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Review Essay

Italo Calvino: The Last Modernist

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***Italo Calvino: Letters, 1941–1985.* Edited with an introduction by Michael Wood. Translated by Martin McLaughlin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 619. \$39.50 (cloth).**

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Sitting in the garden at his summer home on the Tuscan Maremma, Italo Calvino was stricken by a stroke on 6 September 1985. Nearly two weeks later, now at the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage that took his life. He was sixty-one years old. Speculation about his winning a Nobel prize had been rife for some time. Today, nearly three decades later, the question of his stature and status in postwar letters has become urgent once again, prompted in part by the recent publication of his letters, in English, in an edition selected and introduced by Michael Wood and translated by Martin McLaughlin.

Calvino was born in 1923 in Santiago de las Vegas, a small town located outside Havana, Cuba. Both his parents were botanists, and his father was then conducting experiments with tropical fruits. In 1925, Orazio Raimondi, his father's closest friend and a Socialist member of Parliament, died and left his estate to create an experimental institute in floriculture that the two men had long planned together. Mario, Calvino's father, returned to San Remo (in northwest Italy) and became its director. Calvino grew up in the luxuriant gardens that surrounded the Villa Meridiana, spending his summers in nearby San Giovanni, a small town where his father's family also had property.

San Remo was a small town inhabited by residents and well-to-do tourists. (Alfred Nobel built a villa there in 1891 and died there in 1896.) Calvino lived quietly until 1941, when he enrolled in the faculty of agriculture at the University of Turin. After two years, he transferred to the Royal University of Florence. But his life was now overtaken by outside events. On 25 July 1943, Mussolini was deposed by the Grand Council of Fascism and arrested on the orders of the king. Less than two months later, however, after being rescued by German troops, he declared the establishment of the Republic of Salò, nominally a new

578 Fascist state that controlled all Italian territory from Rome northward, in reality a German puppet. Calvino, to avoid military service, went into hiding, and in 1944 he joined partisan resistance forces under the Italian Communist Party. As he explained shortly after the war's end, "I've been a partisan all this time, I've been through an unspeakable series of dangers and discomforts; I've experienced prison and escape, been several times on the point of dying. But I'm happy with everything I've done, with the wealth of experiences that I have amassed, in fact I'd have liked to have done more" (30).

He returned to the University of Turin, now enrolled in the faculty of arts and letters where he received his degree in 1947 after finishing a thesis on Joseph Conrad. By then he had also completed his first novel, *The Path to the Spiders' Nests* (1947), a largely realistic account of his wartime experiences, and was already working at the publishing firm of Einaudi, a left-wing publisher that became a magnet for talented younger writers.¹ His co-workers and friends included Cesare Pavese (1908–1950), Elio Vittorini (1908–1966), and Natalia Ginzburg (1916–1991), three writers who would profoundly shape postwar Italian literature. Though he left Einaudi briefly in 1948–1949 to edit the cultural page for the Turin edition of *Unità* (the Communist Party's newspaper), he returned and stayed on in a variety of editorial roles, lasting until 1980. "The greater part of my life," he later recalled, "has been dedicated to books by others, rather than my own. And I am content with that, because publishing is important in Italy in our time, and having worked in an editorial environment, one that's been a model for the rest of Italian publishing, is not a trivial achievement."²

By 1954 he had abandoned three other realistic novels, which he could not finish to his satisfaction. Instead, in 1951 he dashed off *The Cloven Viscount*, published the next year and greeted with surprising success.³ It was a delightful *divertissement*, a bravura treatment following in the tracks of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, an allegorical fable of alienation with many moralizing winks at trends in contemporary Italian culture. It was "written to give my imagination a holiday after punishing it in the other novel" (82).

