16), the narrator depicts the betrayers Elena and Piero being punished in the same way as Archbishop Ruggieri: ‘Elena and Piero frozen to their tears in iced canals. He would gladly walk on their heads. He could feel the curliness of Elena’s hair beneath his feet, hear her groans in his ears. Condemned to eternal ice, to eternal humiliation’ (247). After receiving a phone call from his mother – who informed him that his niece Barbara had witnessed a murder – and learning about the assassination of the chief prosecutor from the TV news, Marco realised that he had involuntarily acted as a ‘messenger of death’ (246). He immediately heard the ‘roar of the lion’ (253), the need to denounce his sense of ‘failure, frustration and responsibility’ (De Luca 1988: 475) and walked through the city to ‘stare into the mouth of the lion’ (Edwards 1982/1993: 255):

Bocca di leone, terror of city, receptacle of denunciation, tool of the hooded inquisitors, purveyor of savage, unquestionable justice. The mouth of the lion, finally, in front of him. *DENOTIE SECRETE*. Carefully pulling out pen and paper. *Pax tibi Marce*. Writing large the letters of the killer’s name. MARCO BOLCATO, GUILTY. Pushing the sheet in the mouth already crammed with other paper. Guilty. *Bocca di leone*, the stretched mouth of a man in agony without end. (260)

This passage taken from the epilogue shows that the novel ends with Bianca’s ‘rebirth at the expense of [Marco’s] destruction’ (De Luca 1988: 475). Through Marco’s failure, Bianca expresses her desire to ‘kill off the character who has done her the most harm’ (475).

Marco’s collapse is reflected in the narrator’s portrayal of Venice as a decadent city. As she explains, he represents a metaphor for her relationship with her home city: ‘For you are within me, the emblem of my inner city’ (Edwards 1982/1993: 59). Venice is lost as the mere artistic stereotype, as that univocal image for tourists (Francesconi 2002: 97). It is

⁶ ‘*La bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto*’ is the opening line of the thirty-third *canto* of the first *cantica* ‘*Inferno*’ of Dante Alighieri’s epic poem *Divine Comedy* (1308–21). This line describes the scene of cannibalism in which the Tuscan Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, accused of treason of his Ghibelline fellows, was gnawing at the skull of Archbishop Ruggieri, his betrayer.

depicted, instead, as a city of 'decadence, death and dissolution, the wicked carnival city, where no one is what it seems' (Edwards 1999: 30). Edwards explained that in the novel she played with the notion of 'reversal' and 'transgressions' (30). This is shown by the presence of Carnival, which can be interpreted in Bakhtinian terms as the 'feast of becoming, change and renewal' (1984: 10). Aspects of Bakhtin's theory of Carnival as a feast that 'marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions' (10) can also be applied usefully to Elena's idea of the eighteenth-century carnival and masks as something that 'obliterated personal, class and sometimes even sexual differences' (Edwards 1982/1993: 175). The author presents, particularly through Elena's eyes, the 'dark side' (91) of a 'doomed' city (252) 'with no hope' (44), characterised by 'deserted, rotting palaces' (37), 'mournful, static canal[s]' (40), a 'dusty odour of crumbling stone' (141), 'green slimy water' (181), and a sky 'choked, with clouds, [which] had a heavy, stifling quality' (181). The portrayal of Venice as a decaying city shows the narrator's new perspective gained through her gradual non-belonging to her home culture. As confirmed by De Luca, through her disillusioned view of Venice, the narrator tries to deconstruct her imaginary visions and memories (2008: 162).

Narrating her beloved cousin's story and describing her hometown Venice, with which she was obsessed, helps Bianca initiate a process of cultural translation through which she comes to terms with her past and negotiates her transcultural identity. The chapters set in Venice can be read as a form of cultural translation itself, since the narrator acts as a cultural mediator between her Canadian readers and Italian culture. This is testified at a textual level by the narrator's explanations of Italian cultural elements and their translations into English (see a detailed analysis in Section 4.6 in this Chapter). However, unlike the forms of cultural translation theorised in ethnography, the narrator does not translate a foreign culture to the readers of her own culture. Conversely, she translates her Italian home culture to the audience of her Canadian host culture. Interestingly, a 'foreign gaze' on Italy is still visible, for instance, through the several misspelled names of places in Venice (see Section 4.6 in this Chapter). This is an eloquent sign that the author's belonging to Italy is in reality only fictional in spite of the highly autobiographical component of the novel. The chapters set in Venice might be read as a form of cultural translation since the narrator translates the Italian culture to her Canadian readers. However, this might be problematic not only because the narrator presents herself as a Venetian – the act of translating a culture through foreign eyes would be therefore missing – but also because she portrays it merely as the setting of Marco's story and not as her

home country – therefore it would not be useful to show her transcultural identity. For these reasons, my interpretation of this novel as a form of cultural translation will be based on the chapters covering Bianca's life narrative. As I will show in the following sections, by narrating her translational process and the acts of negotiation of her transcultural identity in order to integrate in her host country, Bianca is presented as a 'translated person' like the protagonists of 'Passage to Canada' and *Fabrizio's Passion*.

4.2 Movable Belongings

The image of Venice as the decaying setting of Marco's story appears in contrast with the city of Venice inhabiting Bianca's memories, which she praises in her life narrative. Her place of origin, the 'bride of [her] dreams' (263), 'that stone reality [and] maze of curving streets' (60) is idealised and rendered mythic, thus showing her quest for cultural identity, which she lost in her transition to Canada. The contrasting images of the narrator's home country reflect, on the one hand, her desire to 'exorcise [her] dream of Venice' (267) and, on the other, her awareness that it is still the 'city of [her] mind' (60). Bianca's dual vision shows her way of negotiating her migrant identity and reflects the conflicting nature of Edwards' idea of home:

Home is not simply the place where you live. Home is a feeling, a haven, a cage, a heaven, a trap, a direction, an end, and the generator of more metaphors than Venice. If I claim that I am both not at home and at home in Venice, it is longing that keeps the contradictory states from cancelling each other out.
(1999: 31)

While the narrator presents Venice as her 'inner city' (1982/1993: 59), she perceives Edmonton as her 'outer city' (60, my emphasis), which 'draws never in but out to immensity, to limitlessness, to the indifference of land not yet shaped by man's hand' (60). It is experienced as a difficult terrain that must be understood, negotiated and eventually appropriated through a network of meanings, associations and strategies to find a space in Canadian society (Beneventi 2004: 222). Edwards' contrasting descriptions of home and host country are a common feature in Italian-Canadian literature (222). Like Ricci, Bianca perceived Canada as a 'hostile and cold land' (Edwards 1982/1993: 107), characterised by 'monstrous mountains' (108), as soon as she arrived after having spent 'ten days staring at

the limitless waves, three even more endless days on the train' (109). The use of 'limitless' and 'endless' seems to symbolise the depth of the narrator's anxiety about her uncertain future in the new country, as well as her struggle to leave her home country. As she declares, she was affected by the anguish of displacement: 'Leaving Venice, though I was with Mamma and Papa, I felt stripped of family, of friends, of familiar walls and buildings, of proper landscape. I was exposed, alone in the nothingness' (109). The use of 'proper landscape' and 'exposed' reveals Bianca's initial belonging to Italy, which made her perceive Canada as characterised by the 'emptiness', 'ghostlessness', 'hostility' (107) and the 'cruelness of the prairie[s]' (108). The first description of Canada features a vocabulary of foreignness, coldness and isolation:

Rock and tree, tree and rock. No houses, no people for hundreds upon hundreds of miles. The villages and towns where the train did stop seemed ill-proportioned, perched upon the land rather than rising from it. The only change came in the giving way to prairie – a land to my untrained eye still more monotone, still more desolate. (109)

The emptiness that Bianca accused her home country of reflects her feeling that migration denied her the richness of her internal life. In line with Margaret Atwood's concept that 'landscapes in poems are often interior landscapes [and] are maps of a state of mind' (1996: 49), I would suggest that the narrator's description of Canada is heavily tainted by the trauma of migration. The landscape portrayed reflects the emptiness, rootlessness and dejection that the narrator felt when she lost her language and country. Atwood's theorisation that landscape embodies the migrant writers' attitudes and mindsets is confirmed by the fact that the representation of the Canadian landscape as harsh and alienating is shared by other migrant writers (see for instance Moroni Parken 1896; Hoffman 1990). The narrator's portrayal of Canada as an unwelcoming country is an example of the author's several 'heterostereotypes' contained in the novel. This image of Canada from an external perspective and yet internally is an example of how the novel contributes to mould the Canadian identity and has been considered a 'weakness' by reviewer Petra Fachinger (1995: 150). The author has been criticised for describing Canada as a 'young and innocent society without much of a history' in contrast with the complex Italian sociocultural context provided (150). Fachinger's comment that 'only the landscape is threatening' is elusive of the fact that the narrator's negative descriptions of Canada

reflect the first impression of a migrant, who felt 'stripped' (Edwards 1982/1993: 109) of her familiar environment. The 'nothingness', in which she felt 'exposed' and 'alone' (109), reflects the narrator's 'sense of frustration and loss', as Edwards explained in a conversation with Jacqueline Dumas (Dumas and Edwards 2000: 108).

Bianca's sense of displacement was exacerbated by her recognition of otherness, as revealed by the description of her Canadian peers:

They were so different from the neatly dressed, controlled *bambini* of Venice, that I immediately judged them as wild and dangerous as the animals I had been told roamed the nearby foothills and mountains. Their collective smell, so totally new as to be beyond definition, pressed at me, wrenching my stomach. As an adult, I still try to analyze the components of that characteristic smell whenever I meet it on a bus or by a playground. It eludes me. There is dust certainly, junk food perhaps, whatever else; it still turns my stomach, still makes me faint in the head. (Edwards 1982/1993: 111)

Comparing her Canadian peers with the 'neatly dressed, controlled' Venetian children and judging them as 'wild and dangerous', with a smell that 'still turns [her] stomach', shows Bianca's initial belonging to Italy and her sense of displacement in the host country. This example of 'cultural production' shows how the image of Canada produced by the migrant narrator can act as a negative 'mirror' for Canadian readers (Polezzi 2001: 31). Bianca depicts her Canadian peers through the eyes of an Italian migrant child shocked by those 'bouncing, fighting, dangling' kids, who are 'so different from the neatly dressed, controlled *bambini* of Venice'. The narrator constructs a self-definition of a calm and neat Italian child in contrast with the noisy and shabby Canadian children. The 'untranslated word' *bambini* shows how the narrator desires to assert her Italian cultural identity, thus presenting herself as the 'other' to her Canadian readers. Her perception of Canadian children as 'different' from the Italian '*bambini*' reveals the narrator's initial strong belonging to Italy, which is testified at a textual level by this 'untranslated word'. By referring to the Venetian children through her native language, associated with intimacy and personal involvement, Bianca shows how she still identifies herself with them. *Bambini* therefore acts as a statement of cultural identity through which she wants to give voice to her Italian spirit and regain the Italian culture that has become distant. It signals

the importance of the narrator's first language by setting up the difficulty, or even impossibility, of translating between Italian and English because 'what becomes lost in translation are the familiar building blocks of one's identities' (Pas 2013: 70). Bianca's difficulty can be attributed to her desire not to translate herself into the language of the Canadian 'Other', namely of those 'bouncing, fighting, dangling children' that she immediately judges as 'wild and dangerous'. In such a view she engages with what Cronin calls 'translation resistance' (1997: 39) or 'strategy of estrangement' (2006: 16) as an outlet for her migrant identity. As argued by the translation studies scholar, only 'non-translation' prevents linguistic assimilation (41). Although *bambini* is recognisable to Canadian readers, the blend of English and Italian creates a gentle friction, which at a textual level represents Bianca's difficulty to access the host society due to the 'barrier of language'. Moreover, the heterolingualism created is representative of the tension between the migrant narrator and the host society.

The narrator's hope of finding a nurturing home in Canada was shattered by the hostile reaction of the host society. As with Ricci and the protagonist of *Fabrizio's Passion*, Bianca realised her sense of otherness when she first moved from her private Italian sphere to the public Canadian one. As the following passage shows, her cultural difference was the reason for being humiliated and discriminated against by her Canadian classmates:

I stood alone on the cold playground. The other girls skipped by the school. I edged towards them. Maybe I could slip in, blend imperceptibly into the magic circle. But when I was standing silently beside them, their eyes shifted towards me. Their skipping song shifted smoothly from 'Spanish dancers do the kicks' to 'We don't want no DP's'. I was an adult before I discovered what the letters stood for. They had categorized me accurately enough. (Edwards 1982/1993: 113)

Being labelled a 'displaced person' made Bianca aware that her cultural difference was perceived as otherness in her host country. The narrator proves how the 'othering' process (Spivak 1985) experienced by migrants negates their efforts of being recognised as part of the host society. Through Bianca's peers, the author shows how the host society translates the migrant subjects and represents it as an inhospitable community, which defends itself against the 'other'. Cultural translation in this context can be understood as the

'materialization of our relationship with otherness' (Simon 1992: 161). This is an example of how the novel contributes to mould the Canadian cultural identity, which expresses itself in the ascriptions of difference to Italian migrants.

The struggle in building up social networks, which prevented Bianca from gaining a sense of belonging to Canada, was made even harder by her regular visits to Venice: 'For 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 1982/1993: 108). Moreover, her life in Canada was unsettled by endless departures and arrivals due to her parents' continuous moving from one city to another:

It would have been easier if we hadn't moved so much those first few years. Besicker, Calgary, Leduc, Edmonton, Calgary. Twelve schools in seven years. Even when my voice, my words were just like the others, I never had the time to disarm the natural suspicion. It would have been easier if my parents had come here with the idea of staying. (113)

The difference of her voice and her words from those of the others is representative of the discrimination, sense of shame and isolation that Bianca suffered because of her difficulty in learning the new language:

I took my turn at reading aloud and hearing, between my hesitant words, half-muffled giggles, looking up to see the exchange of knowing glances, the circle closing against me. 'Listen to her. *Dis*. Listen to her.' Round and round – laughs, whispers, secrets, gifts, birthdays – *shared*. I was left outside, watching. (112)

Bianca's awareness of loss was clearly amplified by the barrier of language.⁷ Her difficulty in understanding English made her feel shameful like, for instance, when she misunderstood what her teacher asked pupils to bring the next day. She thought she had understood 'without repetition, without pantomime' (112) but in reality she understood 'shoe laces' instead of 'ribbons': 'I hadn't been totally wrong. I had understood the general idea. I could not deny my pleasure in that I was learning. But the triumph coexisted with the too familiar shame, sense of being caught out yet again' (112). Moreover, she

⁷ Edwards represented language as an obstacle to the migrant characters' integration in Canada in several additional works (see 1973, 1986a, 1990a, 2003).

perceived her peers' words as if they were 'thrown, hurled at [her]' and when she 'tried to catch the sounds, they slipped, twisted away' (111). Under this view, the narrator can be seen as a 'translated person', who has to engage in the process of 'learning to live another form of life and to speak another kind of language' (Asad 1986: 149).

Bianca's struggle to build up social networks displays the intercultural processes of translation between her 'place of departure' and her 'place of arrival', which continuously suspend her in a movement back and fro: between 'place and placeness', 'home and homelessness' (Steiner 2009: 24). As argued by Papastergiadis, 'these temporary reinscriptions which are formed in the contestation between departure and arrival, are the signs with which diasporic communities enunciate themselves' (2000: 139). In the next section, I will show how, as a young migrant woman, the narrator tried to find a sense of belonging by moulding her language and her behaviour to suit her host culture, in order to become part of the host society and free herself from that 'placelessness' that assailed her. I will illustrate the narrator's strategies of negotiation between her Italian and Canadian cultural identities and how she enacted rites of incorporation in order to no longer be perceived as the 'other'.

4.3 'Points of Exit' and 'Points of Entrance'

The narrator's displacement, which opened up 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992/2008: 4), initially led her to seek shelter in the Italian diasporic community, which kept the connection with her past alive. Bianca showed how home is to be found in practices like 'stories carried out in one's head' (Dawson and Rapport 1998: 7), when she used to tell the story of a princess and the King of Venice to her friend Loretta, who was annoyed by the usual stories of that 'rotten and stinking place' (Edwards 1982/1993: 116). Bianca's resolute reaction in defending Venice shows her initial attachment to her native country. However, she soon realised that she needed to break away from her Venetian past by seeking new communities. Bianca's negotiation happened between the two poles of proclaiming an Italian diasporic identity, one full of nostalgic longing for the place left behind and foregrounding the needs of the diasporic community, and the other, which stresses movement rather than stasis and seeks new affiliations with other real or 'imagined communities' (Brah 1996: 93). Bianca's narrative can be read as an example of how migrant characters 're-locate and find their own voices between the boundary markers of

old and new communities' (Steiner 2009: 126). The narrator started a process of cultural translation, where 'points of exit' from an oppressive system and 'points of entrance' into a familiar one were continuously negotiated, thus abandoning her sense of 'placelessness'. She sought out new affiliations, breaking away from the constraints of her diasporic community and resulting, however, in a painful rift with her parents. Bianca's reaction to the 'contact zone', which destabilises perceptions of culture, community and the self (Steiner 2009: 127), was opposite to that of her parents. By re-translating her experience of past and departure, she refused to be defined solely by others; from this point of view re-translation can be understood as a 'strategy of survival' as a migrant (Steiner 2009: 113). Bianca's process of cultural translation stood out as more comfortable with the instability of change than that employed by her parents, which instead emphasised continuity and involved a recovering of identity that maintained clear boundaries between 'us' (migrants) and 'them' (host society). In reaction to the destabilisation of perceptions caused by the merging and clash between Italian and Canadian cultures, Bianca constantly translated herself into her new context and scorned her parents' ill-fitting and ill-at-ease otherness. Her parents represent those migrants discussed by Steiner, who erect walls as a defence against the insecurities and anxieties surrounding migration (125). As explained by the narrator, they regretted moving to that 'barbarous place' (Edwards 1982/1993:120) and they 'clung to their way, but disconnected from the society it expressed' (159). They kept their home customs alive rather than assimilating into Canadian society. The attitude of Bianca's parents can be read as a reference to Edwards' mother, who was 'resolutely closed, impervious to [that] country in both her attitudes and skills' (2008: 139). Bianca soon started to reject her parents' adherence to their own culture, since she saw it as an obstacle to her integration into the host society:

Later, especially through Jody and her family, I began to see that Mamma's and Papa's judgement of Canadians was off and, more, that the code of rules, the method of behavior they were trying to impress on me was inappropriate here'. (Edwards 1982/1993: 117)

Significantly, the narrator began to feel the necessity of finding a 'point of exit' from that oppressive system when she met Jody, her first 'point of entrance' into Canadian society. As she explains, it was with Jody that she realised the possibility of interrelating her Italian with her Canadian identity, an ongoing process constantly in flux: 'With Jody, for the first time, I sensed how the two halves of my life could meet, the mask and the self fuse' (122).

By taking Jody and her family as a basis for comparison, the narrator first scrutinises and translates Canadian culture through Italian eyes, and subsequently measures this experience against the familiar experiences of her home culture. The narrative is therefore defined by a discursive movement to and fro as well as by the resulting strategic choices. It proves how translation processes take the form of a continuous dialogic interaction between migrant subjects and their host society. Moreover, it shows how cultural translation takes place every time that ‘an alien experience is internalized and rewritten in the culture where that experience is received’ (Carbonell 1996: 81). The narrator’s scrutiny of Canadian society is clear when she describes Jody as having ‘been formed in a mold marked “perfect Canadian girl”’ (Edwards 1982/1993: 117–8), thus showing her desire to be like her friend.

Bianca’s mother, however, wanted her ‘to remain an Italian child’ by forcing her to wear the ‘camel coat with black velvet collar, smocked woolen dresses, sensible leather shoes’ that she had sent from Venice, although Bianca ‘longed for ski jackets, jeans, shiny plastic shoes like everyone else’ (114). She pushed her daughter to claim her Italian cultural identity by constantly reminding her to be proud, not like ‘th[o]se Canadians’ (113):

‘Do you want to be like one of these Canadians?’ she would ask rhetorically, which meant, do you want to be without style, without manners, without sense? All Canadians called you by your first name as soon as they met you, ate horrible food that came out of cans, served dishwater instead of coffee and drank rye whiskey with their meals, which was why, at the top of a hat, they got disgustingly drunk. Besides drunk or sober, they slapped you on the back and put their feet on the coffee table. Any slip in etiquette, a forgotten ‘thank you’ or a fork carelessly picked up in the right hand, brought forth – with a punctuating sigh – ‘you are becoming one of them’. (113–4)

The mother’s exhortation not to emulate the Canadian friends is a reference to the author’s mother, as testified in *Finding Rosa*. The rhetorical question of Bianca’s mother, ‘Do you want to be like one of these Canadians?’, recalls Rosa’s favourite question: ‘If all the other girls threw themselves into a canal, would you?’ (2008: 143). Much like the protagonist in *Fabrizio’s Passion*, whose parents expected him to be manly, the mother incited Bianca to put on a feminine attitude, namely to be mannerly, refined, distinguished and cultured. The

author contributes to the construction of gender stereotypical identity when she explains the rules of femininity in the Italian sociocultural context of the 1960s. Bianca's mother could be read as an example of 'heterostereotypes', that is a image of the Italian cultural 'other', who scorns the social rules of the host country and proudly preserves the sociocultural values of her home country, like formality and the obsession about good food. The narrator's portrayal of Canadians as a xenophobic society and their description, through her mother's Italian eyes, as ill-mannered people are examples of how the novel explores the relationship across cultures between the host society and migrants, thus engaging in a process of 'cultural production'. It shows that the way in which a culture is read and interpreted by another has to do with the 'mythology of stereotyping and representation' linking the respective societies (Carbonell 1996: 80).

Examples of the author's 'heterostereotypes' of the Italian culture are contained, instead, in Marco's story. The narrator's 'foreign gaze' at the Italian culture is clear, for instance, from her opinion on Italian premarital relationships: 'I thought everyone in Italy had enormously long engagements' (Edwards 1982/1993: 225). The narrator also shows her Canadian perspective when she describes some Italian terrorists, who appeared on the TV news: 'They looked so Italian, all of them – cocky, handsome, and stylishly dressed' (267). Portraying Italian men as audacious, narcissistic and fashionable contributes to the formation of the stereotypical Italian notion of *italianità* centred on the importance of appearances and fashion. This is a further example of how the novel can be read as a 'translated text' (Polezzi 2001), where the narrator mediates the Italian 'other' to her Canadian audience. Moreover, the narrator makes a comparison on gender roles in Canadian and Italian societies and points out that, unlike Italy, in Canada there are no binary associations between gender and domestic roles:

'One difference between here and there is the men. In Canada, among educated people particularly,' I was exaggerating, lying almost, 'antiquated roles are passing away. There is a true movement towards equality. The men are secure enough in their maleness to cook, to look after the babies and not feel diminished but rather enriched'. (Edwards 1982/1993: 227–8)

Bianca's observation is confirmed by Paola and Marco's reaction to her comment. While Paola complains about the 'tyrannical nature of Italian men' (228), Marco involuntarily shows his contrasting male point of view and his feeling of repression: 'Equality is one thing – here women rule. Italy is a matriarchy' (228). These examples confirm how questions of translation can be seen as complex practices involved in the construction of images and identities as well as in the interaction between cultures (Polezzi 2001: 77).

