

The Future of Man is to be an Animal. Readings of Aganben, Levi and Malaparte.

Jose Mauricio Saldanha-Alvarez

Department of Media and Cultural Studies
Federal Fluminense University, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of the dog in the work of two modern Italian writers Curzio Malaparte and Carlo Levi and the writings of a notable Italian philosopher of our times, The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, in several works he assures the importance of animals in the human life, and the dog, in particular, in the redefinition of the future of the human being. Taking their assertions as analysis tools for the mentioned authors, we analyze in the texts, where they formulate a peculiar way of central role represented by the animal. In Levi he is capable to be the key able to open the door to a fantastic world. For Malaparte the dog becomes the essential counterpart to the humanity being capable to harbor huge feelings that he is able to teach man. Finally, for Agamben, men and animals are part of the same natural creation and, eschatologically, walk together until, at the end of time, when humans will reconcile with their half animal nature.

Key Words: Dog, Animals, Modernity, Fascism, Exile, Europe

INTRODUCTION

Giorgio Agamben, in an essay named *L'aperto. L'uomo e l'animale* (2014) (The open. The man and the animal), introduced the illuminated manuscript of a Hebrew Bible of the 18th century depicting the vision of Ezequiel. In it, there are four primordial and scatological animals: the cock, the eagle, the ox and the lion. They are seated beside the Messiah, participating in a banquet, as if they were human beings (1)

For Agamben, in Manichaean texts, the Archons have a connection with the animal kingdom. Established among bipeds and quadrupeds, among birds, fishes and reptiles. The scatological literature of Talmud alludes to a frequent economy of contact between animals and human beings. On the other hand, in the messianic kingdom, the animal nature shall change its ferocity into meekness. Thus appears in the prophecy of Isaiah, where animals such as the lion and the lamb, walk side by side. The attribution of animal instead of human form to all of Israel seems to affirm that in the final days humans will reconcile with their animal nature.

In the *L'aperto*, the philosopher forged instruments that we appropriated and use in order to discuss the relationship between man and animal, the latter being the future of the former. Thus armed, we shall analyse the works of two Italian writers, Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957) and Carlo Levi (1902-1975), who labelled the relationship between animal and man during 1930-1945, the era between

a desire for order and the rise of the totalitarianisms. As in the illuminated manuscript of Ezequiel, these authors present the animals, in this case, dogs, as protagonists of history, as the future form of man. For Malaparte, the dog not only is profoundly connected to man, but he is morally superior. For Levi, the dog is an independent animal, like an individual divinity. The dog's life fully completes human life. Both writers rework a literary motif attributing to dogs a part of our humanity and to men a link with our long-lost original animal nature. . Men and dogs make up polymorphous species, with strong evolutionary and transformational interactions (Gaietto, 2008, 59).

As the Salima Ikran studies, concerning Ancient Egypt demonstrate, the friendship between dogs and their masters seems to have been intensely and extensively represented in the visual arts. Some buried Egyptians show them together to owners, in prominent positions or simply sharing the tomb with their owners because the dogs are "special". (Ikran, 2005,106).

The inevitable certainty of modernity rooted in the Enlightenment permeates their texts in different ways. Their narratives that we employ here highlight a role of redeemptor for the animal, presented as a future for humans converted into cattle by totalitarianisms and as slaughtered herd in the slaughterhouses of the Second World War.

DOGS AS CHARACTERS AND SUBJECTS: A REFLECTION

In countless ancient cosmogonies, men sought to associate their origins to animals that remain totemic deities. Gradually men shaped their images of the divine based on their own until they reached the point of abstraction, abandoning animal forms. Or, as Eliade explains, man worships not the animal, but the sacred that is manifested through the image (Eliade, 1971, 93). Anthropocentrism became the dominant central quality of our cosmogony. However, the decisive trend of Western thought that consecrates the split between humans and animals is due to Immanuel Kant. Kant's philosophy reserves a hegemonic role for humans in the world. In the essay on *Perpetual Peace*, the philosopher claims that men don't act based on instinct, the way animals do. As they are neither bees, ants nor beavers, they act based on their rationality (1983, 29).

