

This article was downloaded by: [Cankaya Universitesi]

On: 06 May 2014, At: 03:05

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cele20>

Memory and Nostalgia in Antonio Tabucchi's Last Two Books

Joseph Francese^a

^a Department of Romance and Classical Studies , Michigan State University , B-453 Wells Hall, 619 Red Cedar Road, East Lansing , Michigan 48824 , USA

Published online: 03 Dec 2012.

To cite this article: Joseph Francese (2012) Memory and Nostalgia in Antonio Tabucchi's Last Two Books, *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, 17:7, 918-934, DOI: [10.1080/10848770.2012.728801](https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2012.728801)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2012.728801>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

Memory and Nostalgia in Antonio Tabucchi's Last Two Books

~ JOSEPH FRANCESE ~

ABSTRACT In *Il tempo invecchia in fretta*, a collection of short stories (2009), and in *Viaggi e altri viaggi*, a travel book (2010), the Italian novelist Antonio Tabucchi (1943–2012) investigates the conflict between interior time, or duration, and social, or historical time. *Il tempo invecchia* interrogates the dialectic between individual lives and grand historical processes. *Viaggi*—Tabucchi's intellectual autobiography—retrieves the past, which exists in the present as memory, so as to counter the “eternal present” of media time and its humus, consumerism, and provide a sense, or direction, to future decision making. Both volumes demonstrate a form of social commitment that is not Sartrean—that interrogates the present while abstaining from proposing solutions—but is well suited to our times: by bringing together narrative remnants of the past in the present of memory, Tabucchi attempts to give the present a sense and a direction to the future. These *altrove altrui* (the elsewheres of others) provoke a feeling of “nostalgia for the future,” a yearning for what never was, but still might be: a new social and moral order.

The last two books published by Antonio Tabucchi, before he passed away, are *Il tempo invecchia in fretta: Nove storie* and *Viaggi e altri viaggi*, a compilation of brief pieces dating back to the 1980s on travels that took the writer all over the globe.¹ *Il tempo invecchia* looks at what Tabucchi calls, perhaps with tongue-in-cheek, our condition of post-postmodernity, which he defines as the clash of the historical time of the collectivity, and interior time—he uses the Bergsonian term, duration—as lived by the individual.² *Viaggi e altri viaggi* is a collection of travel articles, a future-oriented intellectual autobiography. *Il tempo invecchia* depicts the dialectic of individual lives and grand historical processes, whereas *Viaggi* condenses the past into the present of memory so as to counter the eternal present of media time and its consumerism, by proposing literature and culture as the antithesis to “absolute capitalism” (the Western model, which, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, has imposed itself globally as “an absolute system”). Both volumes demonstrate a form of social commitment well suited to our times: by bringing together narrative remnants of the past in the present of memory, Tabucchi attempts to make the present comprehensible and give a direction to the future. The *altrove altrui* (the elsewheres



Department of Romance and Classical Studies, Michigan State University, B-453 Wells Hall, 619 Red Cedar Road, East Lansing, Michigan 48824, USA. Email: frances@msu.edu

of others), which we visit through his prose, provoke a desire for what never was, but still might be: for feasible, attainable utopias, a new social and moral order to be realized in the future.³

The use, in both volumes, of brief narrative forms is significant. Since publishing three novels set in Portugal (*Requiem*, *Sostiene Pereira*, and *La testa perduta di Damasceno Monteiro*) in the 1990s, Tabucchi has tended, with the notable exception of *Tristano muore*, to prefer the short story, a form for which he has shown a predilection throughout his career.⁴ Unlike novels, collections of short stories (with their multiple protagonists and settings) allow him to juxtapose diverse, seemingly unrelated realities. As for *Viaggi*, the travels he describes may also be considered as chapters—or, to use his phrasing, “attempts at *poème en prose*”—of his autobiography.⁵ As is the case with the tales of *Il tempo invecchia*, the stories of *Viaggi*, when considered individually, aim for the “unity or totality of effect,” which Edgar Allan Poe affirmed as the distinctive feature of the brief narrative (through an anecdotal style that accentuates the finale).⁶ At the same time, Tabucchi proposes that the reader consider the compilation of his brief narratives as a whole, “as if in a painting by Arcimboldo,” that is, the total of the parts should “compose a unified image.”⁷

The sum, so to speak, of the stories of *Il tempo invecchia* is the effect on individuals of what has transpired in Europe over the past three decades. Tabucchi's characters must deal with grand historical processes such as “the disorientation caused by the end of barriers and divisions,”⁸ the legacy of the totalitarian systems in the East and of the wars and associated atrocities that are the “peace dividend” we were promised by George H. W. Bush at the fall of the Soviet Empire, and the emotional travail associated with the end-of-life decisions forced on us by advances in the life sciences. In *Viaggi* the author's social commitment is more immediately evident: the overarching intent of the collection is to counter media time and the self-congratulatory vindication that somehow has allowed the West to avoid taking a sharp look at itself;⁹ he does so by proposing literature and culture as the dialectical antithesis to “absolute capitalism”: “A unified Europe cannot be exclusively a Europe of markets and money; we must also re-evaluate its immense cultural patrimony, its Humanist legacy, because one of the uses of culture is that of helping us combat ‘balkanizations’ and intolerance.”¹⁰

Tabucchi did not witness most of the events represented in *Il tempo invecchia*. In almost all cases—with the notable exception of the loosely autobiographic “Clof, clop, cloffette, cloppete” and the metaliterary, concluding tale “Controtempo” (which details the creative process)—he retells stories he heard either from their protagonists or second-hand. When he reports the stories of others, he implicitly responds to the question that serves as epigraph to *Tristano muore*, “who testifies for the eye-witness”? As he states in the afterword to *Il tempo invecchia*, several of the narratives, before coming into existence in his book, were true stories. All he did was listen, then retell them in his own way. So, in testifying for the eye-witness Tabucchi takes on the task of recording and perpetuating, by transforming into writing, what has been transmitted orally.¹¹ His social commitment makes itself manifest when he gives voice to what otherwise might have been destined to become what Walter Benjamin called the “detritus of history.”

