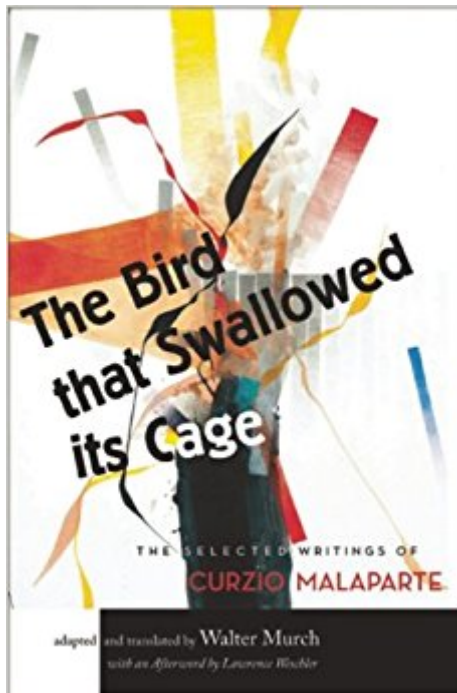


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The Bird That Swallowed Its Cage: The Selected Writings Of Curzio Malaparte



Synopsis

Walter Murch first came across Curzio Malaparte's writings in a chance encounter in a French book about cosmology, where one of Malaparte's stories was retold to illustrate a point about conditions shortly after the creation of the universe. Murch was so taken by the strange, utterly captivating imagery he went to find the book from which the story was taken. The book was *Kaputt*, Malaparte's autobiographical novel about the frontlines of World War II. Curzio Malaparte, an Italian born with a German heritage, was a journalist, dramatic, novelist and diplomat. When he wrote a book attacking totalitarianism and Hitler's reign, Mussolini, in no position to support such a body of work, stripped him of his National Fascist Party membership and sent him to internal exile on the island of Lipari. In 1941, he was sent to cover the Eastern Front as a correspondent for *Corriere della Sera*, the Milano daily newspaper. His dispatches from the next three years would be largely suppressed by the Italian government, but reverberated among readers as painfully real depictions of a landscape at war. The film editor, fluent in translating the written word over to the languages of sight and sound, began slowly translating Malaparte's writings from World War II. The density and intricacy of his stories compelled Murch to adapt many of them into prose or blank verse poems. The result is a book of surprising insight and strange beauty.

Book Information

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Counterpoint (March 4, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1619022818

ISBN-13: 978-1619022812

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #797,142 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #103 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > Italian](#) #4844 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors](#) #10291 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#)

Customer Reviews

This is a collection of translations of short stories by Curzio Malaparte. The origin of this title is not clarified here. It comes from an aphorism by Fughe in prigione (1936; 1954, 10): "sono un uccello

che ha ingoiato la propria gabbia". This work is short, but original. The translator Walter Murch, who is a winning film editor and sound designer, tried to turn the prose into poetry with appreciable results. This task is easier with this awarded author since his prose is very musical. Here there are two wonderful short stories in which sentiments are deep and real (The visit of an angel and Woman by the edge of the sea from *Fughe in prigione*, 1936). In 1933 he voluntarily left the Scotland described in the latter short story before been sent to Lipari to confinement. In the other story of the same collection he mocks maternity making an infernal angel appear. These short stories were written in exile in Lipari. The biographical note is enough reliable; but two comments of mine are needed. a) The pseudonym Malaparte was chosen because in a novel he read that this was the original surname of the Bonaparte. They changed it to comply the Pope (Robin Monotti Graziadei, *Woman like me*, introduction, vii). Maybe the writer born in Prato imagined that he would have not become an aristocrat and the founder of a lineage. This surname alliterates with *mal partorito* (that is not son of his legal father). Malaparte's father was German. His mother was from Lombardia. We don't have any reason to doubt about it. There is not any evidence in favour of Murch's allusion (p. 2). b) Malaparte intuited the Asiatic ancestry of a considerable part of the population of Tuscany (*Maledetti toscani*, 1956).

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