Going back to Bianca's attempted process of integration and her mother's hostility towards their host society, it is important to note that the conflicting mother-daughter relationship was exacerbated by Bianca's increasing desire for assimilation: 'I began to answer Mamma's "Do you want to be like one of these Canadians?" with "Yes, yes, yes"' (117).⁸ Similar to Fabrizio Notte's experience, the more Bianca came into contact with her Canadian friends the more she started to feel 'that inevitable gulf between the immigrant parents and the child' (117): 'In the face of unfamiliar and therefore suspect customs, they kept me reined in, bound and blinkered. They would not acknowledge what habits and guidelines could have changed in Italy since their youth' (159). While with her parents she felt 'exposed', she looked at Jody's family with admiration:

But it was in her home life that the essence of her glamour lay. Her family seemed a model of calmness and rationality. I could never imagine her parents embarrassing her or her sisters in public. They spoke to Jody as if she were an adult. The entire family, even the mother, spent an amazing amount of time in physical activity, skiing at Banff, skating, curling, tennis, swimming at the country club, riding at the stables. Jody had her own horse. (118)

Bianca's integration into Canadian society shows how new relations between people from different cultural backgrounds become possible through translational practices and processes, since they resist the discursive definitions offered by the societies in which they live (Steiner 2009: 12). By offering an outlook both on Canadian and Italian life styles, the

⁸ The migrant daughter's rejection of Italian cultural values imposed by her mother is a common theme in Italian-Canadian literature (see for instance Paci 1982; Petrone 1998). Bianca's rebellion reminds us of Petrone's mother, who wanted her to wear clothes and accessories in green, white and red, as she narrates in her memoirs: 'She made the girls tricolor toques, mitts, scarves and dickies. I refused to wear mine. "These are the colours of the Italian flag", she protested. "I am not Italian. I am Canadese. I am Canadian. I am Canadian", I tried to explain. It was no use' (1998: 281).

narrator represents a mixed and decentred subjectivity, which is always in dialogue with cultural otherness.

Bianca's negotiation between Italian and Canadian cultures leads her to constantly observe the differences between the attitude of locals and migrants in an attempt to bridge the two cultures:

Several times, Jody's mother invited my mother to her house for tea. The Canadian mother always sat straight-backed but slightly, politely, angled forward. The Italian one was looser, legs crossed, head turning. Inspecting the room. And each time, the Canadian one, her smile fixed, 'Won't you have more tea? Another biscuit?' The Italian one, edging her cup a bit forward on the side couldn't. 'Oh, no, thank you, no. You have been most kind. But I couldn't. No.' (Edwards 1982/1993: 119)

This intercultural exchange between Italian and Canadian cultures can be seen as a translational process, since it makes readers understand 'how the foreign and the familiar intersect in every form of cultural production' (Steiner 2009: 99). Bianca acts as a cultural mediator between Jody's mother and her own, whose communication was made difficult by their different cultures. For instance, when her mother criticised Jody's for not being friendly and talkative, she explained to her that there the 'elaborate web of flattering words, though standard in Italian, was alien, even suspect' (Edwards 1982/1993: 120). The narrator's role as cultural mediator is a reference to the author. Edwards used to act not only as her mother's personal cultural mediator but also as her interpreter, as she declared in an interview with Olding: 'I'm told as soon as I could talk, I became my mother's translator. I suspect that learning both languages simultaneously encouraged my later distrust of a singular approach or point of view' (2008: np).⁹ The author therefore shows how encounters between Italian and Canadian cultures are negotiated and narrated. Edwards' role as her mother's interpreter is confirmed in *Finding Rosa*, where she tells an anecdote dating back to her childhood:

⁹ The difficult communication within Italian diasporic family environments has been represented by a number of Italian-Canadian authors (see for instance Paci 1982; Melfi 1991; Ricci 1993).

One of my great-aunts from the English side of the family had told me that when I was two years old, I already went out with Mum to the shops and acted as her translator. 'I can see you', she said, 'a little wee thing at the sweet shop. Your mum – she was trying to tell Emily Jones about your vacation. Mountains, mountains, she was yelling. And you serious – you say, 'She means we are going to Wales'. (Edwards 2008: 136–7)

While Bianca's family represented her 'point of exit' from an oppressive system, Jack, a Ukrainian-Canadian man, was her real 'point of entrance' into Canadian society in the same way that Fabrizio Notta was allowed his integration by his cousins. Bianca's relationship with Jack enlightened 'the possibilities of place and self' (De Luca 1988: 474). With him she explored the world of words, overcame the barrier of language (2008: 170) and changed her perception of Canada:

Yet in teaching me to recognize, teaching me to name, he changed me. It was as if the emotional slide through which I had been viewing the land, the slide that coloured the country oppressive and infinitely barren, flipped up and back to be stored; a new one that painted the land familiar and supporting clicked to place. (Edwards 1982/1993: 63)

Jack triggered Bianca's 'affective turn' (Clough 2007), which provided her with acceptance and stability in the host country.¹⁰ This proves Steiner's point that 'it is in this change where a translation of affiliation takes on significance' (2009: 16). Bianca no longer perceived the Canadian land as 'oppressive and barren' but as 'familiar and supporting', thus confirming Atwood's metaphorical definition of landscapes as 'maps of a state of mind' (1996: 49). During her walk with Jack through the fields, Bianca started to perceive the cold air as a 'caress on [her] overheated cheeks' (Edwards 1982/1993: 61). Everything around her took a new meaning. She therefore acts as an example of how 'mobile individuals' – namely people crossing geographical, social and cultural boundaries – relate emotionally to a changing material environment (Svašek 2012: 1). Bianca's experience sheds light on how 'transit, transition and mobility' make connections between

¹⁰ On the subject of affect in migrant studies see for instance Svašek 2012.

two kinds of movement: firstly, mobility through time and space; and secondly, emotional dynamics (6).

Bianca's fascination for language, which was already clear when she explored her entrance into English and when she explained how the 'mastery of the words, the proper understanding came' (Edwards 1982/1993: 112), becomes even more evident in the following passage:

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. But for Jack, words, in whatever language, were primarily objects to be inspected and reverently wondered over. 'City,' he would say, 'from the Latin *civis* and *civitas*, the place where the citizen is at home. Are you at home? He would tease, 'a citizen?' We could make Edmonton a city. We citizens could make it. (62)

Similar metalinguistic reflections are also expressed in *Finding Rosa*, where the author for instance ponders on the sexual connotation of the Italian word *donna di servizio* (2008: 241) or on the polysemic word *casa*, which means both *home* and *house* (361). Thanks to Jack and his friends of Ukrainian origin, Bianca learned the importance of her cultural difference, which she no longer perceived as an obstacle to her integration in Canada or as a reason for being discriminated: 'But I felt, I still feel, that I was doing more than simply absorbing their views, their masks. I was looking through. I was finally seeing what was here because I had finally lost my expectations of what should be here' (1982/1993: 63). Jack and his friends therefore functioned as those discursive strategies, which made cultural barriers more permeable and provided Bianca with a place that she could claim partially as her own: 'Old masks replaced by new? The vision of the outsider, Italian, American, or Eastern Canadian, superseded by that of the native? Partly' (63).

4.4 The Impossible 'Return Journey'

The narrator's integration in Canada was also enabled by her failed 'return journey' to Venice. During one of her periodic visits to Italy, Bianca experienced the same sense of otherness triggered by 'DP' when Marco introduced her as his 'little Canadian cousin' (122) to his friends. Her reaction – 'Canadian. I'm as Venetian as the rest of you' (122) – shows her initial belonging to her home country. However, she immediately re-evaluated her Italian cultural identity: 'But of course, I wasn't quite' (122). She acknowledged that Venice was no longer her home: 'Yet, I still had no doubt that that self was Venetian. I wanted to belong here, but I was sure that I didn't, that I was, to use a phrase from that first novel, "in exile in a bitter land"' (122). The repetition of 'but' and 'yet' stresses the conflict triggered by Bianca's transcultural identity. She still perceived Venice as her home but at the same time she was aware that she no longer belonged there and that she was inhabiting, instead, a 'Third Space', where the conflicts between Italian and Canadian cultures needed to be negotiated. Living the presence of her past suspended her in a perpetual exile, which provided her with the distance from her home country necessary to overcome its silences and make her re-translation of the past possible (Steiner 2009: 115). As pointed out by Zeleza, exile involves displacement and entails alienation from homeland, family, language and the continuities of self (2005: 3). Bianca's displacement in her own home country was exacerbated when Italian revealed itself as a barrier to her communication with Marco:

Still, when I tried to answer you, the words on my tongue were English. I paused, I stuttered, searched for the Italian equivalents. I was smooth enough with the phrases of family and home. But theory, abstract thought, seemed necessarily English, for it was the language in which I read. I stopped in the middle of the sentence about the benefits of further education. 'I can't quite say what I mean. It's so frustrating.' (Edwards 1982/1993: 122)

The narrator shows how the experience of displacement generates a creative tension with one's own language (Ashcroft *et al.* 1995/2003: 391) and proves how it urges 'transcultural writers to revisit their culture of origin by the essential questioning of their relationship with their body, faiths, rites, languages' (Faquir 2004: 168). The loss of the Italian

language reflects the narrator's progressive non-belonging to Italy; however, her use of the term 'frustrating' is indicative of the sense of failure caused by her inability to 'fit' between language and place' (Ashcroft *et al.* 1995/2003: 391). Bianca's frustration was not alleviated by Marco's words of comfort:

'On the contrary.' You had taken my elbow, bringing it to sudden consciousness and were guiding me towards the stairs. 'You do very well. Your accent is amazingly close. You can barely tell that you live there.' Barely. (Edwards 1982/1993: 122)

Bianca was almost offended by Marco's use of 'barely', she wanted to reappropriate her Italian cultural identity. Her determination in standing in front of the mirror and practicing Italian was eloquent of her desire to repossess the mastery of her language:

It was in the movement of my facial muscles and my mouth that I was caught out. But I couldn't loosen my jaw. My mouth wouldn't open wide enough to let the words properly roll. The Canadian style, tight and reserved, had been coded into my body and could not be unlearned. (123)

This passage shows how English created a different Bianca, not only by changing her perception of the world, but also by inscribing itself into her body.¹¹

The displacement caused by the linguistic barrier and Marco's perception of Bianca as the 'other' made her feel uncomfortable in Venice, which used to be, instead, 'a secure place', her 'enclosure, cocooning' (Edwards 1982/1993: 108). Her harmonious and idealised vision of home as well as her nostalgic dream of the past were therefore shattered by a failed 'return journey'. She felt a stranger in her homeland and realised that 'going home is always a journey abroad' (Bartoloni 2008: 86). Venice therefore revealed itself as an 'imaginary homeland' (Rushdie 1991). In this formulation, home becomes primarily a

¹¹ The definition of Canadian cultural identity as 'tight and reserved' reminds us of Hoffman's association of Canadians with coldness: 'My mother says I'm becoming "English". This hurts me, because I know she means I'm becoming cold...' (1989: 146).

mental construct built from memories and exists in a fractured and discontinuous relationship with the present (McLeod 2000: 211).

Bianca's acceptance of non-belonging to Italy is a reference to the author herself, who confessed that she felt like a 'foreigner' in Venice:

I knew the city, not as a tourist does, as a series of 'sights'; I knew its daily rhythms, its hidden life. In those narrow, labyrinthine streets, I was at home. Yet – I am not Venetian. Despite the many summers I have spent there, despite my affectionate, extended family, despite everything I know and feel about the city, I am an outsider. Although my mother has spoken Venetian to me since I was born, when I open my mouth to speak *Venexiane*, I am exposed as a foreigner. (Edwards 1999: 29)

The narrator's acceptance of the impossibility of the 'return journey' is confirmed at the end of the novel in an interior monologue with Marco in which she expresses her regret for not being able to communicate with him: 'Still. Still I cannot write it in Italian. And you do not read English. I will never touch you at all' (1982/1993: 271). Her inability to communicate with her cousin because of the language barrier hints at her failed attempt to repossess her Venetian past. The narrator's impossibility of the 'return journey' is shared by the author, who described a 'recurring dream' in one of her essays:

I was about to arrive in Venice. I could see the city shimmering before me. I was almost there. But at the moment of arrival, it vanished. I found myself instead on an empty, windswept street. I could never arrive, never return. [...] At the moment of arrival, the city vanished. And I was suspended in a cycle of longing and loss. To arrive was to be safe, to reach refuge, to be home. (1999: 27)

4.5 The Impossible Arrival Home

The concept of 'home' comes across as increasingly complex at the end of the novel. The narrator's acceptance of her failed 'return journey' to Venice helped her renegotiate her past and integrate into her host country, as shown by the initial part of the following passage in which she invokes Edmonton as her home:

Winter, my country. Snow, my country. I am no longer afraid of the vastness, the extremity of this place. Yet, even as I stare out the window, the labyrinthine *calle* of Venice are close, so very close, inevitably drawing me. I hear the noisy cheerful sound of the Venetian crowd on the main paths, the silent darkness of the back ways. I see the canals, the shops, the squares as you pass. The news vendor on the corner, at the end of your road, the main door to your apartment building'. (1982/1993: 69)¹²

The narrator's remembered place, which she left behind, the 'labyrinthine *calle* of Venice', helps her ground the sense of self in an alien landscape. In line with Atwood's idea of 'interior landscapes' (1996: 49), I would argue that the cold and vast spaces are no longer associated with a 'hostile' world as they were described by the narrator at her arrival in Canada. However, the second part of the passage shows that integration does not necessarily mean 'being home'. On the contrary, the movement from 'placelessness' to 'place' is never completed, but constantly requires cultural translation, where 'points of exit' and 'points of entrance' are continuously negotiated. Bianca's *yet* is eloquent of the 'Third Space' inhabited by the narrator. Although she perceives Edmonton as her city, the memories of Venice still inhabit her mind and therefore show that she still finds security in the home of memory to recreate a sense of cultural identity and belonging. The narrator shows how in migration, as in translation, the process of arrival and departure is never complete and 'it is in the temporary enunciations between them that meaning emerges'

¹² The narrator's house as the place where her creative process was initiated sheds light on the relationship between domestic spaces and women's life writing. The novel is an example of how domestic spaces can be sites of revelation as well as venues for dreaming, locating and constructing an emerging interior self. Bianca's house is her shelter from cold and snow, prepares the ground for artistic creation and contributes to her evolution of a writer's identity. In this specific case, the window plays an important role in the shaping of Bianca's memories and imagination. On this subject see for instance Rybczynski 1986; Bachelard 1994; and Mezei 2005.

(Steiner 2009: 100). Bianca's position in the 'Third Space' can be read as a reference to the author's life: 'When I was growing up in Alberta, going to twelve schools in seven years, when I was at university, I felt different, out of place, I thought I would never belong. Like the dream, I would never arrive' (Edwards 1999: 31). Although Bianca's description of Edmonton as her home dates back to a moment before the completion of the last 'attempt' at writing Marco's story, her incomplete process of cultural translation is confirmed by the very last sentences of the novel addressed to Marco: 'Still. Still I cannot write it in Italian. And you do not read English. I will never touch you at all' (Edwards 1982/1993: 271). Bianca's inability to communicate with her Venetian alter ego hints at her failed attempt to 'fus[e]' her Italian and Canadian cultural identities, her 'two inimical halves' (108). The narrator realises that it is not the fusion but the constant negotiation of her transcultural identity that reveals itself as her 'strategy of survival' (Steiner 2009: 99). Bianca's inability to fuse her Italian and Canadian cultural identities is reflected in her failed attempt to 'exorcis[e]' her past and 'escaping' the recurring motif of Venice (Edwards 1982/1993: 262). On the one hand, it solidifies the distance between her and Marco but, on the other, it does not solidify the distance between her and Venice. Accepting that Venice is no longer her home does not lead her automatically to accept Canada as her new home. She inhabits a 'Third Space', where neither departures nor arrivals lead home.

In the final part of the novel, Bianca reveals that she could 'shape' those vast spaces and suggests that imagination would enable her to construct her host country as home and to exercise her agency. She therefore confirms that 'imagination becomes the primary location of home' (McLeod 2000: 211) and the host country, like the home country, is an imaginative construct, for it exists only as a projection of what the migrant character considers to be possible (Tuzi 1997: 127). Exile and home become interchangeable spaces, states of mind, real and imagined (Zeleva 2005: 18). The interchangeability of home and exile, here and there, memory and forgetting suggests that all concepts of origin and belonging are 'mere fictions that one can construct as well as deconstruct' (Hamil 2004: 55). By 'shaping', imagining those 'vast spaces', Bianca seems to fulfil the author's aim of the novel, to 'fully imagine the place that is Western Canada':

When I came to write *The Lion's Mouth* I was interested in exploring not just my relation to my new land but the question of what is this land, or in Northrop Frye's terms 'where is here?' I wanted to fully imagine the place that is

Western Canada, to dream it as the artists of Venice had dreamt and thus made their city. (Edwards 1986b: np)

However, Edwards immediately added: 'I wanted but I could not quite do it; the pull of Venice was too strong' (np). Her partial failure is confirmed when she explains that she started to write about Italy and the Italian-Canadian experience 'to find [her] place, to determine where [she] belonged': 'Yet I found I could not write myself into belonging. My split was only emphasized. Now I see that I will be ever obsessed with the split person: the Canadian in Rome, the Italian in Edmonton, immigrant and emigrant' (1996a: 67).¹³ Her awareness that she will be perpetually involved in a translational process, travelling 'back and forth, Canada and Italy, if only in [her] imagination, forever' (64) was confirmed in another essay in which she expressed the complementarity of her 'inner' and 'outer' cities: 'Edmonton in Venice and Venice in Edmonton: in each place I feel the presence of the other' (1999: 31). She concluded her essay by explaining: 'When I wrote my first novel, I thought I would be able to exorcize my dream of Venice. But the dream repeats itself. I find myself writing this essay. Venice again' (35). Edwards therefore seems to have that 'awareness of simultaneous dimensions' given by the 'exile's plurality of vision'. She is aware of at least two cultures, two homes. She gained the 'double perspective' of what it is like not to be at home, to look at home with detachment and to question its underlying assumptions (Rushdie 1991: 13).

Reading Bianca's act of 'shaping those vast spaces' as one of several references to the author, I would suggest that Bianca's homeness is only a provisional state. She therefore shows that home is not a static place but a space of cultural translation, where different languages and cultures intersect.

4.6 Translated Language

The narrator's continuous waving between the Italian diasporic community and Canadian host society as well as her Venetian past and her Edmontonian present leads me to interpret

¹³ Similar reflections on multiple identities and split personality have been expressed by French-Bulgarian writer Tzvetan Todorov: 'I live in a unique space, at once within and outside of it: a stranger 'back home' in Sofia, Bulgaria, and at home yet 'in a foreign way' in Paris' (1996: 23).

The Lion's Mouth as a novel 'on the border between writing and translation' (Simon 2000: 22). The narrator's incomplete arrival home is reflected at a textual level by the presence of Italian, her mother tongue, which involves Canadian readers in a continuous translational process. The presence of Italian 'untranslated words' in the English text proves how the narrator's entrance into her new language implies a constant process of translation of her behaviour, cultural values, thoughts, beliefs and emotions. This process makes *The Lion's Mouth* similar to those literary texts that Tymoczko defined as 'translations of themselves' (2000: 156). However, unlike the authors discussed by Tymoczko (see 1999a, 1999b, 2000) as well as other postcolonial translation studies scholars (see Mehrez 1992; Bandia 1996; Ramakrishna 1997/2007; Simon 1997, 2000, 2001; Bassnett and Trivedi 1999; Steiner 2009) and unlike those migrant writers analysed by translation studies critics (see Martín Ruano 2003; Larkosh 2006; Polezzi 2006, 2010; Gentzler 2008; Pas 2013), Edwards is an English native speaking author. It is interesting to note that the narrator Bianca Mazzin's mother tongue, instead, is Italian, which makes the novel a 'translated text' similarly to the works analysed by the scholars cited above. Most significantly, the narrator's nationality and mother tongue are two of the very few details, which are not references to the author's life. In light of Edwards' English native language, the translational process from Italian into English in which the narrator is involved becomes even more significant and complex. Considering the highly autobiographical nature of the novel, the narrator's Italian nationality and mother tongue are eloquent signs of Edwards' strong sense of belonging to Italy and to the Italian language although she grew up in England before migrating to Canada. As she confirmed in a conversation with Dumas, the novel reflects her attempt to remain connected with Italian, the language with which she grew up at home (Dumas and Edwards 2000: 107). Interestingly, Edwards defined Italian as her 'mother tongue' (107) although she did not master it to the extent to make it her literary language (106). Moreover, what the author called 'Italian' is in reality Istrian-Venetian, the language she used to communicate with her mother:

When I first started studying Italian literature, I got the sense that I didn't really know Italian. Also, when I was in Italy and spoke Italian, especially in Sicily, friends often corrected the way I say things. But then, when I began to read more, I realized that I was actually not speaking incorrect Italian, but Venetian' (106).

The author's strong sense of belonging to Italian emerges very clearly, however, from her reflections on the impact of this language on the Italian-Canadian authors' texts: 'Even those of us who do not ever write in Italian still carry within us the sound of the words, the structure of the sentences, the method of apprehending the world that the Italian language signifies' (1996a: 64–5). This observation is reflected in *The Lion's Mouth* by the syntactical alteration of English, like the Latinate structures highlighted in bold in the following passages:

- (1) We waited an hour, but since **you didn't have the courtesy to even phone...**. (1982/1993: 47)
- (2) So loud **you have to have the record?**'. (53)

As noted by Canton, these 'stilted sentences' (2004: 152) reporting Elsa's words indicate that they were originally spoken in Italian (155). Latinate structures are also interspersed in the narrative voice of the following examples:

- (3) Her bedroom, **that evening I visited**, was sparse, cell-like. (173)
- (4) Poor child – as I write she is standing in the living room, staring out the window at the still leafless trees and mud-filled garden, **wondering what place is this...** So I begin again my life, in this city, this land. (268)

As Canton noted, passage 4, which is taken from the epilogue, significantly shows that the narrator's belonging to her cultural origins is still strong although her life narrative helped her renegotiate her Italian cultural identity (2004: 155). Italian also surfaces through a Latinate vocabulary, like *falsity* (Edwards 1982/1993: 12). The alteration of English syntactical sentences, which might be perceived as the author's inability to master English and which 'transgresses grammatical rules' (1997: 102) is instead a significant illustration of the tension and negotiation at work in a transcultural subject (Canton 2004: 155). This unconventional syntax, which deterritorialises the English language of the novel, displays

the narrator's 'translation effects' (Simon 2001: 218; 2011: 50; see also Tymoczko 2000: 148) and is a textual piece of evidence of my interpretation as a hybrid text.

The most evident linguistic traces of Italian, however, are 'untranslated words', as shown in the examples below followed by my own explanation or translation. Although they are few compared to the English, they are significant signs of the narrator's process of cultural translation. The limited use of Italian proves that this is not the author's mother tongue and also suggests that the novel was conceived for an Anglophone audience, not necessarily familiar with Italian. Some Italian linguistic traces surface in the form of short clauses, like '*Bianca, se sapessi, se sapessi*,' (10) (if you knew, if you knew), *che disgrazia di Dio* (10) (what a tragedy), *Barbara scossa* (10) (Barbara is upset), *esaurimento nervoso* (10) (nervous breakdown), *la mia piccola cugina canadese* (122) (my little Canadian cousin), *latte, latte, sempre latte* (126) (milk, milk, always milk), *sei innamorato di lei* (225) (are you in love with her?), *le voglio bene* (225) (I have affection for her), *le vuoi bene* (226) (you have affection for her), *sempre semplice* (229, 266) (always simple), *sempre scattando* (264) (always springing into action), most of which are part of conversations between Bianca and Marco and show the narrator's wish to create a sense of belonging to Italy, an attempt to bridge her past and her present (see a detailed analysis in Section 5.2 in Chapter 5). However, Italian surfaces in the English text mainly in the form of single words, most of which are interspersed in Marco's story. A few of them cannot be considered 'untranslated words', since they are not the linguistic outcome of the narrator's process of cultural translation, but they are proper names, like the movie titles *La Dolce Vita* (160, 164) and *Vitelloni* (164), the brands *Pino* (19) and *Ovomaltina* (126), the church name *La Madonna della Salute* (74), the religious festival *Redentore* (87, 92, 102), the left-wing protest movement of the seventies *Indiani metropolitani* (50) as well as the political party *Partito Comunista* (102). Moreover, there are quotes, such as *La Bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto* (129) (the mouth lifted from the grim meal), song lyrics, like *Stasera mi butto* (35), *stasera, stasera* (35) and *Sono una donna, non sono una santa* (79), as well as a few Venetian rhymes, like *Tante zehte, ancuo più che mai/Me par che i sia ben intossegai* (127) (Many people, more than ever/ seem to me well-poisoned) and *De beber late, magari ogni ora/Ch'el sia pur di vaca bionda o mora* (127) (Drink milk, even every hour/As long as it comes from a cow/either blonde or brunette). However, these Italian words are worth mentioning, since the way in which they have been interspersed in the English text sheds light on the author's translation strategies, which I will illustrate at the end of this section.