Calvino, with a nudge from Einaudi, now set himself an imposing task: to compile a collection of Italian folktales that would become an Italian counterpart to the German tales first collected by the brothers Grimm in 1812. The challenges were real. There were collections of folktales in numerous Italian dialects (Tuscan, Venetian, Neapolitan, Ligurian, etc.), but nothing that was actually written in Italian. He explained his working method to a colleague:

In my work I proceed as follows: for every tale I read I make a swift note; then I classify it according to numbered types which I've established on my own . . . ; when, in the near future I start writing them up, for every type or sub-category I will take the best variant, perhaps blending it with others. (101)

The result, which appeared in November 1956, was an extraordinary achievement: three volumes with two hundred tales, a species of mythical encyclopedia for modern Italy. Critical acclaim was unanimous.

One year later he published *The Baron in the Trees*, the story of Cosimo Piovasco, baron of Rondò, a boy who, in a tantrum, climbs up a tree and then decides that he will never return to the ground.⁴ Climbing from tree to tree, he hunts, wages war, pursues his studies, even engages in courtship. Set in the late eighteenth century, the story culminates with the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the subsequent restorations. Bandits and pirates, Jesuits and Freemasons, Cossacks, even Napoleon himself—all make appearances in this beguiling romp.

In 1959 Calvino finished a third allegorical fable, *The Non-existent Knight*.⁵ This was dominated by the adventures of Agilulfo and his squire Gurdulú, as well as Bradamante, a name that overtly nodded to the book's affiliations with Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Once again the book boasted episodic adventures: battles, duels, shipwrecks galore, but with a tone of detachment at once sad and ironic. Calvino himself was uncertain how to characterize the genre in which he was working: "fantasy-moral novels or lyrical-philosophical novels or however you want to call them" (101).

During this entire period, though deeply engaged in his literary work, Calvino was undergoing a political transformation. After working for *Unità* in 1948–1949, he had taken a journey to the Soviet Union in late 1951, while in 1956 the Secretariat of the Communist Party had named Calvino a member of its National Cultural Commission. But in June that year, a series of strikes broke out in Poznań, Poland. When a protest march on 28 June was fired on, crowds attacked the Communist Party and secret police headquarters, where they were repulsed by gunfire. Riots continued for two days until quelled by the army, leaving sixty-seven dead.

These events were followed by the Hungarian Revolution, lasting from 23 October to 10 November. It resulted in the death of 2,300 Hungarians and seven hundred Soviet troops. Calvino was incensed by the way these events were treated in *L'Unità*. Already on 26 October he introduced an order of the day to his Communist Party cell at Einaudi, denouncing the “unacceptable falsification of reality” in its coverage of both events.⁶ When Antonio Giolitti, a prominent but dissident communist, resigned in early July 1957, Calvino followed suit. His resignation brought no sudden change in his attitude towards friends, or even politics. He never moved to the right, remaining an independent leftist.

In late 1959, with financial support from the Ford Foundation, Calvino visited the United States for six months. He spent two months in New York, his time consumed by business for Einaudi, then travelled for three months, reaching San Francisco and Los Angeles. He returned for a last month in New York. He was nonplussed by the sheer size of Los Angeles, “a city that is as big as one that stretched from Milan to Turin, so huge that one can do absolutely nothing because to go from one place to another means a car journey of an hour or an hour and a half.” “Fortunately,” he added, “America is not all an artificial-natural paradise like California here” (197).

In April 1962, while in Paris, Calvino met Esther Judith Singer, known as Chichita, an Argentinian who worked as a translator for UNESCO and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and while in Havana, Cuba, in February 1964, he married her. He now became the stepfather of her sixteen-year-old son from a previous marriage, Marcelo Weil, and in April 1965, the father of a girl, Giovanna. “To experience paternity for the first time after the age of forty gives a sense of plenitude, and furthermore it’s unexpected fun.”⁷ Two years later he and his family would move to Paris, where he would spend the next thirteen years.