Il tempo invecchia is a collection of nine brief narratives. Four tell of Eastern European dictatorships. A fifth is a conversation between a young girl and an Italian veteran of the war in Kosovo. The narrating voice of yet another, “Clof, clop,” is a writer plagued by

a sharp pains emanating outward from his spine (or, as he calls it, with a wordplay on the title of a work by Manzoni, his “colonna infame” [infamous column], 31). His physician believes he is “afflicted with literature” (indeed, metaliterary references abound), and attributes the writer’s discomfort to the uncomfortable positions taken for hours on end while seated at his desk. In fact, the physician admonishes his patient: “your problem is due mainly to the fact that you take on mistaken positions, that you have taken mistaken positions your entire life” (31), a boutade that links this text, through self-irony, to Tabucchi’s *L’oca al passo*, a collection of editorials he wrote from the mid-1990s through 2006, on topical matters. These editorials qua chapters are not ordered in *L’oca* following the chronology of their publication, but are rearranged to reflect how the events discussed in each editorial are compressed in the present of the reader’s memory. Its unusual structure resembles that of the Italian board game *Il gioco dell’oca*; so chance figures in the order in which the chapters are read.¹²

With the possible exceptions of the opening tale, “Il cerchio,” and “Controtempo,” the narratives in *Il tempo invecchia* do not seem to follow any discernible diegetic progression. And as Tabucchi avers in the afterword, the stories are not arranged in the order in which they were written (173). Rather, their seemingly random positioning reflects their sedimentation and juxtaposition, as completed acts that reside in the present of memory.¹³ In other words, in *Il tempo invecchia* Tabucchi comes forth as a sort of Benjaminian storyteller, as described in the well-known essay on Leskov, absorbing and relaying useful counsel culled from the experience of others.¹⁴ Following Benjamin, we can say that Tabucchi seeks to fill the role of the epic narrator, providing intelligence from afar, either by making his reader aware of the conflicts retold in *Il tempo*, or by recounting in *Viaggi* his own experiences traveling around the globe. For Benjamin, such intelligence possesses an intrinsic authority or validity; its empirical nature leads the audience to give credence, even when what is reported is not verifiable (89). I shall later discuss in greater detail how such “conjectural and creative knowledge” figures in the ‘impegno,’ or social commitment, evinced in *Viaggi*.¹⁵ For now, it is sufficient to note that Benjamin’s storyteller enables the audience to assimilate the life-events and the knowledge of others into the reality of their own experience. Once this has been accomplished, the story “becomes indisputable for remembered life” and guides significant future decision making.¹⁶

Viaggi, unlike *Il tempo invecchia*, is ostensibly a work of nonfiction: it collects travel reportages extending back to 1986. However, autobiographies share with fictions the need to create and project a narrating voice: as Berryman points out, autobiography is always an act of self-creation.¹⁷ *Viaggi* begins with an interview that provides a clear indication of its autobiographical nature and major themes. The writer of an autobiography, as is the case with historiography, must come forth with a plausible and recognizable—realistic—representation of time.¹⁸ However, *Viaggi e altri viaggi* is not only a collection of travel writings but also, I contend, an autobiography. It is a text compiled in hindsight; it is not a simultaneous record of travels, a diary.¹⁹ Tabucchi stresses in the introductory “Note” to *Viaggi* that each chapter is an occasional piece inspired *ex post facto* by trips he took, even though at no time did he leave home with the intention of writing a travel book. It thus possesses the fictive quality characteristic of autobiography, which shares with fiction a sense of a story, of something to be told.²⁰

This blurring of genres—the hybridity of this autobiography seems to place it somewhere between a nonfictional record of the writer's travels and a fiction—is subtle but significant: there inheres in the autobiographic form no pact that would guarantee the reader direct access to the writer's true self.²¹ As Ronald Barthes states in the epigraph to his own autobiography, “Everything here must be considered as being said by a fictional character.”²² I stress the fictional component of autobiography for several reasons. First, since *Viaggi* is not strictly a work of nonfiction, its narrating voice—as can be said of the characters who populate *Il tempo invecchia*—is a “phenotype,” that is to say, the emphasis in both books is not on probing the psychological depths of characters, but on the observation of how they interact with their environment.²³ Even though many of the travel pieces in *Viaggi* provide information on the genesis of several of Tabucchi's works, the voice of *Viaggi* is little more than an iteration of the public self-image Tabucchi has created in numerous interviews. In fact, we have no proof that the information provided is factually accurate; what is conveyed may be no more than “real fictions.”²⁴ Second, the non-documentary nature of *Viaggi* legitimates my strategy—based on the imbrication of themes and the common period of gestation of both volumes—of reading it together with *Il tempo invecchia*. Third, I stress the question of genre not because of any intrinsic quality genre may impart to a text, but because it provides an important paratextual indication that conditions reading: it establishes what Umberto Eco calls a “narrative pact” with the reader or raises the reader's expectations.²⁵ From this, it follows that it does not matter if the information conveyed may or may not be verifiable or correspond to “what really happened;” what is of importance is the didactic function the text assigns itself, which is of a piece with its orientation and commitment to the future.

The oral quality of Tabucchi's storytelling, in both volumes, is enhanced by his declining to arrange his tales in any sort of order, chronological or otherwise. As he avers in *Viaggi*, such orality shares with myth a “power of seduction” that is synonymous with the avoidance of plot as the hierarchical ordering of events. Instead, the Benjaminian storyteller strings together microevents as if they were “pearls on a necklace” (239). Neither volume presents a diegetic progression that follows the chronology of the calendar; instead, their internal juxtapositions bring the writer's subjective memory into synchrony with the intersubjective time of the present. In other words, in both volumes Tabucchi brings together what J. T. Fraser calls noetic time, the uniquely human ability “to perceive the world in terms of long-range futures and pasts, connected by discoverable laws” and “sociotemporality,” the shareable social organization of time.²⁶ Fraser argues that because only humans have future time horizons, humans alone can talk about conduct and moral standards (203) and achieving social goals, that is, the collective blazing of trails “into the non-existent and . . . the creation of new reality” (217). The advancement of society is contingent on individuals having a social identity, or temporal horizons that extend beyond their death (201). Indeed, we find in Tabucchi such a tension toward the future when he leads readers of *Il tempo invecchia* to see themselves within their own here and now, in other words within a present that is not absolute, but relative to history understood as the dialectic of “duration,” or interior time, and the long temporal, and social, horizons of the past and of a future in constant becoming.

In *Viaggi* the past does not return as rational, linear progression. Rather, it comes to the reader condensed within the present of the author's memory. This is why Tabucchi's accounts of a trip he took to India in the 1980s and to Australia in 1991 can mesh in the present of reading with more recent journeys he took to North America and throughout Europe, and with excursions to places visited intellectually, and at unspecified times, through the writings of his favorite authors. There is no pretence of linking events and actions objectively or chronologically through what Gilles Deleuze would call the movement-image wherein time is quantifiable, can be measured against physical movement through space, and images are sequentially linked so as to provide continuity and succession.²⁷ Instead, in these two collections we encounter the irrational, subjective accumulation of memory in time-images. In simpler terms, memories replace the sequentiality of motor actions: time is represented through "images" of thought. In *Viaggi* what matters is not the diachronic order in which the chapters are read (as is the case with *L'oca*, a work whose author admonishes us against the "passive," "traditional" way of reading, "one page after the next"²⁸). Much more important—and this applies to both *Il tempo invecchia* and *Viaggi*—is the cumulative effect of the narrations (a realistic reflection of the memory of their author) on the reader. *Il tempo invecchia* deals with the theme of lost temporal synchronization, which coincides with the author's perception that

our perception of existence has changed, and a sum of so many solitary lives—wherein each of us desperately asks the person next to us "what time is it"—has replaced an individual interiority that was always connected to a social dimension.²⁹