Further cases are provided by Italian typical urban elements and words related to the Italian reality, which allow her Canadian readers to experience the Italian component of the novel. These are, for instance, *piazza* (16–7, 36, 152, 238, 240, 258), a square usually associated with Italian towns and cities, *piazzetta* (153, 259), *piazzale* (51, 56), which is a smaller square, *loggia* (260), which is a hall open to the air on more sides and is very common in Mediterranean regions, *viale* (182) (avenue), *campanile* (16, 259) (bell tower), *palazzo* (39, 91–2) (palace), *terrazza* (87, 92, 189, 192–3) (terrace), *cantina* (136) (cellar) and the former currency *lira* (110, 174). Although these words are recognisable to an Anglophone audience and could not have been fully rendered in English, their presence is significant, since it reveals how the Italian setting is at root of Bianca's quest for cultural identity and confirms that 'a different language may reflect a different reality' (Pivato 1999b: 40).

Further examples are provided by more specifically typical Venetian urban elements, like the most recurring word *calle* (23, 28–9, 35, 45, 69, 129, 187, 189, 192, 250, 258), a narrow street enclosed by buildings, *campo* (129, 182, 191, 201, 207), a square usually smaller than a *piazza*, *riva* (255), which is a pedestrian bank along the sea unlike *fondamento* (35, 183, 207), which is instead along a canal. *Fondamento* is one of the misspelled 'untranslated words' together with *passarelle* (182), a footbridge over a canal, and *bricoli* (263), groups of piles used to mark the navigable channels through the lagoon, which I shall analyse in more detail later on in this section. In addition to Venetian urban elements, a considerable amount of 'untranslated words' refers more generally to the Venetian reality, like the boats *vaporetto* (23, 189, 228–9, 245–6, 248, 258) and *gondola* (129, 246), as well as *carnevale* (130, 175, 255), the celebration of which is a very popular tradition in Venice, *acqua alta* (135–6), the flooding of the most low-lying areas of the city following high tide, *piano nobile* (136), the noble floor typical of the ancient Venetian residences, *capanna* (190, 193) (beach hut), *doge* (21, 201), the chief of the State of the Venetian Republic, *Chioggiote* (185), that is women from the town of Chioggia, and *la bocca di leone* (16, 260) (the mouth of the lion).

Other 'untranslated words' are culture-specific items, defined by Trivedi as the 'cruxes of translation', since they prove particularly intractable when translating (2005/2007: 280), like *ciscebei* (Edwards 1982/1993: 259) and *Rosticceria* (211) (a deli shop selling roasted meat and ready-made food). The misspelled word *ciscebei* refers to the

lovers of married noble women, who accompanied them to public entertainments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – particularly in cities in northern Italy, like Venice. This word is an unfamiliar element invoking a foreign culture for Canadian readers and challenges them to be ‘at once capable of reading and translating’ (Mehrez 1992: 122; see also Gentzler 2006: 376). Unlike *ciscebei*, *Rosticceria* has an English equivalent but it represents an ‘irreplaceable Italian word’ the English translation of which would not have done justice (Canton 2004: 145) and acts as a signpost pointing the Canadian readers to Italian culture.

Some culture-specific words are linked to the education system, like *assistente* (100) (assistant professor), *cattedra* (100) (professorship) and *magistrale* (226), formerly a type of secondary school for students wanting to qualify as school teachers. These words would have implied a different cultural connotation if expressed with an English equivalent.

However, the author also uses ‘untranslated words’ for culture-specific terms, although they have an English equivalent. They are used especially for items of everyday life, like drinks and food, such as *bovoli* (88) (snails), *caffè e latte* (143, 193) (latte), *granita di limone* (163) (lemon granita), *scampi risotto* (168) (scampi risotto) and *amaretti* (185) (macaroons). These ‘untranslated words’ are used by the narrator when she translates episodes of her Italian past in a Canadian present reality. With the exception of the Venetian dish *bovoli*, these ‘untranslated words’ have a limited foreignising effect on Canadian readers, since they are highly recognisable and quite international. The remarkable number of Italian culture-bound terms creates a ‘new language’ and makes the text hybrid (Snell-Hornby 2001: 207).

Further recognisable Italian linguistic traces are stereotypical words, like *Signor* (187) (Mr) *Signora* (30, 188–90) (Mrs), *démodé* (18) (old-fashioned). Moreover, *sotto voce* (47) (in a whisper), *cantata* (153), *adagio* (263) (*slowly*) and *adagietto* (263) are used in their literal meaning but also hint at the terms used in music. These stereotypical words, all of which appear in Marco’s story, reveal the author’s mere ‘*illusion of belonging*’ to Italy (Verdicchio 1997: 105, my emphasis). In line with Baldo’s interpretation of Ricci’s use of codeswitching, I would argue that they are used to construct a narrative by giving voice to conflicting perspectives between Italian and Canadian cultures (2008: 36).

A number of 'untranslated words' are restricted to formulaic expressions of oral conversation, like *permesso?* (Edwards 1982/1993: 142) (may I come in?), *pronto* (155) (hello?), *Ciao*, *Zio* (185) (hi, uncle), *caro mio* (208) (my dear), *figlio mio* (27) (my son), *bacini*, *bacini* (154) (kisses kisses), *Bambinona* (107, 129, 226) (big baby), *scuse me* (256) (sorry), which highly depend on orality and show the author's intention of signalling to her readers that the conversations took place in Italian, thus reproducing the local setting.

Most significantly, a number of 'untranslated words' are not characterised by a high degree of specificity, like *luna park* (93) (fun fair), *motoscafo* (107) (motorboat), *bambini* (111) (children), *salotto* (153) (living room), *figlie di Papa* (188) (spoiled girls) and *in gruppo* (224) (in a group). Contrary to Pivato and Camarca, I do not think that Italian 'untranslated words' are used to represent the Italian reality as realistically as possible, and I agree with Grutman that a mimetic reading does not efficiently explain the interaction between different languages within a text, the aim of which is not to mirror or translate reality (2006: 19). In these specific cases, the option to use them is not triggered by a linguistic or cultural difficulty but by the narrator's involuntary impossibility of translating them from Italian into English. This is reminiscent of Michelut's observation that 'language tends to be associated with place' (1990d: 125), that 'one language does not assimilate the experience of the other' (127). Edwards is likely to have felt that the part of herself spoken in Italian stayed there when she left. The fact that the narrator intersperses Italian words when telling about her ride with Marco on the motorboat to the Lido, for instance, proves that 'what has been lived in one language can never cross the boundary and become real (meaningful) to the other language' (125). As noted by Michelut, the experience that binds the two languages becomes a referent, a sign relevant to both through the act of translation' (125). These 'untranslated words' are eloquent signs of the narrator's 'voluntarily incomplete translation process', which highlights her position in the 'Third Space' and makes the text hybrid (Simon 2001: 217; see also Tymoczko 2011: 50–1). These linguistic traces of the narrator's translation from Italian into English are 'translation effects' through which she questions the borders of her transcultural identity.

Finally, the author uses Italian 'untranslated words' to refer to social positioning within the family, like *zia* (238) (auntie) and *Mamma* (mum), which is repeated countless times in Bianca's life-writing and is significantly the most frequent 'untranslated word' throughout the novel. The fact that the narrator refers to her mother almost always with

Mamma, which implies an emotional meaning and invokes familiarity and kinship, signals the author's close association between her mother tongue and her mother. In line with Giorgio's observation that origins, encompassing not only kinship but also race, ethnicity and language, are often seen as metaphorically represented by the maternal figure (2002: 32), I would suggest that the mother-daughter relationship is clearly a central issue of the novel (see a detailed analysis in Section 5.5 in Chapter 5). The word *Mamma* is an eloquent indicator of the affective-linguistic importance of the mother-daughter relationship in the novel, since it invokes more intimacy than the English *mother*. However, it might also convey a stereotypical image of the Italian maternal figure, who has a central role in the family. Similarly to the stereotypical word *signora*, this 'untranslated word' gives voice to the conflicting Italian and Canadian perspectives. Interestingly, the narrator uses the English word to refer to her mother in a few exceptions, significantly when she points her out as an obstacle to her integration in Canada, as shown in the following examples in which I highlighted the word *mother* in bold. As she explains to her ideal reader Marco, her mother pushed her to claim her Italian cultural identity: 'My **mother** in particular – well, you know how stubborn she can be, and she was determined that I would remain an Italian child' (Edwards 1982/1993: 113). Since she never integrated into her host country, Bianca's mother always criticised Canadians for their behaviour, their style and their diet: 'Their food, as **mother** had warned, often came from tins and packets' (118). Not only did she hinder Bianca's process of becoming Canadian but also of becoming a woman, since she acted as a regulator of her sexuality: "'Don't ever let a man touch you", was **my mother's** contribution to my sex education' (163). Even after Bianca finally integrated into the host society, she 'felt exposed without the requisite mother' (221) because she behaved differently from her Canadian friends' mothers, who were instead polite and smiley. Her absence could also make her feel uncomfortable because it made her feel different from the other girls, as shown by the episode of the school recruitment party, which Bianca's mother refused to attend: 'My **mother** had refused to come' (221). Interestingly, in all passages in which the narrator uses the English word *mother*, she expresses disapproval, disappointment and resentment towards her mother, who did not allow her to live her integration and sexuality freely. I would argue, therefore, that while *Mamma* suggests the narrator's desire to preserve her Italian cultural identity represented by her mother, the English word *mother* can be interpreted as her need to repress it in her search for assimilation. As noted by Giorgio, the simultaneous desire to preserve and repress their own ethnic roots is very common among migrant daughters

(2002: 32). *Mamma* is therefore an example of those ‘untranslated words’, which causes a gentle ‘friction’ and represent the narrator’s struggling in her quest for her Canadian identity (Canton 2004: 143).

As is clear from some examples mentioned above, the novel is scattered with several Italian misspelled ‘untranslated words’, which show that the narrator’s Italian mother tongue is a fictitious element intervened by a faulty memory. These words, which are followed by my corrected version in brackets, include *Signora* (30, 188–90, 192) (la signora), *fondamento* (35, 183) (fondamenta), *fondamenti* (207) (fondamente), *sotto voce* (47) (sottovoce), *calle* (69) (calli), *zehte* (127) (zente), *cantina* (136) (ripostiglio), *caffè e latte* (143, 193) (caffellatte), *Regatta* (152) (regata), *scampi risotto* (168) (risotto agli scampi), *passarelle* (182) (passerelle), *Chioggiote* (185) (chioggiotte), *Signor* (187) (il signor), *figlie di Papa* (188) (figlie di papà), *ciscebei* (259) (cicisbei), *adagietto* (263) (adagetto), *scuse me* (256) (scusami) and *bricoli* (263) (briccole). Along with grammar and spelling mistakes, the initial letter of a few words has been spelled in capital letter instead of lower case, such as *Rosticceria* (211) (rosticceria), and vice versa as in the case of *Indiani metropolitani* (50) (Indiani Metropolitani). Moreover, there are inaccuracies in proper names, like the brand *Pino* (19) (*Pino Silvestre*), the singers’ names *Battista* (52) (Battisti) and *Mimi* (92) (Mimi), the movie title *Vitelloni* (164) (I Vitelloni). Interestingly, most of the places in Venice have been misspelled, thus showing how the author’s sense of belonging to this city is fictitious. Place names include *Grande Canale* (21, 26, 87, 91, 245), (Canal Grande), *San Toma* (22) (San Tomà), *San Pantaleon* (34) (San Pantalon), *Campo Bartolomeo* (Campo San Bartolomeo) (45), *Da’ Rezzonico* (122) (Ca’ Rezzonico), *Accademia* (157) (L’Accademia), *Pesaro* (189) (Ca’ Pesaro), *Via Frecceria* (238) (Calle Frezzeria), *mercerie* (251) (Mercerie), *Calle delle Razze* (255) (Calle delle Rasse), *zattere* (258) (Zattere) and *Stazione Termine* (263) (Stazione di Santa Lucia). Finally, there are some misspelled Latin words, like *Pax tibi Marce aevangeli stameus* (259) (*Pax tibi Marce Evangelista meus*) and *denotie* (260) (denontie). These misspelled words reflect the author’s ‘loss of spontaneous contact with [her] inner self, of emotional immediacy and wholeness’ (Simon 2001: 216). They are the result of her ‘fractured state of existence’ (221), which is particularly acute in uprooted people, who challenge the bounds of their cultural identity. Through these mistakes and inaccuracies, Edwards reveals herself as one of those authors discussed by Verdicchio, whose use of Italian is ‘caught within an instinctual search’ that finds emptiness when it turns away from English (1997: 100). The

use of Italian therefore becomes an 'involuntary reaction to this void' (100) and reveals itself as an 'imposed incapacitation' (111).

As a 'fictional translator', Edwards vacillates between domesticating and foreignising translation strategies when she intersperses Italian 'untranslated words' in her novel, and therefore she creates different effects on her Canadian readers. Like Ricci and D'Alfonso, Edwards italicised most of the Italian words and therefore signalled them as foreign elements to her readers. However, a few words like *Signor*, *Signora*, *gondola*, *piazza*, *piazzetta*, *zia*, *cantata* and *scuse me*, are never italicised because they are mostly stereotypical words and the author might have perceived them as fully recognisable to her audience. The non-italicisation of these words makes the transition between languages smoother. Interestingly, place names have not been treated consistently. While *Calle delle Razze* (255), *Riva degli Schiavoni* (255), *Porta della Carta* (260) and *Stazione Termine* (263) are always marked in italics like most of the Italian words, place names like the sandbar *Lido* (18, 23, 44, 87, 107, 171, 190, 211, 258–9), the canal *Grande Canale* (21, 26, 87, 91, 245), *San Toma* (22), *San Pantaleon* (34), *Via Frecceria* (238), the squares *Piazzale Roma* (149, 208, 258), *Campo Bartolomeo* (45) and *Campo Manin* (250), the buildings *Palazzo Morosini* (38; 136) and *Pesaro* (189) as well as the bank *Banca di Roma* (51) are never italicised. The difference might be ascribed to the degree of their popularity at an international level. The non-italicisation of *Mamma* also gives rise to different readings. On the one hand, it might have been perceived as international and recognisable as most of the other Italian 'untranslated words', on the other, its non-italicisation might show that the author's search for her Italian cultural origins is so instinctual that she does not perceive *Mamma* as a foreign word for her Canadian readers and therefore she does not see the need to foreground it visually.

Contrary to D'Alfonso, who interspersed Italian words in *Fabrizio's Passion* but always with their English translation, Edwards mostly resorted to foreignising strategies, since several Italian words are not translated into English. However, these are often international and therefore recognisable; this reduces their foreignising effect on her Canadian readers. In some cases, however, like *ciscebei*, *chioggiote* and *bricoli*, they can act as 'destabilizing factors' (Camarca 2005: 229) and instigate a 'cultural tremblor' (Verdicchio 1997: 38). This strategy of 'anti-translation' makes the novel a hybrid text, which excludes Anglophone monolingual readers and expects them to be at once capable of reading and translating. Edwards' strategy of 'anti-translation' reflects her desire to break the silence in

the monolingual Anglophone Canadian literary mainstream and can be interpreted as a 'deterrent to participation in a national tradition' (Godard 1989: 45).

In other cases, the foreignising effect of Italian 'untranslated words' has been reduced, since the author resorted to 'embedded translations' (Camarca 2005: 234) or 'contextual translations' (Rudin 1996: 141), namely techniques, which allow readers to understand the meaning of foreign words from what precedes or follows, as in the following passage:

- (5) His hand was still resting on the receiver. '*Pronto.*' Marco could hear a blended roar, trucks, cars, and people, but no answering voice. '*Pronto.*' (Edwards 1982/1993: 155, emphasis in the original)

- (6) 'Oh, he's unusual. He was a professor when I first met him. Sociology'.
'An *assistente?*'
'No. He had a *cattedra*. He was one of the youngest ever.'
(35, emphasis in the original)

Specifying that Marco is holding a receiver and describing what he can hear make it clear that *pronto* is an expression used to answer the telephone. Similarly, mentioning Piero's position as a professor and pointing out his remarkable young age when he was appointed, help readers understand that *cattedra* is a teaching position.

A further translation strategy used by Edwards is 'cushioning', which consists of embedding the Italian word 'in such a manner as to make the meaning virtually explicit' (Langeland 1996: 18), as in the following passages:

- (7) Riding the *motoscafo* to the Lido, then the bus to the cheapest beach – hour upon hour of talking. (Edwards 1982/1993: 107, emphasis in the original)

- (8) 'I better go down to the *Rosticceria* and get something for supper. Stay still; you need the rest.' (211, emphasis in the original)

Mentioning the verb *riding* and the sandbar as destination makes it clear that *motoscafo* is a motorboat. Similarly, specifying Paola's visit to the *rosticceria* helps readers understand that it is a deli shop. The cushioning of foreign words and expressions has been considered a strategy of exocitisation in (postcolonial) translation studies (see Mehrez 1992; Venuti 1998/1999), since it does not particularly disrupt the dominant language. This strategy has also been used for the Italian 'untranslated word' *magistrale* (226).

However, the author also resorts to domesticating strategies by combining Italian 'untranslated words' with 'non-literal translations', namely paraphrases (Rudin 1996). When the unfamiliar cultural substrata gives rise to a heavy information load, the author provides her Canadian audience with details on Italian cultural elements:

- (9) It was only when the phrase 'pure and modern' poked through his concentration that he recognized the assaulting odour as **the popular cologne Vidal's *Pino*** – an artificial reproduction of the scent of pine trees. (19)
- (10) '*Stasera mi butto.*' **The silly pop song** they had danced to so unrestrainedly the summer before the wedding played itself over and over in his mind. (35)

In example 9 the brand *Vidal* is preceded by *cologne* and the description which closes the sentence and explains the reason for its name *Pino* (pine). In example 10 the writer clarifies that *Stasera mi butto* are the lyrics of a song, thus acting as a cultural mediator between her Canadian readers and Italian culture. *Vitelloni* and *Dolce Vita*, instead, are not identified as movies: 'You were twenty-four and closer to the *Vitelloni* than to *La Dolce Vita*'. These titles are examples of cultural references as foreignising elements creating a cultural gap as the Canadian readers do not understand that Marco is depicted as an immature and lazy man with neither a clear identity nor a specific aim in his life, like the protagonists of *I Vitelloni*, rather than a man in search of a more meaningful way of life, like Marcello in *La Dolce Vita*. The same strategy has been used for *Redentore* (87), *bovoli* (88), *luna park* (93) and *in gruppo* (224).

Finally, several Italian 'untranslated words' are followed by a 'literal translation' into English, which facilitates the readers' understanding of the text (Rudin 1996). In the

following two examples the author provides the translation of Venetian cultural elements, like *acqua alta* and *bocca di leone* and translates Dante's quotation as well as the inscription on the statue of the lion's mouth:

- (11) Until the outside blaring stopped, it was impossible to calm the child, no matter how much they cuddled or talked to him. *Acqua alta. High water'*. (135)
- (12) *La bocca di leone, the mouth of the lion* was difficult to find in the dim light [...]. (260)

The same technique has been applied to quotations (see 129, 177), song lyrics (see 35, 79, 127, 265), Venetian rhymes (see 127) and oral speeches reporting words of Bianca's Venetian relatives (see 27, 126, 142, 154). Most significantly, it has been used to report passages from Elsa's letter (see 10) and conversations between Bianca and Marco (see 107, 225, 229) (see a detailed analysis in Passages 1, 5–7 in Chapter 5). The incorporated translations create a 'buffer' for Anglophone readers, who are unable to read Italian (Grutman 1998: 183). Through 'translation couplets' the narrator expresses the same idea in two languages and reinforces the expressive acts (Vizcaino 2005: 118). These 'translation couplets' show how the author's identity is duplicated in languages. The narrator reveals herself as those 'nomadic citizens [who] are characterized as polyglots travelling between languages, in a permanent stage of (self)translation' (Meylaerts 2006: 1).

My aim at this point is to demonstrate how the narrator's role as a 'translated person' can be enlivened when the novel is translated (back) into her Italian mother tongue. In the next chapter, I will illustrate the main issues that arise when translating *The Lion's Mouth* into Italian. More specifically, I will explain the translation strategies that have allowed me to convey the narrator's transcultural identity, the process of cultural translation she performs and the hybrid space she inhabits, thus presenting her as a perpetual Italian-Canadian migrant instead of an Italian *emigrant*, as has been done instead in the translations examined in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 5

La Bocca di leone: A Model of Cultural Translation in Practice

In translating *The Lion's Mouth* into Italian, my aim has been to shed light on the three main aspects that have led me to interpret this novel as a hybrid text, namely: the migrant narrator's continuous process of cultural translation, her failed attempt to return to her Italian home country and her failure in accepting her host country as home. As emerges clearly from my analysis of Italian-Canadian literature in general and *The Lion's Mouth* in particular, 'home' is a crucial and complex concept in migrant writing, closely linked to the notions of cultural identity and language. Translating 'home' becomes a particularly thorny issue when the target cultural context happens to be the narrator's home country. Unlike translators Iacobucci and Frattolino, I did not aim to bring the author/narrator 'back home' or to bring Italian and Canadian cultures together. Conversely, I have tried to produce new meanings through the encounter of these two cultures and to show that home can be found but in movement. My aim was to reproduce the narrator's continuous movement between Venice and Edmonton at a textual level through a similar endless movement of my target text between Italian and English. My strategy draws on Malena's association of migration with translation (2003). This theorist pointed out that both migrant subjects and texts are in movement, whether between countries and cultures or languages. Moreover, she stressed that, like texts, migrant subjects can achieve different levels of translatability and therefore of (in)visibility – they can either move from one culture to another by 'creating the illusion that they are native to the target culture, or retain traces of the foreign, by carrying untranslatable elements and proclaiming their difference and forcing transformation on the culture' (Malena 2003: 9). In translating Bianca Mazzin's cultural identity, I aimed to make her visible as a migrant subject. I have stressed her cultural difference; I have not presented her as an Italian woman who emigrated to Canada but rather as an Italian-Canadian, who is still in the process of finding her home. Her acceptance that Italy is no longer her home is visible at a textual level through linguistic traces of her foreignness, of her progressive process of becoming Canadian.