He published comparatively little during these years: in 1963, *Marcovaldo, or, The Seasons in the City*, a children’s book composed of twenty stories, each with the same form.⁸ Marcovaldo is a worker in the modern city: each time he seeks some form of contact with nature, he suffers a checkmate. The stories are each assigned to one of the four seasons. In 1965 he published the *Cosmicomics*, a collection of short stories.⁹ But his interests were plainly changing, a transformation signaled by his growing interest in the work of the French writer Raymond Queneau (1903–1976), who in 1960 had founded the experimental literary group Oulipo (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle, Workshop of Potential Literature). In 1967 Calvino published an essay titled “Notes on Narrative as a Combinatory Process,” another sign of his changing interests.¹⁰ The next year he participated, together with Roland Barthes, in several seminars on Balzac.

In 1972 Calvino published *Invisible Cities*, a collection of the descriptions that Marco Polo gives to Kublai Khan, encompassing all the cities that he has seen on his many travels.¹¹ At first the atmosphere is that of the fabulous Orient, taken from the *Thousand and One Nights*. But it gradually changes to take in the modern megalopolis that covers the entire planet. The accounts assume the timeless qualities of a catalog of emblems, yet also retrace a dialog taking place between places and their inhabitants. A year later he published *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*, short stories based on the Tarot cards.¹²

In his later years, Calvino turned towards increasingly abstract schemas to organize his literary work. *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* appeared in 1979, a work arranged in an A-B-A-B pattern that oscillates between the story of the reader, who is reading *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller*, and other texts that he reads that are substitutes or counterfeit versions of it, tantalizingly incomplete narratives that toy with generic and other expectations.¹³ *Palomar* followed in 1983.¹⁴ Its organization was more complex. It had three main sections titled “Mr. Palomar’s Vacation,” “Mr. Palomar in the City,” and “The Silences of Mr. Palomar.” Each main section had three subsections, and each subsection three parts. “The numbers 1, 2, 3 that mark the titles

580 of the index,” Calvino explained, “whether they are in the first, second, or third position . . . correspond also to three thematic areas, three kinds of experience and inquiry that, in varying proportions, are present in every part of the book.”¹⁵ Those marked “1” generally corresponded to visual experience; those marked “2,” to anthropological or cultural materials in the broad sense; and those marked “3” to more speculative experience, whether about time, the cosmos, or infinity. At this point, a reader may sense just how radically Calvino had changed. Had the exuberant fabulist of his early books turned into a proponent of arid abstractions? Or was the same exuberance still there, but transmuted into a more precise, more skeptical registration of everyday experience?

Since his death, Calvino’s stature within postwar Italian literature has been reinforced by a series of critical editions. His novels and stories have been issued in an edition of three volumes (1991, 1992, and 1994), his essays in two more (1995).¹⁶ In addition, the many editorial reports that he wrote for Einaudi have been collected in one volume, published in 1991.¹⁷ Further, an edition of his letters appeared in 2000, the basis for the present edition.¹⁸ But have these volumes been bought by members of the general public, or chiefly by scholars who work on Calvino? Their cumulative price amounts to €466 (or \$616, or £400)—not a sum to be sniffed at.

Another cache of Calvino letters also came to light in 2004, when the *Corriere della sera* newspaper published excerpts from a trove of 407 letters addressed to Elsa De’ Giorgi, a minor actress with whom he had an affair (she was married) between 1955 and 1958. The letters were, for Calvino, decidedly odd in tone: “I want to write of our love, I want to love you writing, I want to have you while writing, nothing else.”¹⁹ Chichita Calvino, then seventy-six years old, gave an interview about the letters, one laced with acidic wit: the letters were composed of “words almost painfully commensurate with their recipient.”²⁰ But a more refined version of that comment was offered by Eugenio Scalfari, a friend of Calvino from his youth to his death, who suggested that the overheated prose, redolent of D’Annunzio, was a stratagem to please Elsa’s taste for “adoringly erotic letters.”²¹ The *Corriere*, more absurdly, went so far as to suggest that De’ Giorgi might have been Calvino’s muse. But Chichita got in a final word on that subject: “The fact is that Calvino would have been Calvino even without De’ Giorgi. And even without Chichita.”²²