Tabucchi proposes in his interviews that Eastern and Western Europe experienced the twentieth century differently. It is as if the East, formerly "preserved in the refrigerator" has now brought its diverse time westward.³⁰ For example, in "I morti a tavola" a retired East German spy feels his life, in the absence of the Berlin Wall, or as he calls it the "Grand Structure" (81), is "out of sync;" indeed "everything is off schedule" (88). The clash of conflicting temporal orientations is evident in stories situated in the West, also. The main character of "Il cerchio" is a childless thirty-eight-year-old woman of Maghrebi descent, raised in Paris, and married to a Swiss scientist. At a celebration with her in-laws she is inexplicably overcome—against the backdrop of the overabundance of water to be found in Geneva—by the memory of her grandmother as a young girl taking three-mile walks nightly across the desert to get drinking water from a communal well then finds herself wondering why she feels out of place in her husband's family and out of touch with the surrounding natural world (16–17). In "Clop, clop" the aunt must coordinate past and present for the protagonist by reminding him of critical events from his childhood that he had forgotten: she remembers his memories for him. Thus, her stories restore to his consciousness what had been buried within the unconscious (38–39) and the voice can "navigate in a Self he had lost" (41). But the cure is temporary: as he takes his leave, he is struck dumb when he overhears an adolescent girl, his aunt's fellow patient in a cancer ward, repeatedly proclaim in "a voice that was full of joy and life" and with "a broad smile": "well, this is the most beautiful thing on earth!" (51).

The most beautiful thing on earth. Said by a little girl pulled in a gurney by a nurse. She knew what the most beautiful thing was. But he didn't. Was it possible that at his age,

with all that he had seen and learned, he still didn't know what the most beautiful thing in the world was? (51)

As stated, Tabucchi compares the juxtaposition of discrete tales in the same collection to the construction of a mosaic: books such as *Il tempo invecchia* are “the sum of so many fragments that, when combined, take a form we could never have anticipated, before we put them all together.” This way of reading Tabucchi's “time-images,” “allows the mosaics to arrive at the last tessera and form a totality whose meaning is different from that of its parts.”³¹ As he writes in “La geografia immaginaria di Gregor von Rezzori,” which contains a succinct explanation of his poetics, there are writers (among whom Tabucchi must be listed), who work not on historical memory, but up the ante by “dealing with” the metaphor of History (*Viaggi*, 222). In so doing, they “install a different relationship with the temporal dimension.”

This diverse rapport “constructs” the Epic dimension, which obviously does not depend on the quantity of writing, but on the quality of the ingredients; because a text, to qualify as epic, does not need to be as long as Homer's poem. It can easily be contained within a short story of a few pages. (*Viaggi*, 222)

This strategy of reading *Viaggi* as so many tesserae or Deleuzian time-images can be applied also to *Il tempo invecchia*. In his own words: “these are not isolated stories; they form a design, as was always the case with all collections of my brief narratives.”³² Each article/chapter constitutes a tessera within the Voyage that has been his life (10). The episodes recounted acquire a meaning and direction when placed in a sharable temporal continuum—of past, present, and future—and read together. As he told an interviewer, “In and of itself, life doesn't have meaning. We are the ones who give it meaning with our interpretations of it. While recounting a life, we make sense of it.”³³ Thus the phenotypes depicted in his collections combine to tell a story; the sum of their components forms “a mosaic, not a fresco”: “It's like thumbing through a photo album and understanding that it preserves a long journey and an overarching intent, an abiding interest. It's like taking a walk in the snow, then coming inside and seeing, from the window, your footprints and the direction traced by your steps.”³⁴

For the narratives to come together and achieve the effect of giving a direction to the flow of time, their readers must possess the same sort of “conjectural and creative knowledge,” as Tabucchi describes it, that Pasolini demonstrated in his famous editorials against a corrupt system of power in 1975. In denouncing three decades of gross mismanagement of the nation's affairs, including the collusion of the government with organized crime and domestic terrorism, the poet came forth with a litany of “I know,” charges which he and all Italians knew were true but could not prove.³⁵ Pasolini's “trial” of *Il Palazzo* was set in “poetic-literary,” not juridical or forensic, terms. He did not have tangible proof; nonetheless, what mattered was the shareable moral truth Pasolini had abstracted from events. Readers of Tabucchi's brief narratives must possess similar knowledge: like Pasolini, they must be able to “connect the dots” as if they were “the tesserae of a mosaic” and deduce “the idea of the entire mosaic” (*Viaggi*, 163).

Il tempo invecchia concludes a trilogy of creative narratives whose theme is the contemplation of time.³⁶ Yet, the intertwining of topics and intertextual self-references, within but also without the “trilogy,” linking it to other texts written during this period,

are inevitable. Indeed, topics interrogated within the components of the trilogy resonate with what is discussed in *L'oca* and *Viaggi*. For example, the middle work of the “time trilogy,” *Tristano muore*,³⁷ is a study in what Tabucchi calls the “nauseating . . . growing tide of historical revisionism we see in Italy.” He is referring to “the perversion of the real through its negation,” the camouflaging of the crimes of Fascism under the mantle of divergent but ‘equally valid’ ideals.³⁸

Historical revisionism figures in *Il tempo invecchia* particularly in “Nuvole,” when a girl tells of a visit by the President of the Republic to her middle school. She took from that encounter the lesson that all ideals are “respectable if you believe in them,” among which is that of the “Fatherland,” *la patria*. The President told her class—implicitly referring to the young men who remained faithful to Mussolini to the end, fighting on the side of the Germans and his puppet regime in Salò—that if a young person errs, as long as he or she acts “in good faith,” the ideal remains valid (61). Her interlocutor, an Italian veteran of the war in Kosovo, responds that ideals are precisely what transported people to Auschwitz (62).