With this aim in mind, I have resorted to Venuti's foreignising strategies, which are well-explained in the introduction to his edited book *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (1992), as well as in his seminal studies *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995) and *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998/1999). The provocative expression 'invisibility' in the title of his first monograph and the term 'difference' used in the subtitle of his second study are eloquent of his approach to translation. He invites translators to show the translated nature of a text, thus making themselves visible. Moreover, 'foreignising strategies' make it possible to 'write translated texts in ways that seek to recognise the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts' (1995: 41). Venuti's strategies therefore call into question the fluency of the target text, the translator's invisibility and translation as a transparent activity. Transparency is replaced by the foreignising strategy of 'resistancy' (1995: 290), which discourages the tendency to assimilate the 'other' and makes it possible for 'sameness' to be exchanged with 'difference' (Bartoloni 2003: 467). A translated text therefore becomes a site where a different culture emerges and where target-text readers discover a cultural 'other' (Venuti 1995: 306). Venuti's theorisation of 'resistancy' draws on Philip Lewis' advocacy for a 'translation that values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies or plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own' (Lewis in Venuti 1995: 24). Venuti applied this theory when translating Milo De Angeli's poem 'L'idea centrale' (1975) into English by reproducing the discontinuity of the source text at a syntactical level (Venuti 1995: 290). As he previously explained in the introduction to *Rethinking Translation*, a resistant translation makes the translator's work visible and helps to 'preserve the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text by producing translations which are strange and estranging, which mark the limits of dominant values in the target-language culture and hinder those values from enacting an imperialistic domestication of a cultural other' (1992: 13). Resorting to resistant strategies in my translation allowed me to represent the Italian-Canadian authors' resistance to the stereotypical representation of *italianità* at a textual level. In his second study, Venuti theorised a new foreignising strategy, defined as 'minoritizing' (1998/1999). Similar to 'resistancy', the 'minoritizing' strategy resists assimilation into the dominant culture and brings into relief the linguistic and cultural differences available in the source text (11). Venuti echoed Berman's idea of 'good translation' and asserted that a 'good translation is minoritizing: it releases the remainder by cultivating a heterogenous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary

canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal' (11).¹ Venuti theorised the 'minoritization strategy' when translating a selection of works by Iginio Ugo Tarchetti with a 'cultural' and not 'commercial' aim to 'create a minor literature within the major language' (20). This strategy continually seeks to make manifest the cultural difference of the foreign text in its own language and promotes cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference through the proliferation of variables within the dominant language (11). Adopting 'minoritizing strategies' when translating *The Lion's Mouth* enabled me to emphasise how the migrant narrator's cultural difference is interpreted as a sign of minoritisation and how she is perceived as the 'other' by the host society. Moreover, this translation strategy makes Edwards 'visible' in the Italian context instead of presenting her as an Italian author. My use of foreignising strategies relies on Steiner's concept of translation as a signifier of the way in which the textual production constructs cultural difference and transports it into the fabric of the text (2009: 3). As pointed out by the translation studies critic, 'the term translation describes both a social phenomenon of people living in cultural translation and a particular way of producing texts using language to signify this experience' (3).

As I will illustrate in the next section, I resorted to foreignising strategies to emphasise the Canadian level of the novel as an even more foreign element for target-text readers. This helped me compensate for the erasure of the original heterolingualism created by Italian 'untranslated words' – mainly contained in Marco's story – which had a foreignising effect on Canadian readers. When translating the novel into Italian, it is impossible to ignore the shift in perspective that occurs and the different audience of the text. This implies that while Italian culture is represented as the cultural 'Other', it represents a familiar element for target-text readers. However, this interpretation might result as problematic in view of my reflections expressed at the end of Chapter 4. Since the narrator spent her childhood in Venice, she does not present herself as translating a culture which is foreign for her, but which is her own culture – therefore, as I have already mentioned, the act of translating a foreign culture through an external perspective is missing. Moreover, her role of cultural mediator between Italian culture and her readers

¹ Venuti used the term 'remainder' following Lecerle's work *The Violence of Language* (1990) in which he theorized the 'remainder' as 'what questions the autonomy of language' (Lecerle 1990: 41), 'the linguistically repressed [which] returns' (51). 'The remainder is the return within language of the contradictions and struggles that make up the social; it is the persistence within language of past contradictions and struggles, and the anticipation of the future ones' (182).

disappears as well in the target text, because Italian culture happens to be the readers' culture. In translating this novel, my aim was not to emphasise how the Italian component of the novel had a foreignising effect on Canadian readers or to show to Italian readers how the narrator originally acted as a cultural mediator between Italian culture and her Canadian readers. Conversely, my aim was to emphasise the Canadian level of narration as foreignising to Italian readers and consequently to present the narrator as a cultural mediator between Canadian culture and Italian readers. While Marco's story set in Venice has a foreignising effect on Canadian readers, Bianca's life narrative set in Edmonton is foreignising for Italian readers. As I will show at the end of the next section, Venuti's foreignising strategies have allowed me to make this compensation possible. Before illustrating them, I will explain how I have treated the original Italian linguistic traces in light of my interpretation of the two levels of the narration, where I deliberately used different translation strategies.

5.1 Translating a Translated Language

Contrary to translator Concilio, I did not systematically retain all the original Italian 'untranslated words' in italics. Since they are familiar elements for Italian readers, I did not find it necessary to emphasise how the narrator originally signalled them as foreign to her Canadian readers. I therefore removed the italics for stereotypical words conventionally associated with Italy, like most of the Venetian urban elements and Italian food.

I maintained the italics instead for proper names, like *Indiani metropolitanani* (37), the movie titles *La Dolce Vita* (107, 109) and *I Vitelloni* (109), the song title *Stasera mi butto* (27), the song lyrics *stasera, stasera* (27) and *Sono una donna, non sono una santa* (57), the brands *Pino Silvestre* (16) and *Ovomaltina* (85), the Venetian rhymes *Tante Zente, ancuo più che mai/Me par che i sia ben intossegai* (86) and *De beber late, magari ogni ora/Ch'el sia pur di vaca bionda o mora* (86), as well as the quote *La Bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto* (87).

Most significantly, I retained the italics for those words which are eloquent linguistic signs of the narrator's transcultural identity. Drawing on Bice Mortara Garavelli's observation that italics is a typographical device used in literature to signal the

introduction of another context of reference thus bringing extra implicit information into the text (1985), I resorted to it in order to place emphasis and therefore draw the readers' attention to those words. I applied this strategy to *Bambinona* (73, 87, 109, 147), *motoscafo* (73), *bambini* (75), *la mia piccola cugina canadese* (83), *carnevale* (88), *granita di limone* (109), *vaporetto* (149–50), *sempre semplice* (150, 171), *bocca di leone* (168), *adagio* (169), *adagetto* (169), *sempre scattando* (170).² *Motoscafo*, *granita di limone* and *la mia piccola cugina canadese* appear in Bianca's life narrative and more specifically in passages in which the narrator recalls her summers spent in Venice with Marco. By placing emphasis on the motor boat that took Bianca and Marco to the Lido and the lemon granita which they were drinking together, I aimed to draw the readers' attention to these words, which show how Bianca's memories are still vivid in her mind and how language operates on an affective level. They are, therefore, eloquent signs of the author's 'voluntarily incomplete translation process'. I foregrounded *la mia piccola cugina canadese* to lead readers in interpreting this phrase and encouraging them to linger on the importance that those words had for Bianca, who was shocked when she realised that her cousin saw her as a Canadian. Signalling that the words were spoken in Italian shows how they are still etched in her mind. Similarly, the emphasis of *Sempre scattando*, which appears in direct speech, aims to show that the words were spoken in Italian by the narrator's mother, thus reminding readers of her Italian origins. *Carnevale* and *bocca di leone* are two of the few words appearing in Marco's story, which I retained in italics. While I emphasised *bocca di leone* because it is clearly a core element of the whole novel, I placed emphasis on *carnevale* only twice although it appears three times throughout the text, to show that in that case Bianca's words were originally pronounced in Italian. Highlighting the original language of that word is important because the narrator had previously specified that Bianca pronounced those words with a 'flattening English accent' (Edwards 1982/1993: 129).

I also resorted to the italics when I retained some 'untranslated words' in their misspelled original version, namely *fondamento* (27, 121), *calle* (50), *cantina* (91), *scampi risotto* (111), *passarelle* (120–1), *fondamenti* (136), *Calle delle Razze* (165), *bricoli* (169) and *Stazione Termine* (169).³ I foregrounded them in italics as external elements and I explained my strategy in the preface to my translation in order to inform Italian readers

² For an analysis of my italicisation of *Bambinona*, *bambini*, *sempre semplice*, *adagio*, *adagetto* and *vaporetto*, see passages 4–5, 10 and 26 in this Chapter.

³ For an analysis of my italicisation of *calle*, *bricoli* and *Stazione Termine*, see passages 25–6 in this Chapter.

about the hybrid language of the target text. Unlike Iacobucci and Frattolino, who corrected Italian misspelled words in other Italian-Canadian literary texts, I would argue that these are particularly significant, since they undermine the linguistic purism and show a hybrid language. Moreover, they are representative of the authors' Italian 'false identity' (Verdicchio 1990c: 123) and the impossibility of 'reclaiming precisely that thing that was lost' (Rushdie 1991: 10). As noted by Martín Ruano, translators cannot resort to normative grammar when translating transnational and hybrid literature. The authors' cultural hybridity would be enlivened through translation aiming to retain the *detritorialisation* of the authors' language instead of their *reterritorialisation*. However, I only retained ten original Italian misspelled 'untranslated words' out of thirty-eight throughout the novel. I corrected the others because retaining them would not have helped me emphasise the narrator's transcultural identity unlike the ten 'untranslated words' listed above. *Cantina* is among the most eloquent signs of the complexity of the author's relationship with Italian language. Unlike all the other words mentioned before, *cantina*, which means *cellar*, is not misspelled but is out of context, since according to the narrator it is 'on main floor' (136). I did not correct it because it is an eloquent sign of the author's fictitious familiarity with Italian and because replacing it with a completely different word would have proven to be a domesticating strategy, which would have remained at odds with my translation approach to the novel. Moreover, I retained the misspelled words *passarelle* and *Calle delle Razze*, which are linked to the Venetian reality, because their misspelling might be interpreted as phonetic interferences from the Venetian language and therefore casts light on the narrator's cultural origins. *Razze* underwent a hypercorrectness, since Venetian speakers tend to pronounce the voiced fricative consonant /z/ as the voiceless one /s/. The misspelled word *Razze* is indicative of the author's 'failure of memory' (Verdicchio 1997). Although she is familiar with *Calle delle Rasse*, the place where her grandfather Renato Pagan was born (Edwards 1990b: 107), she fails to remember the correct spelling; thus proving as a mistake of a 'fallible memory' (Rushdie 1991: 10). *Scampi risotto*, instead, can be seen as a calque from the English and therefore sheds light on the author's Canadian identity. Although *scampi risotto* is also an English expression, its original italicisation suggests that the author treated it as an Italian 'untranslated word'. This calque is particularly meaningful because it signals that the narrator had already started her process of cultural translation and made her entrance into the English language at the time she was having dinner with Marco during one of her last summers in Venice. Particularly relevant to the concept of identity are also the misspelled words *fondamento* and *fondamenti*. The

author mixed up *fondamenta*, a bank along a canal, with *fondamento*, which instead means *basis*. I did not correct this mistake because the concept of ‘basis’ proves to be of very special relevance in the following passage:

[Marco] began running, pushing his way down the *calle*, then turning off down a narrow, empty *fondamento*. *Stasera. Stasera*. Tonight, tonight. Quickly, he was out of air. Slowing, he glimpsed at the end of a narrow path branching off to the left the bright lights of a café. (35)

Significantly, *fondamento* precedes the lyrics *Stasera stasera* of the song *Stasera mi butto* (literally *tonight I will throw myself* or *I abandon myself tonight*), the song that Marco and Paola had danced to the summer before their wedding. As indicated by Canton, the song title is very meaningful, although not accessible to Anglophone readers who are not familiar with the Italian language and culture (2004: 151). It hints at Marco’s psychological status at his wedding, namely at the abandonment of ‘his’ self in marrying a wealthy woman whom he did not love. At the same time, this expression can also refer to his act of abandoning himself to a night of passion with Elena, thus putting his marriage at risk (151). *Fondamento* therefore stands for stability in contrast to Marco’s loss of direction, psychological confusion and sense of panic, which brought him to the final breakdown (147). As explained in the previous chapter, the narrator constructs her identity through Marco’s *disidentity*. The contrast between stability and disorientation therefore proves to be significant and *fondamento* acts as that ‘secure word’, which however distorts the idea conveyed by *fondamenta* and reveals itself as the ‘destroyer of meaning’ (Verdicchio 1997: 97).

In line with my strategy of not emphasising how the narrator originally acted as a cultural mediator between Italian culture and her Canadian readers, I did not retain all the original explanations or translations of Italian cultural elements to which the narrator resorted. However, I reproduced the non-literal translations *festa del Redentore* (61), *la bocca di leone* (15) and *bovoli* (61) because they are elements linked to the Venetian reality with which Italian readers are not necessarily familiar. I also retained *la stupida canzone pop* (27) because the adjective *stupida* (*silly*) makes the narrator’s explanation a personal consideration. Unlike Pas, I do not think that the lack of emphasis on the narrator’s elucidations of her mother tongue and cultural references to her Canadian

readers diminishes the hybridity of the target text. Moreover, I omitted all the ‘translation couplets’ contained in Marco’s story because target-text readers are familiar with Italian cultural elements and explaining their meaning would have been redundant. As I will explain in Section 5.2 in this Chapter, I retained, instead, those ‘translation couplets’ reporting passages from Elsa’s letter and dialogues between Bianca and Marco (see 10–1, 73, 147, 150), since they are eloquent signs of the narrator’s role as a ‘fictional translator’.⁴ Similarly, I reproduced the ‘translation couplets’ of *in gruppo* (146), and *my little Canadian cousin* (83). I retained *in gruppo* to show the narrator’s process of self-translation, while the emphasis on *my little Canadian cousin* – aims to show that she translates Marco’s words to herself as if she needed to interiorise them, as she was still incredulous that her cousin introduced her as a Canadian to his friends.

In order to compensate for the suppression of some originally italicised Italian ‘untranslated words’ as well as ‘translation couplets’ and the consequent partial erasure of the heterolingual nature of the source text, I resorted to compensation strategies. More specifically, I tried to create a foreignising effect on Italian readers by inserting English ‘untranslated words’ in my target text much like Edwards peppered the source text with Italian ‘untranslated words’. I applied this strategy to those words which can be easily associated with the Canadian reality and which helped me emphasise the narrator’s Canadian cultural identity. This creates a foreignising effect on Italian readers as much as her Italian cultural identity is a foreignising element for the Canadian audience. All the English ‘untranslated words’ have been italicised in order to be presented as foreign elements to Italian readers. Most of the strategies applied to words listed below will be explained in detail in the passages analysed in the next sections.

Just as Edwards inserted Italian place names without contextualising them explicitly, like *Lido* and *Stazione Termine*, I left *Cape Breton* (80) and *North Saskatchewan River* (45) untranslated.⁵ Moreover, I retained *West* (79, 150) in English instead of translating it as *il Canada occidentale* to allow Italian readers to experience the Canadian component of the novel. Following the author’s example in including *La Madonna della Salute* without specifying that it is a church, I did not clarify that *St. Mary’s Girls* (116) and *KKG* (143–4) are respectively a school for girls and a sorority. In line with Edwards’ use of *Chioggiote*, I inserted *Maritimers* (80) to shed light on the fact that Jody’s

⁴ See passages 1, 4–6.

⁵ For an analysis of *Cape Breton* and *North Saskatchewan River*, see passages 17 and 22.

father is from the Maritimes, his region of origin.⁶ Much like the author used Italian words for urban elements typical of the Venetian reality, like *bricoli* and *passarelle*, I resorted to English ‘untranslated words’ for elements typical of the Canadian vegetation, namely *Virginia creeper* (10), *Indian paintbrush* (45), *Queen Anne’s Lace* (45) and *prairies* (73) as well as *wilderness* (44–5), which is stereotypically associated with the Canadian landscape. In order not to make the passages containing these ‘untranslated words’ incomprehensible to my target-text readers, I added a translation into Italian, thus compensating for the suppression of some original ‘translation couplets’ contained in Marco’s story.⁷ Following Edwards’ use of Italian words for culture-specific elements like *ciscebei*, I retained in English *DP* (77), *sock hops* (81) as well as *hop hop* (82).⁸ *High school* (80, 143, 145), *grade eight* (81), *grade nine* (112), *graduation* (112, 146), *recruiters* (145–6), *sorority* (143, 145) and *BA* (149), which are related to the Canadian education system, are in line with the author’s use of *magistrale*, *assistente* and *cattedra*.⁹ Just as Edwards mentioned *bovoli*, *caffè e latte*, *amaretti* and *granita di limone*, I inserted English ‘untranslated words’ for food and drinks, which are either typically North American or that were unknown to the narrator before migrating to Canada, like *noodle soup* (80), *baked beans* (80), *lemon meringue pie* (80) and *marshmallow* (80).¹⁰ Moreover, I retained *digestive* in English (56), which refers to the originally British digestive biscuits and *ammonia cookies* (78), considered typical of the Scandinavian-American community. *Digestive* is the only word, which I maintained in English in Marco’s story. Although I did not emphasise the narrator’s original role as a cultural mediator between Italian culture and her Canadian readers throughout the novel, I retained this word in English because it strikes me as particularly significant of her transcultural identity. Edwards’ use of *digestive biscuits* (Edwards 1982/1993: 77) is a relevant sign of her role as a fictional translator. The author defined the biscuits that Paola laid on the saucer for Marco as ‘digestive biscuits’ although they were not already distributed in Italy in the eighties. She chose instead a kind of biscuit which is familiar to Canadian readers. Presenting the narrator as a ‘fictional translator’, I would argue that she resorted in this case to a domesticating strategy, since she made her translation as accessible as possible to her readers. I retained this word in English not only to shed light on the author/narrator’s role as a ‘fictional translator’ but also because

⁶ See passage 17.

⁷ See passages 7–8 and 20–1.

⁸ See passages 9 and 15.

⁹ For an analysis of *high school*, *grade eight*, *graduation*, *recruiters* and *sorority*, see passages 9, 15–7.

¹⁰ See passage 17.

translating it into the Italian *biscotti digestivi* would have stood out as too alienating, while *biscotti da tè* would have resulted in a domesticating strategy, which is not in line with my approach to translation. Other English ‘untranslated words’ appearing in my target text are the titles *Mrs.* (82, 144) *Mother* (107, 116, 145), which are reminiscent of Edwards’ *Signora* and *zia*. I used *Mrs.* to refer to Jody’s mother and John Kennedy’s wife, and I used *Mother* as the title of the nuns of the KKG in order to remind readers of the local setting.¹¹ Similar to Edwards’ use of *signora* and *zia*, I did not italicise these English ‘untranslated words’ because they are followed by people’s proper names and the typographical contrast would have stood out as confusing. Moreover, I inserted the English ‘untranslated word’ *mother* (82), which Bianca used to call her mother to show her detachment from the maternal figure; my choice is in line with Edwards’ use of *Mamma*.¹² Other English ‘untranslated words’ interspersed in my target text do not have a high semantic specificity, but they show Bianca’s progressive belonging to Canada. These are *Winter, my country*. *Snow my country* (50) and *never never* (146).¹³ I translated *never never* into Italian first and then I retained the English version to show how the narrator internalises and repeats to herself, in her mother tongue, that she would have never dared to transgress the rules at her girls’ school. Finally, I inserted the formulaic expressions *sweetie* (50), *please* (50), *yes, yes, yes* (79), *I know, honey* (143) and *well, honey* (143–4), which are in line with Edwards’ use of *permesso, caro mio, pronto*.¹⁴ I used *I know honey* and *well, honey* to report Jody’s words in the language in which they were originally spoken, thus reproducing the local setting. Just as Edwards inserted *sei innamorato di lei* and *le voglio bene*, which have been linguistically analysed by the narrator, I also inserted the English ‘untranslated words’ *fry pan* (46), *frying pan* (46), *crazy bones* (82–3), *I have been working like a moose* (82) and *you look terrible* (145) in direct speech.¹⁵ *Fry pan* and *frying pan* shed light on Jack’s comments on Bianca’s Albertan vocabulary. *Crazy bones* and *I have been working like a moose* are two expressions spoken by Bianca’s mother, which show her non-mastery of English. Besides retaining *crazy*, which she mistakes for *lazy*, I also translated it into Italian to show the non-sense of her expression. *I have been working like a moose*, instead, contains the erroneous word *moose*, with which Bianca’s mother does not mean *deer* but *donkey* or *mule*, which in her Istrian-Venetian mother

¹¹ For an analysis of *Mother* see passage 16.

¹² See passage 15.

¹³ For an analysis of *Winter, my country. Snow, my country* see passage 25.

¹⁴ For an analysis of *yes, yes, yes, sweetie* and *please*, see passages 14 and 23.

¹⁵ For an analysis of *you look terrible*, see passage 16.

tongue are *mus*. Besides referring to the animal, *mus* is also used figuratively to mean *hard worker*. Misled by the phonetic affinity between *moose* and *mus*, Bianca's mother erroneously used this word to mean *to work like a dog*. Her direct translation is an example of linguistic elements representing the 'utterances of immigrant culture' (Verdicchio 1996/1997: 125; see also 1997: 17). In this case as well I inserted a 'translation couplet' to show how that expression does not make sense.

In the following sections, I will provide my explanations and rationale for choosing between different textual practices and different forms of compensation. I will illustrate how my translation draws on my critical analysis of *The Lion's Mouth* as a form of cultural translation, thus showing how literary translation is also a form of literary criticism (Gaddis Rose 1997: 13). The items under analysis are highlighted in bold.

5.2. Translating Belongings

The first passage I shall analyse is taken from the novel's prologue and reports sentences from the letter that Bianca receives from her aunt Elsa. This is one of the most striking examples of the narrator's several metalinguistic reflections, proving how translation and translation-related processes are at the heart of the narrative. The difficulty experienced by Bianca in understanding her aunt's handwriting, which is 'illegible' to her 'Canadian eyes' (Edwards 1982/1993: 10) reveals her gradual non-belonging to Italy as a language-related process, as reflected by her continuous act of translating.

PASSAGE 1

She scorns punctuation, the sentences **tumble, gasp, and sputter** across the page. And the voice **behind** those poor sentences, need I tell you, pours out, complains, bemoans: **endlessly**. But this time, as I scan the letter for a nugget of information, I discover more than I expected. '**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'. Typically, my aunt does not explain further; there is no hint as to the source of the shock, the content of the fear. '**Worse, Marco (you, you) suffered a nervous breakdown.**'

Esaurimento nervoso, the words translated literally as an exhaustion of the nerves. (LM: 10)

Disdegna la punteggiatura, le frasi ruzzolano, si affannano e schizzano sulla pagina. E la voce che si nasconde dietro quelle misere frasi, non c'è neanche bisogno che lo dica, si sfoga, si lamenta, si lagna: senza tregua. Ma questa volta, mentre scruto la lettera per avere una briciola di informazioni, scopro più di quanto mi aspettassi. "Bianca, se sapessi, se sapessi", *if you knew, if you knew*. "Che disgrazia di Dio!" *God's disgrace?* Devo aver sbagliato a tradurre, *a disgrace from God*. "Barbara scossa". *Barbara has been shocked? Hit? Shaken?* "Ha visto qualcosa che non avrebbe dovuto vedere e ora ha paura di tutto. Maledetti brigatisti". Come al solito, mia zia non si dilunga nelle spiegazioni; non fa alcun cenno a cosa sia stato dovuto lo shock, o di cosa abbia paura. "E la cosa peggiore è che Marco (tu, tu) ha avuto un esaurimento nervoso". *Nervous breakdown*, tradotto letteralmente: una rottura di nervi. (BL: 10–1)

The narrator's struggle to read her aunt's letter is evident from the anthropomorphic verbs she uses to describe words, which 'tumble, gasp and sputter'. In translating them as *ruzzolano, si affannano e schizzano*, I tried to retain the narrator's figurative language as well as rhythm and, at the same time, to capture the elusiveness of Elsa's words. Bianca's perception of her aunt's words as tumbling, gasping and sputtering across the page is reminiscent of the 'barrier of language' (110) that initially kept her from her classmates, whose words 'slipped, twisted away' (111). Bianca's entrance into the English language and the partial loss of her mother tongue is representative of her crossing of boundaries, of the transition from her home to her host country. Narrating her past through Italian eyes first and subsequently from a Canadian perspective reveals Bianca's 'fluidity of identity' and the constant 'changing subject position' shared by diasporic writers (Aschroft *et al.* 1989/2004: 218). The narrator's transition from an Italian migrant child to a Canadian woman presents her initially as the 'other' and finally as the 'self' to her Canadian readers. Bianca's Canadian 'gaze' at Italian culture emerges when she defines her aunt's sentences as 'poor'. I tried to emphasise her gradual non-belonging to Italy and Italian by translating *the voice behind those poor sentences* through the expansion *la voce che si nasconde dietro a quelle misere frasi*. I added *che si nasconde*, literally *which hides itself*, to stress how cryptic those sentences are for Bianca and her effort in deciphering them. Moreover, I translated *endlessly* as *senza tregua*, literally *without a break, a rest*, rather than for instance *all'infinito*, to highlight how those bemoaning and complaining words strike the Canadian writer as distressing. *Tregua*, which originally comes from a vocabulary of war, emphasises Bianca's hostility towards her aunt's words and adds extra force to her

impatience as well as indifference towards her aunt's problems, thus shedding light on her emotional detachment from the Italian reality.