Calvino’s letters to De’ Giorgi will probably be published only sometime after 2019, when the entire collection will be unsealed. Will they make much difference to our assessment of the writer? Calvino himself insisted on the distinction between the biographical subject and the writer. Already in 1967 he wrote: “In my view the starting point should be to regard the author as dead; to draw up a list of the extant writings and work on them; for the critic, the author does not exist, only a certain number of writings exist” (334). This was almost a year before Roland Barthes, in his most famous essay, would announce “The Death of the Author.” Yet Calvino remained remarkably consistent on this point. When asked about the possibility that somebody might write a “life and works” volume about him, he confessed his perplexity: “Life and works? I’m afraid I don’t really have a *life* on which something can be written. All I have is a series of works that form part of the general context of literary works in our time” (357). Michael Wood, who has selected and introduced the letters for this volume, could easily have mentioned the letters to De’ Giorgi and just as easily justified their exclusion on the basis of Calvino’s many comments. But not to mention them at all, for some, will entail a lack of transparency more grating than their exclusion.

Yet a great deal of complexity is concealed by that simple prepositional phrase, “for some.” Certainly the number of people who took note of the news about Calvino’s letters to De’ Giorgi must have been exiguous. Yes, their publication and the ensuing debate were reported by the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*; but would anyone have kept these reports in the forefront of their concerns throughout the last ten years?²³ Yet the question of the audience envisioned for the current volume remains unanswered. Michael Wood’s introduction presupposes readers completely *au fait* with all of Calvino’s works; he never deigns to furnish a chronological or synthetic overview of Calvino’s career. Likewise, the introduction presupposes a single, unitary Calvino whose outlook is more or less constant and consistent. Yet surely there is some change discernible in the long arc of his career: from the exuberant fables of the 1950s to the dry, almost somber lucidity of *Palomar* (1983)? Or alternatively, if there is no change, and instead only the deepening of a single, unitary vision, how best might we define that? And surely so much

has changed in the political landscapes that Calvino traversed, national or international, that a few words might prove helpful to those readers who have no recollection of the Cold War, a force that profoundly shaped Calvino's outlook? Or to those readers whose notion of Italian politics has been shaped entirely by the *bunga-bunga* antics of Silvio Berlusconi during the last twenty years? And what about the cultural landscape? Calvino thrived during decades when Italian culture was flourishing, as a brief list of filmmakers can remind us (Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio De Sica, Federico Fellini, Lucchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Pier Paolo Pasolini). In the fuller, Italian version of Calvino's letters, he comments on every one of them. While much has changed in the three decades that have elapsed since Calvino passed away, you would scarcely discern that from the introduction to this volume. It presupposes a reader over fifty years old, one with no need to be reminded of Calvino's works, their development, or their being situated in a world that no longer exists. However inadvertently, it does a genuine disservice to Calvino and his works, making them seem to be part of a hermetic code known only to dons, rather than part of a continuing public debate. The letters themselves, thankfully, are so much richer, vibrant, probing.

The relationship between this English version of Calvino's letters and its Italian counterpart is a subject that requires brief discussion. Michael Wood estimates that his selection contains "a little less than one third of those that appear in Luca Baranelli's magnificent *Lettere*" (x). Further, while not scanting "the Italian dimension," it takes "care to retain letters that have an international dimension." In practice, this entails several strategies. First, it means eliminating Calvino's many letters to his family, especially from his earlier years. Of the first twenty-one letters that are contained in the Italian edition, only two are admitted to the English version. In effect, the English edition gives a portrait of Calvino that is stiffer, and a bit duller: he no longer has a childhood, or feels its after-effects in young adulthood. Second, in practice the question of retaining "letters that have an international dimension" proves thorny. Consider five letters from Calvino to Michelangelo Antonioni that appear in the Italian edition; all are reproduced in the English edition. But then consider five letters from Calvino to Hans Magnus Enzensberger that appear in the Italian edition; only one is given in the English version. Is Antonioni somehow more "international" than Enzensberger? The logic of such editorial decisions isn't always clear.

