

Introduction

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The articles in this special volume of *Italian Canadiana* intend to study, through their various interdisciplinary approaches, the manner in which patterns of *nostos*, of journeying and returning, in Italian Canadian writing and other narratives are both identified and deployed. The contributors, as the reader can glean from their biographical sketches at the end of the volume, incorporate myriad branches of knowledge: from diaspora and postcolonial studies to cultural sociology and anthropology, from literary criticism and semiotics to the history of immigration, from high-ranking diplomacy to creative writing and documentary photography, and from comparative literature to translation. It is hoped that, given this array of interpretative modes, the reader will garner the dialogic and specular tenor of these texts which, while intersecting, without, paradoxically, problematizing each other, compose a thematic ensemble whose heuristic motivations grant them a common sense of literary stability and scope.

While each individual study in this volume, mapping a particular shift or ambiguity in the manner a specific *nostos* device is deployed, may be read with great profit on its own, it will also, perhaps more importantly, form part of a general trajectory, thus enhancing its significance when engaged as a vital segment of a greater narrative. A narrative whose interdisciplinarity, often attempting to question *nostos* patterns traditionally measured by journey and homecoming, invokes postmodern instances of fracture with both the dominant or canonical culture and the ensuing aesthetics. All the Italian Canadian narratives analyzed in this special issue share one common thread, that of *erranza*, of wandering, a human condition that parallels their very "migrant" writing and other modes of representation, partly dismantling, as it were, conventional discourse while advancing an alternative to the topical stylistic features of mainstream Canadian literature. An *erranza* whose exilic voice becomes the language of the migrant text itself; a text, en clair, as displaced as the voice that engenders it, a language not yet at home. A textual language, however, crafted *ad arte*, given the supreme degree of literariness that characterizes Italian Canadian writing today. Felicitous diverse colours, and profitable ones, I might add, for the Canadian literary tapestry as they weave, in an indirect and belatedly foundational manner, their exquisitely unique Italian Canadian literary weft threads through the warp fabric of Canadian literature.

In its internal structure, ideated to map a linear progression within seven broad thematic areas, the volume opens with an overarching article by Vito Teti that examines the uses and paradoxes of nostalgia and melancholy in the philosophical and folkloric literature of the West and