Tabucchi has contended in numerous interviews that the reduction of Resistance fighters and Fascists to a common denominator—to young patriots who happened to fight on opposite sides of a bloody civil war for love of country—in the name of “national pacification” constitutes a re-writing of historical truths. Such revision presents the crimes committed by the followers of Mussolini as something other than crimes: for example, their trampling on the Albertine Statute³⁹ before 25 July 1943, the atrocities committed by the Italian army in Africa in the 1930s, the deprivation of Italian Jewry of citizenship in 1938, and the slaughter and other acts of violence against innocent Italians committed by those who remained loyal to the dictator after 25 July 1943. These were all merely “errors” made with the best of intentions. If this were true, he argues, it would tautologically follow that no crimes were committed by the supporters and followers of the Regime and the Italian Social Republic because no one did anything criminal.⁴⁰

He further argues that such revisionism—or, to use his term, “negationism,” the denial of history and time—obliterates the value of memory.⁴¹ Instead, memory is precisely what is needed to guide us out of the “eternal present” of postmodernity into the future. For example, when the aunt in “Clop, clop” asks “do you remember how beautiful Italy used to be?” (41), she expresses her desire for a time when Italy was not “cynical, superficial, post-Craxian”⁴² and Italians had not yet been overtaken by the “shame of having been poor and of having been a people who had emigrated,”⁴³ she longs for a lost common sense, one based in social solidarity and not in consumerist individualism; she pines for a people that did not need to have every minute packed with the foolish “input” of commercial television.⁴⁴ She misses a time when political discourse in Italy, a country that “a billionaire clown made disappear” (110), was not infected with today’s xenophobia, racism, and, I might add, rampant corruption. Tabucchi cannot understand what could have caused the rise in certain Italian regions of “a xenophobic and racist Right, that in certain respects reminds one of Nazism.” He speculates it was due to the consumer values that overtook Italy consequent to what Pasolini called the “anthropological change” brought about by the so-called “economic miracle.”⁴⁵

The value of memory is further demonstrated when Tabucchi re-tells, in *Viaggi*, a story he heard as a child from an “interposta persona” (a “third person”), a neighbor who as a young woman risked her life hiding a Mongolian soldier cut off from his unit,

protecting him from Nazi reprisal. In fact, through *Viaggi* we can glean how the influence of and the dialectic with “interposte persone,” shaped Tabucchi’s social commitment. In addition to reporting the actions this neighbor, the author tells of literary models whom he knew personally. One, Sophia de Mello Breyner, provided “the verbal thread that guided Portugal through the darkness of the Salazarian labyrinth” (205). Another, Drummond de Andrade, wrote poems that speak of love, the atom bomb, and the quotidian (198–200), and that ironize on literati who would argue against the heteronomy of culture, relegating it to an ephemeral, other-worldly sphere.

In any case, the “negation” or rationalization, a half-century after the fact, of the misdeeds of a brutal dictatorship in terms of “love of Fatherland” “perturbs” history,⁴⁶ and is of a piece with the “illusion of a portable eternity,”⁴⁷ “a sort of fictional eternity . . . that extinguishes time, interior time, the time of the conscience.”⁴⁸ Media culture—and we must remember that one of Tabucchi’s targets since at least the mid-1990s has been media magnate and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi—has shortened the time horizons of Italians. In other words, the compression of existence into the so-called eternal present of postmodernity not only negates the weight of the past in significant decision-making but also represses the necessary life-compass of death, that is, long-term future expectations and concern for what we will leave to posterity. Tabucchi contends that “we’ve lost the sense of death and of long durations. Rather, we should accept the fact that we are ‘age-able’ and ‘die-able’.”⁴⁹ We exist historically, in time; and time, shared memory, is the basis of the social pact.⁵⁰ The dissolution of this pact in the eternal present of media time, deprives us of an important perspective on how to live in the short term, and is reflected in the new common sense decried by the aunt in “Clof, clop.”⁵¹

Eternity is not “*tascabile*,” or portable, but his “*patria*,” the Italian language, is: he takes it with him wherever he travels: “I bring Italy with me wherever I go because my homeland is the Italian language, and with it in hand I can go wherever I please. I have a portable Fatherland.”⁵² The issue of language is important because Tabucchi’s knowledge of several languages has facilitated his travels. It has allowed him unmediated access to the *forma mentis* of many of the peoples whose countries he visited, thus enabling the “intelligent tourism” advocated in *Viaggi*, which can be defined as his desire to use tourism to establish intellectual linkages between individuals and between cultures. Proof of Tabucchi’s alloglossia, his ability to speak and write the language of another, if any were needed, is the fact that he published his lectures on Pessoa at the École des Hautes Études in Paris and that he wrote his novel *Requiem* in Portuguese.⁵³ While the Italian language, his *patria*, remains his “intellectual emotional sphere,” *Requiem* (a work in which he elaborated his bereavement for the deaths of several people who were very close to him) makes manifest his linguistic “schizophrenia,” a “profound split” in his psyche, whose “only therapy,” he proposes, is to treat the “other side” of his personality as a “double” that must be accepted in its diversity.⁵⁴

Tabucchi engages his “double” when he creates his characters. He calls the literary character a “prosthetic device” that allows the author to “examine the other’s soul, to understand that which the Self is not.”⁵⁵ In his own words, his social commitment is manifested through his adoption of “the points of view of other individuals,” his exploration of “diversities” (I use the plural advisedly), his “investigations into the nature of reality as seen through the eyes of others.”⁵⁶ When the author imagines himself as

other he acquires both self-knowledge and comprehension and empathy for the other: “when we struggle to be that which we are not, we come to understand others better; and perhaps ourselves, too. Inventing literary characters is a strange exercise.” As the character develops, it overtakes the author, who “becomes” the character, “even if only for the period of time in which she is writing that particular book.”⁵⁷

The use of “the double” to pursue this Möbius-strip trail—inward toward self-understanding and outward toward comprehension and identification with the other, then back inward again toward enhanced self-knowledge—has been a characteristic of Tabucchi’s fictions, at least since *Notturmo indiano*.⁵⁸ So in *Viaggi*—even while acknowledging how “adopting a foreign language means choice, freedom, wanderings, adventure”—the point of reference remains his “linguistic homeland.”⁵⁹ The modifier here is significant; as he stressed: “one’s only true homeland is language. A writer only belongs to herself and her native language.” By extension, the writer’s only *impegno* is to be true to herself.⁶⁰

But being true to oneself, as Tabucchi sees things, does not mean positing literature as autonomous from its social context. Following Vladimir Jankélévitch, he insists that esthetics and ethics are linked.⁶¹ At the same time, what he calls the “mission of the poetic” (borrowing Hermann Bloch’s term)⁶² obligates writers to speak of that which they do not know; to serve, as Edward Said suggests, as the “unrewarded, amateurish conscience” of those in power.⁶³ In other words, while his social commitment is not Sartrean,⁶⁴ Tabucchi proposes that his writings be considered nonetheless a weapon in the “guerrilla” struggle against the other—the evil, that is within each of us—and as a tool to “understand the irreality of reality” (*Viaggi*, 223): the egoisms and minor injustices that can gradually grow, if left unchecked, into crimes against humanity. Thus, the social function of the writer is conveyed by her “conjectural and creative knowledge” to abstract moral truths from events; to sow doubt where there is certainty;⁶⁵ and to serve as antithesis to the status quo.⁶⁶ Indeed, literature’s social commitment is to be found not in its ability to provide answers, but in its willingness to ask those questions that society is not yet prepared, or is unwilling, to tackle.⁶⁷