The translations of the letters that have been made by Martin McLaughlin are exemplary in their masterful command of diction, syntax, and prose rhythm. Calvino himself once noted the qualities required of contemporaries who were translating into Italian; yes, he conceded, there were now more translators than in the past:

However, what is dwindling day by day is the number of those people who when they write Italian move with those essential gifts of agility and sure-footedness in the choice of words, economy of syntax, and sense of the various linguistic registers, in short with an understanding of style (in its double aspect of understanding the peculiarities of the writer to be translated, and of knowing how to come up with Italian equivalents in a prose that reads *as though it had been thought up and written directly in Italian*): the very gifts in which the unique genius of the translator resides. (247)

Substitute "English" for "Italian" in those phrases and one would have a good definition of the challenges that McLaughlin has successfully addressed. This is not the first time that McLaughlin has taken up work by Calvino: he has previously published translations of *Why Read the Classics?* (1999), *A Hermit in Paris* (2003), and *Into the War* (2011), not to mention his contributions to the *Complete Cosmicomics* (2009). Anglophone readers of Calvino, or those who don't know Italian, can only be grateful to him.

McLaughlin states that he has translated most of his notes from those found in the Italian edition of the letters, "but on other occasions they are supplied by the translator in order to assist the non-Italian reader with certain names and events that need no explanation to an Italian reader but do require one for the Anglophone reader" (xvii). In practice, the policy is not really followed. When Calvino, in 1976, offers to do some pen-portraits of contemporary Italian

582 politicians, he proposes proceeding “from Moro and Andreotti to Berlinguer, Pajetta, Amendola, Ingrao” (468). A brief note to another letter explains who Giorgio Amendola is (551, n. 17), but no annotations are given for the other five. Perhaps a handful of older Anglophone readers will recall Moro, Andreotti, and Berlinguer; but very few will know the identities of Pajetta or Ingrao. Odder still, their names are given in full in the book’s carefully prepared index, enabling a reader to look them up. But wouldn’t it have been easier simply to provide a brief annotation? The same is true of the writers and cartoonists “Salgari, and Yambo, and Mussino, and Rubino” (421); nobody, even in Italy, will recognize these names. Then there is the curious case of Claudio Villa and the San Remo Festival (227). All too many English readers will know the successor to the San Remo Festival, the Eurovision Song Contest (ugh!), but the San Remo Festival vanished in 1954. Claudio Villa was an Italian singer, popular in the 1950s and 1960s; but you would have to be over eighty years old to recall him. At times, too, there are oddities in the sequencing of information. In 1968, Calvino confesses his interest in “reading Heissenbüttel” (349), but no annotation elucidates this reference. A year later, Calvino tells a correspondent that he is “pleased you quote Heissenbüttel, who is the author who interests me most in all the current theoretical writing on literature” (380). An annotation promptly gives us the works that Calvino probably has in mind. This case is exceptional, but the number of names not annotated is formidable.

The book’s greatest pleasures are literary and cultural. Calvino is keenly aware of the ethical and stylistic merits of Giorgio Bassani’s novel, *The Gold-Rimmed Glasses* (1958), with its elegiac pathos. He continues to cherish Cesare Pavese’s contribution to Italian literature many years after his premature death in 1950. More surprisingly, he esteems the novels of the Sicilian writer, Leonardo Sciascia. More knotty is his ever-changing relationship with Pier Paolo Pasolini. We too often forget how deeply Pasolini was involved with philology; in 1955 he published *Italian Song-Book: An Anthology of Popular Poetry*, a collection comprising every region of modern Italy. It appeared just when Calvino was at work on his own collection *Italian Folktales*:

