

Discoverism in the Work of Italian-Canadian Historians

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I

PREAMBLE

According to data obtained during the 1981 census the five most used languages in Canada, not counting the official, are in descending order: Italian, German, Hungarian, Chinese, and Portuguese. These five languages are the mother tongues of 13% of the Canadian population, and more than half of this population lives in five cities: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. Let us think for a moment about this data and try to understand in what way it expresses a profound change, a change that will become ever more apparent and irrefutable in the fabric of Canadian society during the decades to come. Our country is really becoming, if it is not already, a human mosaic to the point in which the so-called *third groups*, taken as a block, make up the

highest percentage of the entire Canadian population. The *ethnics*, in other words, represent a human segment more important than that of French descent and perhaps than that of English origin. This data, however, has not served as an incentive to change radically the definition of the Canadian identity. In fact, there are two groups, the French and the English, which cling to the claim of having been and of remaining the two *founding peoples*, and when by this term is meant that they arrived in this country before other *etnie* that today make up the Canadian population the matter becomes no longer a joke.

It becomes, instead, serious because of the implied connotations and the practices that follow insofar as the concept of *founding peoples* means *that these two groups are more Canadian than the others*. Not only that, but also that the past, present, and future collective ideal should conform to their model or recognize their privileged position historically and culturally. For nearly a decade we have been talking about multiculturalism for about forty per cent of the Canadian population at a federal level and in Quebec, the province in which I live, of *cultural communities*. The new Canadian constitution continues to enforce an official English/French dualism while mentioning multiculturalism, especially in Article 27. This seems to be a contradiction, and in effect is one. How can we reconcile official dualism, which privileges the heritage of two groups, with a *diversity* ever more widely inserted in the human and, therefore, cultural and, in the not too distant future, even political fabric?

So as things are presented at an official level and, above all, at a practical level, multiculturalism is a good means of keeping at bay a mass of naive Canadians who happily remember that their way of *belonging* to their new country does not correspond to official rules. The keepers of official political power

look favourably on the institutionalization of difference and present it as a manifestation of generosity and open mindedness, and forget to let those interested in it understand that an extreme defence of *difference* ends up, in both the short term and the long term, hurting Canadians of the *third solitude*, as I like to call them.

In fact, so long as we relegate into a common ambiguous pot called multiculturalism those who do not have a French or an English surname and who are not of the white race, and so long as we spend millions to subsidize projects, mostly of a folklorist nature, in order to encourage maintaining the *ethnic* identity of various minority groups, we are just defending to the death the status quo and end up postponing to the Greek Calends the debate on national identity. Multiculturalism, as it is practiced today, does nothing more than appease the vanity of so-called community leaders and is a form of arrogant paternalism and political manipulation. The politicians, in other words, make their «ethnic» voters happy with crumbs in the form of subsidies from the ministry of multiculturalism, feel that they have a clean conscience, and everything goes on as always.

Instead, the knot to untie is, to put it precisely, to arrive at a concept of identity which is a juncture of Canada's various human components. The time is ripe provided that, on our part, we intellectuals of the *third solitude*, and in particular those of us of Italian origin, insist that the notion of *founding peoples* must no longer mean a right to cling to the exercise of political power, of representing official Canada internally, and especially externally. How many Canadian diplomats are from the third solitude? They are as rare as white elephants. And the same argument applies to the civil service. I will limit myself to just one example that I know well. The municipal employees of the city of Montreal are ninety-seven per cent

Canadians of French origin, while forty per cent of the population of the same city is of some *other* ethnic origin. This is how the concept of *founding peoples* translates in concrete terms. And it is this that is now unacceptable, because so long as the *third solitude* is left out from the exercise of power even its historical contribution will remain marginal. It is therefore necessary to encourage minority groups to become major participants in order to make the concept of belonging more relevant and to render it more elastic. But I will talk about this in a more detailed manner later. For now I want to stress the fact that the contribution that the *others* are making to Canada is very significant and proportionally as important as that made by the two *founding peoples*; the *others* are contributing to the economic wealth and to the cultural identity of both English Canada and French Canada, and we Canadians of Italian origin are proving to be the means of establishing bridges among the various solitudes, thanks to our trilingualism and our ever increasing social mobility.