A significant challenge in translating this passage is presented by the noticeable presence of 'translation couplets', which reminds us that the narrator is suspended in a condition of continuous 'travelling between languages, in a permanent stage of (self)translation' (Meylaerts 2006: 1). In reporting her aunt's words, Bianca shows a translating consciousness and admits that she 'must be translating incorrectly'. Her mistranslation *God's disgrace* sheds light on her difficulty in expressing herself in Italian and proves how her own act of self-translation is accompanied by a sense of loss of her mother tongue (see Wilson 2011b: 125). Like the narrator in *Fabrizio's Passion*, Bianca acts as a cultural mediator between the letter's author and her Canadian readers, who are informed that the original communication was in Italian. She acts as a 'fictional translator' in an effort to bridge the gap between her two worlds. Her failure, however, is clear when she translates 'incorrectly' and 'literally' *God's disgrace* and *exhaustion of nerves*, which reveal the loss of the spontaneous contact, emotional immediacy as well as the wholeness of her Italian cultural identity and signal her 'fractured state of existence' at a textual level (Simon 2001: 206). The narrator's resolution in looking for the English equivalent for her aunt's words suggests that her 'existence would not be possible without the intervention of translation processes' (Polezzi 2012a: 351). Unlike the translator of *Fabrizio's Passion*, I highlighted the narrator's role as a 'fictional translator' because it is a meaningful textual piece of evidence of how translation is a metaphor for her transcultural identity. In order to relay the narrator's interlinguistic journey, I retained all the 'translation couplets' reporting Elsa's original words and Bianca's translation. By translating her aunt's sentences into English, she filters them through 'Canadian eyes' to her Italian readers. The inversion of the original italics has been necessary, since a perspectival shift occurs when the text 'travels back' to the Italian context. While Elsa's words are originally signalled in italics as foreign elements for Canadian readers, they are not foregrounded in the target text, since they are perceived as familiar by the Italian audience. However, I opted for a compensation strategy by signalling Bianca's English translations as external items. The inverted use of italics triggers different mechanisms of otherness, since the narrator is pointed out as the Canadian 'other', who has nearly lost her familiarity with Italian. In the source text, instead, the 'other' is represented by Elsa, who appears as the stereotypical Italian mother worried about her exhausted son. Particularly interesting are the mechanisms enacted by

the last 'translation couplet', where Elsa's letter mingles with Bianca's inner dialogue with her ideal reader Marco, whom she addresses in direct speech through the repeated pronoun 'you, you' in brackets. Contrary to the previous cases, Bianca mentions the word *nervous breakdown* in English first, and only later on does she report her aunt's original Italian words. Bianca's use of English to mention Marco's serious health condition can be read as an impulse to inform her Canadian readers about this shocking news. She subsequently reports the original words of the letter *esaurimento nervoso*, which she translates literally into English as *exhaustion of the nerves* in a likely attempt to be faithful to the original, but by creating a sense of estrangement in the English-language readers. Bianca's literal translation, however, can also be seen as a deliberate act through which she wants to explain to her Canadian readers how this mental illness is associated with a consumption of nerves in Italian rather than a breakage in English. In my target text Elsa's words, which come first as in the previous cases, are followed by Bianca's translation, which identifies her as an English speaker and therefore as the 'other' to the Italian readers' eyes. She finally 'travels back' to Italian by translating the English expression *nervous breakdown* literally, as if she wanted to explain to Italian readers how this illness is perceived in her own language. Overall, I retained the original 'translation couplets' to evince how the narrator's cultural identity is duplicated in languages. As with the mechanisms triggered in Valenzuela's translation of Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, my inversion of the original italics implied a 'relocation' and created a text, which 'refuses to march into established territories, into mapped, culturally predetermined positions' (Martín Ruano 2003: 197). Like the Mexican translator, I aimed to relocate the language multiplicity, which recreates the 'plural voice' of the migrant narrator, who internalises and requires both languages (201).

The letter that Bianca receives from her aunt leads her to write her fourth and final 'attempt at a novel' (Edwards 1982/1993: 107). Learning about Marco's nervous breakdown generates in her the desire to discover the origin of his collapse. As the narrator explains in an inner dialogue with Marco, she wrote his story to come to terms with her Italian past: 'Why have I spent my winter telling your story? I needed to exorcise my dream of Venice. I needed to rid myself of the ache of **longing** that I have carried for so long' (269). I translated this passage as 'Perché ho passato tutto l'inverno a raccontare la tua storia? Dovevo esorcizzare il mio sogno di Venezia. Dovevo liberarmi dal dolore provocato da quella **brama** che ho sopportato per così tanto tempo' (173). In translating

longing, I opted for *brama*, which is also used as a translation for *yearning*, to emphasise the intensity of Bianca's desire to come to terms with her Venetian past.

The third version of Marco's story sheds light on his progressive degeneracy. In the second 'attempt at a novel' (Edwards 1982/1993: 12), for instance, he 'debauched' the female protagonist with his 'degeneracy' and 'corruption' (163), as is clear from the narrator's inner dialogue with her ideal reader: 'Do you see why in my sixteen-year-old **fictionalizing** I judged you degenerate?' (163). I translated this passage as 'Capisci ora perché nella mia **trasposizione romanzesca** di quando avevo sedici anni ti avevo giudicato degenerato?' (108). I rendered the verb *fictionalizing* with the noun *trasposizione romanzesca* – literally *fictional transposition* – instead, for instance, of the more literal *romanzare*, in order to flesh out the transposition of Bianca's real life on the page, into the fiction. I aimed to convey how her narrative identity reflects her own *migrant* identity and how the evolution of the three attempts is representative of Bianca's progressive Canadian perspective as well as non-belonging to Italy, which are embedded in her narrative process.

While Bianca's previous attempts failed because they did not provide enough grounding to overcome her past, she is more confident in her fourth attempt:

PASSAGE 2

This time I am below the masks. As my need has shrunk, my narration **has drawn closer**. And this time, I am within you, within **the city of my mind**, that mirage on the horizon, that stone reality, that maze of curving streets that draws me deeper and deeper. My outer city, Edmonton, draws never in but out to immensity, to limitlessness, to **the indifference of land** not yet shaped by man's hand. (LM: 59–60)

Questa volta io sono al di là di ogni maschera. Dato che il mio bisogno si è affievolito, la mia narrazione **si è evoluta**. E questa volta, io sono dentro di te, dentro **la città della mia immaginazione**, quel miraggio all'orizzonte, quella realtà di pietra, quel labirinto di stradine curve che mi conduce sempre più in profondità. La mia città esteriore, Edmonton, non guarda mai verso l'interno ma verso l'immensità, verso l'infinito, verso **quell'indifferenza di una terra** non ancora plasmata dalla mano dell'uomo. (BL: 44)

As Bianca explains, her narration 'has drawn closer', which I translated as *si è evoluta*, literally *has evolved/developed*, in order to point to Bianca's process of maturation. Her progressive integration in Canada is made possible thanks to her continuous process of cultural translation and her activity of creative writing, which helped her 'exorcise [her]

dream of Venice' (269), the 'city of [her] mind' (59). I translated this definition of Venice as *la città della mia immaginazione*, since it hints at how Bianca's city is always present in her imagination: 'Yet even as I stare out of the window, the labyrinthine *calle* of Venice are close, so very close, inevitably drawing me' (69). Moreover, imagination is essential for Bianca to start to see her 'outer city', Edmonton, as her 'home', as suggested by the verb *shape* at the end of the novel: 'And I began to believe that the people around me and, yes, I, could also shape these vast spaces, could also learn the habit of art. What we could make with our grain' (269). These lines prove McLeod's observation that 'imagination becomes more and more the primary location of home' (2000: 211). Finally, I tried to emphasise how Bianca sees Edmonton as her 'outer city' by translating *the indifference of land* as *quell'indifferenza di una terra*, thus replacing the definite article with the demonstrative adjective *quella* (*that*) to highlight the distance that she perceives between herself and her host country. In translating *land*, I added the indefinite article *una* to stress how indefinite and anonymous she perceives that territory 'not yet shaped by man's hand' (Edwards 1982/1993: 60).

The letter that Bianca receives from her aunt shows how engagement with 'things from home' is a way for migrant subjects to have inner dialogues with their absent home countries and create a sense of belonging (Svašek 2008: 221). As shown by the following passage, learning about Marco's conditions makes Bianca feel close to him still, despite the distance:

PASSAGE 3

I sense **you** close behind me, just out of reach. But at the same time, I am overwhelmed by the distance **between us**. My mind paraphrases a half-remembered sentence of Henry James. Mile after mile of ocean, province after dreadful province, **between us**. I am helpless before such **separation**. (LM: 11).

Percepisco **la tua presenza** appena dietro di me, irraggiungibile per poco. Ma allo stesso tempo sono sopraffatta dalla distanza **che ci separa**. La mia mente parafrasa una frase di Henry James che ricordo a malapena. Tra di noi migliaia e migliaia di oceano, territori sempre più desolati. Sono impotente di fronte a una **distanza** del genere. (BL:11)

In my Italian translation of Bianca's inner dialogue with Marco, I rendered the personal pronoun *you* with *la tua presenza*, literally *your presence*, to stress how Bianca feels that Marco is physically behind her despite the enormous distance between them. In translating *the distance between us*, I used the expression *la distanza che ci separa* to foreground the 'miles after miles of ocean' that forced them to separate, and to show how she is still affected by that separation before which she feels 'helpless'. I tried to emphasise the endless miles also by anticipating the translation of the second *between us*, *tra di noi* at the beginning of the elliptical sentence. Moving *miglia e miglia di oceano – miles after miles of ocean* – arouses the readers' interest and shifts their focus on the endless miles separating Bianca and Marco. Finally, I translated *separation* as *distanza*, instead for instance of *separazione*, to emphasise that not only did Bianca's emigration separate them but it also forced them to live in an insurmountable distance. This second occurrence of *distanza* places emphasis on how Bianca feels 'overwhelmed' by it.

The concept of distance is among of the most meaningful of the novel. Bianca's inability to overcome her separation from her Venetian home country and her beloved cousin Marco is one of the main obstacles to her integration in Canada and the trigger for her 'attempt[s] at a novel' (107). With this consideration in mind, I foregrounded it throughout my target text. For instance, I used *distanza* for the original *space* when I translated Bianca's description of a picture of Marco and herself, which was taken during one of her summer holidays in Venice: 'There is a large **space** between us and our expressions; our looks are so divergent. We do not seem to be together at all. Rather we seem two strangers, caught in the same frame by chance' (179). I translated this passage as 'C'è una grande **distanza** tra di noi e le nostre espressioni; i nostri sguardi sono così divergenti. Non sembriamo affatto stare insieme. Piuttosto, sembriamo due estranei, finiti nella stessa cornice per caso' (118–9). Instead of the more literal *spazio* or *vuoto*, I used *distanza* to hint not only at the physical but also at the cultural distance that Bianca and Marco started to perceive after she left Italy for Canada. Their distance is also clear when Marco introduces her as his 'little Canadian cousin' (Edwards 1982/1993: 122) to his Venetian friends, thus pointing her out as the 'other'. The use of *distanza* intends to convey the transformations that Bianca underwent in terms of her identity formation and emotional subjectivity after moving to Canada.

Distance emerges as a painful recurring motif until the end of the novel, when Bianca admits in an inner dialogue with Marco how painful it is for her not to be able to

help him after learning about his serious health condition: ‘But you were locked away from me, trapped in the centre of a Venetian maze’ (264), which I translated as ‘Ma eri lontano da me, rinchiuso, intrappolato nel cuore di un labirinto veneziano’ (169). The insurmountable distance prevents Bianca from helping Marco, who is ‘locked away’ from her, which I tried to emphasise by translating *away* as *lontano*, namely *far*. Moreover, I used the word *cuore* to translate *centre* because not only does it mean *core/central part*, but also *heart*. By moving *centre* into the affective semantic domain, I tried to emphasise the emotional load carried by Venice, Bianca’s strong sense of belonging to her ‘inner city’ and her attachment to its ‘emblem’ Marco (59).

Bianca’s affection for Marco emerges clearly in her life narrative when she cites, mentions and brings his words in Italian to memory, thus showing how his voice is still etched in her mind. As I will show in the following three passages, Bianca translates Marco’s utterances into English for her Canadian readers and therefore acts as a ‘fictional translator’.

PASSAGE 4

‘*Bambinona*,’ you called me. **Big baby**. I almost didn’t mind. Your voice was so gentle, so intimate when you said it. (LM: 107)

“*Bambinona*”, mi chiamavi. **Big baby**. Quasi non mi dava fastidio. La tua voce era così dolce, così profonda quando lo dicevi. (BL: 69)

PASSAGE 5

It was the last time I saw you. When you kissed me goodbye at the *vaporetto*, you stared into my eyes. You wanted something. ‘***Sempre semplice***.’ Always **simple**. ‘Little cousin’. Always simple, an accusation and a dismissal. I have been accused and dismissed for being the opposite: subtle and obscure. (LM: 229)

Fu l’ultima volta che ti vidi. Quando al *vaporetto* mi salutasti con un bacio, mi guardasti fisso negli occhi. Volevi qualcosa. «***Sempre semplice***». **Always simple**. «Cuginetta». Sempre semplice, un’accusa e un rifiuto. Sono stata accusata e rifiutata per essere stata il contrario: enigmatica e ambigua. (BL: 150)

Unlike the strategy I applied in translating passage 1, by reproducing the narrator's two 'translation couplets' of *Bambinona* and *sempre semplice*, I retained both the English and the Italian in italics. By emphasising the Italian version, I aimed to focus the readers' attention on Marco's original words, which are still imprinted in Bianca's mind. For the same reason I retained *vaporetto* in italics. By giving emphasis on this word, I aimed to show how the water-bus that Bianca took the last time she saw Marco, is still imprinted in her mind. The heterolingualism created by the 'translation couplets' in these two passages gives voice to Marco's and Bianca's conflicting cultural perspectives. In the source text Marco's Italian words are foreign elements for Canadian readers and point him out as the 'other', the Italian man, who stereotypically has a protective attitude towards his younger cousin and calls her '*Bambinona*'. Marco's protective attitude becomes patronising when he suggests to her how to behave, to be '*sempre semplice*'. Conversely, in the target text Bianca's translation into English points her out as the 'other', a Canadian woman who recalls how she '*almost didn't mind*' (my emphasis) that her beloved saw her as a 'big baby' and how she perceived 'always simple' as 'an accusation and a dismissal'. In translating *dismissal*, I initially rendered it with *congedo* to emphasise how painful their separation was. However, I finally opted for *rifiuto* (*refusal*) because, unlike *concedo*, it is suitable for both semantic fields and can be used to translate both the dismissal Bianca received from Marco and the one from her colleagues, who criticised her novel: 'They read my manuscript, then shook their heads, and closed ranks against me. It was like being in elementary school again. "Subtle, obscure, needlessly complex", they all agreed, even the very subtle Canadian Writer' (229–30).

Bianca and Marco's contrasting cultural values stand out as particularly clear in the following passage, in which he announces that he will soon marry Paola:

PASSAGE 6

'But are you in love with her? *Sei innamorato di lei?*' You blinked as if surprised. 'Naturally – *Le voglio bene.*' (I have much affection for her.) Even then you couldn't say you were in love with her. '*Le vuoi bene?*' I was determined to push my point, but you deflected it. (LM: 225–6)

«But are you in love with her? Ma sei innamorato di lei?».

Battesti le palpebre come se fossi sorpreso. «Ovviamente. **Le voglio bene**». *I have much affection for her*. Neanche allora riuscisti a dire che eri innamorato di lei. «**Le vuoi bene?**», volevo assolutamente ribadire il mio punto, ma tu deviasti il discorso. (BL: 147)

This passage is illustrative not only of Bianca's and Marco's different cultural positionings but also of their communicative difficulties. They culminate in their final failed reconciliation, which is caused not only by their physical but also cultural and linguistic distance. The narrator's metalinguistic reflections on the meaning of *to be in love* and *voler bene* show her 'plurality of vision' and reflect Edwards' observation that 'the experience of two languages can also make you aware of the difficulty of all communication' (Dumas and Edwards 2000: 105). In the source text Bianca translates her own question *but are you in love with her?* into Italian, although she has Canadian readers in mind, to remind them of the fact that Marco speaks a different language and to call their attention to the word *innamorato*, namely *in love*. She subsequently reports Marco's answer in its original language *le voglio bene* and translates it into English to inform her audience about the semantic slippage in Italian between *essere innamorato* and *voler bene*. While Bianca asks Marco very clearly whether he is *in love* with Paola or not, he answers evasively that he has *affection* for her. Bianca's translation of her own question and of Marco's answer points out the evident incongruity due to their cultural difference. As in passage 1, Marco's words are italicised, since they are external elements for Canadian readers, to whom he is pointed out as the 'other', the Italian man, who is stereotypically influenced by social conventions when making personal decisions about his private life. Although he is not 'in love' with Paola and feels only 'affection' for her, he decides to marry her because it is 'right' for him, as he explains to Bianca: 'It's right for me now. Finally one must put away the childish life of the senses. If one stays too long one becomes ridiculous. [...] One must plunge into adult life. One must take one's place' (Edwards 1982: 1993: 225). When Bianca shows her surprise at his answer, he judges her a 'sentimentalist' and accuses her of naivety: "*Ah Bambinona*. You'll learn." You pinched my cheek. I slapped at your hand' (226).

As in the previous passages, I retained the 'translation couplets' to enliven the narrator's complex translation process and her multiple negotiations between her Italian and Canadian identities. Moreover, as in the previous two passages, retaining the heterolingualism conveys Bianca's and Marco's contrasting world views. Bianca's

question in English, which precedes the one in Italian, identifies her as the Canadian ‘other’ to her target-text readers for whom she simultaneously acts as a cultural mediator being aware of the difference between *to be in love* and *voler bene*. Retaining the ‘double-voiced dialogue’ is therefore essential to show a ‘dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages’ (Bakhtin 1981/2004: 324–5). Reporting Marco’s answer in its original language first shows how Bianca brings his voice to memory. Finally, I omitted the brackets when reporting Bianca’s translation into her own language in order to emphasise that it is no longer an explanation for her readers, but it shows how she has internalised it and how it echoes in her mind.

While the male character of Bianca’s ‘attempt[s] at a novel’ (Edwards 1982/1993: 107) represents Marco, the female character is a ‘sensitive Italian girl’, who ‘emigrated to loneliness and isolation’, as she explains in the following passage:

PASSAGE 7

My main **concern** was in telling the story of ‘a sensitive Italian girl’ who emigrated, with her parents, to the **prairies**, who emigrated to loneliness and isolation, more, to an eventual mental and physical decay. For she was destroyed by the hostile, cold land. (LM: 107–8).

Il mio **obiettivo** principale era raccontare la storia di una “sensibile ragazza italiana” che era emigrata, con i genitori, tra le **prairies**, le **praterie**, che era emigrata nella solitudine e nell’isolamento e, per di più, verso un definitivo declino mentale e fisico. Poiché era stata annientata dalla terra fredda e ostile. (BL: 73)

In line with my interpretation of cultural translation as a core issue in the narrative, I translated *concern* as *obiettivo*, literally *aim*, instead for instance of *interesse* or *preoccupazione*, to emphasise how Bianca’s life narrative is based on her aim to ‘exorcise [her] dream of Venice’ (269) and proves to be both a cathartic experience as well as a strategy of cultural translation – translating her Italian past into a Canadian present helps the narrator negotiate her transcultural identity.

This passage is the first example of the foreignising compensation strategies I used in my target text. Just as Edwards inserted Italian ‘untranslated words’ related to the Venetian reality in the source text, I retained the English word *prairies*, which refers to a typical plain of the Canadian landscape. Through this foreignising strategy, I aimed to

compensate for the erasure of the original heterolingualism, which occurs when translating the novel 'back' into the narrator's Italian mother tongue. However, *prairies* appears with its translation into Italian to make it accessible to Italian readers. Through the linguistic displacement created by the clash of English and Italian, I aimed to reproduce Bianca's displacement triggered by that 'hostile, cold land'. As observed by Polezzi in her analysis of Erminia dell'Oro's *Asmara Addio*, 'the sensation of cold marks a number of losses' (2006b: 217). Likewise, Bianca's separation from her home country inevitably makes her perceive Canada as alien and unhomely.

As with the foreignising strategy used for *prairies*, I inserted the English 'untranslated word' *wild* in my target text when the narrator describes the Canadian landscape: 'And still, that sense of the **wild**, the oceans of untouched plains, forests, and tundra is there, above and beneath the skyscrapers and traffic jams' (60). I translated this passage as 'Eppure, quel senso di **wilderness**, di oceani e pianure incontaminate, foreste e tundra è lì, al di sopra e al di sotto dei grattacieli e degli ingorghi del traffico' (44). I inserted the English 'untranslated word' *wilderness* to describe a typical feature of the Albertan landscape just like Edwards used Italian 'untranslated words' for Venetian urban elements. *Wilderness* has a foreignising effect, which was intended to evince the displacement experienced by the transplanted narrator when confronted with the 'untouched plains, forests and tundra', a scenery totally different from the palaces and the labyrinthine *calli* which Bianca was used to. The word *wilderness*, however, has a much more foreignising effect on Italian target-text readers. Although my strategy of 'anti-translation' may exclude Italian monolingual readers, it conveys the narrator's sense of displacement, her being 'exposed' and 'alone' in the 'nothingness' (Edwards 1982/1993: 109). Just as Edwards peppers her novel with Italian 'untranslated words' closely linked to the Venetian and Italian realities, I tried to allow Italian readers to experience the Canadian component of the novel, which emerges clearly from Bianca's life-writing. In doing so, Italian readers share the narrator's experience of displacement and uprooting, and they are involved in a perpetual translation when confronted with English 'untranslated words', thus participating in the narrator's process of cultural translation.

5.3 Translating Displacement

The displacement experienced by the female protagonist of Bianca's 'attempt[s] at a novel' (107) was shared by the narrator herself upon her arrival in Canada. As she explains in the following passage, she felt 'stripped' of her family and familiar environment:

PASSAGE 8

Rock and tree, tree and rock. No houses, no people for hundreds upon hundreds of miles. The villages and towns where the train did stop seemed **ill-proportioned**, perched upon the land rather than rising from it. The only change came in the giving way to **prairie** – a land to my **untrained eye** still more monotone, still more desolate. Leaving Venice, though I was with Mamma and Papa, I felt **stripped** of family, of friends, of familiar walls and buildings, of proper landscape. I was exposed, alone in the nothingness (LM: 109).