I’ve been wanting to tell you how much I enjoyed your *Canzoniere italiano* (*Italian Song-Book*), and how much I believe it is a beautiful and important book. . . . I read the whole thing bit by bit, and every so often my mouth would just fall open. . . . Your choices show great poetic intelligence. . . . I also found—and learned—in your work the procedure which is also the one I use in sifting the folk-tale material aesthetically. (111)

When Pasolini came out with his novel *A Violent Life* (1959), Calvino rushed to praise it: “I’ve read it all. It is magnificent. A clear cut above all your other books. It is the kind of work that ought to have been written. All (or almost all) of the things that I want to see in a novel are in it” (177).

But these enthusiastic exchanges were followed by a silence lasting more than a decade, until Pasolini published a review of Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, in which he mentioned that the two men had “stopped being close to one another”:

What you mean is that it is you who have gone very far away: not just with the cinema, which is the thing that is furthest from the mental rhythms of a bookworm, which is what I have become in the meantime, but also because your use of words has shifted to communicating a presence traumatically as though projecting it onto big screens: a mode of rapid intervention that I ruled out from the start. (427–28)

When Pasolini published an article in the *Corriere della sera* in January 1975, headlined “I’m Against Abortion,” Calvino raged: “When I read that article on Sunday I got so angry that I felt that I would never be able to argue with him without descending to a level that would have played into his hands, and I said: no, with Pasolini, the only thing to do is to act as if he did not exist” (453). Ten months later, Pasolini was murdered, and any opportunity for reconciliation had passed.

Another correspondent is the great director Michelangelo Antonioni, who immediately caught Calvino’s attention when he filmed *The Girlfriends* in 1955, with a plot based on Cesare Pavese’s

novella, *Among Women Only*.²⁴ Pavese's suicide in 1950 had resulted in Calvino becoming a caretaker of his literary estate. Writing on behalf of Giulio Einaudi "and other friends" of the deceased author, he praised the film for retaining "that moral core that was typical of Pavese." But he noted:

You have carried this out with your own spare, acerbic style of narration based on the link between landscapes that are always a bit squalid and wintry, and dialogs with pauses that seem almost casual, a cinematic style that harks back to the model of understatement in so many modern writers, amongst whom Pavese too may be numbered. (107–08)

In praising Antonioni for pursuing the sparseness found "in so many modern writers," Calvino inadvertently raises a question central to our assessment of him and the entire period covered by his career. After all, Antonioni would soon go on to direct *The Adventure* (1960), a film in which the disappearance of one character sparks a fruitless search that is never resolved, and a film that more than one critic has compared with Carlo Emilio Gadda's novel *That Awful Mess on the Via Merulana* (1957).²⁵ Gadda's novel begins with two crimes that take place in central Rome, a burglary and a murder, but neither is fully resolved by the book's end, and its center of gravity gradually shifts away from detection to the elusiveness of truth and the elaborations of a style that makes heavy use of Roman and other dialects. Not surprisingly, Calvino contributed an introduction to the American edition of the book when it was reissued in 1984, echoing sentiments that he already expressed in his letters back in 1958 (158). This cluster—Antonioni, Calvino, Gadda—poses some questions that have not been adequately addressed in criticism to date.

Antonioni is nothing if not a modernist filmmaker, and the same could be said of his great contemporary as well, Federico Fellini. But our received, and perhaps deeply mistaken, views of modernism and Italian cultural history do not allow us to make such claims. A brief summary of those views has recently been formulated by Luca Somigli in his essay on Italy for the new *Cambridge Companion to European Modernism* (2011). Somigli, after surveying the turn-of-the-century scene, hones in on three figures: F. T. Marinetti (and the Futurists), Luigi Pirandello, and Italo Svevo. He then notes that Fascist Italy had a fraught relationship with modernism, though it was nowhere near as hostile to it as Nazi Germany, with its famous Degenerate Art exhibition, or its proscription of Thomas Mann. Italian modernists included Carlo Bernari, Alba de Cespedes, Paola Masino, Elio Vittorini, and Carlo Emilio Gadda. But, he concludes, "The war put an end not only to Fascism and the monarchy, but also to modernism" (92).