The tension between human reason and animal instinct has not disappeared from the face of the earth. In the years between wars, during the years from 1918 until 1939, this tension remained and flourished. Heidegger considered that metaphysics stemmed from the animal in order to study the human being and his dignity.

In humanism, the other is the animal. For Agamben, the other of civilization is the *homo sacer*, the naked life, the animalized life that would always have constituted privileged space for elaboration of the plots of political discourses in the West. This otherness becomes a kind of guilty conscience to which we always return, even when we think not, because nothing defines us as well as that to which we vehemently and passionately oppose (Ferreira, 2011, 203).

As the dog seems to go before us due to this earlier ageing, their life shared with man prepares him for old age, suffering and death. The animal seems not only to be companionable but also to represent a kind of indispensable double, a lucky number protecting a man who stands before the mystery of existence. Knowing what death means, the dog resigns itself to it, and its presence teaches us how to take this unavoidable step.

Dog and Religion

In a brief analysis of the pre-modern thought, Eliade has explained Herz's deductions in relation to the polarity between the left and right hands, and reaffirms its paramount symbolic function. This religious polarity confers upon the right hand the role of instigator of the sacred, of the structures of law and reason in man. The left hand, the bastard and cursed left, has the responsibility for the dirty work and the domain of the profane, of women, the earth and the underworld. The left hand is associated with lawlessness and upheaval, with lack of control and impulses (Eliade, 217).

Our writers appear to have understood the superiority of man to animals more perhaps by virtue of what Moscovici calls genetic assemblies linked to anatomical and physiological organisation manifested by an endless struggle.

Thus, children and savages are animated by anarchic sexual and aggressive impulse without looking to the interests of others or community or the law, or custom that is law based on tradition. In Lucania, Carlo Levi found a peculiar social habit. Male and female strangers would never be alone together. If they ended up together, they could copulate in an uncontrollable expression of desire, free from guilt (2010, p.110). Moscovici explains, at every stage of their development, the newest societies subjugate nature to culture.

Thus, the nobility of the dog, a higher animal quality indicated by the writers, would be a way to curb the excessive rationality that leads to holocausts. Being a dog or trying to be like dogs is a sign of nobility, of virtue. It is the dialectic of detachment, of the joy of living, of the camaraderie of mutual trust. On the other hand, acceptance of these writings leads us to think about the absolute necessity of this shamanic sense of sifting through the recesses of nature which enables us to predict and prophesise. The dog becomes the prophet who announces the good news: men who have become like dogs will be fully human by recovering the missing link, the animal half of our nature.

Thus modern and more extreme modernist developments seem to address the "biological background that resides in them against the uncertainty of their individual behaviour." (Moscovici, p. 188) According to this author, human life must be made of oppositions that produce an essential duality: discipline and indiscipline. The dog, Cerberus or Anubis, is a being from the place between life and death, indiscipline at its most sublime. Levi was aware of the role of animals and men in countries that were ruled by monarchs that, as in China, were dragon kings, or tiger and devil kings, or of the role of the dog Anubis, as in Egypt (Levi, 1964, p. 22)

It should be said that in the writings analysed, it is not always evident that there is desire for a double personality or for a literary theme of the double, as we read in Plato, according to Clément Rosset's explanations (97). It is an ontological brotherhood that leads us to think that our authors appear to discuss a symbolic reorganisation of the universe. There are humanised animals that are like our doubles, and they become the idols of the individual, the family and also of the group. Furthermore, the blood of animals is an effective substitute for human blood in sacrifices.

AUTHORSHIP AND THE PLACE OF WRITING

In the phenomenological perspective, the place is imbued with a solid environmental quality, ensuring a qualitative atmosphere as a total phenomenon (Norberg-Schulz). The places where Levi and Malaparte lived in order to write, are places where the myth was still present and modernity

was not fully established. The region had but a few schools and tradition prevailed with a vigour. As Y Fu Tuan points out, the myth not only contrasts in frequency with reality, but flourishes in the absence of precise knowledge (Y Fu Tuan). Tradition constituted codes of interpretation of the world which were valid and necessary. It was the place where memory was indispensable, given the reduced presence of memory machines and paper.