Rocce e alberi, alberi e rocce. Niente case, niente persone per centinaia e centinaia di miglia. I paesi e i paesini in cui si fermava il treno sembravano **disarmonici**, sembravano essere sospesi sulla terra piuttosto che ergersi da essa. L'unica variazione ci fu nel passare alla *prairie*: un territorio, ai miei occhi **non ancora abituati**, ancora più monotono, ancora più desolato. Quando lasciai Venezia, sebbene fossi con Mamma e Papà, mi sentii **sradicata** dalla famiglia, dagli amici, dalle mura e dai palazzi che conoscevo, dal paesaggio vero e proprio. Ero esposta, sola nel nulla. (BL: 74)

In translating *stripped*, I resorted to the Italian *sradicata*, which literally means *uprooted*, instead of the Italian version *privata*, or even *denudata*. My translation *sradicata* was intended to emphasise the narrator's traumatic experience of being uprooted and the importance of cultural roots in migration. This reminds us of Brah's observation that 'diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots "elsewhere"' (Brah 1996: 179).¹⁶

¹⁶ I also tried to emphasise the concept of roots when translating the passage 'It would have been easier if my parents had come here with the idea of *staying*' (Edwards 1982/1993: 113) as 'Sarebbe stato più facile se i miei genitori fossero venuti qui con l'idea di *mettere radici*' (77). By rendering *staying* with the expression *mettere radici*, literally to *take root*, I aimed to highlight Bianca's displacement caused by her parents' continuous moving from one city to another: 'It would have been easier if we hadn't moved so much those first years. Besicker, Calgary, Leduc, Edmonton, Calgary' (Edwards 1982/1993: 113). As the narrator explains, changing twelve schools in seven years made her integration into the host country difficult. *Mettere radici* therefore highlights her desire to settle down and her need to belong to one place, which would have made her adjustment easier. Moreover, I translated the passage "'True Venetians don't emigrate. They travel, but they don't settle," Mamma pronounced, "except for fools like us"' (115) as '«I veri veneziani non

Bianca's description of the Canadian landscape is an example of how translating this novel contributes to the 'formation of stereotypes and codified images' (Polezzi 2001: 31). In translating this passage, I aimed to convey the narrator's 'foreign gaze' on Canada (2000: 30). In order to relay her displacement triggered by that 'monotone' land, I resorted to the same foreignising strategy used in passage 7 and inserted the English 'untranslated word' *prairie*. Unlike the previous passage, I did not opt for a 'translation couplet' because Italian readers have already been provided with its Italian equivalent. I rendered *ill-proportioned* with *disarmonici*, instead of the more literal *sproporzionati*, to emphasise the clash that Bianca notices between Canadian and Italian landscapes. The narrator's use of 'proper landscape', which shows how she regards the Italian landscape as a basis for comparison, is indicative of her continuous movement between two positions – Italy and Canada. By comparing the Canadian landscape to the Italian one, she perceives it as 'monotone' and 'desolate' as her eye is 'untrained'. I translated *untrained* through an expansion with *non ancora abituati*, literally *not trained yet*, thus anticipating Bianca's final success in adjusting to the Canadian landscape thanks to her process of cultural translation.

As admitted by the narrator, re-reading her first attempt at a novel, 'illuminates the depth of the shock' that the experience of uprooting triggered in her. Since then, spanning two worlds 'split' her life into two 'seemingly inimical halves'.

PASSAGE 9

Besides, it illuminates the depth of the shock my family's emigration from Venice to Canada caused. For 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. Italy was **enclosure, cocooning, the comfort** of a secure place among the cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents (LM: 108).

Inoltre, fa luce sull'intensità dello shock provocato dall'emigrazione della mia famiglia da Venezia al Canada. La mia vita, infatti, era **scissa** in due parti apparentemente **avverse**, non solo tra il periodo precedente e quello successivo, ma durante tutta la mia gioventù: l'Italia in estate, il Canada in

emigrano. Viaggiano, ma non **mettono radici**», dichiarò Mamma, «tranne i pazzi come noi» (78). My translation of *settle* as *mettono radici* was intended to highlight the concepts of stasis and dwelling in contrast with the nomadic nature of Venetian people. In this context, it also emphasises the belonging of Bianca's mother to Italy.

inverno. L'Italia significava essere avvolta, imbozzolata nel conforto di un posto sicuro tra cugini, zii e nonni. (BL: 73–4)

In my target text I translated *split* as *scissa*, instead of *divisa*, to emphasise how sharply and neatly Bianca's cultural identity was divided into her Italian and Canadian selves, her two 'seemingly inimical halves', which I translated as *parti apparentemente avverse*. Contrary to the more literal equivalent *nemiche*, *avverse* not only conveys the reciprocal hostility between the two halves of Bianca's life, but it also reinforces the contrast and the conflict between her two cultural identities. Moreover, *avverse* hints at the impossibility of the fusion of her two selves, unlike what Bianca initially hoped: 'With Jody, for the first time, I sensed how the two halves of my life could meet, the mask and the self fuse' (122).

The split of Bianca's cultural identity is intensified by her regular 'return journeys' to Venice, her 'enclosure, cocooning, the comfort of a secure place'. This description reveals Bianca's conflictual relationship with Italy, where she feels protected among her relatives. However, *enclosure* might also carry a less positive connotation, since it does not refer exclusively to a protective place but also to a kind of trap, where everybody pampers her so much that she feels stifled: 'there was always a surfeit of noise, of concern, of advice – of hands straightening the bow in my hair, grabbing me for a hug' (108). I tried to convey Bianca's feeling of oppression by translating as *essere avvolta, imbozzolata nel conforto*, where the passive voice of *avvolgere*, literally *to envelope*, expresses how she suffered her relatives' attitude. The narrator's intolerance becomes more acute after her entrance into Canadian culture, as is clear when she sees her relatives' prohibitions as inconceivable: 'You can't drink that, it's much too cold; you can't go out alone; you can't wear that dress; you can't, you can't. It's not done' (109).

5.4 Translating Otherness

The narrator's initial belonging to Italy is reflected in her perception of her Canadian peers as the 'Other', as shown in the following passage:

PASSAGE 10

The **people** here even stood farther away from each other. At the very first, the barrier of language kept me from my classmates. I remember my first school bus ride. We were staying in a farm near Calgary with distant relatives on Papa's side. I stood by the door, by the driver, unable to make my legs move forward, to make them move past those **seatfuls** of bouncing, fighting, dangling children. They were so different from the neatly dressed, controlled *bambini* of Venice, that I immediately judged them as wild and dangerous as the animals I had been told roamed the nearby foothills and mountains. Their collective smell, so totally new as to be beyond definition, **pressed** at me, wrenching my stomach. (LM: 110–1)

La gente qui stava ancora di più a distanza. Nei primissimi tempi, la lingua era una barriera che mi teneva lontana dai miei compagni di classe. Ricordo la prima volta sul pulmino della scuola. Allora eravamo in una cascina vicino a Calgary con dei parenti lontani da parte di Papà. Ero in piedi vicino alla porta, vicino all'autista, impossibile comandare alla mia gamba di fare un passo in avanti, un passo oltre quella **massa** di bambini che saltavano, si azzuffavano e dondolavano. Erano così diversi dai *bambini* composti e ben vestiti di Venezia, che li giudicai immediatamente selvaggi e pericolosi come quegli animali che, a quanto mi avevano detto, vagavano sulle colline e sulle montagne vicine. Quell'odore collettivo, talmente nuovo da essere indefinibile, mi **schiacciava**, facendomi ribaltare lo stomaco. (BL: 75)

When translating this passage into Italian, *bambini* reveals itself as one of those linguistic elements which signal otherness in the source text but are read as familiar signs of sameness in the target text. This is an example of how originally Italian 'untranslated words' shed light on the complexities in translating the unfamiliar 'other', who becomes familiar when she is translated 'back' into her mother tongue and proves how the superimposition of languages is 'threatened by translation' (Berman 2000: 287). Although *bambini* is a familiar element for Italian readers, I retained it in italics when it occurs the second time and refers to Venetian children. I emphasised it to draw the readers' attention to this word, which is eloquent of the narrator's sense of belonging to Italy. By engaging with Wolf's theorisation that translation means 'producing meanings which are created through the encounter of cultures' (2000: 141), I tried to reproduce the meanings generated by the encounter between the migrant Italian narrator and Canadian children by shifting the notion of otherness from the former to the latter. While in the source text the narrator identifies herself with the Venetian *bambini* and presents herself as the 'other' to her Canadian readers, in the target text the 'other' is represented by Canadian children, who are seen through the narrator's eyes, thus showing the distance between the migrant and

the host society. My translation strategy draws on Lopes' observation that the original 'other' becomes the 'self' in translation (Lopes in Martín Ruano 2003: 195). In order to retain the cultural difference emerging from the encounter with the 'other', I opted for compensation strategies, which turned the original Canadian 'self' in the source text into the 'other' in the target text. In this way, I aimed to preserve the 'contested space' by shifting the focus of the contrastive perspective from 'controlled *bambini* of Venice' to 'seatfuls of bouncing, fighting, dangling children', where I translated *seatfuls* as *massa* that literally means *mass* and is often used for a multitude of ordinary and undifferentiated people. Tymoczko's observation that 'no text can ever be fully translated in all aspects' and that 'perfect homology is impossible between translation and text' (1999b: 22) is particularly useful to justify my translation strategy. Although with *massa* I lost the metaphorical connotation conveyed by the author's neologism *seatfuls*, I emphasised Bianca's negative perception of Canadian children, thus proving that while something always gets lost in translation, this loss also comes with something to be gained (Rushdie 1991: 17). *Massa* was intended to convey the narrator's sense of displacement at the encounter with the 'Other', to evince how she perceives the Canadian children as undistinguished entities and how she does not see them as humans but rather as 'animals' (Edwards 1982/1993: 111). Moreover, this word, often used for large groups, emphasises the big quantity of rowdy and loud Canadian children, whose 'collective smell' 'pressed' at her and created a feeling of oppression. I translated *press* as *schiacciare* because it involves a stronger physical connotation than *opprimere*. Bianca is overwhelmed by the children's 'collective smell' not only on a psychological but also on a physical level as it 'wrench[ed] her stomach' (111).

The narrator's sense of displacement is amplified by the humiliations she suffers from her Canadian classmates, who discriminate against her due to her cultural difference and label her as 'DP', a displaced person:

PASSAGE 11

Their skipping song shifted smoothly from '**Spanish dancers do the kicks**' to '**We don't want no DP's**'. I was an adult before I discovered what the letters **stood for**. They had categorized me accurately enough. (LM: 113)

Mentre saltavano la corda, passarono con disinvoltura dai versi **di una filastrocca "Spanish dancers do the kicks"** a "**Non vogliamo DP**". Ero ormai adulta quando scoprii **che quelle lettere stavano per Persona Dislocata**,

insomma, un'aliena. Mi avevano classificato in modo sufficientemente accurato. (BL: 76–7)

Since the original English lines *Spanish dancers do the kicks* might have prevented Italian readers from understanding the context, I resorted to a domesticating strategy by adding that they are rhymes. While the previous passage shows how the narrator 'construct[s] an image of the *self* and project[s] images of the *other*' (Ramakrishna 1997/2007: 11), this paragraph illustrates how 'the self is defined by the other' (Godard 1997/2007: 160), namely, how the Canadian 'Other' projects the narrator's image of a 'DP'. I retained *DP* in English, which reminds Italian readers that the narrator is in a host country, where her cultural difference is the reason why she is 'categorized' as a displaced person. *DP* can be read as an 'ethnic marker' (Canton 2004: 155), which shows how the Canadian host society translates migrants' cultural difference into a sign of minoritisation. It presents the narrator as a member of an ethnic minority group discriminated against by the host society and brings her marginal and peripheral status to the foreground. By resisting the assimilationist process of translation, I aimed to convey the cultural integration that the narrator was denied by the Canadian 'Other'. It can therefore be seen as a linguistic manipulation showing the narrator's marginality and subalternity.

The English 'untranslated word' *DP* shifts the Italian readers' attention to Bianca, who remains the 'other' instead of being assimilated. The clash of languages that I created in my target text compensates for the erasure of the original heterolingualism created by *bambini*. Through this compensation strategy I tried to avoid linguistic homogenisation and not to involve the Italian audience in a monolingual reading experience. This proves how translation can operate from a space in-between. Instead of naturalising the foreign, I aimed for a translation which 'receives the foreign as foreign' (Berman 2000: 285) and where a cultural 'other' is manifested by transforming the target language. By releasing the heterolingualism, I attempted to foreground the migrant's voice. Moreover, the 'untranslated word' *DP* is a textual piece of evidence of the tension between the two cultures, the narrator's cultural difference perceived as otherness by the host society and her initial sense of displacement. I resorted to this foreignising strategy in an attempt to reshape and represent the narrator's perceptions in her journey in translation, where she needs to renegotiate her transcultural identity and assert her social position after moving from the diasporic private sphere to the Canadian public one. If we consider the derogatory

label *displaced person* in conjunction with my translation of *seafuls* as *massa*, analysed in the previous passage, the two terms signal the way in which Canadian host society and the Italian migrants perceive each other's identity. Similar to passages 8 and 10, Bianca's portrayal of Canadians as xenophobic people acts as a negative 'mirror' for the source-text readers. Moreover, by retaining *DP* in English the narrator brings Canadian children's exact words to memory and shows how they are still imprinted in her mind. By doing so, I attempted to stress how her sense of displacement is still alive when recalling her early encounters with the 'Other'. The English 'untranslated word' *DP* can be interpreted as the host society's refusal to translate itself into the language of the migrant 'other' and therefore can be seen as an act of 'translation resistance' (Cronin 1997: 39), which sheds light on how Canadian local children keep the distance from Italian migrant Bianca. Their refusal to speak her language can be read as an indicator of their hostility towards the migrant child, who 'discovered what the letters stood for' only as an adult. My choice of retaining *DP* can be interpreted as a 'minoritization strategy' if seen as a way to promote the understanding of cultural difference through the proliferation of variables within the dominant language (Venuti 1998/1999: 11). However, as this 'untranslated word' might have stood out as too alienating for Italian readers, I diminished its foreignising effect by explaining what *DP* means through a domesticating strategy in the same way I did with *prairie* (see passage 7). While in the source text the author takes for granted that her readers know what *DP* means, I resorted to an expansion by translating *what the letters stood for* as *che quelle lettere stavano per Persona Dislocata, insomma un'aliena*. I opted for *Persona Dislocata* because its initials correspond to the abbreviation *DP*. However, since it is not a common Italian expression to refer to a displaced person, I added the term *aliena*, namely *alien*, meant not simply as somebody from a different country but as an extraterrestrial. With this term I aimed to emphasise how Canadian children were disturbed by Bianca's cultural difference and how they saw her as coming from a different world. Explaining the meaning of *DP* after its English abbreviation might trigger the readers' perplexity but at the same time it will help them understand Bianca's position. Finally, through this non-literal translation I highlighted the narrator's role as a cultural mediator between Canadian and Italian cultures. As noted by Ramsay and Walker, a degree of familiarisation through domestication is necessary in order to ensure the target-text readers' comprehensibility and therefore to relay and negotiate successfully the otherness of the source culture (2010: 49; see also Geertz 2006: 366). My combination of foreignising and domesticating strategies is in line with Geertz's observation that the

'deeply different can be deeply known without becoming any less different' (Geertz in Pratt 2010: 96).

The distance between Bianca and the Canadian 'Other' is exacerbated by her initial difficulty in understanding English, as she reveals in the following passage:

PASSAGE 12

It was hard to balance with the swaying, and I could not touch a seat in case I came in contact with one of those alien **little hands**. Their words seemed thrown, **hurled at me**, but when I tried to catch the sounds, they **slipped, twisted away**. (LM: 111)

Era difficile tenermi in equilibrio con il dondolio ma non potevo toccare i sedili in caso venissi a contatto con una di quelle **manine** aliene. Le loro parole sembravano **scagliate contro di me**, vomitate addosso, ma quando cercavo di afferrare i suoni, **scivolavano via, aggrovigliandosi nel divincolarsi**. (BL: 75–6)

I tried to convey the hostility between Bianca and the Canadian children by translating *alien little hands* as *manine aliene* rather than *piccole mani estranee*. As in the previous passage, I opted for *aliene* to stress how Bianca perceived those hands as negatively unfamiliar. While the adjective *piccole* carries a denotative meaning and would have hinted at the size of children's hands, its diminutive usually conveys intimacy and familiarity. In this case, however, *manine* clearly has a sarcastic connotation, since it clashes with the narrator's comparison of the children with 'wild and dangerous [...] animals'. Irony is a discursive strategy very common among Italian-Canadian authors (Tuzi 1997: 20). In a more general context, Hutcheon pointed out that irony shows up in 'splitting images' of the Canadian transcultural literature as a sign of the author's resistance to the dominant culture and a way to negotiate dualities. It proves to be a destabilising factor to avoid the affixation of a single particular meaning to the events told by the narrator, but provides different perspectives (1991: 48–9).

Moreover, I aimed to stress the children's uncivilised and aggressive nature in Bianca's Italian eyes by translating *hurled at* as *vomitare addosso*, where the verb *vomitare* is used metaphorically but it also hints at the physical side effect that displacement has on

Bianca's body in the same way that children's collective smell 'wrench[ed]' her stomach (Edwards 1982/1993: 111). A special challenge was presented when translating the figurative expression *twisted away*, for which I used the phrase *scivolavano via, aggrovigliandosi nel divincolarsi*, literally *they slipped by tangling up and wiggling out*, in order to convey both the intricate movement of English words and their elusiveness. In this way, I attempted to emphasise Bianca's strain and failure in catching them.

5.5 Translating 'Points of Exit' and 'Points of Entrance'

The narrator realises that she needs to exit her Italian diasporic community in order to integrate into her new host country and not to be seen as the 'other'. She therefore starts a process of cultural translation, where 'points of exit' from an oppressive system and 'points of entrance' into Canadian society are continuously negotiated. From Bianca's description of her mother's attitude, it is clear that she scorns her parents' ill-fitting and ill-at ease otherness:

PASSAGE 13

Mamma soon found **staying home** in the latest **bare** house in the latest **bare** suburb intolerable. 'I can't even **go out for a walk** in this cold. So I stare at the whiteness all day. You never see one living person walk by. Not even a poor dog.' Her hands would shake. (LM: 110)

Mamma trovò subito insopportabile **starsene rinchiusa** in quella nuova casa **spoglia** in quel nuovo quartiere di periferia **deserto**. «Non posso neanche andare a **fare due passi** con questo gelo. Così sto qui a fissare il bianco tutto il giorno. Non si vede passare neanche un'anima viva. Neanche un cane», diceva scuotendo le mani. (BL: 75)

I translated *staying home* as *starsene rinchiusa*, instead of the more literal *starsene a casa*, to stress how disconnected Bianca's mother was from her host society both through the pronominal form of the verb *stare* and the adjective *rinchiusa* (*shut away*).¹⁷ I used two different adjectives to translate *bare* because it would have been impossible to use one

¹⁷ On the intensifying function of pronominal verbs see in particular Serianni 1988.

single Italian equivalent. While I opted for *casa spoglia* to translate *bare house*, which emphasises how bleak that place was for Bianca's mother, I translated *quartiere deserto* to highlight how desolate and empty that suburb was. I repeated *neanche* – *not even* – twice to stress her surprise at such a desolation. In order to foreground the migrant woman's 'foreign gaze', I rendered *cold* with the stronger *gelo*, namely *bitter cold*, to emphasise the depiction of a cold and unwelcoming land seen through Italian eyes. Bianca's mother perceives the Canadian climate as so hostile that she cannot even 'go out for a walk', which I translated as *fare due passi*, an idiomatic expression meaning *a short walk*, literally *two steps*. Through this hyperbole, I aimed to emphasise the sense of displacement experienced by the woman and her unwillingness to adjust to her new environment.

Bianca's desire to break away from the constraints of the Italian diasporic community results in tensions with her mother. Giorgio's observation that the maternal figure is often a metaphor for origins encompassing ethnicity and language is useful to understand Bianca's reaction (2002: 32). Similar to the parents of the protagonist in *Fabrizio's Passion*, Bianca's mother pointed out her cultural difference, which made her feel excluded from the Canadian society.

PASSAGE 14

I was beginning to feel that inevitable gulf between the immigrant parents and the child. I began to answer Mamma's 'Do you want to be like one of these Canadians?' with 'Yes, yes, yes'. I hadn't rejected Venice, but I wanted **protective colouring**. I wanted **camouflage, to become like** rather than to become. My parents' way meant exposure. Later, especially through Jody and her family, I began to see that Mamma's and Papa's judgment of Canadians was **off** and, more, that the code of rules, the method of behavior they were trying to **impress** on me was **inappropriate** here. (LM: 117)

Stavo iniziando a percepire quell'inevitabile abisso tra genitori immigrati e figli. Iniziai a rispondere alla domanda di Mamma "Vuoi diventare come queste canadesi?" con "Yes, yes, yes". Non avevo rifiutato Venezia ma volevo un **manto protettivo**. Volevo **mimetizzarmi, diventare come** piuttosto che diventare. I modi di fare dei miei genitori mi facevano sentire esposta. Più tardi, specialmente grazie a Jody e alla sua famiglia, iniziai a rendermi conto che il giudizio di Mamma e Papà sui canadesi era **fuori luogo e, inoltre, che il codice di regole, il modo di comportarsi che cercavano di inculcarmi era inopportuno** qui. (BL: 79–80)

In translating this passage, I inserted the untranslated phrase *yes, yes, yes* in an effort to reproduce textual evidence of Bianca's resistance to her mother as well as her desire for 'camouflage' and to become exactly like 'th[o]se Canadians'. Although *yes* is a highly recognisable word to Italian target-text readers, it creates a clash of languages disclosing Bianca's refusal of engaging in a dialogue with her mother tongue, Italian culture and its values. Through this strategy, I aimed to show her wish to repress her Italian cultural origins in search for assimilation to the dominant culture, a common reaction among migrant daughters (Giorgio 2002: 32). Bianca's refusal to speak her mother's language reveals her rejection of complying with her expectations, of being controlled and of being the eternal Italian child. The English 'untranslated word' *yes* was intended to exacerbate Bianca's rebellion, exasperation and longing to become a Canadian woman. It signals her desire to break the bond with her mother, whose manners are so 'inappropriate [t]here', and to set herself free as a result of her inner struggle.

Moreover, I translated *become like*, which I italicised in order to foreground it as a foreign element, as the calque *diventare come* in order to signal Bianca's progressive non-mastery of her Italian mother tongue and her desire for 'camouflage' to Italian readers. Similar to Edwards' Latinate-structured sentences disclosing the narrator's Italian mother tongue to her Canadian readers, my direct translation *diventare come* reveals traces of her English acquired language to Italian target-text readers.

I opted for *mimetizzarsi* as a translation for *camouflage*, instead of choosing for instance *camuffarsi*, to emphasise not only Bianca's unwillingness to be seen as the 'other' but also her desire to be exactly like the other Canadian children, 'to become like rather than to become'. I highlighted her longing to adjust to her new environment unlike her mother, who instead 'can't even go out for a walk in [that] cold' (Edwards 1982/1993: 110). Since *mimetizzarsi* also means the change of colour of animals', I translated *colouring* with the polysemic word *manto*, whose secondary meaning is *fur* and belongs to the same semantic field. On a more figurative level, it also means *mantle* and *protective layer* that therefore conveys the protectiveness for which Bianca was longing.

Finally, I aimed to convey Bianca's resistance to her parents by translating *off*, which in this case stays for *erroneous*, with *fuori luogo* (*out of place*), instead of *sbagliato*, to emphasise that their judgment was not only wrong but also inappropriate. Moreover, I translated *impress* as *inculcare*, which also has an educative connotation, rather than

imprimere or *imporre*, to stress the persistence of Bianca's parents in imposing a completely wrong attitude on her.

As is clear from the following passage, the values Bianca's parents were trying to impose on her were an obstacle to her integration into the host country. Bianca therefore tries to distance herself from her mother, in particular, who criticises Canadian customs, like the 'sock hops', a kind of dance popular in North American schools especially in the fifties:

PASSAGE 15

She was against 'sock hops', afternoon dances in the gym for the **grade eights**. I was desperate to go, even though I knew no one would ask me to dance. (Just as a few years later I fought for the permission to date although I had never even been approached.) 'Those **hop-hop** things are disgraceful.' 'Hop-hop things?' Jody's mother's smile was frozen in mystification. 'Hops. Dances. They are only children – babies. We didn't have such things in my day.' '*Mother*,' I was not supposed to talk, but this was too much. 'You went to a girl's school.' 'And so shall you next year. Away from all this hopping. You wouldn't hear of such things in Italy.' '*Mother*, things are changing there too. Anyway the schools don't have gyms.' (LM: 120–1)

Era contraria ai "sock hops", dei balletti che si facevano il pomeriggio in palestra per gli studenti del **grade eight**. Io morivo dalla voglia di andarci, anche se sapevo che nessuno mi avrebbe chiesto di ballare. (Proprio come qualche anno dopo avrei lottato per avere il permesso di uscire con un ragazzo anche se non mi si era mai avvicinato nessuno). «Quella roba hop-hop è una vergogna». «Roba hop hop?», l'espressione persa della madre di Jody si manifestò in un sorriso irrigidito. «Saltelli. Balletti. Sono solo delle ragazzine, delle bambine. Ai miei tempi non avevamo niente del genere». «*Mother*», non avrei dovuto parlare, ma questo era troppo. «Tu sei andata in una scuola femminile». «E ci andrai anche tu l'anno prossimo. Lontana da tutto questo saltellare. In Italia non sentiresti mai delle cose del genere». «*Mother*, le cose stanno cambiando anche lì. E comunque, nelle scuole non ci sono le palestre». (BL: 81–2)

In translating this passage into Italian, I inserted the English 'untranslated word' *Mother* to signal Bianca's dissent towards her mother, who criticises the dances popular in Canadian high schools. My translation strategy is in line with my interpretation of Edwards' alternate use of *Mamma* and *mother* (see section 4.6 in Chapter 4). While the Italian 'untranslated word' *Mamma* signals Bianca's attachment to her mother and her Italian past, the English word *Mother* is a linguistic sign of the distance that she wants to establish between them.