Yet this view deeply misreads the arc of Italian cultural history. For the reality is that Vittorini was imprisoned for publishing *Conversations in Sicily* in 1941, while Gadda's major work, *That Awful Mess*, could never have appeared under Fascism. It may be useful to recall that Joyce's *Ulysses*, first published in 1922, was not translated into Italian until 1960, even though Carlo Linati had offered to undertake the task back in 1920 (a proposal that prompted Joyce to produce the famous "Linati schema" outlining the novel's structure). Yes, Linati signed Benedetto Croce's anti-Fascist manifesto of 1925; but he knew only too well how a translation of *Ulysses* would fare under Fascism. The point, simply put, is that modernism was effectively stymied by Fascism, and that in Italy it thrived in the forty years that followed the war's end, blossoming especially in film, where it was redeployed by Antonioni, Fellini, Pasolini, and Bertolucci. But it also found its voice in Italian literature, and Italo Calvino was its greatest and most accomplished exponent, as this volume of letters makes very clear.

Notes

1. *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (Turin: Einaudi, 1947).
2. "Italo Calvino, Interview with Marco d'Eramo," *mondoperaio*, 6 June, 1979; quoted in Mario Barenghi and Bruno Falchetto, "Cronologia," in Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), xxvi.
3. *Il visconte dimezzato* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952).

4. *Il barone rampante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1957).
5. *Il cavaliere inesistente* (Turin: Einaudi, 1959).
6. Italo Calvino, quoted in Mario Barenghi and Bruno Falcetto, "Cronologia," in Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), xxx.
7. Italo Calvino to Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 24 November 1965, in Italo Calvino, *Lettere 1940–1985*, ed. Luca Baranelli (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), 903.
8. *Marcovaldo, ovvero Le stagioni in città* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963).
9. *Cosmicomiche* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965).
10. "Appunti sulla narrativa come processo combinatorio," in *Italo Calvino: Saggi, 1945–1985*, vol. 1, ed. Mario Barenghi (Milan: Mondadori, 1995), 205–25.
11. *Le città invisibili* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972).
12. *Il castello dei destini incrociati* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973).
13. *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979).
14. *Palomar* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983).
15. Italo Calvino, *Paolomar* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994; first edtn. 1983), [220].
16. Italo Calvino, *Romanzi e racconti*, ed. Claudio Milanini, Mario Barenghi, and Bruno Falcetto, 3 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1991–1994); Calvino, *Saggi*, 2 vols. (See note ten.)
17. Italo Calvino, *I libri degli altri. Lettere 1947–1981*, ed. Giovanni Tesio (Turin: Einaudi, 1991).
18. Calvino, *Lettere 1940–1985*. (See note seven.)
19. Quoted in Stefano Paolo, "Elsa, Italo e il conte scomparso," *Corriere della sera*, 4 August 2004, 1.
20. Simonetta Fiori, "Le lettere violente," *La Repubblica*, 7 August 2004, 40.
21. Eugenio Scalfari, "L'ultima crociata sulle lettere di Calvino," *La Repubblica*, 9 August 2004, 1.
22. See note nineteen.
23. John Hooper, "If on a Winter's Night Two Lovers . . .," *Guardian*, 18 August 2004; Elisabetta Povoledo, "Italian Novelist's Love Letters Turn Political," *New York Times*, 20 August 2004.
24. Antonioni's film, in Italian, is called *Le amiche*; Pavese's novella is *Tra donne sole*.
25. Antonioni's film is called *L'avventura* in Italian, while Gadda's novel is called *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana*.