



Italo Calvino and the Compass of Literature (Toronto Italian Studies)

Eugenio Bolongaro

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Looking at five of Italo Calvino's often neglected early novels: *The Young People of Po*, *The Cloven Viscount*, *The Baron in the Trees*, *The Non-Existent Knight*, and *The Watcher*, Eugenio Bolongaro argues that these works, written between 1948 and 1963, contain a sustained meditation on the role of the intellectual and on the irreducible ethical and political dimension of literature. This meditation provides an insight into a crucial moment in Calvino's development as a writer, and allows Bolongaro to lay the groundwork for a more 'political' reading of Calvino's later work.

Italo Calvino and the Compass of Literature firmly situates Calvino within his historical context - the cultural revival of post-World War II Italy - by relating these early novels to Calvino's political and critical writings which played an important role in the cultural debates of the time. This approach provides a key to understanding Calvino's work in a new light, ably demonstrating that Calvino's full literary significance cannot be understood in isolation from the politics and cultural movements of the period. One of the few book-length English-language works on Calvino's early writings, *Italo Calvino and the Compass of Literature* will prove to be an indispensable tool to Italianists and literary studies scholars.

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