A historical relevance and an identity not already formed or defined in negative terms but as something to be proud of are, it seems to me, the two things with which to challenge public opinion; only in this way can every Canadian citizen, regardless of his ethnic origin, be truly equal in practice as well as in theory. So when Canadian writers of Italian origin are no longer seen as *ethnic* artists and are no longer looked down on by literary critics of daily newspapers in various cities, and above all when there is no longer a question of the polyhedricity of belonging, for the very reason that the Canadian national identity is a multiple and officially accepted as such, as is becoming the case in the United States and in Latin America, the ambivalence between *founding peoples* and real multiculturalism can be clarified. It is necessary, therefore, to give multiculturalism a positive

significance, and this can be done in two ways: by encouraging groups of the *third solitude* to become major participants in the present and the future and by recovering the past heritage of minority groups to demonstrate the point that since the beginning of the European presence plurality was a constant factor. The decompartmentalization of the right to belong is projected into the future and is sought for in the past. In the specific case of we Italian Canadians the return to the concept of discoverism is an effective weapon to gain a historical relevance and the right to belong as equals. And it is exactly this justification of the theory of discoverism that I want to hammer in this paper.

II

*Criticism of Discoverism:
Robert F. Harney and Luigi Bruti Liberati*

In a paper presented at the first international conference about the Italian experience in Canada, which took place in Rome, at the Canadian Academic Centre in Italy, in May 1984, the historian Robert F. Harney stressed the danger of mystification inherent in the concept of "discoverism." In fact, he denounced various attempts by Italian-Canadian politicians, writers, and intellectuals, especially Father Guglielmo Vangelisti, the journalist Antonino Spada, and more recently Father Camillo Menchini, of referring, in their writings, to figures like Giovanni Caboto, Giovanni da Verrazano, Francesco Giuseppe Bresnani, and other men with an Italian surname who played a role in establishing a European presence in New France.

Harney accused them of creating false historical bases in order to reclaim a legitimacy for belong-

ing that, in his opinion, goes back to the first wave of immigration that began towards the end of the last century. We cannot seek an Italian presence at the beginning of the European presence on the territory that later became the Canada of today. First of all, the historian pointed out, we cannot talk of an Italian national presence in the case of various exiles because until the second half of the 1700's the idea of belonging to an Italian nation did not exist; there existed instead a sense of belonging to the city from which one came, but navigators and officers of "Italian" origin were citizens of the world, cosmopolitan adventurers.

It is not therefore men like Enrico Tonto or Burlamacchi or Caboto or Verrazano or others like them, albeit illustrious historical figures, but rather immigrants of peasant origin or small tradesmen that made up the base for the formation of various Italian-Canadian communities. In other words, in the interest of historical truth, Harney cautioned against an emphasis on hagiography, the so-called *filiopietism*, and urged the conference members to accept reality for what it really was. The historian's thesis struck at the *vexata quaestio's* kernel: how to reshape the methodology of Canadian historical analysis and what role to assign to minority groups in the national debate. Harney has a good point: hagiography is not an objective measure for analysis. However, a question that comes spontaneously is this: how much of official Canadian history, especially that about origins, from roughly the arrival of Jacques Cartier to the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, is hagiography?¹ How much of F. K. Garneau's three volume *Histoire du Canada* can be rescued from hagiography? And has not even a historian chronologically much closer to us, such as Lionel Groulx, for the most part, used hagiography in his writings? The fact that one of the most respected his-

torians of French Canada, Mason Wade, begins his analysis from 1760 seems to me to be significant.²

And even when we do not depend on hagiography, even when history becomes *social* and we make connections among history, economics, sociology, and Marxism, do we still not fall into an ethnocentric vision?³ Even a young scholar like Paul-André Linteau when, at the end of the 1970's, giving an overview picture of the development and new directions of historiography in Canada begins by explaining that

Speaking of Canada, one finds it moreover necessary to distinguish between two nations, of various distinct history, language, and culture. It is a distinction especially evident in the field of historical studies, in which it is legitimate to talk about two historiographies, that of French Quebec and that of English Canada, each with its own sources of inspiration and with scarcely any reciprocal influence!⁴

and then in "matters of interest and in the uncertainties that mark an important renewal" does not consider at all the history of immigration, which for decades has radically transformed the French Canadian and English Canadian social make up.