Both authors suffer exile as punishment imposed by the fascist regime for their political criticisms. Perhaps they lived their punishment writing about them which they set up as life-stories, as Soja named them, which are also geographic coordinates. Soja deems that animals and plants do not possess a world of their own and integrate, thus an “already-made geography sets the stage, while the wilful making of history dictates the action, and defines the story line”, where a “historical imagination” has its place and value (Soja1989, 14).

The places of exile, Lucania and Lipari and Europa, hold a strong charge of duplicity well beyond binary oppositions, and of the genesis of animal characters. As Heidegger points out, (read by Agamben), the relationship between man and animal, between the world and the environment, seems to evoke that intimate dissidence that exists between the two.

In their imposed exile experience, our authors do not adopt the social rules of their tormentors, typical of nomads (Onfray). Exile is not a journey desired by the author. It's a journey imposed by the political atmosphere. However, both authors see reality through the filter of their vast personal culture. There, they emerge invested in an innocence that permits both to marvel about the findings of the exile location's culture, of its temporality, of its history, of their strategies for permanence, of their codes of interpretation. Levi and Malaparte maintain in their writings a strategy capable of preserving live emotion generated by the place (Onfray).

Van den Bossche signals that this voyage is equivalent to a rite of passage. The writing is positioned between the economy of labour of known knowledge before the unknown and radically different (Damaro). Because it is about the place of writing, situated between the real cleavage, now absent, and the writing, which is present, is translated as a return of metonymy, but also of the replacement (Damaro). Between the voyage and the narrative, a contact between two essences makes its presence: one real and the other in writing.

Place of Exile Lucania, the land of wolves and duplications.

Carlo Levi was a writer whose formation appears to have oscillated between different trends and sensitivities. Without the implausible and narcissistic brilliance of Malaparte, he presents himself as a good-natured man who is supportive to all. He was a Jewish doctor in the country which is the seat of Roman Catholicism, Italy. Born in the rich north of Italy, this learned man, well-nourished and rosy, loved the semi-arid lands of the south of the Italian peninsula and its famished people with a passion.

The places for the writings appear different. The map of these author's places is complex, but it starts to become clearer when the inhabitants, whilst mourning their fate, let slip another essential tropism: duplication. The bipartite nature of Lucania-Basilicata, of its existential duplicity, extends to names. Or, according to Cassirer, the name as the ontological root of being, the hidden meaning of life. It seems to us that Levi himself, who, in another work, *L'origine delle lingue*, reaffirms the

command of the language: "Nomina, numina, si usava dire: i nomi sono numi, le parole sono divinità. Sono cioè modi di determinazione, sono l'essenza delle cose; e, per una mente non ancora abituata alla visione razionale, sono le cose stesse". ("Nomina, numina, it used to be said: names are gods, words are gods. That is, they are ways of determination, they are the essence of things; and, for a mind not yet accustomed to rational vision, they are the things themselves"). (Levi in Galvagno, 2004, 169).

The fascist state imposed a new and modern name for the ancient region. Thus, from Lucania, it would be called Basilicata. Its primitive name – Lucania - represents the ancestral animality, according to which it would be suppressed by modern rationality. Lucania is the name that dives into tradition and into history. It belongs to the collective imaginary. As the name Basilicata, the modern state, in its possessive eagerness, eliminates the social fiction. And so, Lucania, the real and the live present, for Levi, a perfect coincidence with the thing so named (Galvano).

The exile of nearly five years was initially in a village situated in a desolate, rocky, wilderness called Grassano, but soon the authorities transfer him to another village called Aliano, which was far from the railway station and which Levi fictionally baptised Gagliano (Colangelo, 2008, pp 21-22).

In this village that wound its way between ravines, he discovered Lucania and discovered its asymmetric time. If Grassano was lively due to the proximity of the provincial road and trains, Gagliano, by contrast, was far away, in a distant wilderness until very recently (Colangelo, 2008, p.23). The town itself had an animal and duplicated form, "it descended and rolled like a worm around its single street, between two steep cliffs."

This region had been emptied of men who had emigrated, leaving their families cut off. The middle classes and those who wanted a better life migrated to larger population centres, or further afield to America. They left their wives behind, abandoned to their fate. In Levi, the senses record the odours of groups of people, or the smells that rise from the earth. Sounds also make up the landscape, like the silence of the hills of clay, heard as a sound. Whereas in Grassano he was awakened by the bells of the flocks of sheep, in impoverished Gagliano it was the sound of the hooves of donkeys and goats that the poor peasants would lead very early in the morning for three or four hours along a path of "to their fields in the unhealthy ravines of Agri and Sauro."