Tabucchi’s writings, fictional and nonfictional, revolve around questions regarding the ethics of politics and the logic, or lack thereof, of history.⁶⁸ He considers the writer “an MP without a mandate who represents a non-existent people.”⁶⁹ One such “non-existent people” that he has written about “without a mandate,” are Italy’s Roma, a preferred target of Italy’s revanchist Right.⁷⁰ The racism that has greeted not only the Roma, but the refugees and immigrants who have arrived in Italy over the past two decades has clashed with the long-held myth of “italiani brava gente,” according to which the majority of Italians were not fascist and that Italian Fascism was somehow ‘softer’ than Nazism. The illusion of “italiani brava gente” represses the historical reality: what are now being called “valid ideals” and love of the *patria* would somehow justify the “brutal” compliance of the *ragazzi di Salò* to Nazi “demands for forced labor; anti-Semitic policies, and stringent police methods” against civilians.⁷¹ This illusion would also conceal the fact that the *repubblicani* fought to restore a regime that denied its political opponents, Jews, and homosexuals their constitutional rights (arresting them, confiscating their property, killing some while herding others off to death camps); contributed to overthrowing a constitutional republic and the installation of a dictatorship in Spain; allowed atrocities to be committed on indigenous peoples in the colonial wars in Africa;

and organized crimes against humanity during the Second World War in Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania.⁷² As Tabucchi put it: "Italy has never admitted its guilt. History is replete with symbolic gestures and we have never had a Willy Brandt who dropped to his knees in the Warsaw ghetto. We Italians too are responsible of heinous crimes, but we have never asked forgiveness. It is as if Italy always flees from its own self-image."⁷³ In other words, a core element of Tabucchi's recent work is the effort to combat the tendency of many Italians to repress rather than take a sincere look at themselves and their history.

One innovative charge of Tabucchi's fictions is the manner in which his fictional writings lead his readers to see themselves being seen. *Il tempo invecchia* has at its core the awareness that the other, the observed, does indeed look back; as Benjamin Kilborne writes: "the dynamics of scrutiny work both ways."⁷⁴ For example, in "Il cerchio" a patrician Genevan family is observed by its heir's wife, who is of Moroccan descent. Other stories in *Il tempo invecchia*, particularly those having to do with member countries of the former Warsaw Pact, focus on the Stalinist perversion of the gaze, or the social bond. "Festival" answers the question "what happens when those who monitor others believe they themselves are under surveillance?" (125). What happens is they are overwhelmed with fear of the storyteller. In this case, a panel of judges, charged with the administration of a sham political trial against a Polish dissident, shocks the defense attorney when they deliver a verdict of not guilty, occasioned, one surmises, by the presence in their courtroom of a documentary filmmaker to whom a ministry has given permission to record trials and other legal proceedings (131). "I morti a tavola" retells the story of an East German spy charged with monitoring the activities of Bertolt Brecht. The spy, much to his chagrin, learned after the destruction of the Wall and the opening of the GDR archives, that he and all his colleagues had been kept under constant surveillance by the same East German secret services for whom they worked (97). As a result, the reader sees how seeing and being seen, the basis of human community, was transmogrified into a pathology by totalitarianism, destroying the social fabric.

For Tabucchi, "when all is said and done, totalitarianism is surveillance, domination of the citizenry." But he also believes that "this is a human tendency: people want to be watched, preferably from on high. If no one does so, they invent someone. They want to be monitored, and, often, punished also."⁷⁵ This is why several of the characters in *Il tempo invecchia* demonstrate a compulsion to repeat negative or traumatic experiences: they miss being dominated. For example, the spy just mentioned finds the absence of the "Grande Struttura" disorienting (87).

Indeed, the stories of *Il tempo invecchia* illustrate cases of what Tabucchi calls the "nostalgia for the worst" of those who—perhaps in the absence of something positive to which to aspire,⁷⁶ of future horizons that would give a sense or direction to their lives and to history⁷⁷—long for the lost negativities or constraints, such as the Berlin Wall. "Bucarest non è cambiata per niente," for example, is the story of an elderly Romanian Jew who was interned under Fascism and is now living in Israel. He fills his time with bad memories of the injustices he suffered under the dictator Ceausescu, the humiliation of learning of the honors bestowed by Western democracies on Ceausescu's pseudo-scientist wife, and of a youthful Benedict XVI wearing a Nazi "Gott Mit Uns" belt buckle while guarding prison camp internees (141–43). At the story's conclusion this character returns mentally to an oddly happier time and place, to Bucarest, where he was forced to choose between freedom from persecution for himself, his wife and his son and abandoning

his brother to a penal institution. His conversations with his son are more soliloquy than dialogue and his senility has convinced him that memories cannot be shared. Assuming a posture in diametrical opposition to that of Benjamin's narrator, the father asserts "that memory is yours and yours alone; it cannot become a shared memory even if you tell it to others; memories can be recounted but not transmitted" (145).

This compulsion to repeat life's worst moments, which prevents many of the characters from moving forward, motivates the protagonist of one of the most artistically successful stories in the collection, "Fra generali." This story tells of a Hungarian general, whom Tabucchi calls László, who in 1956 kept an invading Soviet army at bay for three days and, for his efforts, was stripped of his rank and jailed. Released from prison only after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, he leaves all behind and moves to Manhattan: "Who knows why," the narrator asks, "he came to die in this city, which holds no memories for him" (103). In order to shape László as a literary character and endow him with necessary plausibility and depth, the storyteller "imagines" the youthful László's physical appearance and speculates on his upbringing and values (105). The narrating voice then goes beyond conjecture to pure imagination and invents for László a youthful love affair, a hypothesis the narrator believes is justified because "the attribution of feelings that belong to everyone's heart is not an unfounded conjecture" (106). The narrator also speculates that László abandoned his first love in order to follow his father's wish that he pursue a career in the military. After the fall of Ceausescu and the General's rehabilitation and lionization, László contacts the Russian general who crushed László's troops and then sent the brief László believes was the reason he was humiliated and spent over three decades in jail. László invites his counterpart to Budapest, but the Russian fears the secret services now operating in Hungary: "who knows what could happen to him" (113). So he plays host to László for three days in Moscow instead. There, the two chat, play chess, go to the theater and end their time together in a bordello, where—perhaps because of the enduring specter of his lost love, the "country girl with the blonde hair"—László spends "the best days of his life" (114) with reminders—one conscious, the other unconscious—of the two saddest moments of his life.

In "Nuvole" an Italian veteran, exposed to excessive amounts of depleted uranium during the Kosovo campaign, chooses to convalesce in the very place where he contracted leukemia. In other words, the compulsion to relive the traumas of the past afflicts not only individuals in former Warsaw Pact countries but also affects Western Europeans. As the dying aunt in "Clop, clop" bemoans,

what do you expect? trying to educate the populace is a waste of time. For that matter, this populace now has money and has been educated by *Big Brother*; that's why they vote for him; they vote for the man who educated them (36).