Using R. F. Harney's *Frozen Wastes: The State of Italian-Canadian Studies*, as a starting point, Luigi Bruti Liberati in his essay, titled *Gli Italiani in Canada: studi e interpretazioni*, which forms the introduction to the volume *Dalla frontiera alle Little Italies: Gli italiani in Canada 1800-1945*, by Harney, draws up a balance of the interest shown by official historiography, both in English and in French, as regards the phenomenon of immigration and has to note that

Until recent times, Canadian historiography has dedicated an altogether marginal attention to the problem of immigration in general and that of Italians in particular. The emphasis placed on the creation of a national identity, of the evolution from British colony to independent state, on relations with the motherland on one hand and the United States on the other, on the francophone minority's struggle to survive and its difficult relations with the English majority, have had the effect of leaving misunderstood and undervalued for a long time the role of immigrants in Canadian history, especially those who did not come from either of the "founding nations," Great Britain and France.⁵

Bruti Liberati pointed out that an ethnic historiography, above all in the case of Italian Canadians whose community structure derived from an immigration of workers, has had a hard time to emerge and has had to wait for the creation of an intellectual élite before the historical interest of the Italian presence in Canada could be studied seriously. And this intellectual élite appeared in the 1970's, headed by Robert F. Harney, who is beginning to use Canadian public archives, for a long time left poorly sorted, and Italian "immigration bulletins." In 1976 Harney became president and academic director of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, a group which took the first decisive step for the serious study of Canadian ethnic minorities. And within ten years Harney's teachings had made converts: in fact, John Zucchi's and Franc Sturino's work has reconstructed how the Italian colony of Toronto came together, while Angelo Principe and Luigi Pautasso wrote about consular propaganda and the Fascist movement in English Canada. Antonio Pucci and John Potestio, instead, studied the Italian presence in

Northern Ontario. As for French Canada, Bruti Liberati pointed out Bruno Ramirez' activity on the formation of Montreal's *petite Italie*, helped by a bevy of young researchers like Michael Del Balso, and Roberto Perin's activity in documenting the fascist phenomenon in Montreal.

It should be noted that since writing this report, Bruti Liberati has published his book, titled *Il Canada, l'Italia e il Fascismo (1919-1945)*⁶, which studies, based on Italian and Canadian archival sources, the important phenomenon, of fascist ideological penetration into Italian-Canadian communities and, in a wider sense, into the hearts of the Canadian population.

Italian-Canadian studies, according to Bruti Liberati, "even if they have not reached maturity, seem however to be well on their way and rest on solid foundations." At the conclusion of his critical barrage, the historian found hope in the fact that the historiographic research is moving in the right direction, above all because today the interest in the debate is widespread, even among scholars not "born" of the immigrant experience. We have as proofs the ever more frequent scientific conferences dedicated to the history of ethnic groups and of Italians in particular and the fact that the two best most recent books concerning the history of Canada in this century – *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* by R. C. Brown and R. Cook, Toronto, 1974; and *Twentieth Century Canada* by J. L. Granatstein, Toronto, 1983 – place the question of immigration at the center of their argument, finally rendering a deserved recognition to the contribution made by immigrants to building the Canadian nation.⁷

The critical address put forth by Bruti Liberati follows in the wake of Robert Harney, who is, to a certain extent, his teacher. It therefore does not surprise one at all to find that, in the case of Harney and his

disciples, the field of research chosen (the coming together of Little Italies) and the methodology used (official negligence of the Royal Italian Government, the exploitation of seasonal labour by bosses, human chains that recreate the village environment, the naive adhesion to fascist rhetoric, etc.) owe much to the approach by American researchers from the new left in the United States and to the debate on the Risorgimento as a thwarted revolution and of fascism as a historical phenomenon not entirely concluded and as something to be analyzed, beginning with the elimination of prejudice, as does Bruti Liberati. It is not surprising at all that the editor of the series *I fatti della storia*, from the publisher Bonacci, Rome, is Renzo De Felice, one of the best-prepared historians of fascism and that Harney's and Bruti Liberati's works be published precisely in the series edited by De Felice.