Its barren luminous landscape seemed to hold a different realm: "The abandoned village seemed to be more under the spell of the animal kingdom. "I felt their still round eyes looking at me from behind". Having entered this kingdom and made contact with its inhabitants, new keys to the kingdom of mystery, Fernandez's "mythical universe" were revealing themselves (1960, 174). "Unseen, animal presences floated in the air. Suddenly, from behind a house, with a leap of her bandy legs, the queen of those places jumped out, a goat who stared at me with her yellow and indecipherable eyes" (Levi, 2010, p. 72).

Politics didn't even make sense to these people; it was an oblique discourse whose hidden meaning benefited the local rulers but never the peasants. "They neither had nor could ever have what is called political awareness because, in every sense of the term, they remained unconscious followers of paganism rather than citizens: the gods of the state and city cannot be worshipped in this land of clay where the wolf and the old black wild boar reign".

Modernity in Levi is as evident as in Malaparte: they view it sometimes as distance from the natural world and at other times as the terrifying creation of depersonalised individuals under the aegis of the machine. Modernity may represent banishment, alienation and separation from nature. But if nature is irrepressible, how can one find a necessary coexistence with her? (di Donato, 2007, p.77). Between the years 1935 and 1936 the fascist regime exiled Levi to Lucania. Thanks to his working imagination he was able to publish his experiences in 1945 in a book called *Christ stopped at Eboli*. This book was an instant public and critical success. However, it is first and foremost a journey of the eyes and a writing translated as an iconotext - the work of a writer and the work of a painter, two poetic forms of partnership (Donzelli, 2004, 34).

The region is depicted essentially as a "different world, hidden away in pain and tradition, ignored by history and by an eternally passive state" (p. 9). Eboli is a provincial town, and in a way it is where one enters Lucania, those lands beyond Eboli, over which loneliness hung like a cloud. And everything was trampled on, from the trees to the people (Donzelli, 2004, 93). In this land of ancient non-historical habits, there lived a population of invisible beings, earth spirits and souls of the dead, animals and angels and demons. Levi, in Lucania, felt like he was walking in a space without history. Carlo Levi's dog was called Barone. Its origin is shrouded in mystery. He was found, already an adult, walking along the railway and, because of the animal's solemn look, they gave him to Levi. He was an animal of stately appearance whose bouncing gait made his long silky hair wave like the noble animals of medieval heraldic shields. The peasants, seduced by his elegance and charm, changed the name Barone to transform him into the guardian of meaning on the borders of the imaginary: Baron, half dog, half lion, a happy curious dog investigating burrows faced with the mysteries of this rough, wild and beautiful region. He was a joyful animal whose fur recalled the heraldic emblems that adorned medieval shields.

One of his peculiarities was that he could not stand the sound of the sacristan's bell which led Levi to suggest that maybe there was an evil creature in the animal (Miccinese, 1979, p.38). Unlike the scapegoat who perishes while carrying the community's sins, he is presented as a being who is free from guilt. He is an animal with a wholly positive moral disposition towards a world ruled by a dictatorship, described as "a free and wild cheerful being". It is the natural element that mitigates the bestiality of human greed, the terribly human beastliness of the small and sordid characters in this quiet city of Gagliano.

Levi's dog is a hinge between the cosmic forces of creation and of nature. The peasants, those who are closest to this matrix decoded the double sign of divinity in the animal. Therefore, this "dual nature always engenders an obscure attraction, implying respect for the village deities. Everyone recognised something sacred in my dog. They did not look at him like a normal dog; he was an extraordinary being, different from all other dogs and worthy of particular reverence". At the end of his life, after the death of the father to whom he had given Barone, he found in himself a sacred and a double being, because his opponents of power, "in their terror of the sacred in me they also found in me a twofold nature: half baron, half lion" (Levi, 2010, p. 125).