This same populace, in *Viaggi*, willingly allows itself to be herded into tour buses and spends its money on "unintelligent" vacations where they observe only the surface of the places they visit.

The gaze is also at the core of *Viaggi*, but since the narratives are told in the first person, the vantage is that of the "intelligent tourist": Tabucchi immerses himself in various *altrove altrui*, the elsewheres of others, searching for feasible utopias to contrast with home. While on holiday, he watches the Other observe "unintelligent tourists," Westerners whose disposable income permits them to go off on exotic, prepackaged

excursions that bring their clients close to the local culture but prevent them from interacting with it (e.g., “I Robinson,” 94–99). Travel also affords Tabucchi, who is not only an “intelligent tourist” but also a white European male, to experience xenophobia firsthand when an Australian customs guard is flustered by the sight of a traveler, Tabucchi, laughing with a companion in an incomprehensible language, Italian, while waiting for their baggage. So, the agent singles out Tabucchi (‘guilty,’ like the other emigrants who are returning from a vacation in Italy, of having a tad more skin pigment than the agent) for questioning (*Viaggi*, 143).

Pendant to such willingness to be seen—or to contemplate oneself from the perspective of the other—is the desire to see, to experience firsthand both the *altrove* and the *altrui*; together, they make explicit the author’s desire to seek out alternatives to the here and now of contemporary Italy. They make manifest the author’s conviction that literature and art, by their very existence, are proof positive that “life is not enough”; in his own words: “Literature provides something extra with respect to what nature allows us. And this something extra includes diversity; that small miracle afforded us while traveling through this brief existence of ours: we can step outside ourselves and become ‘other’.”⁷⁸ Literature, like travel, “is an extra form of knowledge” (*Viaggi*, 14) that allows us to consider nondescript “non-places” such as airports and supermarkets, “architectural spaces characteristic of our times in which we spend a good part of our existence but where we live as if ‘suspended’ because they are places of utility and passage, urban limbos” (*Viaggi*, 88). But literature and travel also submit to our consideration feasible utopias, proof that things do not have to be the way they are. For example, in the Basque country Tabucchi observes how sculptor Edoardo Chillada bequeathed to his hometown an “immense open-air museum,” a utopian “place in which to move around and pass the time, where nature and art combine to create and enchant the visitor” (55–56). From the Portuguese city of Alentejo he reports on “an intelligent tourism sponsored by the State”: ancient castles transformed into “first-class hotels run perfectly and at affordable prices” (178). Crete is a place where capitalist rationalization and abuse of natural resources is countered by the preservation of cities like Chaniá—an eminently livable area with an inimitable, ancient history—that has managed to protect its architectural aura (67–73). This is why Tabucchi lists it among his “cities of desire”: “real but remote, often unreachable or marked by the nostalgia of an impossible return, they are closed within a sort of magical spell that transforms them, giving them the aura of fantasy.” Chaniá is the “idea” of what a city should be (202).

Another such city is Fernando Pessoa’s Lisbon: “metaphor of an Absolute Wharf where the individual lands only to then embark for the unknown, and, what is more, for the unreachable Samarcanda dreamt by his semi-heteronym in the *Book of Disquietude*” (202).⁷⁹ Both Soares and Tabucchi—in *Viaggi*, his own “book of disquietude”—travel “toward the unknown” (*Viaggi*, 18). In Tabucchi’s case, that voyage heads toward the future and the state of having-been.⁸⁰

Tabucchi’s *Voyage* goes toward the locus of desire: it is a yearning for the future. It is also, in a certain sense, “*saudadoso*,” the Portuguese term that conveys nostalgia for the past, for what has been lost. *Saudade*, as Tabucchi explains, is generally understood as “a complex sentiment, a nebula in which coexist regret, remorse, the desire for what has been lost, the awareness of what could have been done but was not, of what one

could have become but did not.⁸¹ However, Tabucchi attributes added significance to the term: for him it also connotes the desire for what never was, but also for what still might be, it is “impulse, remorse, aspiration.” It

can be nostalgia for the past but also nostalgia for the future, a desire for the future, in addition to nostalgia for that which could have been but was not. It resembles, to some extent, Pereira’s desire for repentance.⁸²

In other words, *saudade*, for Tabucchi, in addition to nostalgic regret and remorse also signifies a yearning for what still might come to be. It is more than a simple, painful, and impossible voyage toward the irreversible, an Homeric *nòstos*. Indeed, the comparison to Pereira’s “catharsis” (as Antonio Gramsci used this term⁸³)—which sparks Pereira’s desire to rectify his inactivity in the past and to inhabit the future by engaging posterity in dialogue—enables Tabucchi’s reader to imagine a new social and moral order. Thus for Tabucchi, *saudade* is a rebellion against linear time, because, in his own words, “it consists of nostalgia for the future” (Petri, 72); “it necessitates revisiting the social project of the French Revolution and retrieving its ideals of “liberty, equality, and fraternity.”⁸⁴

Tabucchi is aware that “when you reference such values in our world you unavoidably appear utopian, since freedom, as we know, does not exist in three quarters of the world; social solidarity is generally derided, even at the level of anecdote, and one could say more or less the same about equality.” So, as a writer Tabucchi records “the malaise that surrounds us” in order to disseminate disquietude.⁸⁵ And, since “literature is a form of knowledge” he contends it does well when it “anticipates the times.”⁸⁶ In other words, rather than utilizing literature to explain reality or engage the present polemically, he has it do reconnaissance for the future. As his Pereira says, literature is “a message in a bottle that someone is sure to pick up.”⁸⁷

Just as literature allows us to engage the future and see ourselves from the vantage of posterity, *saudade* “expresses a desire you wish would come true.” Like Dante’s “disio” (*Viaggi*, 168–69), *saudade* evokes “humanity as a creature of desire, as beings who live of aspirations and dreams,”⁸⁸ who yearn to “modify events and correct cruel History.”⁸⁹ Thus, we may say that Tabucchian *saudade* is a utopian nostalgia for the future that “coincides with the dream of a *different* history, with the hope for change.”⁹⁰ It is a retrieval and elaboration of the past that provides needed orientation within the electronic-paced intensity of the present. In this scheme of things, literature, by looking both to the past and to the future, can provide points of orientation capable of contrasting the eternal present of media culture; if and when it does, it can make individual and collective time coincide once again.

In Tabucchi’s fictional works *saudade* elaborates itself in the act of writing, in a manner reminiscent of the protagonist of “Controtempo,” an author who transforms his thought into something “concrete and visible” by making “that which was real within himself . . . truly real.” When he does so, he and his reader are absorbed, not in “a past that never was” but “in a future still to be lived;” and they experience, to paraphrase Tabucchi, the “nostalgia of the best.” When this occurs they are overtaken by a “feeling of infinite liberation” (*Il tempo invecchia*, 170–71) and, I would add, of future possibilities.