The methodology of Italian-Canadian historical researcher or of an Italian scholar, like Bruti Liberati, presumes a prejudice against history made by individual, strong personalities and favours instead the other story, the story of the little people, because the humble workers were "the bearers of a quiet intellectual imperialism to other people's frontiers."⁸

Therefore, the fact is not astonishing that Bruti Liberati, when analyzing the two works that appeared before the 1970's about the history of Italians in Canada, begins by noting that "both are works by Italian Canadians and by non-professional historians," and mentions *Gli italiani in Canada* by Father Guglielmo Vangelisti, published in Montreal in 1956, and *The Italians in Canada* by Antonino Spada, which appeared in Ottawa in 1969. Vangelisti's book, by providing a synthesis of the vicissitudes of Italians in Canada from its discovery

to the year 1900, had the merit of uncovering the roots of the Italian presence.

Some extremely valid pages are those in which the author, using civil and religious archives, studies the presence of Italian troops in French and British regiments in Quebec and their subsequent remaining in the country as settlers after their discharge and reconstructs the genealogy of Montreal's most important Italian families.⁹

But "from a methodological standpoint Vangelisti's analysis is, however, heavily threaded with an excessive hagiographic emphasis ('filiopietism')" on the one hand while, on the other, points out Bruti Liberati, "the parochial perspective – that of Our Lady of the Defence – proves too restrictive." Another big flaw is that of having almost completely ignored "the problems stemming from the *padrone* system* and from the Italian immigrant presence in Montreal" and especially from "fascist penetration of the Italian community," which are treated with reticence and in a cursory fashion because, notes Bruti Liberati, Vangelisti himself had been not only a witness but also a protagonist of the events of the 1930's with which he deals. Vangelisti's book, in the final analysis, "is doubly valuable as a historical reconstruction and as a witness of an 'era'" and in retrospect can be seen as encouraging the birth and development of Italian-Canadian historical studies.

The Italians in Canada, by Antonio Spada, is seen as a "missed opportunity," and, instead of supporting and finishing, after thirteen years

* *Padrone* or boss system refers to the practice of underpaying them.

narration, Spada, completely silent on his own antifascist past and the significant role he played on behalf of the Canadian government in identifying the most dangerous fascists to be interned, ends up writing "a cumbersome and inorganic work that follows neither a chronological order nor an adequate thematic organization" and suffers from rhetoric, especially when it is dealing with the first centuries of Italian-Canadian history in that "it repeats almost literally Vangelisti's book, thus becoming the English vehicle for the errors and the hagiographic excesses of the latter."¹⁰

Bruti Liberati ascribes the limitations of Spada's book more "to the climate existing in the Italian community during the first period after the war" than to the author himself. ... The fact remains that the first book about Italians in Canada to appear in English "could have done its task better." The common error in Vangelisti's and Spada's treatises is that of tackling only marginally the problems stemming from the first mass immigration from the end of the 1800's to the First World War. This is instead the new Italian-Canadian historiography's privileged field of inquiry. Thus we come upon a fundamental question of the debate: what should be the methodologies to be applied and what the fields of inquiry in dealing with the Italian presence in Canada?

Is it necessary to avoid bothering with the origins of New France and with the period prior to Canadian Confederation in 1867 only because the Italian presence was not numerically relevant? And if we do not, do we necessarily have to fall into hagiography? And even if we do fall into hagiography to some extent, is not the need to search in the past to justify our belonging in the present a legitimate reason? For certain, if the historical debate translates itself into practice in the present and helps to create the parameters of future behaviour for Italian

Canadians. In a country that is searching for a definable identity, the worth of points of equal reference, chronologically justifiable, does not make for a stretching of that truth but is an expression of a wish to love one's new country. Does he who spends his time investigating the role played by the Jesuit Father Francesco Giuseppe Bressani and, in general, by the Catholic Church in New France suffer from an inferiority complex, as Robert F. Harney seems to believe? It is significant, in this respect, that in his review of studies about Italians in Canada, and their interpretation, Luigi Bruti Liberati does not even mention the work of Father Camillo Menchini, who is the author of four books: a biography, *Giovanni Caboto, scopritore del Canada* (1974), *Giovanni da Verrazano e la Nuova Francia* (1977), *Francesco Giuseppe Bressani, primo missionario italiano in Canada* (1980), and *Montreal e il suo certificato di nascita 1535-1985* (1985). Yet Bruti Liberati must have known about the existence of at least the first three of Menchini's works. Why did he not comment on them? Because to spend one's time on discoverism may perhaps mean to fall into "aggressive and ethnocentric assertions, to narrations that in fact approach racism?"