Place of exile: Malaparte: Exile in Europe

Curzio Malaparte's existence is connected to Italy and Europe. Italy however, was divided by a clear demarcation between a north that was rich, cosmopolitan, European and industrial and an agrarian South, subject to pressure from large landowners and abject poverty. There was also the void

opened up by the lack of a state to fill these spaces and enable the consolidation of citizenship. After the First World War, liberalism in Italy was unable to provide an adequate response to the serious problems resulting from the modernisation and the general crisis of capitalism. In clashes between right and left, a new force appeared as a variation of modernity, manufacturing methods and a thunderous desire to enjoy and control: Fascism. However, even this new and triumphant system faced the gap between north and south. It was a country whose painful division was striking to the observer, the industrialisation of the north poorly supported by the economic weakness of the Mezzogiorno, whose Sicilian sulphur mines were its most obvious source of wealth (Joll, p. 8).

Curzio Malaparte makes modernity an essential trope. Modernity that historically treated the animal in a programmed contradiction set up within two directives. Under the first, they are killed en masse, using modern, industrial methods. It is as if their prodigious number metamorphosed them into beings without the right to life and are prepared for mass death. This massification dressed up as utilitarianism that incorporates the roots and guiding principles of liberalism went beyond the limits of the slaughterhouse and the farm. It has jumped over the fence, becoming free to use the objectifying discourse of the human mass: genocide. The mass killings of "herded humans".

Agamben, whilst debating between nature and redemption in Benjamin, the Gnostic Marione opens a window so that they insert Malaparte and Levi, as, explaining the sense of latent and permanent animality when reporting the debate between Bataille and Kójeve in 1939 when the war became inevitable, a declaration of the college of sociology translates his impotence and denouncing the passivity and the audience of fear from the war encroaching as a form of massive "non-virilisation" (between quotation marks in the original) where men change into a kind of "conscious sheep sent to the executioner". Also, if in a way different from that which Kójeve had in mind, they were becoming animals in the true sense (Agamben, p.15).

MALAPARTE, CHAMELEON OF LIFE AND IN LITERATURE

The dog in Carlo Levi is shown as the hinge between the cosmic forces of creation and the nature of man. The dog Barone was a gift from an inhabitant of Grassano. They wanted to shower him with a beautiful dog. Stimulated by the duplicity, he asked a local barber to give him a cut that made him look like a lion cub, Levi didn't know to what breed of dogs he belonged to. He was a rather uncommon specie which he had never seen the likes of before. "It was a happy, free and wild being. He was affectionate, but without servitude. He obeyed but kept his independence. A sort of little god or a familiar spirit, joyful and unattainable. He didn't walk but hopped about and chased the birds, fought with cats and dogs, ran through the fields, scared off the goats, looked at the clouds "as if chasing the wavy thread of an omniscient human thought. The elastic incarnation of a bizarre spirit of the woods" (Levi, 2010, 102).

The peasants closest to this hinge between telluric forces soon decoded the duplicated sign of divinity in the animal. Therefore, this "double nature always begets an obscure attraction, implying respect within the pantheon of deities of the village. Everyone recognized that there is something sacred in my dog. They didn't see him as a normal dog...: he was an extraordinary being, different from all dogs and worthy of being particularly revered" (125). Levi realized that his fascist opponents "in their sacred terror, also discovered in me a double nature: half baron, half lion".

For Rosalba Galvano, Levi, when delighted with the new reality, suited his sense of time and of “nomad” to that of Lucania. In addition, he inserted in his writings the word *peasant*, this “magic and poetic word that includes the double sense and that of ambiguity, contrary to the unequivocal sense of reason” (2004, 173).

The Italian writer Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957) has a peculiar aura, a contradiction between those who do reject him and those who consider him a great modern writer. The prestigious scientist Serge Moscovici was a child during World War II. In 1943, the destruction around him led him to deny all known logic in the light of colossal human evil. In his immaturity, the German took on the role of human symbol and the agent that unleashed the horrors of war. The German took on an outline of such enormous wickedness that Moscovici was led to doubt the human civilisation that had forged the ultimate monstrosity of the Holocaust: “I repented of being a Christian, I was ashamed to be Christian” (2005, p.155). Decades after the horror, already a renowned scientist, Serge Moscovici gained enough courage to read Malaparte’s *Kaputt*. He was surprised to recognise himself as its protagonist in the work. In this frightening book, he found the testimony of his own existence as he read the description of the children of the ghetto, of which he, Serge, was one.