This process of detachment is emphasised in the target text by the linguistic ‘friction’ created by this English ‘untranslated word’ although it is recognisable to the Italian audience. The narrator’s use of English to call her Italian mother shows her instinctive reaction to her maternal repression, her desire to break with her Italian past and, as a consequence, to ignore her maternal heritage. Bianca realises that she can integrate into the Canadian host society only by breaking the powerful and painful bond with her mother, which threatens ‘engulfment and self-loss’ (Hirsch 1989: 133). The English ‘untranslated word’ *Mother* appearing in the target text is marked by Bianca’s anger towards her mother and the desire to silence her. The linguistic tension characterising the Italian version of this passage is a textual proof of the conflicting mother-daughter relationship, the ‘mother-hate’, which has been theorised as an essential condition of the female liberation and self-determination (131). *Mother* therefore expresses Bianca’s process of disidentification with her mother, who becomes her primary negative model. She objects to her mother’s inability to integrate into their host country and to her scorn of Canadian culture. This ‘untranslated word’ is a linguistic symbol for Bianca’s ‘matrophobia’, namely her fear of becoming her mother and her desire to become ‘purged’ of their bondage (Rich 1976: 236). Breaking this bond triggers Bianca’s process of becoming a Canadian woman. Her mother not only hampered her integration into the host society, she also acted as a regulator of her sexuality: “‘Don’t ever let a man touch you,” was my mother’s contribution to my sex education. “Men are all alike”. A touch, a kiss, even letting go of one’s skirt and one was over the edge. Danger. The easy fall”” (Edwards 1982/1993: 163). The suggestions of Bianca’s mother reveal how she pushed her daughter to comply with Italian gender stereotypes. Following Hirsch’s observation that en-genderment is intimately tied to the process of transmission and the relationship with previous and subsequent generations of women (1989: 11), it is clear that Bianca’s mother represented an obstacle to her process of becoming woman. The English ‘untranslated word’ *mother* can therefore also hint at Bianca’s ‘feminist rejection of female victimization’ (130).

Mother, however, is only one of the English ‘untranslated words’ in my translation of this passage, which also contains the untranslatable cultural reference *sock hops*. Moreover, I retained *hop hop*, since this English onomatopoeic sound gives a sarcastic tone to the Italian woman’s expression. The narrator’s portrayal of her mother through Canadian eyes on the one hand and the Italian woman’s criticism towards the host society on the other are examples of ‘cultural production’. They show that the way in which a

culture is read and interpreted by another has to do with the ‘mythology of stereotyping and representation’ linking the respective societies (Carbonell 1996: 80). I attempted to shed light on the ‘contested space’ of ‘cultural production’ through this foreignising translation, which reveals the difference of the foreign text (Polezzi 2012: 352).

Finally, I inserted the English ‘untranslated words’ *grade eight*. I did not opt for the Italian equivalent school year *seconda media*, which is the second year of middle school like grade eight, because the two education systems do not fully correspond one to the other. For instance, while Canadian students in grade eight are between thirteen and fourteen years old, *seconda media* in Italy is attended by eleven- and twelve-year-old students; the hyperbole of Bianca’s mother ‘children – babies’ would therefore have been diminished. Furthermore, I chose not to use a domesticating strategy in order to reproduce the local setting and to expose Italian readers to the Canadian cultural context. However, I resorted to an expansion and added *alunni (pupils)* so that Italian readers understand that *sock hops* were taking place at school.

By inserting these English ‘untranslated words’, I employed the strategy of ‘resistancy’, which ‘avoids fluency’ and ‘challenges the target-language culture even as it enacts its own ethnocentric violence on the foreign text’ (Venuti 1995: 24). Although this strategy might exclude Italian monolingual readers, it is useful to preserve the narrator’s cultural difference, thus not bridging the gap between Italian and Canadian cultures. Unfamiliar cultural elements, like *sock hops* invoking Canadian culture, are necessary to ‘signify the foreignness of the foreign text’ (Venuti 1995: 99). Moreover, the heterolingualism created in this passage conveys the conflicting cultural perspectives, namely the Italian woman’s hostility towards her host country in opposition to her daughter, who longs for assimilation and who acts as a cultural mediator in reminding the mother that her criticism is inappropriate.

As the narrator explains, she feels ‘exposed’ without the ‘requisite’ mother who, unlike her friends’ Canadian mothers, expounded her opinions ‘with her usual intensity, her usual accent’, criticised ‘the sandwiches in English’ and ‘the other mothers in Italian’ (221–2). In the following passage, the narrator recounts one of several embarrassing episodes in which she felt exposed because of her mother.

(I was never to forget my **graduation** from **high school**. During the final procession in the cathedral, as we filed out, capped and gowned and diplomaed, Mother leaned out from a pew and hissed, '**You look terrible**', **loudly in English** as I passed). Unanchored by a mother, I flitted from group to group. But I was sitting alone on a side sofa when I happened to overhear **Mother Mary** and one of the **recruiters** talking. **Mother Mary** was pointing out Anna Lee. 'A good student and a good girl. She is so active – in sodality, in a student government, a natural leader. She was president of **KKG** this year too, I think.'

'**KKG?**' the priest asked in that slightly condescending tone priests use towards nuns. 'A **sorority**, **Kappa Kappa Gamma**. All our nicest girls belong. All the girls of quality.' (LM: 222)

(Non dimenticherò mai il giorno della mia **graduation** alla **high school**. Durante la sfilata finale nella cattedrale, mentre eravamo in fila, con il tocco, la toga e il nostro diploma, mia madre si sporse da un banco e fischiò: «**You look terrible**», *Sei orribile*, disse ad alta voce mentre passavo). Liberatami da mia madre, passai velocemente da un gruppo all'altro. Ma ero seduta da sola su un divano laterale quando per caso origliai **Mother Mary** che parlava con uno dei **recruiters**. **Mother Mary** stava indicando Anna Lee. «Una brava studentessa e una brava ragazza. È molto attiva: nel sodalizio, nel comitato studentesco, ha uno spirito innato da leader. È stata anche presidente della **KKG** quest'anno, mi sembra». «**KKG?**», chiese il prete con quel tono un po' condiscendente che usano i preti con le suore. «Una **sorority**, **Kappa Kappa Gamma**. Ne fanno parte tutte le ragazze perbene. Tutte le ragazze in gamba». (BL: 145)

Similar to the foreignising strategy used for *grade eight*, I retained in English additional cultural references linked to the Canadian education system, like *graduation*, *high school*, *recruiters* and *sorority*, because translating them into Italian would have implied a different cultural connotation. As pointed out by Pivato, a different language may reflect a different reality (1999b: 40). More specifically, unlike Canadian graduations, the Italian equivalent *cerimonia di diploma* does not involve a celebration, where graduates wear gowns and caps. Likewise, the Italian *scuola superiore* consists of five school years, while Canadian high schools cover the school years from grade ten to twelve. I did not resort to domesticating strategies and use their Italian equivalents in order to reproduce the Canadian setting, where the behaviour of Bianca's mother stands out as even more inappropriate. *Sorority* is another example of English 'irreplaceable words' (Canton 2004: 145), since these social organisations for undergraduate female students, which are very popular in North America, are missing instead in the Italian context. For Bianca the sorority represents the evidence of Canadians' hostility, since some of her migrant friends were 'blackballed on the accent thing' (Edwards 1982/1993: 220). Horrified by that

discriminatory procedure, Bianca never applied to become a member: 'pretending superiority, I refused to take the test' (218). Moreover, I retained the name of the collegiate women fraternity *Kappa Kappa Gamma* (KKG). The English 'untranslated word' *sorority* together with *recruiters* might show the narrator's entrance into the English language as well as her longing to become a member of the KKG and to be accepted in the American Catholic University. However, they also create a 'cultural tremblor' (Verdicchio 1997: 38), which conveys Bianca's bitterness. While the translation for *recruiters* as *membri della commissione di selezione* would not have been concise enough, my usage of *Mother Mary*, which could have been translated as *Madre Mary*, follows Edwards' deployment of the Italian 'untranslated word' *signora*. Retaining *Mother Mary* in English, one of those nuns who always warned the girls against 'mortal sins of the flesh' (Edwards 1982/1993: 160) and reminded them to be 'feminine' (175), can be interpreted as the narrator's intention to represent her as the 'Other'.

The remarkable number of English 'untranslated words' interspersing my target text makes it 'stranger', to put it in Venuti's terms, than the source text characterised instead by a slighter degree of discontinuity and fragmentation (1995: 292). Following Venuti's analysis of his translation of De Angelis' poem, I engaged with Lewis' theorisation of 'abusive fidelity' as Venuti did in justifying his deviation from the source text. As Lewis explained, 'abusive fidelity' 'acknowledges the abusive, equivocal relationship between the translation and the foreign text and eschews a fluent strategy in order to reproduce in the translation whatever features of the foreign text abuse or resist dominant cultural values in the source language' (Lewis in Venuti 1995: 23–4). Following this line of thought, my translation engages with the Canadian text through a relationship of 'abusive fidelity': on the one hand, the target text resists the linguistic prescriptivism and monolingualism frequently imposed by Italian publishing houses and, on the other, it simultaneously creates a resistance in relation to Edwards' novel qualifying its meaning with additions creating a 'critical thrust' towards it (Venuti 1995: 292). Although my target text exceeds the original foreignness, I would propose that the heterolingualism produced in this passage mimics the narrator's 'identity-shattering experience' (Venuti 1995: 294). In line with Venuti's definition of 'interpretive translation' as a transformation of the source text grounded on the information about the author's readings in literature and literary criticism, which aims to circulate the body of writing where it continues to be alien and marginal (292), I would argue that my excesses are due to my reading of the novel as a

site of 'cultural production', where the cultural difference needs to be preserved, thus involving readers in a perpetual translation.

However, I combined these foreignising strategies with a domestication when translating '*You look terrible*', loudly in English as I passed. Instead of specifying that Bianca's mother pronounced that sentence in English, I retained it in its original language and embedded it in a 'translation couplet' similar to what Edwards did when introducing direct speech reporting the words of Bianca's Venetian relatives. Retaining the utterance of Bianca's mother in English shows the Italian woman's intention to be understood by the Canadian 'Other'. By translating it into Italian, I aimed to present the narrator as a 'fictional translator', who acts as a mediator between her mother and her Italian readers.

I also resorted to the strategy of 'resistancy' when the narrator lists the usual Canadian meals at Jody's home. As she explains in the following passage, Bianca was longing for that 'wonderful' food, which her mother did not allow her to have:

PASSAGE 17

Their food, as mother had warned, often came from tins and packets. She hadn't warned how wonderful it would taste. Lipton's chicken **noodle soup**, ketchup, hot dogs, **baked beans**, barbecue-sauced spareribs, **Jello**, **lemon meringue pie**, Duncan Hines chocolate cake with Betty Crocker frosting, ice cream with Kraft **marshmallow** topping – a revelation indeed. 'We're **Maritimers**,' her father would say to me over supper, 'though all the children were born in Calgary. My father and his father before him worked the coal mines of **Cape Breton**. I worked there myself. Only a couple of years older than you. Every summer through **high school** and through law school at Dalhousie [...]'. (LM: 118–9)

Come aveva messo in guardia mia madre, mangiavano spesso cibo che veniva da scatolette e bustine. Ma non mi aveva messo in guardia da quanto fosse delizioso. La **noodle soup** al pollo della *Lipton*, ketchup, hot dog, **baked beans**, costine di maiale con la salsa barbecue, **Jello**, **lemon meringue pie**, la torta al cioccolato della *Duncan Hines* con la glassa della *Betty Crocker*, gelato decorato con **marshmallows** della *Kraft*, una vera rivelazione. «Siamo **Maritimers**», mi diceva suo padre a cena, «anche se tutti i figli sono nati a Calgary. Mio padre e ancora prima suo padre lavoravano nelle miniere di carbone di **Cape Breton**. Io stesso lavorai lì. Quando avevo solo qualche anno più di voi. Tutte le estati ai tempi della **high school** e della laurea in giurisprudenza alla Dalhousie. (BL: 80)

I inserted English 'untranslated words' for food originally from North America, as well as *noodle soup*, which was unknown to Bianca before migrating to Canada. By using Bianca's acquired language, I attempted to show her longing to integrate into her host society and to enjoy the food like everybody else. As in the previous passage, my translation has a more foreignising effect than the source text. However, the heterolingualism produced aimed to convey the conflicting perspectives between the Italian woman disgusted by that 'horrible food that came out of cans' and her Canadian daughter, who instead finds it 'wonderful'. Interestingly, Bianca's 'wonderful' is at odds with the 'junk food' with which she labelled the Canadian children's snacks on her first ride on the bus. I would argue that the narrator's change in perspective shows her progressive integration.

Finally, I inserted English 'untranslated words' for items referring to provenance, *Cape Breton* as well as *Maritimers*, which hints at a shared group identity. By retaining them in English, I tried to convey the sense of belonging of Jody's father and his pride for that 'good country', the 'country of the future' with 'no limits' and where 'you can make yourself'.

While Bianca's family represents her 'point of exit' from an oppressive diasporic system, her Ukrainian-Canadian lover Jack acts as her real 'point of entrance' into Canadian society. With him the narrator starts to explore the world of language, of words, and makes her entrance into her host country:

PASSAGE 18

Yet in teaching me to recognize, teaching me to name, he changed me. It was as if the emotional **slide** through which I had been viewing the land, the slide that coloured the country oppressive and infinitely barren, flipped up and back to be stored; a new one that painted the land familiar and supporting clicked into place. Old masks replaced by new? The vision of the **outsider**, Italian, American, or Eastern Canadian, superseded by that of the native? Partly. (LM: 63)

Eppure, insegnandomi a riconoscere, insegnandomi a dare un nome alle cose, mi cambiò. Era come se il **filtro** affettivo attraverso cui prima vedevo il paese, il filtro che conferiva alla terra una qualità opprimente e infinitamente arida, si fosse sollevato per essere accantonato; improvvisamente un filtro nuovo che dava alla terra toni familiari e solidali era scattato al suo posto. Vecchie maschere sostituite da nuove? L'immagine dell'**outsider**, italiana, americana, o canadese dell'est soppiantata da quella dell'indigena? In parte. (BL: 46)

This passage is illustrative of how learning about the changing environment is central to migrant people's perceptual experience of the world (Svašek 2012: 7) and how migrant subjects are linked to their environment by emotions, which enable them to learn (Milton 2002: 37). Jack triggers Bianca's 'affective turn' (Clough 2007), which enables her to change her relationship with the Canadian environment.

In translating *slide* into Italian, I used the word *filtro*, literally *filter*, to convey how this is a metaphor for Jack, who acts as Bianca's 'pocket of connection' with the Canadian environment (Steiner 2009: 4). While at the beginning of her 'transit' (Svašek 2012: 2) to Canada Bianca feels 'exposed' (Edwards 1982/1993: 109) in that landscape, she subsequently starts to perceive it as 'familiar and supporting', thus showing her final 'transition' (Svašek 2012: 2).¹⁸ Jack allows Bianca to change her perception not only of the Canadian landscape but also of herself, since he helps her negotiate her transcultural identity. She no longer sees herself as an 'outsider' but partly as a 'native' and, therefore, confirms how human beings 'perceiv[e] themselves in relation to their human and non-human environment' (Merleau-Ponty 1996; Ingold 2000). Bianca's perception of herself as the 'native' reveals her 'transformation', namely the transit-related change that she underwent in terms of her cultural identity formation and emotional subjectivity (Svašek 2012: 5). Jack acts as an 'affective possibility' (Conradson and Latham 2007; see also Davidson *et al.* 2005) that influences Bianca's idea about her cultural identity and the way she relates to her host country. Finally, I retained *outsider* in English to present the narrator through the 'foreign gaze' of the Canadian 'Other', similar to the strategy I used for *DP* (see passage 11). Its foreignising effect, however, is diminished, since *outsider* is currently part of the Italian language; it is used to refer to people who succeed in their career despite their marginal position, or artists and writers who do not belong to any specific streams, as testified by the definitions in *Treccani*: 'Chiunque riesca ad imporsi, in politica, nel lavoro e sim., nonostante non sia tra i favoriti o si trovi in una situazione marginale' and 'Chi opera in campo letterario, artistico e sim. al di fuori di ogni scuola o movimento'.¹⁹

¹⁸ In using the terms 'transit', I am drawing on Maruška Svašek's theorisation of this concept as the changing social, cultural and spatial environments constituted by individuals before and after coming into contact with each other (2012: 2–3). 'Transition', instead, refers to transit-related changes in the meaning, value and emotional efficacy of images as opposed to changes in their location.

¹⁹ See entry 'outsider' of the online Italian dictionary *Treccani*.

The image of the ‘filter’ associated with Jack is confirmed when Bianca feels that she is ‘absorbing’ her lover and his friends’ ‘views’, as she explains in the following passage:

PASSAGE 19

But I felt, I still feel, that I was doing more than simply **absorbing** their views, their masks. I was looking through. I was finally seeing what was here because I had finally lost my expectations of what should be here. (LM: 63)

Tuttavia avevo la sensazione, e ce l’ho tuttora, che stavo andando oltre la semplice **assimilazione** dei loro modi di vedere, delle loro maschere. Li stavo passando in rassegna. Finalmente riuscivo a vedere cosa c’era qui perché avevo finalmente abbandonato le aspettative di cosa ci sarebbe dovuto essere. (BL: 47)

In translating *absorbing*, I used the term *assimilazione* because it hints at the process of assimilation into Canadian society that Bianca undergoes thanks to Jack and his friends. The narrator seems to be living what Franz Fanon called the first stage of the ‘assimilationist phase’ with which he meant the evolutionary schema of the native intellectual’s cultural evolution in a colonial era (1967). As with the intellectuals discussed by Fanon, our narrator brings to the surface her assimilation to her host culture.

In order to emphasise the important role that assimilation plays in Bianca’s integration in Canada, I retained the same semantic field to translate how her Canadian style could not be ‘unlearned’: ‘The Canadian style, tight and reserved, had been coded into my body and could not be unlearned’ (Edwards 1982/1993: 124). I translated *unlearned* as *disassimilato* to stress the process of inscription of the host culture in Bianca’s body. As a ‘translated being’, Bianca experiences a series of transformations, since she adjusts to the loss of her home country to fit better into the cultural context of her host country. However, the Canadian style, which had been coded into her body, leads Bianca to also lose her Italian mother tongue. During one of her ‘return journeys’ to Venice she realises the difficulty in communicating with Marco despite her continuous practicing.

Bianca's fascination with language, which emerges throughout the novel through several metalinguistic reflections, becomes even more evident when she explores her entrance into the English language. The following passage is illustrative of the connection that Jack created between her and the Canadian landscape:

PASSAGE 20

It was Jack who taught me the names of the flowers – **Indian paintbrush**, **Queen Anne's lace**, fairy bells, who taught me to recognize the different species of mushrooms, to categorize the different types of birch. (LM: 61)

Fu Jack che mi insegnò i nomi dei fiori: *l'Indian paintbrush* – la castilleja – la *Queen Anne's lace* – la carota selvatica – le campanelle; fu lui che mi insegnò a riconoscere le varie specie di funghi, a classificare i diversi tipi di betulla. (BL: 45)

In translating this passage into Italian, I inserted the English 'untranslated words' *Indian paintbrush* and *Queen Anne's lace*, two very common plants in North America. Since they might have acted as 'destabilizing factors' for Italian target-text readers (Camarca 2005: 229), I opted to reduce their foreignising effect through 'translation couplets'. My translation strategy was shared by Moroni Parken, who retained English words in her Italian-language memoirs, *Quattro Anni di Canada*, to name typical elements of Canadian flora and fauna: 'Poi c'era la pianta chiamata in inglese *adder's tongue*, lingua di vipera, che è un giglio in miniatura di un bel color giallo; e poi mille e mille altri fiori: appassito uno ne spuntava un altro affatto diverso, tanto che i mesi erano per noi segnati da nuovi fiori e da nuove farfalle' (1896/1907: 57, emphasis in the original). Further examples are provided by the insertion of *sumach* (32), *loon* (34), *speckled-trouts* (41) and *mink* (126). Like Moroni Parken, I retained *Indian paintbrush* and *Queen Anne's lace* in English in order to show Bianca's impatience to translate herself into a Canadian and her intimate relationship with the Canadian landscape that she finally perceives as 'familiar and supporting' (Edwards 1982/1993: 63). I also used English 'untranslated words' for typical Canadian fauna in the following passage:

PASSAGE 21

I have spent the morning gardening, uprooting thistles and chickweed from between the zucchini and lettuce plants, hacking back a wild rosebush and the **Virginia creeper**. I am floating in self-righteousness, in the image of myself as establisher of order, shaper of boundaries. (LM: 9)

Ho passato la mattinata a fare giardinaggio, a sradicare cardi e stellarie tra le zucchine e la lattuga, a sfolire un cespuglio di rose e la **Virginia creeper**, la **cosiddetta vite canadese**. Mi lascio trasportare dalla mia presunzione, dall'immagine di me come creatrice di ordine, forgiatrice di confini. (BL: 10)

By inserting the English 'untranslated word' *Virginia creeper*, I drew on De Luca's interpretation of this passage as a metaphor depicting Bianca as the 'establisher of order' between her Italian past, represented by zucchini as well as lettuce, and her Canadian present, symbolised instead by a wild rosebush and the Virginia creeper (see section 4.1 in Chapter 4). I attempted to emphasise this antithesis at a textual level through the linguistic clash created by the English 'untranslated word' *Virginia creeper*, which, however, is followed by its translation *vite canadese* in order to make it more accessible to target-text readers. Interestingly, the Italian equivalent, whose back translation is *Canadian vine*, invokes a foreign perspective of this plant and reveals its Canadian origins. I expanded this 'translation couplet' through *la cosiddetta*, literally *the so called*, to stress how this is a translation through which Italian speakers 'labelled' Virginia creeper as a Canadian plant. The narrator therefore acts as a 'fictional translator', who mediates between Canadian culture and her Italian readers by providing them with the name they used for this plant originally from North America.

Similarly, I resorted to English 'untranslated words' for place names to show Bianca's final sense of belonging to Canada:

PASSAGE 22

In the summer and fall, long walks along the winding river and expeditions to the country to visit the last ferry that crossed the **North Saskatchewan River**, the graveyard at Pakan, the church at Frog Lake. (LM: 61)

In estate e in autunno, lunghe passeggiate lungo il fiume sinuoso ed escursioni in campagna per visitare l'ultimo traghetto che attraversò il **North Saskatchewan River**, il cimitero a Pakan, la chiesa a Frog Lake. (BL: 45)

Along with the ‘untranslated word’ *River*, I also retained the formulaic expressions *sweetie* and *please*. By doing so, I also tried to convey Bianca’s entrance into the English language by letting her express some interjections in English when talking to Jack during a prayer service in a church, where his parents were buried:

PASSAGE 23

‘Not too much longer, *sweetie*. When he passes the family’s grave we can sit and eat.’ ‘I don’t want to eat on a grave.’ I could no longer whisper. ‘I feel faint. Weighed down... I can’t breathe. *Please*’. (LM: 68)

«Non ci vuole ancora molto, *sweetie*. Quando passa la tomba di famiglia possiamo sederci e mangiare».