To what extent is Robert F. Harney's apodictic conclusion on the question of discoverism acceptable?

Continuously invoking the greatness, past and present, of Italy and her culture, showing the special qualities of the first élites of immigrants, North America's Italian intellectuals run the risk of allowing the use of ethno-psychiatry in history – that false perception caused by the coming together of hagiography and inferiority – of usurping the place of a serious study of Italian immigration, substituting the celebration of an ancient era of heroes and artists in

North America. Such celebrations lead to a surrogate history that does not consider at all the real story and the humble and humane dignity of Italians who arrived with the mass immigration after 1885. This negation of history, this incorrect channelling of research energies, of ethnic pride, and, increasingly more often, even of finances, makes it so that the heroism and the human resourcefulness of the eight million Italian immigrants who contributed to civilizing the Americas are not being appreciated in their true light.¹¹

Is it really a matter of ethnic *disesteem*, of an inferiority complex, when we use our time to investigate traces of the Italian presence in Canada prior to the first wave of immigration? The various Carignanos, Tontis, Marinis, De Grassis, Doneganis, Bruchesis, Del Vecchios, etc. are not just hagiographic inventions: they represent a human presence, which is being studied and included within the sphere of New France's development. Why, for example, should we hide the fact, stressed by Camillo Menchini in *Montreal e il suo certificato di nascita*, according to which

C'est pour remercier le cardinal Hyppolite de Médicis de son intervention auprès du pape, et à la demande de Jean Le Veneur, que le roi François Premier précrivit à Jacques Cartier de donner le nom de Montréal dont le cardinal De Médicis était archevêque, à un lieu sur les terres qu'il découvrirait, dans la Neuve France, Jacques Cartier donna ce nom à l'île d'Hochelaga en Canada.¹²

If we accept Harney's logic and follow it to the end, we would not need this conference, one of the themes

of which is precisely that concerning Italian forerunners, especially those who satisfy our need for respectability. To spend our time on illustrious figures of the past does not mean giving, by comparison, a negative historical position to Italian mass immigration to North America after 1885. One field of research does not exclude the other: both are part of the Italian-Canadian identity. It means paying back by the same token a hagiography become official, which sees, for example, in Jacques Cartier *le découvreur du Canada*.¹³ Why should it be acceptable for Canadians of French descent in Quebec and of British descent in other provinces to establish an uninterrupted historical lineage in order to justify their right to be and to consider themselves the two *founding peoples* and to claim special rights in the Canada of today? Why should it not be possible for other ethnic groups, and for the Italian in particular, which make up the human mosaic of the Canada of today? Analyzing dialectically Harney's thesis, discoverism on the one hand and the French Canadian nationalistic approach to history, we can conclude that by far the biggest majority of Canadians of Italian origin is made up of descendants of poor immigrants, but the return to illustrious antecedents is a weapon to legitimize their right to belong to the country. Discoverism, in my opinion, plays an important role in redefining the Canadian national identity: it is a legitimate means of defence for one of the most important groups of the third solitude to make history relevant and make it so that every segment of the Canadian population has the right to belong.

III

An invitation from D'Iberville Fortier, the former Canadian ambassador to Italy, and the results, and Luca Codignola's new avenue of inquiry into New France.

It is important to stress that, parallel to the formation of a crew of Italian-Canadian researchers into the history of emigration, or better immigration, which sees in the imperialism of poverty another version of Italy's ancient civilizing mission combined with the need to earn one's bread – researchers who are providing in this fashion the necessary conspicuousness to the epic of almost a million people on Canadian soil – there has taken place, in Italy, the birth of an ever-increasing interest in Canadian history. It is the grandiose events of New France, “that enormous French Empire in America whose culture, whose institutions, and whose peculiarity are of immense importance for the history, as a whole, of the Americas”¹⁴, which is the focal point of the scientific investigation of the Italian historians. And since the end of the 1970's the French bearing, which sinks its roots into events that took place during more than four centuries, is being studied with the same scientific precision as the Portuguese-American or the Hispanic-American cultures, and in this way an excessively “Anglo” approach, which tended to ignore and to undervalue the existence of a French Canada, is being corrected.