WAR, TOTALITARIANISM, INTELLECTUALS AND DOGS

Agamben, in a reading he does of Heidegger, whom he considers the last philosopher to believe in *polis* as the place where conflict reins between latency and between humanity and animality and of the anthropogenesis that results in the close contact between human and animal, resulting in the anthropologic mas, intellectual chine that, like the historical fate of man and the typical bio-politics of the continent indicates the decisive conflict governing culture is that between animality and humanity of man (82).

Malaparte for many years revealed an eccentric character in his books and in the famous red house he had built opposite of the stunning cliff of Faraglioni, in the island of Capri. Through the love of his dog *Phoebus*, he himself is half man, half mythical beast. He is half Tuscan and half inhabitant of Capri. He is half Latin, half Nordic. His German father was Protestant and Nordic, a manufacturer of texts, and his Italian mother was a Latin Roman Catholic. In his writing, and particularly in his later works, a fatigue of rational human existence can be perceived. Natural selection has led to mass extermination, the pursuit of living space: kill your neighbour as yourself.

He, too, presents himself as man and author, as an antinomian process, realised through opposing polarities. He was an ardent Italian and a European. In his antifascist activities Malaparte was condemned to exile on the isle of Lipari. This island is of volcanic origin and constituted of volcanic stones. It’s a porous rock, quite light. Someone could lift a large block, its weight being ridiculous. When a photographer from the regime took a picture of him in order to show the world how healthy he was in prison, Malaparte lifted two enormous rocks of pumice that weighed almost nothing, thus ridiculing the fascist regime with his performance. Removed from Lipari, he remained a prisoner at his home on the isle of Capri.

In 1941, he left for his European exile when sent by the prestigious journal *Corriere della Sera* as correspondent at the Russian front, following the advances of German troops. His exceptional quality materials produce a divergent and disquieting look on the conflict. It becomes an industrial war, locked between industrial powers and was registered in a stupendous book *The Volga rises in*

Europe. The European exile engulfed Finland, a country then aligning with the German Reich. It circled through Sweden *en route* to Germany, Yugoslavia and the Russian front. In Finland, he reported the tragic magic of the region and the war in the Arctic (Serra, 200). In Finland, he discovers sauna, the healthy nudity of people, the proverbial cleanliness and order of the Finnish, whose trenches and walkways were of an impeccable order. And there was human bestiality, practicing horrors that an irrational animal would never do. During his visit to the Russian front, he reported that the Nazis froze Russian soldiers and stood them up, extending their arms, as beacons signalling traffic directions for their troops. This way, as Serra proclaimed, an entire continent can be a place of exile. The result of this involuntary journey, however necessary as atonement and experience on a continent in war, resulted in the writing of three marvellous and terrible books: *The Volga rises in Europe*, *Kaputt* and *La Pelle* (Serra, 230).

The original volume of *The Volga rises in Europe* was destroyed during an allied bombing over Milan in 1943. (Barrelli, 347). Malaparte, in this notable work, lends vast space to the war fought in the URSS, which he had visited in 1929, when nurturing a platonic admiration for communism. As he followed the Nazi troops, he discovered that their material soviet conquests at the cost of huge sacrifices, were destroyed by the Nazis who intended to regenerate Europe (Hope, 2006,21). Indeed, *Kaputt* is the narrative of this Europe a place of exile, in that continent occupied by Nazi totalitarianism with its official brutality. Throughout the pages of this work, aristocrats, artists, aestheticians, politicians and Nazi dignitaries circulate with their conceit and fatuousness (Hope, 154). As for the book *La Pelle*, it's a close-up of an Italy ruined by the war. A terrible work that records the way desperate, hungry mothers sell their sex. They sell the flesh of their small sons to brutal soldiers. The skin of these unfortunate people is the only merchandise that allows them to survive and still the hunger in a city that represents the confluences of the Mediterranean: Naples.