«Mi sento svenire. Oppressa... Non riesco a respirare. *Please*». (BL: 50)

In this passage I retained the exclamations *sweetie* and *please* in English. Just as Italian ‘untranslated words’ originally appearing in Bianca’s dialogues with Marco disclose her attachment to him and her belonging to Italy, the English *sweetie* aims to emphasise Jack’s role of introducing Bianca to the English language, while *please* shows her entrance into the English language and her intimate relationship with Jack. This ‘untranslated word’, which reveals that the conversation took place in English, is an example of ‘representation of otherness through language’ through which the voice of the Canadian ‘Other’ emerges (Bassnett 1998: 38).

Thanks to Jack, Bianca finally sees Canada as her ‘home’. Jack’s words – ‘Are you at home? [...] A citizen? We could make Edmonton a city. We citizens make it’ (62) – seem to echo in Bianca’s mind, and she finally decides to ‘come to terms with the country [she] had been living in’ (221), as shown in the following passage:

PASSAGE 24

So I begin again my life in this city, this land. City: the place where the citizen is at home. I will, with the others, **make** this city, imagine it fully. The possibility exists. We are not yet confined by old fantasies and old blood, all the weight of what has already been done, good and bad. In our simplicity we are unhampered, **untried**. (LM: 268)

Così ricomincio daccapo la mia vita in questa città, in questa terra. Città: il luogo in cui il cittadino si sente a casa. **Costruirò**, con gli altri, questa città, la immaginerò nella sua pienezza. La possibilità c'è. Non siamo ancora limitati da antiche fantasie e dall'antica stirpe, da tutte le conseguenze di ciò che è stato già fatto, nel bene e nel male. Nella nostra semplicità siamo liberi, una **pagina bianca**. (BL: 172)

In translating this passage, I rendered *make* with *costruire*, literally *to build*, to strengthen the power of imagination, which reminds us of McLeod's observation that imagination is 'the primary location of home' for diasporic subjects (2000: 211). Particularly significant is the narrator's statement 'the possibility exists', which shows how the trauma of separation and dislocation are potentially 'the sites of hope and new beginning', a terrain where 'memories reassemble and reconfigure' to form new homes and new spaces (Brah 1996: 193). In order to emphasise the concept of a new beginning, I translated *untried* as *pagina bianca*, literally *blank page*, which also reminds us of how the writing activity – which connotes a language-related process – reveals itself as a 'vehicle for translation' for the author and allows her to reach a sense of connection between past and present, thus enabling a future (Steiner 2009: 5). My choice is in line with De Luca's use of the term 'pagina bianca', when explaining that creative writing is a means for Bianca to express herself.²⁰

²⁰ In her analysis, De Luca observed: 'Caterina Edwards, nata in Inghilterra da madre veneziana, permette alla sua protagonista Bianca di esplorare, come un paleografo, il mondo ambiguo della parola scritta e di confrontarsi con la pagina bianca, mezzo con il quale, secondo Gilbert e Gubar, la donna nel suo processo creativo si manifesta come testo e come artefatto' (2006: 149).

5.6 Translating an ‘In-complete Home’

Although the narrator starts to see Canada as her country and she no longer perceives the cold weather as a ‘long plight’, the memories of Venice are still etched in her mind. As shown in the following passage, Bianca reminds us of the ‘mobile people’, discussed by Svasek, who are often attached to their dear ones in distant homes or to places that they might never see again (2012: 13):

PASSAGE 25

Winter, no longer just the long plight. **Winter, my country. Snow, my country.** I am no longer afraid of the vastness, the extremity of this place. Yet, even as I stare out the window, the labyrinthine *calle* of Venice are close, so very close, inevitably **drawing** me. (LM: 69)

L’inverno, non più semplicemente la lunga piaga. **Winter, my country. Snow, my country.** Non mi fa più paura la vastità, l’eccesso di questo posto. Eppure, anche quando mi incanto a guardare fuori dalla finestra, le *calle* labirintiche di Venezia sono vicine, così vicine, che inevitabilmente mi **risucchiano**. (BL: 50–1)

In translating this passage, I inserted the English untranslated phrase *Winter, my country. Snow, my country*, which emphasises that Bianca finally comes to love her host country, with which she establishes an intimate relationship. These ‘untranslated words’ compensate for the loss of the original heterolingualism created by *calle*, which however is much more recognisable to source-text readers. I opted for a more foreignising strategy to present the narrator as the Canadian ‘Other’ to the Italian readership and to enliven her final integration into her host country. While the Italian ‘untranslated words’ appearing in the source text, such as *bricoli*, *passarelle* and *motoscafo* show the narrator’s belonging to Venice and how the Italian setting is at the root of Bianca’s quest for identity, the English ‘untranslated words’ interspersed in the target text reveal her Canadian cultural identity. The interference of English in the Italian text is a linguistic piece of evidence of the narrator’s ‘fractured state of existence’, which is particularly acute in uprooted subjects (Simon 2001: 216). The ‘Third Space’ in which she is caught is significantly represented at a textual level by the adverb ‘yet’ embedded in the middle of the passage, which reveals

how the arrival ‘home’ is always ‘in-complete’ (Steiner 2009: 25). Those ‘labyrinthine *calle*’ that she still feels ‘close’ and ‘draw’ her, show how Bianca’s movement from ‘placeness’ to ‘place’ is never complete and continuously requires cultural translation, where ‘points of exit’ and ‘points of entrance’ are continuously negotiated (21–2). In order to emphasise how Bianca’s sense of belonging is still strong despite her integration in Canada, I translated *drawing* as *risucchiare*, literally to *engulf*, instead of, for instance, *attirare*. *Risucchiare*, strengthened the power of attraction undergone passively by the narrator, which prevents her from exorcising her dream of Venice. However, her strong sense of belonging to Venice remains at odds with the erroneous word *calle*, which I retained misspelled to show how her belonging and Italian cultural identity are only an illusion.

The ‘Third Space’ occupied by Bianca emerges even more clearly in this last passage, where she reveals that Venice is the ‘recurring motif that [she] cannot escape and [she] cannot capture’:

PASSAGE 26

Venice, stone and water, Venice, bride of the sea, bride of my dreams; she is the recurring motif that I cannot escape and I cannot capture. I have dreamt each method of approach. By plane, the flat land gives way to delta, the low plain etched by a myriad of rivers and tributaries into an abstract print. The lagoon is marked by shoals, by mud islands. As we dip, as we drop lower and lower, the city lies below me: a red-roofed tight maze cut by a snakelike canal. By train the effect is muted. Mestre, the long bridgeway, the concrete and glass *Stazione Termine*. The best is by sea: a measured approach, *adagio*, the still lagoon, a wooden pile and a lone hut, *adagio*, the city a violet apparition hovering in the horizon, *adagio*, *adagietto*, a long curving line of *bricoli*. I am almost there. The spires are ever closer. I am almost inside. (LM: 263)

Venezia, pietra e acqua, Venezia, sposa del mare, sposa dei miei sogni; lei è il motivo ricorrente da cui non riesco a evadere e che non riesco a catturare. Ho sognato ogni singola strategia per raggiungerla. In aereo, la terra pianeggiante fa spazio al delta, la bassa pianura è incisa da una miriade di fiumi e affluenti dando forma a un disegno astratto. La laguna è segnata da bassifondi, da isole melmose. E mentre iniziamo ad atterrare, mentre andiamo sempre più giù, la città giace sotto di me: un labirinto stretto fatto di tetti rossi e attraversato da un canale sinuoso. In treno l’effetto viene attenuato. Mestre, il lungo percorso attraverso il ponte, la *Stazione Termine* in cemento e vetro. La migliore è via mare: un approccio pacato, *adagio*, la laguna immobile, un palo di legno e una capanna solitaria, *adagio*, la città un’apparizione violacea che si libra all’orizzonte, *adagio*, *adagetto*, una lunga fila sinuosa di *bricoli*. (BL: 169)

This passage presents the narrator as one of those exiles discussed by Said, for whom new and old environments are vivid in their minds and occur contrapuntally (2001: 186). Bianca's inability to 'enter the comfort of the labyrinth' (Edwards 1982/1993: 264) seems to confirm Trinh Min-ha's point that when displaced people come to love their new home, they will immediately be sent back to their old one, where they are bound to undergo again another form of estrangement (1994: 12). Significantly, the narrator refers to Venice through the personal pronoun *she* in the same way she does in the passage 'I finally wanted to come to terms with the country I had been living in. I wanted to make her my country. But *she* was hidden, obscured' (Edwards 1982/1993: 221, my emphasis). Although according to English grammar rules this personal pronoun can be used to refer to countries, it has been the author's choice to opt for this optional figure of speech, which could have been replaced by *it*. In order to highlight this personification, I translated *it* as *lei*, which is used in Italian only for people, in order to give human traits to Venice and therefore to convey how Bianca is still attached to her city; hence her difficulty in escaping it. I translated *escape* as *evadere*, instead of *fuggire*, because it implies a more physical connotation and emphasises the narrator's obsession with her past, which hampered her integration in Canada. The end of the novel, however, reveals that the process of arrival and departure is never complete in migration, as in translation, and that it is in 'the temporary enunciations between them that meaning emerges' (Steiner 2009: 100). She proves how home is not a static place but a space of cultural translation, where different languages and cultures intersect (144). The narrator is perpetually caught in exile, which entails an intercultural movement from one's native land to another, from the 'here of home' – Canada, to the 'there' of foreign abode – Italy (Zeleva 2005: 11). Her intercultural movement is reflected at a linguistic level by the narrator's travelling between her two languages, in an attempt to bridge past and present, points of departure and arrival. The Italian 'untranslated words' *stazione*, *adagio*, *adagietto*, and *briccoli* cast light on how the narrator perceives language as both 'home' and a 'translated space' (Wilson 2011a: 238). Following Bartoloni's theorisation, it demonstrates how the 'interstitial zone' is characterised in equal measure by the features 'of the known (the original) and those of the 'becoming' (the translation)' (2003: 468). The heterolingual nature of this passage is a linguistic piece of evidence of the narrator's hybrid site of belonging, of her belonging to

I retained in italics both the misspelled ‘untranslated words’ to signal them as foreign elements. Moreover, I foregrounded *adagio* and *adagetto* to show the narrator’s longing to reach Venice. While I corrected *adagietto* because it would have stood out as unnecessarily alienating, I retained the misspelled ‘untranslated words’ *bricoli* and *Stazione Termine* to shed light on the narrator’s position in the ‘Third Space’. I did not correct *bricoli* with *briccole* because it is a Venetian culture-bound term with which not all Italian readers are necessarily familiar. This misspelled word, therefore, is not too foreignising for target-text readers. Moreover, I retained the original name of the train station not only because it is spelt incorrectly (*Termine* instead of *Termini*) but also because it is the name of the train station in Rome, not in Venice. The author might have mixed up the Venetian train station *Stazione di Santa Lucia* with *Stazione Termini* in Rome. She is likely to have been misled by the word *Termini*, similar to *termine*, which also means *end*. With *Stazione Termine* she might have had *terminus* in mind, as *Stazione Santa Lucia* is the final station of the train lines for Venice. *Stazione Termine* is eloquent of how ‘the Italian-Canadian struggle grows around an attempt to remember that does not have dismemberment as its starting point’ (Verdicchio 1997: 101). The correction of this mistake would not have shown how ‘remembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present’ and how this process is never ‘a mere retrieval from the memory bank’ (Smith and Watson 2001: 22). I opted to retain this mistake, although it is highly foreignising for Italian readers, to convey the ‘Third Space’ in which the narrator is caught. While she confesses that she cannot ‘escape’ the ‘recurring motif’ of Venice, ironically she does not remember the name of its train station, thus revealing her ‘failure of memory’ (Verdicchio 1997: 101) and confirming the impossibility of recuperating her past.

To summarise, throughout my translation I removed the italics for some of the originally Italian ‘untranslated words’ and I omitted some original explanations as well as ‘translation couplets’ – mainly included in the chapters narrating Marco’s story – when they referred to Italian cultural references. Foregrounding them as external elements would have been unnecessary since they are familiar to target-text readers. However, I retained the italics and ‘translation couplets’ for those elements – mainly embedded in the chapters about Bianca’s life narrative – which were useful to make the narrator’s process of translation visible and to shed light on the narrator’s transcultural identity. In order to compensate for the partial erasure of the heterolingualism and of the narrator’s process of self-translation, I resorted to interventionist strategies through which ‘newness comes to

the world', where 'newness' undermines the homogenisation of the language. Through Venuti's foreignising strategies of resistancy and minoritisation, I aimed to reproduce the linguistic tensions characterising the source text, which are an eloquent sign of the cultural displacement experienced by the narrator (see passages 7, 8, 10–11, 15–18, 22–23 and 25). Interspersing English 'untranslated words' in my Italian target text allowed me to show the narrator's cultural difference and to present her as a migrant subject, who leaves traces of her acquired language and culture when she is translated 'back' into her Italian mother tongue. This strategy enabled me to show the impossibility of bridging the gap between Italian and Canadian cultures. The co-existence of two languages reflects the co-presence of the two cultures, which are continuously negotiated by the narrator. Just as Italian 'untranslated words' signal the narrator's otherness in the source text, English 'untranslated words' present the narrator as the 'other' in my target text and are not read as 'familiar signs of sameness' by Italian readers. In this way, the narrator, who is originally presented as an unfamiliar Italian migrant to her Canadian readers, does not become familiar to Italian readers, since she is presented as a Canadian woman with Italian origins, who made her entrance into English and her host country after engaging in a process of cultural translation. In translating passages 15–18 and 25, I conveyed the narrator's cultural difference and affirmed her Canadian 'self' as the 'other', thus showing how her cultural difference is perceived as otherness by the host society. In this way, Italian readers look at the familiar through foreign eyes and are involved in a process of translation. My strategy relies on Bartoloni's observation that the translator's task is not to substitute one language with another language, one culture with another culture or one identity with another identity but to transfer one language *into* another language, one culture *into* another culture and one identity *into* another identity (2008: 89; see also Jamarani 2012). As is clear from passages 16–18 and 21–23, I did not substitute Canadian culture with the Italian one through the visibility of the English language. In passage 15, I aimed to transfer the narrator's Canadian cultural identity into her Italian one by showing the negotiation between her desire to adjust to Canadian customs and her mother's hostility towards them. Although the translation of some passages like 16–18 might stand out as difficult to read for the Italian readership and disorienting with foreignising 'untranslated words', which make the target text more disruptive than the source text, I responded to Venuti's invitation to literary translators to be 'challenging' and 'provocative' in order to conjure up the foreignness of the foreign text (1998/1999: 23). They remind us of those hybrid texts, which 'show features that somehow seem "out of place"/"strange"/"unusual" for the

receiving culture' (Schäffner 2001b: 169). Moreover, I resorted to a resistant strategy, for instance, in translating passages 15–16 in order not to assimilate the narrator to Italian culture, but to show traces of a 'translated being', of an Italian child eager to translate herself into a Canadian. Instead of 'translation-as-assimilation', I opted for 'translation-as-diversification' (Cronin 1998: 149) and retained the narrator's hybrid language, which resists being incorporated into the target language. Following Gentzler's observation that translation strategies cannot be seen in terms 'either foreignizing' or 'domesticating' (2006: 366), I resorted to both (see passages 11 and 15). My aim was to emphasise the foreignness of the Canadian level of the narration for Italian target-text readers just as Edwards emphasised the Italian level of the novel foreign to her Canadian audience. While Canadian source-text readers 'travel abroad' (Venuti 1995: 101) through the foreignising Italian 'untranslated words', which present the narrator as the 'other', as an Italian migrant struggling to integrate into her host country, the Italian target-text audience is sent abroad through English 'untranslated words', which present her as the 'other', an emigrant, whose Canadian style 'had been coded into her body and could not be unlearned' (Edwards 1982/1993: 123). Seeing the source and the target text as disclosing the two different 'inimical halves' (108) of the narrator, her transcultural identity is fully represented when seen both in Canadian and Italian contexts. Coherent with this view, we can recall Gaddis Rose's observation, quoted earlier, that 'literary texts are fuller when read with their translations because taken together they loosely enclose interliminal space of meaning' (1997: 73). Through this lens, source and target texts are seen as having a 'dialectic relationship' (Bassnett 1998: 31), which disrupts the concept of binary opposition.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

The present thesis has engaged in a discussion on the relationship between cultural translation in Italian-Canadian literature and its translation into Italian. The analysis of the existing translations of Ricci's 'Passage to Canada' and D'Alfonso's *Fabrizio's Passion* has shown that the process of cultural translation in which the narrators are involved reveals itself as a complex issue when engaging with translation in practice.

Being cast in an interstitial position, Italian-Canadian authors are involved in acts of negotiation of their transcultural identity, which are reflected both at a thematic and a linguistic level. At a thematic level, their process of cultural translation is clear through the narrators' metalinguistic reflections and their processual use of language as well as through their role as cultural mediators between Italian culture and their Canadian readers. Moreover, narrators look at Canadian culture through Italian eyes, which shows their cultural origins and make them 'outsiders from the inside', and yet they present Italian culture from a Canadian perspective, which reveals their non-belonging to their culture of origin. At a linguistic level, this is reflected through the occasional use of the Italian language, which shows the desire to reconnect with their cultural origins. However, the 'untranslated words' appearing in the English texts are often misspelled, which reveal that their relationship with the Italian language and Italy is only intervened with a fragmented memory. They are an eloquent sign of the narrators' impossibility of returning to Italy and of their cultural hybridity. Analysing the relationship between the narrators' uninterrupted metaphorical journey between two different languages and cultures as well as their failed return journey to Italy led me to new understandings about the translation of Italian-Canadian literature by practice. The result is my own Italian translation of *The Lion's Mouth*, which has shown how engaging with migrant writing through translation by practice deserves critical engagement within literary and translation studies. I presented it as my main case study and as a third model of translation if compared to 'Passaggio in Canada' and *La Passione di Fabrizio*. My translation is the result of my engagement with theories of cultural translation and hybridity as well as the basis for the contribution to new knowledge about the relationship between migrant writing and translation by practice. Contrary to the Italian translators of other Italian-Canadian texts, my aim was not to bring

the author 'back home', but to present her transcultural and hybrid identity as being in constant movement between Italian and Canadian cultures. I conveyed the narrator's 'Third Space' by carrying out an 'incomplete translation', which is still in the process of reaching its home and bears traces both of the source and target languages (Bartoloni 2003; see also Larkosh 2006: 298). Similar to the narrator, who is cast in an interstitial position between her Italian home country, to which she can no longer return, and her Canadian host country, which she still cannot see as her home, my target text travels between the Italian and the English language. My target text is therefore characterised by an incomplete process similar to the way I interpreted the original as a 'product of a voluntarily incomplete translation process'. While the English 'untranslated words' cast light on the narrator's progressive integration in Canada, the italicised original Italian 'untranslated words' reveal their belonging to Italy which, however, can no longer be repossessed as shown by her failed return journey to Venice. The impossibility of returning home is evident in my target text by the misspelled Italian 'untranslated words', which prove the impossibility of repossessing the Italian language as well. Just as the 'return journey' to Venice takes the migrant narrator ahead, namely towards an integration in Edmonton, translation goes beyond the dichotomy departure/arrival. Therefore, translation is not a movement from a source text to a target text, but rather located in the 'Third Space', where 'conflicts arising from cultural difference and the different social discourses involved in these conflicts are negotiated' (Wolf 2002: 190). *The Lion's Mouth* is therefore an example of transcultural and hybrid literary works that challenge the practice as well as the idea of translation and call into question 'either'/'or' categories (Gentzler 2006: 366). Usual categories like 'national'/'foreign', 'other'/'self', 'foreignising'/'domesticating', 'original'/'translation', 'source'/'target', which are still bound to the traditional binary translational models, need to be revisited when translating transcultural and hybrid literary texts (Mehrez 1992: 121–2; Ramakrishna 1997/2007: 21–2; Wolf 2000: 141; Martín Ruano 2003: 194; Sturge 2007: 13; Polezzi 2013: np). The resistance to these binary models reflects Edwards' resistance, and that of other Italian-Canadian writers, to the binary model 'centre'/'periphery'.

One of the aims of this study is to challenge some critics' preconception, illustrated in the introductory chapter, according to which cultural translation is an abstract concept and scholars are not interested in translation by practice. By contrast, this practice-led project provides a first step in the exploration of the link between cultural translation and

interlingual translation in migrant writing. While interlingual translation enlivens the complex translational process in which migrant narrators are involved, insights from cultural translation has allowed me, as a translator, to resort to more appropriate strategies. Translating a migrant literary work that can already be read as a form of translation is extremely important because it advances the readers' understanding of migration practices, which are at the basis of our increasingly multicultural and multilingual globalised society. Seeing how intercultural exchanges are expressed in a different language makes readers aware of the extremely important role of translation in the interaction between migrant subjects and the host society. It sheds light on the intercultural encounters of everyday life and on processes of self-representation as well as reformulation of cultural identity. This might help readers belonging to the host society reflect on how to respond differently to the practices of migrant subjects, who in turn might resort to new strategies of integration in the host country. These reflections confirm that translation can be seen as a form of literary criticism since it has helped me as a translator to enliven the source text. My translation, which is the result of a close reading of the source text and the product of scholarly research, leads readers to a new interpretation of the text through specific lexical choices and translation strategies. For instance, my foreignising strategies aimed to lead readers to go beyond notions of a national culture or literature and to think instead in terms of transculture and transnationalism, where boundaries are difficult to establish. More specifically, foreignising strategies shed light on the migrant narrator's linguistic displacement, the sense of otherness she perceives, her desire of integration into the host culture and the practices of translation she adopts in order to succeed. The use of italics for the originally Italian 'untranslated words', instead, places emphasis on the importance of memory in the migrant experience; more specifically, the misspelled Italian 'untranslated words' is a meaningful signal of the narrator's fragmentary memory. The resulting constant movement between different languages helps readers analyse the ways in which transcultural subjects construct an image of themselves through translation between home and host cultures and sheds light on their fragmentary identity. As a whole, my translation has allowed me to contribute to the existing criticism on *The Lion's Mouth* in particular and Caterina Edwards' works in general and to shed light on her acceptance of her own hybrid cultural identity, her incomplete integration in Canada, the impossibility of the return journey and her continuous movement between two cultures. Translation therefore emerges as an innovative way to think about literature and culture across national and linguistic borders.

The model of translation I adopted could also be applied to other migrant texts to prove whether it is valid or not, and whether it could be expanded and improved. Moreover, it would prove useful to investigate how such a model would be received by the Italian publishing industry and Italian readers, and how it would place itself within the Italian literary system. Finally, translating *The Lion's Mouth* according to the proposed model sheds light on some specific issues in translation studies, like translating affect, which are only beginning to point to new directions in translation studies, such as the conflation of translation and affect. As shown in the previous chapters, the narrators' non-belonging to their country of origin has been translated as nostalgia for their home, since they have been influenced by mechanisms of self-representation and they aimed to represent Italy as the motherland of emigrants, who long for their 'return journey'. Another fruitful line of enquiry would be to investigate migrant writing from a gender perspective and more specifically the relationship between transcultural identity and mother/motherland/mother tongue in women's migrant writing. Moreover, it would be useful to analyse how this relationship is relayed in translation by practice when the text is translated into the narrator's native language. A better understanding could also be provided by a similar analysis applied to self-translation, which would allow scholars to investigate how migrant authors convey their process of cultural translation when translating themselves not only from one culture to another but also from one language to another. To conclude, this study shows how cultural translation and interlingual translation are inextricably linked; more specifically, it hopes to have led to new understandings about translation by practice and to have shed light on new translation strategies that could be applied not only to Italian-Canadian writing but to any migrant literary body.

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