In so doing we are following the advice given by the former Canadian ambassador to Italy, D'Iberville Fortier, who, again at the end of the 1970's, indicated three avenues in the field of history for scholars to follow for a useful and mutual understanding of the history of Canada and Italy.¹⁵

The first was that of an inquiry into the “spirit

of adventure and of discovery" of *political explorers*, to which the great Italian Renaissance navigators – among them Caboto and Giovanni da Verrazano – belong. The second avenue was, instead, that of the *giants of the Faith*, who were ready to put their life at stake "to announce the Gospel, first to the colonists and then to the indigenes." Among them Father Francesco Giuseppe Bressani holds a conspicuous place, according to D'Iberville Fortier. It was moreover necessary to include the conduct of the Jesuits who received jurisdiction from Pope Urban VIII, thanks to the "prerogative of the Indies," with absolute power in Catholic matters from the XVII Century wherever Portugal, Spain, and France faced one another. The historians must still clarify the conflicts in matters of jurisdiction between the Sacred Congregation for *de Propaganda Fide* (founded in 1622) and the superiors of missionary orders (particularly the Jesuits), and between France and the Holy See. "We are dealing," the Canadian ambassador explained, "with a heroic period, the history of which has only recently begun to be written about." The third and last avenue that he pointed out to the researchers was "the three centuries of Italian-Canadian relations." He explained:

In what way did Canada react to the Risorgimento? For what reason and in what way did the immigration of so many Italians to Canada take place? How were the new arrivals greeted and what was their fate? What contribution have they already made to the culture of their new country? It is a story that deserves to be written, and the sooner we do it the better.

The proposals of former ambassador D'Iberville Fortier seem to me very stimulating and worthy of being pursued because if, on one hand, they give due con-

spicuousness to the importance of the immigration phenomenon – Harney’s and his disciples’ privileged field – on the other hand, offer much broader possibilities for research. In contrast to the United States where the Protestant element has played a fundamental role, in Canada it is the Catholics who established the bases for the European presence. It follows that the contacts between New France and the Vatican were important and continuous. Proof of this are the first results obtained by Luca Codignola who, for example, in one of his publications *L’America del Nord nei documenti dell’archivio della sacra congregazione “De Propaganda Fide,” 1622-1799. Una introduzione*¹⁶ makes known that the success of Catholicism and its influence in New France, whose territory includes Acadia, Canada, Louisiana, and the entire West, “was so great that we could not write the history of New France without taking into account the Catholic Church.” Moreover, emphasized Codignola, who is the expert in such matters,

the documents concerning New France saved in the archives of Propaganda are sources of primary importance not only for the history of the Catholic Church but also for the story of the French presence in North America.¹⁷

And, again from Codignola’s mouth, we learn that “in spite of their importance the documents saved in the Propaganda archives have been, up until now, scarcely used for the story of North America.” The matter is serious first of all because there are other religious archives in Rome that may contain very important documents to rewrite objectively the history of New France without any hagiography whatsoever and moreover because in this specific case documents saved in the Propaganda archives are written in Italian and in Latin; sometimes of documents written

originally in French or English only the Italian translation can be found."¹⁸

We have therefore an unexplored mine that may force the entire Canadian and North American historiography to renew the debate on many conclusions by now become canon. But personally I am interested in this phenomenon because this virgin field of inquiry permits us to widen the terms of reference dealing with the Italian presence or the relations between Italy and Canada. In other words there are means in the course of centuries of history and of bilateral relations between Italy and Canada that are being sifted without any hagiographic considerations and without necessarily being a victim of an inferiority complex or ethnic disesteem, if used. Moreover, it seems to me important to distinguish between Canadian and United States history; otherwise, if we do not, we risk applying to a Catholic country, at least until the English conquest, the prejudices and prejudicials, which had their *raison d'être* in the country of Quakers but which have little or no justification for being applied to the reality of Canadian history. There is, in other words, a correspondence between the American situation and the Canadian, beginning with the first wave of mass immigration – though even in this case we should distinguish between English Canada and French Canada – and the methodology used by Harney and the Toronto school if justified; instead when we want to study the Italian presence or influence in Canada up to Confederation, we must change the viewpoint. It is history as a whole, at low, medium and high levels, that we should be studying. It seems to me that this is the direction in which Italian-Canadian historiography should go; otherwise, we end up ignoring the evidence and the existence of sources and contacts between Italy and Canada before the epic and pacific wave of mass immigration.