NOTES

1. After a brief bout with cancer Tabucchi died in Lisbon on March 25, 2012, three days before this article was accepted for publication. The works that are at the focus of this essay are: Antonio Tabucchi, *Il tempo invecchia in fretta* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2009), and *Viaggi e altri viaggi*, ed. Paolo Di Paolo (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2010).
2. Bruno Corty, "La machine à démonter le temps," *Le Figaro*, 28 May 2009.
3. For an analysis of "The Self as Other" in earlier works by Tabucchi, particularly *L'Angelo nero* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991), see Joseph Francese, "Tabucchi: The Angel of History," in *Narrating Postmodern Time and Space* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 138–54.
4. Antonio Tabucchi, *Requiem: Un'allucinazione*, trans. Sergio Vecchio (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1992); *Sostiene Pereira: Una testimonianza* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1994); *La testa perduta di Damasceno Monteiro* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1997); and *Tristano muore* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2004). In the stream-of-consciousness narration of *Tristano*—perhaps Tabucchi's masterpiece—subjective, interior time supersedes collective time.
5. Tabucchi, "Come nasce una storia," 185. All translations herein are my own.
6. Edgar Allan Poe, Review of *Twice Told Tales*, in *The New Short Story Theories*, ed. Charles E. May (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994), 60. See also B. M. Éjxenbaum, "O. Henry and the Short Story," in *The New Short Story Theories*, 87.
7. Fabio Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa? L'abbiamo persa da tanto tempo," *Il venerdì di Repubblica*, 25 September 2009.
8. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa?"
9. Norman Manea, *On Clowns: The Dictator and the Artist* (New York: Grove Press, 1992), x.
10. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa?"
11. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa?"
12. Antonio Tabucchi, *L'oca al passo: Notizie dal buio che stiamo attraversando* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2006). For the uninitiated, *Il gioco dell'oca* resembles the U.S. board game Chutes and Ladders. Players of *Il gioco dell'oca* advance their marker along a path of sixty-three squares in numbers corresponding to throws of the dice. Those who land on the 'lucky' squares (one of the thirteen squares marked by a goose) may jump forward a number of squares double those shown by their roll of the dice: the first player to reach the final, central square wins.
13. As Karl-Heinz Stierle argues, "the chronically arraigned whole of the 'action' can be a whole only if one has a complete view of it. And this means that the story has to be in the past. The preterite here, as in all narrative texts, is the tense denoting completeness of action, its state of being past." Karl-Heinz Stierle, "Story as Exemplum—Exemplum as Story: On the Pragmatics and Poetics of Narrative Texts," in *New Short Story Theories*, 22.
14. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 84, 86.
15. Antonio Tabucchi, "Un fiammifero Minerva," *MicroMega* (1997): 2. See chap. 4 of Joseph Francese, *Socially Symbolic Acts: The Historizing Fictions of Umberto Eco, Vincenzo Consolo, and Antonio Tabucchi* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), for an analysis of Tabucchi's equation of writing and social commitment, particularly in works of his maturity, such as *Requiem*, *Sogni di sogni* [Palermo: Sellerio, 1992], *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi. Romanzo in forma di lettere* [Milan: Feltrinelli 2001], *Autobiografie altrui Poetiche a posteriori* [Milan: Feltrinelli, 2003], and *Tristano muore* [Milano: Feltrinelli, 2004]).
16. Benjamin *Illuminations*, 91, 100.
17. Charles Berryman, "Critical Mirrors: Theories of Autobiography," *Mosaic* 32.1 (March 1999): 76–77.
18. Tonya Blowers, "The Textual Contract: Distinguishing Autobiography from the Novel," in *Representing Lives: Woman and Auto/Biography*, ed. Alison Donnell and Pauline Polkey (New York: MacMillan, 2000), 106.

19. See Tabucchi, "Come nasce una storia": "Perhaps I am one of those writers who is incapable of writing a *journal intime*, a diary; so I prefer writing other people's diaries" (182).
20. Blowers, "The Textual Contract," 106.
21. Linda Anderson, *Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3.
22. Roland Barthes, *Barthes di Roland Barthes*, trans. Gianni Celati (Torino: Einaudi, 2007).
23. Antonio Tabucchi and Bernard Comment, in *Pour Tabucchi: Le Rencontres de Fontevraud* (Saint-Nazaire: Meet 2009), 276.
24. Anna Dolfi, *Gli oggetti e il tempo della saudade: Le storie inafferrabili di Antonio Tabucchi* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2010), 17.
25. Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 107, 91.
26. J. T. Fraser, *Time: The Familiar Stranger* (Redmond, WA: Tempus Books, 1987), xv, 188 and ff.
27. D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 103.
28. Tabucchi, *L'oca al passo*, 17.
29. Maria Cristina Carratù, "Antonio Tabucchi: Il tempo non è più quello di una volta," *Repubblica*, 16 October 2009.
30. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa?"
31. Andrea Bajani, "Il fascismo globale che ci gira intorno: Incontro con Tabucchi," *Unità*, 29 November 2005.
32. Tabucchi and Comment, *Pour Tabucchi: Le Rencontres de Fontevraud*, 276.
33. Fabio Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: Le jeux de l'écrivain e de l'hasard," *Magazine littéraire* 436 (November 2004): 92–97. (http://www.feltrinellieditore.it/SchedaTesti?id_testo=1468&id_int=1384: accessed 23 February 2011).
34. Concita De Gregorio, "La letteratura non è il luogo della militanza: Intervista ad Antonio Tabucchi," *Repubblica*, 3 December 2005.
35. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, ed. Walter Siti and Silvia De Laude (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 632–38.
36. Tabucchi and Comment, *Pour Tabucchi: Le Rencontres de Fontevraud*, 276–77.
37. The first work of this trilogy is another collection of short stories, *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi: Romanzo in forma di lettere* (2001. Milan: Feltrinelli). His grouping of a novel, *Tristano*, with two collections of short stories, *Si sta facendo sempre più tardi* and *Il tempo invecchia in fretta* (Feltrinelli, 2009) into a "time trilogy" demonstrates that theme, and not narrative form, may provide the starting point for analyses of his fictional works, and further justifies reading *Il tempo invecchia* together with *Viaggi*.
38. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: Le jeux de l'écrivain e de l'hasard." Silvia Santirosi, "La nostalgia del peggio," *Il mattino*, 30 September 2009.
39. "Lo Statuto Albertino" is the constitution King Charles Albert granted to the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1848; it became the Constitution of the Kingdom of Italy upon Unification and remained in force until 1948.
40. Santirosi, "La nostalgia del peggio."
41. Chiara Dino, "Sostiene Tabucchi 'Gli italiani senza memoria'," *Corriere fiorentino*, 13 October 2009.
42. Antonio Tabucchi, "Promesse escono anche in Italia: i racconti di Bernard Comment," *Corriere della sera*, 26 April 1995, 31.
43. Antonio Tabucchi and Edouardo Lourenço, "Les lunettes renversées: les pays vus d'ailleurs, la culture et ce qu'elle deviant," in Antonio Tabucchi, *Pour Tabucchi: Le Rencontres de Fontevraud* (Saint-Nazaire: Meet, 2009), 137.
44. Dino, "Sostiene Tabucchi 'Gli italiani senza memoria.'"
45. Tabucchi and Lourenço, "Les lunettes renversées," 137. However, Tabucchi seems to neglect the fact that such xenophobia and racism greeted Southern Italians who migrated to those same Northern Italian regions, particularly in the decades following World War II. In this regard, see Enrica Capussotti, "Nordisti contro Sudisti: Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Italy: 1950s and 1960s," *Italian Culture* 28.2 (2010): 121–38.