The literature of Malaparte that is born from the Second World War is charged with death facing the brutal advance of modernity and its hallucination (Gentilli, 2000, 273). His peregrination through the European exile corresponds to the path of a traveller who, as William Hope, self-invented himself (2000, 181). Upon his arrival in Naples, Malaparte enters a bar and orders a drink in an environment filled with flies. Meanwhile, a huge government poster on the wall urged the population to fight off the flies. Facing the enormous swarm, he complains to the owner of the bar. The owner shrugs and replies that yes, there is a war. "But what do you want? The flies won."

The animal will be the future of man.

Malaparte himself received from his admirers and detractors the nickname, which is the name of an animal: the chameleon. (Barilli, 2000, 41). Nonetheless, whenever he includes animals in his narrative, he treats them with great gentleness. As in *Kaputt*, where he shows the loss of humanity of men and the sublimity of animals (Gentilli, 298). The dog for Malaparte was endowed with a mute voice whose actions and behaviour should be imitated by men. Febo, this "dog of the moon" followed Malaparte wherever he went. When he was sentenced to exile by the fascists, the only one who followed him, the only one who waited for him was his dog, Phebo. The origin of Phebo has none of the mystery surrounding Levi's dog Barone. During the winter of 1940, to escape the war, Malaparte took refuge in Pisa, residing in an empty house, in a beautiful dead street in that beautiful and dead city.

The image of the dog was of a dog as a Christ, capable of restoring the writer's perception of the concept of brotherhood without reservation. "He was not only my brother; he was my judge." "He was the guardian of my dignity and, at the same time, I would say with the ancient Greeks, my *dorufórema* (a Greek word which means bodyguard)" (184).

In Rome Malaparte was set free, but it was a freedom that was as costly as imprisonment. Because of this the dog was "sad, he seemed humiliated by the spectacle of my freedom". He knew that freedom is not a human act, and that men cannot, and maybe do know how to, be free; that freedom in Italy and in Europe weighs as heavily as slavery (2007, p.48).

In the city of Pisa, the dog of the moon disappeared from city streets. Malaparte searched for him everywhere, feeling the anguish of a possible sorry end. His worst fears were confirmed when he finally found him in the veterinary clinic of the University. He was being used in an experiment along with dozens of other dogs. "I was standing in front of Phoebus; I was shaking horribly, tears streaming down my face. Phoebus stared at me with a wonderful sweetness in his eyes (...) the other dogs too, lying on their backs, in their cribs, stared at me with the same wonderful sweetness in their eyes and not the slightest whimper coming from their throats". To avoid a cacophony of howling, the doctors had cut their vocal cords (188).

Like the blessed ones of the illuminated manuscript from the copy of the Hebrew Bible of the thirteenth century, Levi e Malaparte seem to complete our nature, recovering the rupture existing between animal and man. According to Jonatas Ferreira:

"The fact remains that the Judaeo-Christian tradition is fraught with a fundamental ambiguity with respect to the human-animal relationship. Man is the apex of creation, the lord of nature, but the righteous man, the holy man is a lamb. Christ himself is compared to a sheep sacrificed so that humanity as a whole could be saved. In a nutshell, our animality, in a way, is a curse, as it points to our biological precariousness, our perishability; but the road to transcendence brings us the innocence of animals as the highest reward" (Ferreira, 2011, 206).

CONCLUSION

In his book, *Febo cane metafisico* (*Febo metaphysical, dog*) Malaparte synthesized the encounter between a human being and his dog so as to remind us of the ancient burials, when humans and dogs were together for eternity: L'incontro fra un uomo e cane is always l' incontro fra due spiriti liberi, fra due forme di dignità, fra due morali disinteressate (2018). (The encounter between a man and a dog is always the encounter between two free spirits, between two forms of dignity, between two disinterested morals)

Finally, we conclude that in the narratives analysed, the dog occupies a prominent place under the spotlight as a subject who is operating in mediation between reason and imagination. We can also note the position of the dog in the connection between life and death, or rather, in the fullness of existence. The dog precedes man and waits for him in life. Reason points to half of existence; death is its other half denied insistently and deliriously by the action of modernity on the stage. The death of the dog precedes the death of the man. The dog therefore makes it easier for modern man to understand the concept of death. The dog is our protector and the guardian of the secret of the

world to come. The dog knows that the secret of the beyond goes before us to lead us into the green pastures of the Christian heaven, the smooth light of the Elysian Fields, the deep shadows of Hades.

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