Discoverism, in the final analysis, is not after all the hydra, the scarecrow, the expression of an inferiority complex, as the school of Italian-Canadian historians seems to have an apodictic tendency of saying. It is, on the contrary, an efficient weapon in regards to the historical pretensions of two groups on territory that has become the Canada of today. And it is the indication that other fields of research exist that, without ignoring the history of immigration, have their own scientific value, and the relations between Italy and Canada from the beginning of the 1500's up to the end of the last century deserve attention, without any hagiographic connotations whatsoever, equal to that of the epic of a million Italian Canadians, who live and participate in the life of their country of adoption.

Translated from the Italian by C. Dino Minni.

NOTES

1. Cfr. Robert F. Harney, "L'immigrazione italiana e la frontiera della civiltà occidentale" in *Dalla frontiera alle Little Italies: Gli Italiani in Canada 1800-1945*. Roma: Bonacci Editore. 1984. pp. 39-72.

2. For an overview of French Canadian historiography, see Serge Gagnon. "Historiographie canadienne ou les fondements de la conscience nationale," in André Beaulieu, Jean Hamelin, Benoît Bernier, *Guide d'histoire du Canada*, Québec, 1969, pp. 1-61. Lionel Groulx's inclination toward hagiography is very evident in his works such as *Notre maître le passé*, 2nd saria (Montréal: Granger, 1945) or in *Dollard est-il un mythe?*, (Montréal et Paris: Fides, 1960) or in *Le Canada Français missionnaire*, (Montréal et Paris: Fides, 1964).

3. Cfr. Mason Wade, *The French Canadians, 1760-1945*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1955. Mason also wrote on Lionel Groulx (pp. 57-58):

Abbé Groulx, whose highly charged eloquence as both writer and speaker made him an increasingly influential figure, continued his rewriting of Canadian history in terms of a perpetual struggle between the races. In his view the French were always noble martyrs – unless they were *déraciné* traitors to the "race" – and the English harsh tyrants, who seemingly devoted themselves to making a mockery of the expression "British fair play." He provides an heroic legend in which a proud people could believe. Abbé Groulx became and remained the idol of the ultranationalists... Among the bases of his integral nationalism are the cult of the homeland and of the French language, folk-hero worship, Catholicism as a national unifying

force, Caesarism or monarchism and corporatism. As developed by Maurras, this nationalism is a breeder of alien influences: Protestant, Jewish, liberal, republican, communist...

4. Cfr. Paul André Linteau "Evoluzione ed orientamenti della storia sociale nel Quebec e in Canada" in *Canadiana*, Venezia: Marsilio, 1979, especially pp. 109-111, ed. L. Codignola.

5. Cfr. Luigi Bruti Liberati, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-37, especially pp. 11-20.

6. Luigi Bruti Liberati, *Il Canada, l'Italia ed il Fascismo*, Roma: Bonacci Editore, 1985.

7. Bruti Liberati, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Cfr. also R.C. Brown, R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921. A Nation Transformed*, Toronto: 1974, J.L. Granatstein et. al. *Twentieth Century Canada*, Toronto: 1983. In his last book *Histoire du Québec depuis 1930*, P.A. Linteau does not ascribe a great importance to the immigration phenomenon.

8. Cfr. Robert F. Harney, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

9. Cfr. Luigi Bruti Liberati, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

12. Cfr. Robert F. Harney, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

13. P. Camillo Menchini, *Montréal et son certificat de naissance, 1535-1985, Hommage à notre ville à l'occasion de son 450ième anniversaire de naissance*. Montréal: 1985, p. 45.

14. Cfr. *Montréal et l'art du monument*, Montreal: 1985 p. 33. Recherche et rédaction S. Leclerc – C. Ekemberg. This must be considered as an official statement, since this book, signed by the Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau and by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Quebec, has been published by the city of Montreal and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Quebec.

15. Cfr. Raimondo Luraghi's introduction in

Canadiana, aspetti della storia e della letteratura canadese, Venezia: Marsilio, 1978, p. 23-25.

16. *Ibid.*, "I rapporti tra l'Italia e il Canada." p. 14-17.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

18. *Canadiana*, 1979. *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.