46. Francesco Mannoni, "Tabucchi dentro il cuore del tempo," *Giornale di Brescia*, 17 October 2009.
47. Severino Colombo, "Tabucchi: 'L'Italia?' Sempre prima, nel bene e nel male . . ." *La Provincia di Como*, 13 October 2009.
48. Tabucchi and Comment, *Pour Tabucchi: Le Rencontres de Fontevraud*, 276.
49. Colombo, "Tabucchi: 'L'Italia?' Sempre prima, nel bene e nel male."
50. Carratù, "Antonio Tabucchi: Il tempo non è più quello di una volta."
51. Santirosi, "La nostalgia del peggio."
52. Mannoni, "Tabucchi dentro il cuore del tempo."
53. Antonio Tabucchi, *La nostalgie, l'automobile et l'infini: Lectures de Pessoa* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).
54. Antonio Tabucchi, "Some Reflections on Translations," *Italian Culture* 21 (2003): 171.
55. Antonio Tabucchi, "Sostiene Tabucchi: Intervista di Albero Scarponi," in *Raccontano se stessi*, ed. Alberto Scarponi (Rome: Gargemi, 2002), 119.
56. *L'oca al passo*, 131. Such Möbius-strip morphing back and forth, between Self and Other is at the core of *Autobiografie altrui*.
57. Tabucchi, "Sostiene Tabucchi," 119.
58. Antonio Tabucchi, *Notturmo indiano* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1984). For an analysis of the "plural personality" that animates Tabucchi's early works, see Joseph Francese, "L'eteronimia di Antonio Tabucchi," *Stanford Italian Review* (1992): 123–38.
59. Antonio Tabucchi, "Language as Homeland and the Exile of the Writer," *Autodafé: The Journal of the International Parliament of Writers* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2000): 82.
60. Antonio Tabucchi, "Norman Manea, el eterno extranjero," *Letras libre* 7.82 (October 2005): 74.
61. Antonio Tabucchi, "Berlusconi a abaissé le niveau esthétique." *Le Monde*, 10 October.
62. Tabucchi, "Un fiammifero Minerva."
63. Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 83.
64. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: Le jeux de l'écrivain e de l'hazard." Jennifer Burns, *Fragments of Impegno* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2001), 62–80, and Elizabeth Wren-Owens, *Postmodern Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 79–100, also provide analyses of *engagement* in Tabucchi's writings.
65. Tabucchi, "Un fiammifero Minerva," 6.
66. Tabucchi, *Sostiene Tabucchi*, 125.
67. Tabucchi, "Un fiammifero Minerva," 6.
68. Tabucchi, "Norman Manea, el eterno extranjero," 74.
69. Antonio Tabucchi, "La maggioranza pericolosa," *l'Unità*, 15 January 2005, 23.
70. See Antonio Tabucchi, *Gli Zingari e il Rinascimento: Vivere da Rom a Firenze* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999).
71. Roy Palmer Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943–1948* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 146.
72. Michele Battini, *The Missing Italian Nuremburg*, trans. Noor Giovanni Mazhar (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 19.
73. Simonetta Fiori, "Tabucchi: così l'Italia è diventata il mio grande rimorso," *Repubblica*, 27 January 2010, 57.
74. Benjamin Kilborne, *Disappearing Persons: Shame and Appearance* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), 5.
75. De Gregorio, "La letteratura non è il luogo della militanza: Intervista ad Antonio Tabucchi."
76. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: minacce alla libertà di stampa?"
77. Santirosi, "La nostalgia del peggio."
78. Antonio Tabucchi, "Il padrone della tabaccheria," *Repubblica*, 31 January 2007, 50.
79. Antonio Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, trans. Richard Zenith (New York: Penguin, 2001).
80. *The Book of Disquietude*, a "Factless Autobiography," tells of "vagheggiamenti, di sogni, di viaggi mai fatti" (*Viaggi*, 172). The fundamental difference, of course, is that Soares never leaves his room; this is why Pessoa can write of having "travelled without living" and of "the

weariness of having had a past, the disquiet of living the present, and the tedium of having to have a future" (*The Book of Disquietude*, 463).

81. Gambaro, "Antonio Tabucchi: Le jeux de l'écrivain e de l'hazard."
82. Romana Petri, "Uno scrittore pieno di gente," *Leggere* 61 (June 1994): 72. In this way Tabucchi supersedes his most important, perhaps, literary model, Pessoa, whose writings are characterized (as Dolfi synthesizes) by the "nostalgia of the past," a paradoxical "nostalgia of the present" (the immobile present of a life that is thought and written about but not lived), and the "metaphysical nostalgia" (of living not the historical fact but its abstraction or spiritual essence), and by the "nostalgia of the possible" (the desire for what might have been) (Dolfi, 23–24).
83. As Gramsci defines it, catharsis indicates "the passage from the merely economic (or egoistic-passionate) to the ethical-political, that is, the superior elaboration of the structure in superstructure in the consciousness of individuals." Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), 1244.
84. Carlos Gumpert, "La letteratura come enigma ed inquietudine. Una conversazione con Antonio Tabucchi," in *Dedica a Antonio Tabucchi* (Pordenone: Associazione Provinciale Per La Prose, 2001), 122, 104.
85. Gumpert, Gumpert, "La letteratura come enigma ed inquietudine," 104.
86. Antonio Tabucchi, "Cambi di stagione della letteratura: Queneau e Calvino, due grandi giocolieri del secolo al tramonto," *Corriere della sera*, 15 January 1998.
87. Tabucchi, *Sostiene Pereira*, 78.
88. Tabucchi, *Sostiene Tabucchi*, 114–15.
89. Tabucchi, *Il padrone della tabaccheria*.
90. Antonio Prete, "L'assedio della lontananza," in *Nostalgia: Storia di un sentimento* (Milan: Cortina, 1992), 21.